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A New Foundation – Luke 6:12-26

Introduction – Jesus embroiled Himself in controversy because He refused to join with the Pharisees in applying principles of holiness to separation, but rather He sought to extend holy-living to a program of mercy and love and inclusion. This is not a little renovation taking place – this is new wine. Or, to use another analogy, the old foundation is corrupt. This is a new foundation being laid.

A New Israel and Twelve New Sons (vv12-16) – After spending the night in prayer (more on that later), Jesus comes down and selects twelve from among his disciples to be apostles. Disciples are followers of a master-teacher, and apostles are sent-ones by that master with authority. Old Israel, represented in the hometown Nazarites, and then the Pharisees in Galilee, have rejected God and His message of Jubilee, and so Jesus comes down from the mountain as the New Israel (Jacob) and establishes a New Israel with twelve new “sons.”

These Twelve – will be the foundation of the new church and they will be sent to all the nations to preach the gospel – that is the story of Luke-Acts. That is the message that continues to bother the religious-elite as well (notice the passage in Matt 12:15ff that follows the same stories of offense against the Pharisees). This is a missionary-foundation. Against the pride and presumption of keeping people out, these twelve will be sent with authority to bring people, all people, in – *from Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria, and to the end of the earth* (Acts 1:8). We really know very little about most of these twelve. Their glory is not in their person, but rather in their message, as another apostle, Paul, will make so clear (1 Cor 2:1-9). The Twelve would sit in judgment over the first twelve (read Luke 22:28-30). And this, I believe, is the main reason that Jesus spent the night in prayer.

The Purpose of the Night in Prayer (v12) – There are many speculations about why Jesus spent the whole night in prayer at this time, and what it is He prayed. And through those speculations and study we can draw a few important applications. First, on another occasion, we learn that when Jesus was seen praying, His disciples asked to be taught how to pray as well, and He taught them the Lord’s Prayer (Luke 11:1ff). We know that Jesus prayed and sang the Psalms as prayers, even while hanging on a cross (Matt 26:30, 27:46). Critical times in the life of the church or individuals call for special times of prayer (Acts 13:2-3). We should shape our prayers around the Word of God – a good book to help in this way is *Matthew Henry’s, A Method for Prayer*.

Rejection/Rejected/Love – What was critical at this point? Was it particularly that Jesus needed wisdom in selecting just the right twelve? Was He praying for grace to strengthen Him after such rejection? Or was it out of love for Israel and His knowledge of the coming judgment upon them? Jesus knows He will send these Twelve to the Jews first, as He went to them first as well. But He knows what He taught Israel to sing for centuries (Deut 32 – the Song of Moses, a song of Israel’s hypocrisy, idolatry, hard-heartedness, and God’s judgment). He knew what was coming, and He did not rejoice in their unbelief. Could it be that He was pleading for God to change the hearts of Israel, pleading for such change, weeping for lost Israel (Luke 13:34-35), and beseeching the Father to establish a New Israel – and could it be that the Twelve were the Father’s answer to that prayer?

Serving the Great Multitude (vv17-19) – Jesus does not stop doing the things that are enraging the authorities. The disciples are all around Him and of course the Twelve are there as well. They are joining with Him, by being with Him, in these acts of preaching, healing, and other acts of mercy.

Blessings and Curses (vv20-26) – Jesus comes down from the mountain, having been with God, declares His new Twelve, and gives a New Torah of sorts to his disciples. He begins here with four blessings and four woes, or curses, that contrast one another. He also invites the disciples to join with Him, not only in Jubilee-proclamation, but also in cross-bearing and suffering.

Poor, Hungry, and Broken – The first three couplets, considered in context, are not teaching a type of socialism and the redistribution of wealth, but of desperation for salvation versus a self-righteous, presumptive pride. Jesus is speaking comprehensively to those who are oppressed. It is those who are the righteous-poor, broken and hungry before Him, that will be healed, picked up, delivered, and glorified. Those who refuse to acknowledge Him or who mock Him and plan against Him, thinking they have their own refuge will find that (as a prophet, one of your own, once said,) “*I guess ev’ry form of refuge has its price.*”

Final Blessing/Woe – If you stand with Jesus today in the public square, you will be hated, you will be excluded, you will be

reviled, and your name will be cast out as evil. That is how the egalitarian/homosexual community, the scientific/academic community, the political community, the education community, the business community, and even the faith community operate today. Stand in any of those communities and say, "Jesus, the Son of Man, the True-emperor, is Lord of this community," and you know what happens.

New Foundations/Cross-Bearing/Joy - It wasn't a day that rocked the world, and yet it was. A new Foundation was set, upon which the whole church would be built stone by stone (Eph 2:19-22). There was no promise that suffering and oppression and ridicule would be whisked away. But there was a promise that this kind of faith-communion-walking with Jesus would bear fruit throughout the world and, ultimately, eternally, in heaven.

"By this fellowship the adversities themselves not only become blessings to us, but they are also aids to greatly promote our happiness and salvation" - John Calvin, "Golden Booklet of the True Christian Life"

Dave Hatcher - December 4, 2005