**How Did Jesus Do Outreach 3 - Upside Down Teaching Luke 6:17-42**

I’ve got a dilemma for you...

... where you’ve got to figure out what to do

* It’s an incident that happened to me a few years ago

... and I had no time to think

... I just had to act on instinct

... but I’d love to know what you would’ve done

It was a Friday around 11am, a normal working day

* I’d left something at home so I shot back to get it
* I came in the back door as usual, but heard some movement in one of the rooms
  + *I called out ‘Hullo..’ but in the same moment realised that* ***no-one was supposed to be home***

‘Who’s there?’, I called...

... in a more guarded voice

* And just that moment I saw a guy dart down our passage with my backpack on his back

... full of valuables he’d ransacked from our master bedroom

* + - The front door slammed and he was off down the street in a blur
* What would you do?

**Chat with each other**

Well you’ve had a couple of minutes to think about it

* At the time I had a couple of milliseconds
  + So I have no doubt that there is great wisdom in the room as to exactly what I *should have* done!
* Let’s hold on to it now

... but I will tell you exactly what I did at the end of the sermon

Here’s our series slide

* Going through Luke’s gospel observing Jesus’approach to outreach

... we’ve seen that he does loads of miraculous healings that draw crowds

* And we saw last week how he invited people to follow him

... and accepted invitations to parties that would challenge your comfort zone

And did you love seeing last week...

... how Jesus doesn’t force or coerce anyone ... he just invites

* + That’s so important for us too

The next way Jesus interacts with the world...

... which is significant enough as to be unmissable

... and would have to feature in any series like this

... and that is **Jesus’ teaching**

So let’s take a look at Luke 6 from verse 17

* Pages: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Blue/Red) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Brown)
* We’re going to read a fair bit of it so we can get a feel for what it was about his teaching, that was special
  + This is basically Luke’s version of the Sermon on the Mount (Sermon on the Plain)
* As you listen, imagine you are one of the crowd
  + Imagine even, that you’ve come a long way to hear this man
  + And I want to ask you straight after I read it:
    - What strikes you hearing this as a member of the crowd?

Luke 6:17-42New Living Translation (NLT)

17 When they came down from the mountain, the disciples stood with Jesus on a large, level area, surrounded by many of his followers and by the crowds. There were people from all over Judea and from Jerusalem and from as far north as the seacoasts of Tyre and Sidon. 18 They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those troubled by evil spirits were healed. 19 Everyone tried to touch him, because healing power went out from him, and he healed everyone.

The Beatitudes

20 Then Jesus turned to his disciples and said,

“God blesses you who are poor,

for the Kingdom of God is yours.

21 God blesses you who are hungry now,

for you will be satisfied.

God blesses you who weep now,

for in due time you will laugh.

22 What blessings await you when people hate you and exclude you and mock you and curse you as evil because you follow the Son of Man. 23 When that happens, be happy! Yes, leap for joy! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, their ancestors treated the ancient prophets that same way.

**[From 4 blessings to 4 sorrows or woes:]**

Sorrows Foretold

24 “What sorrow awaits you who are rich, **[Imagine a shiftiness in the crowd here]**

for you have your only happiness now.

25 What sorrow awaits you who are fat and prosperous now,

for a time of awful hunger awaits you.

What sorrow awaits you who laugh now,

for your laughing will turn to mourning and sorrow.

26 What sorrow awaits you who are praised by the crowds,

for their ancestors also praised false prophets.

Love for Enemies

27 “But to you who are willing to listen, I say, love your enemies! **[Who are their enemies?]** Do good to those who hate you. 28 Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you. 29 If someone slaps you on one cheek, offer the other cheek also. If someone demands your coat, offer your shirt also. 30 Give to anyone who asks; and when things are taken away from you, don’t try to get them back. 31 Do to others as you would like them to do to you.

32 “If you love only those who love you, why should you get credit for that? Even sinners love those who love them! 33 And if you do good only to those who do good to you, why should you get credit? Even sinners do that much! 34 And if you lend money only to those who can repay you, why should you get credit? Even sinners will lend to other sinners for a full return.

35 “Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for he is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked. 36 You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate.

Do Not Judge Others

37 “Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn others, or it will all come back against you. Forgive others, and you will be forgiven. 38 Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.”

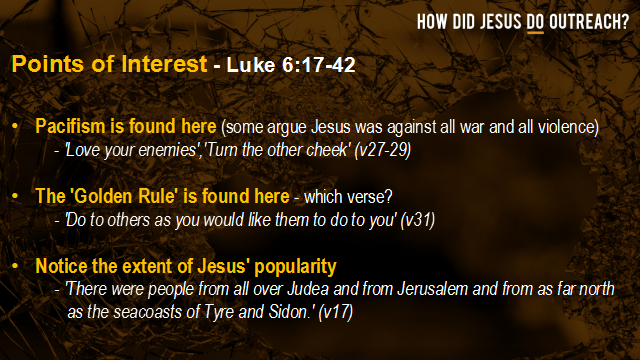
39 Then Jesus gave the following illustration: “Can one blind person lead another? Won’t they both fall into a ditch? 40 Students are not greater than their teacher. But the student who is fully trained will become like the teacher.

41 “And why worry about a speck in your friend’s eye when you have a log in your own? 42 How can you think of saying, ‘Friend, let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,’ when you can’t see past the log in your own eye? Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend’s eye.

**What’s striking you as a member of the crowd?**

[Feedback]

Some Points of Interest:



Pacifism

* Where did people like Gandhi or groups like the Mennonites get the idea that Jesus was a Pacifist?  
  + It’s here from verse 27: ‘Love your enemies’ and ‘turn the other cheek’
* So when war or something evil is happening you respond by not fighting back at all
  + There have been some amazing examples of this being effective

Golden Rule / Jesus’ Popularity - not just his healings that drew the crowds...

So what can we say about Jesus’ teaching here?

* What’s special about it?

**1. It’s very direct!**

* Often itinerant speakers do this
  + They drop a bomb on you then leave
  + Is that true of itinerant speakers you know?
* They don’t hang around to figure out with you how it might apply in this situation or that
* And that’s why their speaking is memorable and effective
* They just present a stark reality and you have to figure out how to live it

For example, he says...

* ‘Forgive others and you will be forgiven’
  + But what if the person doesn’t want to be forgiven?
    - He doesn’t go into that

Or when does turning the other cheek...

... make you into a doormat or a pushover?

* Should you never stick up for yourself?
* He doesn’t get into that either

And Jesus’ teaching is...

**2. Crazy at face value**

* “Blessed are the poor”
  + Awesome! - that means we don’t have to support World Vision anymore
    - Why would we stop people from being poor if they’re blessed because of it?

And it seems to say in v24 that “all rich people are bad”

* Really?

“And you who laugh?”

... is it bad to laugh?

* + Is it better to be miserable because then you’ll be blessed?

Jesus hardly wanted to stop people laughing...

... when his entire ministry was a protest against the killjoy attitude of the Pharisees

I think people have always known

... that these statements point to a much deeper reality:

* + - They’re asking you: Do you need God in your life?
    - Or have you become self sufficient, through wealth or pleasure?

... because if you have, you’ll also find you have an inner emptiness

... that’s what Jesus wants to save you from

When we’re poor or hungry or sad or persecuted...

... we’re ***desperate*** for God

* When we have everything we can easily find ... we just don’t need God anymore

And of course, Jesus didn’t hate wealthy people

* Quite the opposite - He had some wealthy friends who supported him
* But it’s fair to say in the unjust Roman-ruled world of the first century

... that many who’d gotten rich, had done so by cheating others somehow

**3. Jesus’ teaching is clearly opposite to the world’s thinking**

* It’s hard to find a self help book called, ‘How to be poor in 5 simple steps’
* Or a conference speaker who speaks on: ‘How to be the saddest you, you can possibly be’
* This was Upside Down teaching!

I looked in on Netflix for illustrations of Jesus’ teaching...

* What you mostly find are it’s opposites
  + You find entire TV series built on revenge rather than loving your enemies
* Reality programmes like the Bachelor seems as opposite as you could get to: ‘Do not judge, and you will not be judged’
* “If you love only those who love you - says Jesus - why should you get credit for that.” Reach beyond your friendship circle
  + But so many programmes are about tight friendship groups that won’t let others in
* I’ve read a bit about the trendy new series called **Thirteen Reasons Why**
  + And I wonder whether just one character living out Jesus’ teaching could transform the entire series

So this Upside Down quality made Jesus’ teaching very compelling

* People hadn’t heard anything like it before
  + *“You heard Moses say, An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth*
  + *But I say to you, turn the other cheek*
  + *Love your enemies”*
    - Wow!

It took them beyond just keeping laws

* To changing your heart motivations so that you’d never want to get ***anywhere near*** breaking that law

But I still look at all this and think there’s an even greater reason...

... why crowds flocked to hear Jesus’ teaching

* Because as a teacher I know how easy it is...

... to sound brilliant by just copying the best work of others

* Download a sermon by Bill Hybels or John Ortberg
  + Just flog all the best bits
* It’s easy to teach amazing things
* Jesus could’ve put together an amazing memorable speech

... full of the best spiritual ideas from his time

I think the unseen difference ...

is that Jesus ***was ...*** the things he preached

* Jesus was the poor
* Jesus was the hungry
  + He had no paid job
  + He’d often go days without food

Jesus was the persecuted...

* He did weep over Jerusalem and was drawn to sad people again and again

And how pathetic would it be...

... to say “Blessed are the poor and hungry

... if you’d never been those things yourself

... and you yourself had never really been desperate for anything?

Jesus did love his enemies

... he turned the other cheek all the way to the cross

... where he did say Father forgive them, they know not what they do

Jesus was all the things in this passage

* Who he was spoke as loudly as his revolutionary words
  + And the two worked powerfully together

I think what drew the crowds, was that...

... this was a Rabbi from Galilee - not Jerusalem

* In fact, it was an ***unpaid*** Rabbi from Galilee - Rabbi’s normally got paid
* And it was an unpaid Rabbi from Galilee who like many in the crowd was a ***destitute subject*** of the ruling Roman Empire
  + And he is saying ... love your enemies!
    - Love the Romans - yeah - and pray for them

With all these things in mind, maybe we can see...

... how revolutionary Jesus’ teaching was

* And what it might’ve felt like to be in that crowd

Now I take two big conclusions out of Luke 6 regarding outreach today

* The first one is: ***We’ve got to use words***
* I’m sure you’ve heard that statement that’s quoted so often that says:
  + *‘Preach the gospel at all times and if necessary use words’*
  + It’s attributed to Francis of Asissi

First question: Is it biblical?

* No - the NT says ‘Always have an answer ready when asked about the hope that is in you’
  + Yet it’s quoted so often by Christians
* Here it is - you can even download it as wallpaper on your computer, with great fonts and a very cool background graphic!
  + But it’s not biblical!

And secondly, Francis of Asissi never said it!

* It doesn’t appear in any of his writings
  + There’s no record of any of his disciples saying it
    - And no biography within 200 years of his death includes it

More to the point...

... he ***wouldn’t*** have said it, because he was a very keen preacher

* He would sometimes preach in as many as 5 villages a day, often outdoors
  + He’s not a guy who was afraid to open his mouth

... and just hide behind his good deeds

[Article by Mark Galli, Editor of Christianity Today]

I think this unhistorical quote

... so often heard from Christians today is the biggest cop out

... for ever talking about your faith in God

If we only had to walk the talk...

... and never say anything

... then why would Jesus bother giving the Sermon on the Mount?

* Why talk? - he should’ve just helped people

If we want to be Christlike

... we shouldn’t hide our Christian faith from the world

* Jesus used words - and those words matched his deeds
  + ***That’s what we need to emulate***

And so to build that picture of words and deeds together...

... let me add this point:

* **When you live out his radical teaching it draws people's interest and questions**

Just like the crowds showed up...

... because of who Jesus was

* When ***we*** live out the revolutionary things of this passage

... in the same way, it draws people with their interest and questions

If this all seems too hard for a normal human being

... then I’d say it actually sounds really similar to how Emily - who was nterviewed earlier -

... cares for the Unitec students she meets, in a really Christlke way

... and that really draws people

... so that when Emily teaches they are really interested to know what she has to say

Let’s think practically then about our earlier dilemma...

* What should I have done at 11am that Friday morning when I came home and heard a burglar in the house?

I’ll tell you what I did do...

* I said to myself: ***That swine has my bag***
  + *And he’s nicked a whole lot of my family’s stuff*
  + *I’m going to get it back*

I sprinted down the passage...

... threw open the door

... and took off after him

* Down one block towards Petone Beach

... and already I was gaining on him

* I called out and he could tell I was behind him
  + He turned left and ran a block out of sight of anyone who thought a pastor chasing a thief might be an interesting spectacle

He dropped the bag

... but I was still gaining on him even without it

* Pretty good I thought
  + Not a bad time for a 200 metre sprint when you’re 40 right!?
  + This guy thought he could get away
    - And I’d been watching Prison Break on TV, which is all about nailing the really bad guys
      * So it was quite exhilirating feeling like I was doing it in real life

I finally caught up with him

... he turned his back to me sucking in the big ones

And I had this strange revelation as I looked at him

* Just standing there in the street with him
  + *He was about my age*
  + *It was as if I were looking at myself, but a different me*

As I talked to the cop a few hours later

... I asked: ***Why would he do this?***

*... there wasn’t even much in my bag*

And the cop said...

... they do it to get just enough money to feed their drug or alcohol addiction

... they sell your stuff secondhand

* I felt incredibly sad to think of a guy my own age

... in such a cycle of addiction that he’d risk the humiliation of being chased down the street

... who would break into a house just to get $100 worth of stuff to hock off so you could pay for your next fix

* That’s a broken man

... like the broken window on this series graphic

It was all instinct on the day

* I just wanted my bag back from this guy who’d violated my family’s house and stolen our gear
* I told the whole story to my Life Group, feeling like something of a hero

... and at the end, one of the guys said:

***But Steve? What about grace?***

What should I have done?

* What might Jesus have done?
  + Is there a deed I could’ve done to help this guy?
  + Are there some words I could’ve said that might’ve changed his life?

I honestly don’t know

... but everytime I think of it

... I feel shamed by that scene in Les Miserables

... where Valjean has abused the Priest’s hospitality and stolen his silverware and run off in the middle of the night

* And when caught by the police, the Priest says: ***You should’ve taken these candle sticks too***
  + ***Now go. And remember that Jesus Christ has brought your freedom***

I hope I can be more like that Priest if there’s a next time

* And I hope, that like that Priest, and like Jesus himself

... that each of us can find moments to say revolutionary ***words*** that match our revolutionary ***deeds***

**PRAYER**

**Song: None but Jesus**