



WEEKLY STUDY

WEEK 5

In Luke 6.43-45 we encounter what appears to be a relatively straight forward teaching from Jesus. It seems to be a moral teaching emphasizing the difference between good and bad. And that is certainly a part of the teaching. But it is also clear that Jesus was revealing that the heart is the heart of the matter. I hope your moments of prayer and study this week give you opportunities to examine the state of your heart before God and to look for good fruit in your life.

Peace of Christ,
Pastor Mark Youngman
Son of a Botanist

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected visit prov.church/smallgroups.

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture and follow the daily prayer prompt.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: LUKE 6.43-45 (NIV)

“No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. ⁴⁴ Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thorn bushes, or grapes from briers. ⁴⁵ A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.”

- This is a continuation of what some have called, “The Sermon on the Plain”. It contains a lot of content also found in Matthew’s “The Sermon on the Mount”. Scholars have questioned whether or not it was the same talk. Either way, it was a longer series of teachings that stand out when compared to the common teaching of the day. Here, Jesus helps us to identify the line from the source to the product. Out of a good source comes good fruit. **How do you usually use the terms *good* and *bad*? How do you identify the fruit in your life? How do you know if it is good or bad?**
- *God, you are the source of everything good in my life. Help me to stay connected to you and produce good fruit. Amen.*

TUESDAY: MATTHEW 6.19-21 (NIV)

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

- This is a variation on the teaching from Luke 6.45. *Store up good things in your heart and good things will come from your heart.* Here, Jesus talked about storing your treasure in heaven. We store up treasure by the choices we make and priorities we keep. **What sort of things or people are treasures in your life? What is the connection between heaven and the heart?**
- *God, I pray that I will put my highest focus on treasures stored in heaven. Let my heart be a treasury of things destined for heaven. Amen.*

WEDNESDAY: 1 SAMUEL 16.7 (NIV)

But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

- God was preparing Samuel to find and anoint David as the future king. At first, Samuel was impressed with the early candidates, but God told him to look past the exterior characteristics. If he had only been looking at the outward appearance, he never would have discovered the boy who would grow into one of the greatest kings in history. **Do you ever find that other people seem to be carrying around greatness that is commonly missed by others?**
- *God, help me to see others with your eyes. Give me the ability to see the potential that lies beneath the surface, both for myself and others. Amen*

THURSDAY: EZEKIEL 36.24-28 (NIV)

For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. ²⁵ I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. ²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. ²⁸ Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God.

- The vision for the restoration of Israel is shared with the prophet. The heart transformation that God desires is not just individual but community-focused. This leads us to consider, *Who are my people? What land (literally or metaphorically) are we meant to live in?* Notice with God's people, any return to their land would come only after they were given new hearts. We need our hearts to be made new by God regardless of our location or any rewards we might want from God. **Could the hearts of an entire nation be changed?**
- *God, change my heart and change the hearts of people in my nation. I don't want others to be changed to think like me, but us all to be transformed by your Spirit. Amen.*

FRIDAY: PROVERBS 3.1-6 (NIV)

*My son, do not forget my teaching,
but keep my commands in your heart,
2 for they will prolong your life many years
and bring you peace and prosperity.
3 Let love and faithfulness never leave you;
bind them around your neck,
write them on the tablet of your heart.
4 Then you will win favor and a good name
in the sight of God and man.
5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
6 in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make your paths straight.*

- The writer of Proverbs references the heart three times in these verses. (1) Keep God's commands in our hearts. (2) Let love and faithfulness be written on the tablet of our hearts. (3) Trust in the Lord with all of our hearts. The "heart" is a way of identifying the core of who we are, so consider—**are God's commands, love and faithfulness stored up in your heart? When are you most likely to lean on your own understanding instead of trusting in God with all your heart?**
- *God, in all my ways let me submit to you. Make my path straight today so that I can follow you alone. Amen.*

SATURDAY: PSALM 73.23-26 (NIV)

*Yet I am always with you;
you hold me by my right hand.
24 You guide me with your counsel,
and afterward you will take me into glory.
25 Whom have I in heaven but you?
And earth has nothing I desire besides you.
26 My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart
and my portion forever.*

- The Psalmist is in the midst of some serious self-reflection here. He has recognized that God is good to those who are pure in heart. He himself has struggled to remain faithful when he sees good things coming to those who are evil. Here he pledges to look to God to be his portion. **Do you ever question why good things seem to happen to bad people? How can such thoughts distract you from faithfulness to God?**
- *Lord, I turn it all over to you. I confess that I experience envy and anger when I see the gains of unjust people. Let my heart desire nothing but you. Amen.*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Take a moment to consider the fruit that is present in your life.

- What fruit do you see in your own life?

- What do others see as the fruit you are bearing?

- What might the fruit say about the condition of your heart?

- Is there any evidence that God is still working on your heart to be fully transformed?