

08. Luke 5:27 - 6:38



Luke 5:27-28 (Mark 2:13-14)

After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up, left everything, and followed him.



Called 'Matthew'
in Matthew 9:9

Luke 5:29-32

(Mark 2:15-17)

Then Levi gave a great banquet for him in his house; and there was a large crowd of tax collectors and others sitting at the table with them.

The Pharisees and their scribes were complaining to his disciples, saying, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”

Jesus answered, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners *to repentance.*”



When Moses ascended Mount Sinai with Aaron, Aaron's sons and the seventy elders, we are told: 'They beheld God; they ate and they drank' (Exodus 24:11).

When the promised Messiah came, there would be a sumptuous banquet to which all would be invited: 'On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear' (Isaiah 25:6).

Luke delights in portraying Jesus sharing a meal. Much of his teaching and a number of his parables are associated with a meal (Luke 7:36-50; 11:37-52; 14:1-24; 15:1-32).

The Law had strict rules about who was welcome at the ‘communion banquets’. In the scene upon which we are reflecting, the experts in the Law are shocked that Jesus eats with people of the likes of Levi and his friends.

We meet this criticism again later in the Gospel: **‘All the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them”’** (Luke 15:1-2).

‘They began to grumble: “He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner”’ (Luke 19:7). Jesus responds to their grumbling: **‘Today salvation has come to this house for the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost’** (Luke 19:10).

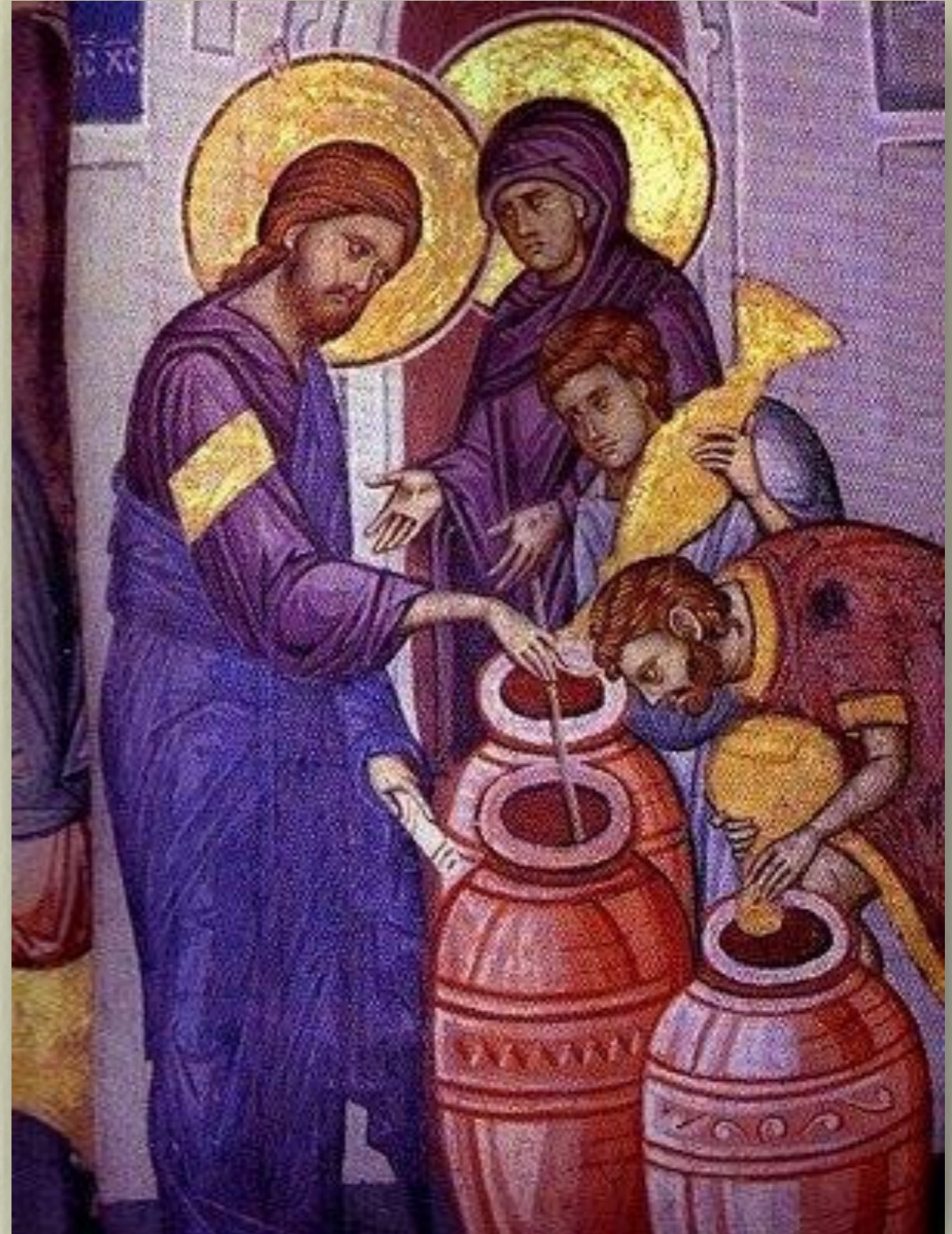
‘Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me’ (Revelation 3:20).



Luke 5:33-35

(Mark 2:18-20)

Then they said to him, “John’s disciples, like the disciples of the Pharisees, frequently fast and pray, but your disciples eat and drink. Jesus said to them, “You cannot make wedding guests fast while the **bridegroom** is with them, can you? The days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days.”



Cana John 2

‘Your Maker is your husband, the Lord of hosts is his name; the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called. For the Lord has called you like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, like the wife of a man’s youth when she is cast off, says your God. but with great compassion I will gather you. In overflowing wrath for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you, says the Lord, your Redeemer’ (Isaiah 54:5-8. See also 62:4-5).

‘I will take you for my wife forever; I will take you for my wife in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy. I will take you for my wife in faithfulness; and you shall know the Lord’ (Hosea 2:19-20).

In John's Gospel we find the Baptist speaking of himself as the friend of Jesus the bridegroom: 'He who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. For this reason my joy has been fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease' (John 3:29-30).

This same image holds a particularly important place in the Book of Revelation: 'Let us rejoice and exult and give glory to the Lord our God, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has been made ready' (Apocalypse 19:7; see also 21:2).

On Fasting

Isaiah 58:1-3 (back in Jerusalem after the exile)

Shout out, do not hold back!

Lift up your voice like a trumpet!

Announce to my people their rebellion,

to the house of Jacob their sins.

Yet day after day they seek me

and delight to know my ways,

as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness

and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;

they ask of me righteous judgments,

they delight to draw near to God.

“Why do we fast, but you do not see?

Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?”

Isaiah 58:3-5

Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day,
and oppress all your workers.

Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight
and to strike with a wicked fist.

Such fasting as you do today
will not make your voice heard on high.

Is such the fast that I choose,
a day to humble oneself?

Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush,
and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?

Will you call this a fast,
a day acceptable to YHWH?

Isaiah 58:6-8

Is not this the fast that I choose:

to loose the bonds of injustice,

to undo the thongs of the yoke,

to let the oppressed go free,

and to break every yoke?

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,

and bring the homeless poor into your house;

when you see the naked, to cover them,

and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,

and your healing shall spring up quickly;

your vindicator shall go before you,

the glory of YHWH shall be your rear guard.

Isaiah 58:9-11

Then you shall call, and YHWH will answer;
you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.
If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,
If you offer your food to the hungry,
and satisfy their needs
then your light shall rise in the darkness,
and your gloom be like the noonday.
YHWH will guide you continually
and satisfy your needs in parched places,
and make your bones strong;
and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water,
whose waters never fail.

Luke 5:36-39

(Mark 2:21-22)

He also told them a parable: “No one tears a piece from a new garment and sews it on an old garment; otherwise the new will be torn, and the piece from the new will not match the old.

And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the skins and will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins.

And no one after drinking old wine desires new wine, but says, ‘The old is good.’”

However well-founded and inspiring the religious customs handed on to us may be, they cannot substitute for an openness to the surprise of God's self-revelation in the present moment. Every time a child is born into our world, a new cloth is created and we are gifted with new wine. Every generation brings with it a new energy and a new revelation — not contradicting the old, but certainly not able to be contained within it. The call of Jesus is for us to be faithful to what has gone before, by being as open to the surprise of God's action in our lives as were our ancestors in faith .

‘Surely I know the plans I have for you, says YHWH, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope’ (Jeremiah 29:11).

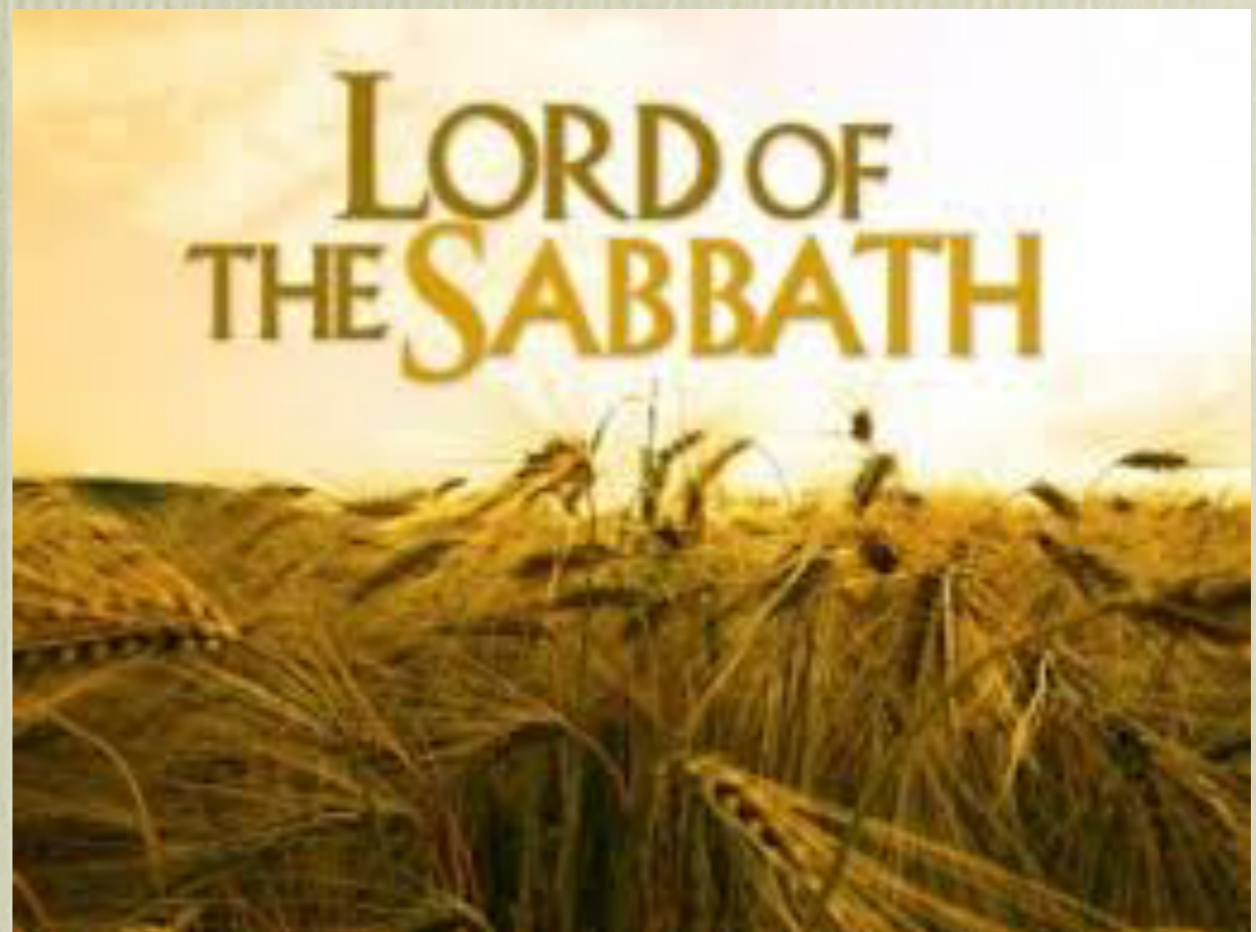
We are being called ever forward into a future full of hope. Our Christian faith is faith in that promised future, which God will create through us if we listen now to ‘every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord’ (Deuteronomy 8:3). In our willingness to do God’s will, we must be ready to be detached from everything, however sacred it might appear.

Luke 6:1-5

(Mark 2:23-28)

One **sabbath** while Jesus was going through the grain fields, his disciples plucked some heads of grain, rubbed them in their hands, and ate them. But some of the Pharisees said, “Why are you doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?” Jesus answered, “Have you not read what David did when he and his companions were **hungry**? He entered the house of God and took and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and gave some to his companions?”

Then he said to them,
“The Son of Man is
lord of the **sabbath**.”



The Sabbath

‘You shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, given in order that you may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you ... Whoever does any work on it shall be cut off from among the people ... Therefore the Israelites shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a perpetual covenant’(Exodus 31:13,16).

Sabbath observance was symbolic of the commitment of the people to keep their part of the covenant.

‘If you refrain from trampling the Sabbath, from pursuing your own interests on my holy day; if you call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the Lord honourable; if you honour it, not going your own ways, serving your own interests, or pursuing your own affairs; then you shall take delight in the Lord’(Isaiah 58:13-14).

Sunday

‘Former adherents of the ancient customs have since obtained a new hope. So they have given up keeping the Sabbath, and now order their lives by the Lord’s Day instead, the day when life first dawned for us, thanks to Jesus and his death. That death is the mystery that has moved us to become believers and endure tribulation to show that we are disciples of Jesus Christ our teacher’ (Ignatius of Antioch to the community at Magnesia n. 9).

‘Let no one be under any illusion; a person who excludes himself from the sanctuary is depriving himself of the Bread of God, for, if the prayer of one or two individuals has such efficacy, how much more powerful is that of the bishop together with the whole church’ (Ignatius to the community at Ephesus n. 5.2).

‘Do not neglect to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encourage one another’ (Hebrews 10:25).

Luke 6:6-II

(Mark 3:1-6)

On another **sabbath** he entered the synagogue and taught, and there was a man there whose right hand was withered. The scribes and the Pharisees watched him to see whether he would cure on the **sabbath**, so that they might find an accusation against him. Even though he knew what they were thinking, he said to the man who had the withered hand, “Come and stand here.” He got up and stood there. Then Jesus said to them, “I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the **sabbath**, to save life or to destroy it?” After looking around at all of them, he said to him, “Stretch out your hand.” He did so, and his hand was restored.

But they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.



Luke 6:12-16 (Mark 3:13-19)

Now during those days he went out to the mountain *to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God*. And when day came, he called his disciples and chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles:

Simon, whom he named Peter and his brother Andrew,

James and John,

Philip and Bartholomew,

Matthew and Thomas,

James son of Alphaeus and Simon, who was called the Zealot,

Judas son of James and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

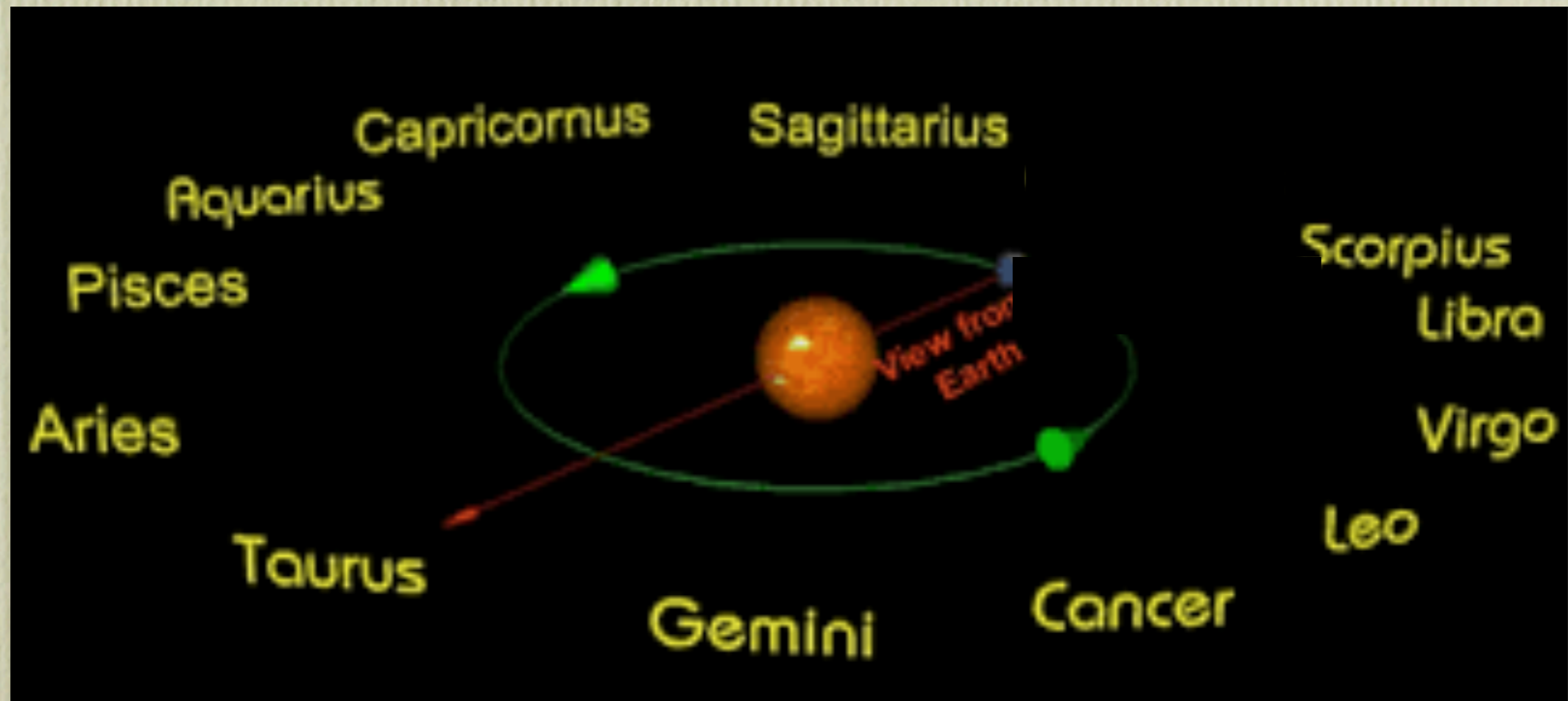
‘the man from Kerioth’?
yaskar yotê : he who betrays?

↓
‘Thaddaeus’ in
Mark 3:19 and
Matthew 10:4)



Jesus goes to the 'mountain', the place of prayer and revelation. He responds in a powerfully symbolic way to his rejection by the religious leaders by publicly selecting and commissioning a group of twelve to carry on his universal mission of renewing the twelve tribes of the covenant community of Israel (see 22:30; compare the symbolic action of Moses in Exodus 24:4). He has already said that new wine needs new skins (Luke 5:38). Since the old Israel will not accept the gospel, he must establish a repentant and renewed Israel that will.

The number twelve (see also Acts 1:13) derives, ultimately, from the twelve constellations in the zodiac. Since the heavens were understood to be the realm of God in a special way, the number twelve represented universality in its heavenly aspect – that is, universality as willed by God.



Hence the 12 sons of Jacob (tribes of Israel).

Luke 6:17-19

see Mark 3:7-8, 10

*Jesus came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon. They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for *power came out from him and healed all of them.**

Jesus, like Moses (see Exodus 33:12 - 34:28), has been on the mountain in prayer with God (6:12). Moses was commanded not to take anyone with him (Exodus 34:3). Jesus, on the contrary, summoned the twelve to be there with him. They are to be his 'apostles', so they must first share with him his communion with God.

Just as Moses brought down from the mountain the revelation which he had received from God, now Jesus with his apostles brings down the new law, the new covenant, the new word from God to 'a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people' who are eagerly waiting to touch him and to hear his healing word.

By placing Jesus' words on the essence of discipleship just after the appointment of the Twelve, Luke wishes to highlight the universal relevance of the teaching contained in this section.

A comparison with Matthew 5:3 - 7:27 indicates that the following 'sermon' is Luke's composition, in which he draws together sayings of Jesus that focus on the essential meaning of the gospel and of discipleship.

Luke is sharing his inspired insights into the mind and heart of Jesus in an attempt to connect with the experience of his community and to draw out the implications of Jesus' teaching for their lives.

Sometimes he gives a summary statement of Jesus' teaching; sometimes, however, he goes not to Jesus' remembered words but to the heart of Jesus' teaching, and finds his own inspired words to apply it to the new situation of his community.

We are privileged to have here a record of a number of Jesus' sayings. We are privileged also to have the insights of an inspired disciple who has contemplated Jesus' words and, with profound pastoral love, is sharing his insights with his fellow Christians. Each generation is called to do the same, as the context within which we live our lives changes.

We will not find here an ethical code as such or a complete statement of discipleship. The moral teaching of Jesus always includes a call and it is this call that continues to echo through these words.

We are being invited to welcome Jesus into our hearts and to live as he lived by letting him live in us.

Then he looked up at his disciples and said:

Blessed and happy (Μακάριος,) are you who are poor,
for yours **is** the kingdom of God.

Blessed and happy are you who are hungry now,
for you **will be** filled.

Blessed and happy are you who weep now, for you **will** laugh.

Blessed and happy are you when people hate you,
and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you
on account of the Son of Man.

Rejoice in that day and leap for joy,
for surely your reward is great in heaven;
for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets.

Luke 6:20 (Matthew 5:3)

Blessed and happy are you who are poor,
yours is the kingdom of God.

‘Blessed and happy (אַשְׁרֵי) are those who trust in God’ (Psalm 2:12).

‘The Lord takes delight in his people.

He crowns the poor with salvation’ (Psalm 149:4).

Luke’s focus is on the special joy which we experience when we welcome God’s blessing. Situations that could so easily be destructive are rendered meaningful by our union with God.

Psalm 131

O GOD, I am not proud,
holding my head too high,
reaching beyond my grasp.

I have calmed myself and stilled my longing.
I am at peace like a weaned child
resting in its mother's arms.
My whole being is at rest.

O Israel, hope in GOD,
now and for ever.

Luke 6:21 (Matthew 5:6)

Blessed and happy are you who are hungry now, for you **will** be filled.

‘One does not live on bread alone’ (Luke 4:4).

Luke 6:21 (Matthew 5:4)

‘Blessed and happy are you who weep now, for you will laugh.

Isaiah 61:1-3

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
because the Lord has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners ...
to comfort all who mourn;
to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.

Luke 6:24-26

But woe to you who are rich,
for you have received your consolation.

Woe to you who are full now,
for you will be hungry.

Woe to you who are laughing now,
for you will mourn and weep.

Woe to you when all speak well of you,
for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.

Luke 6:27 (Matthew 5:44)

‘But I say to you that listen,

Love (ἀγαπαω; first time) your enemies



Luke 6:28

= do good to those who hate you,
bless those who curse you,
pray for those who abuse you.

Luke 6:29-30 (Matthew 5:39-42)

If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also;
and from anyone who takes away your coat
do not withhold even your shirt.
Give to everyone who begs from you;
and if anyone takes away your goods,
do not ask for them again.

When as disciples we are insulted or treated badly, we are to remember how Jesus was treated and respond in like manner.

As Peter tells us: 'When he was abused, he did not return abuse;
when he suffered, he did not threaten;
but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly' (1 Peter 2:23).

Luke 6:31 (Matthew 7:12)

Do to others as you would have them do to you.

Luke 6:32-34 (Matthew 5:46-47)

If you love those who love you,
what credit is that to you?

Even sinners love those who love them.

If you do good to those who do good to you,
what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same.

If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive,
what credit is that to you?

Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

Luke 6:35-36

Love your enemies,
do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return.

Your reward will be great,
and you will be children of the Most High;
for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.

Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. (Matthew 5:48)

oiktirmos (+ James 5:11) rahamim

Jesus' disciples are to follow his example, by imitating God in loving everyone, for the God he calls 'Father' is not only God of Israel, but God of the whole world, and God's holiness radiates out to every land and every people. So must our love if we are to be faithful disciples of Jesus.

Luke 6:37-38

‘Do not judge, and you will not be judged; (Matthew 7:1)
do not condemn, and you will not be condemned.

Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure,
pressed down, shaken together, running over,
will be put into your lap; for the measure you give
will be the measure you get back.’