

The Gospel of Luke

Details of a Disciple's Disposition

Luke 17:1-10

1. **Stumbling Blocks Amongst the Faithful** (vs.1-2)

This is the final portion of a session of teaching and interaction that began in a previous chapter (Luke 15:1). Jesus has responded to other interlocutors, but He is now again speaking directly to His Disciples.

A. The Inevitability of Stumbling Blocks (v.1a)

Jesus warns that the path of discipleship will be filled with various occasions for becoming entangled in sin. These can come from many sources including an individual's exercise of his or her Christian liberty (Rom. 14:13; 1 Cor. 8:9).

B. The Peril of Bringing a Stumbling Block (vs.1b-2)

A disciple is not to take lightly the potential of placing a stumbling block in front of another Christian. Jesus paints a vivid picture that a terrible death (v.2) or being horribly maimed (Matt. 18:8-9) is to be preferred over being the cause of stumbling.

C. The Necessity for Watchfulness (v.3a)

A Christian is not to become overconfident in striving against sin (cf. 1 Cor. 10:12; 1 John 2:1). Christians must be continually vigilant so as not place stumbling blocks in front of other believers (1 Cor. 10:28-32; cf. Gal. 5:13; 1 Pet. 2:16).

2. **Brotherly Fellowship and Forgiveness** (vs.3b-4)

The Christian church community is made up of individuals who have a shared goal of pursuing righteousness. When there is sin in the fellowship, it is important that believers respond faithfully.

A. Respond with a Rebuke (v.3b)

A Christian brother who sins, regardless of the manner of sin, is to be rebuked so as to warn him of his error in the hope of repentance and restoration (Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5:1ff; Gal. 2:11ff; cf. 2 Sam. 12:7).

B. Ready with Forgiveness (v.3c)

Jesus had already instructed His disciples to respond to an enemy with love (Luke 6:27), and now He instructs the disciples to respond to a repentant brother with forgiveness (cf. Eph. 5:31-32).

C. Tireless Personal Forgiveness (v.4)

Love, a defining characteristic and continuing goal of Christian fellowship, should enable the Christian to overlook sins whenever possible (1 Pet. 4:8)

and to be ready to give respond in forgiveness whenever someone repents (Matt. 18:21-22).

3. **Faith in Action** (vs.5-6)

A. A request for more faith (v.5)

The disciples believe that consistent obedience to the principles that Christ has articulated requires a level of trust that the disciples do not possess.

B. An illustration of faith (v.6)

It is not the amount of faith which one possesses, but it is the object of one's faith that is important. A small faith in the true God is sufficient for obedience to Christ's instructions, and more powerful than an immense faith in a false god.

4. **Faithfulness in Action** (vs.7-10)

Jesus now warns the disciples that they are to maintain a proper attitude concerning their obedience. A believer in his most devoted faithfulness to the commands of God is doing only what is commanded, nothing extra. Obedience is an expectation and not an occasion for extra celebration.