

THE REST OF THE STORY
(Going Deeper & Personal Application of Sunday Sermons)
Gospel of Luke

The Skill of Rebound

The NBA (*National Basketball Association*) season has just begun. The campaign for that World Championship title is the focus of the best basketball players on the planet. Every team has a line-up of superstar athletes with various personal skills and abilities; some can *dunk the ball*, some can dribble with dazzling agility; still others are great rebounders who recover off-target shots and give their team a second or even third chance to score. Rebounders are experts at not giving up on those missed shots, but aggressively tracking down the ball and keeping possession for additional chances to score.

Sometimes the term ***rebound*** is applied to a person bouncing back from an adverse experience – failed marriage, health or physical setbacks, a lost job, or some other deep disappointment in their life. Good rebounders get knocked down in life, but they overcome, get back up, and try, try again. That image of God in people, though distorted by sin, still energizes them to *bounce back* in life rather than give up and accept defeat.

In spiritual things, victorious Christians must learn the art or skill of *spiritual rebound* in their growth in grace (**2 Corinthians 4:7-11**). Skill in rebounding develops spiritual maturity (**1 Peter 1:6-7**). The Lord isn't surprised when we fail sometimes and spiritually slump in our daily Christian life. Therefore, He has prescribed a way for us to *rebound* through repentance and reconciliation (**1 John 1:6-2:2**).

Jesus' twelve disciples hit a spiritual slump in those final months before the cross. They didn't fail morally or doctrinally, but pride over past accomplishments had tripped them up, causing overconfidence and prayerlessness, which led to strife, joylessness, lovelessness and fruitlessness for several weeks. Jesus helped them *rebound* from their carnal rut using an encounter with a scribe, the good Samaritan story, and an incident at the house of Martha and Mary (**Luke 10:25-42**).

How did these three things motivate the twelve to *rebound* and get going again with joy in their salvation? Chapter 11 is about their *rebound*, starting with resumption of what led to the slump in the first place – prayer and teaching about it. But what motivated them (and us when we need a *rebound* in life) is the rest of the story we are left to figure out between **Luke chapter 10 and 11...**

'Bouncing Back from Spiritual Slumps'
(The Art of Spiritual Rebound – The Twelve Disciples)
Luke 10:25-42

Synopsis

Jesus' disciples had learned so much from Him and done wonders in His Name during the first 2½ years of public ministry in Galilee. But prideful overconfidence by nine of them on the one hand and feelings of superiority by three of them on the other had rendered them all spiritually incompetent at the base of the Mount of Transfiguration. As Jesus led them south from Galilee to Judea, incompetence soured into strife among them, then spoiled further into an exclusive attitude about themselves; lack of repentance degenerated into malicious prejudice against a city in Samaria which finally devolved into a sluggish, lethargic attitude about being Jesus' disciple.

Being unable to use the slumping twelve to announce His coming to Judea, Jesus replaces them with 70 (72) novice disciples to do their job for them in Judea. When the 35 (36) teams of two return they are ecstatic about the results. So was Jesus, but the twelve apparently weren't able to rejoice with them about it, causing Jesus to take them aside privately and admonish them about their spiritual dullness.

The time had come for the Lord to not just tell the twelve about their sorry condition, but to graphically reveal it to them using three events found nowhere else in the gospels - the prideful scribe (*what the 12 had become like*), the gracious Samaritan (*what the 12 need to be like*) and the sisters (*how to rebound with love for Him (Mary) and love for others (Martha)*). Fixing the problem of the 12 and getting them to rebound was clearly more than just mechanically saying 'I'm sorry'. To truly rebound, there needed to be tangible, heart-felt repentance in the form of better attitudes and behaviors. Spiritual rebound isn't just saying 'I apologize' (*they may have said it to Jesus, but this is never mentioned in the text*); changed conduct is the best way to say 'I'm sorry Lord' – saying it and showing it what great spiritual rebounders do..

The Scribe (truth without grace)

Religion – knowledge of Scripture to earn eternal life

Luke 10:25-28

The religious scholar knew the Old Testament inside and out but his pride of learning blinded him to the presence of the very One it is about, standing right in front of him! The scribe knew what the Bible said but failed to understand what it meant personally.

- Talk about the dangers of Bible study without personal application. What was missing in the scribe and all people who read the Bible but have no intention of doing it? (*James 1:22-25*)
- Do you think some Christians fall into the trap of academic spirituality? Do you?
- What can be done to study the Bible in a way that is personal, exciting and relevant?

The Samaritan (grace without truth)

Social gospel – compassionate care for others, but no gospel

Luke 10:29-37

The story of the good Samaritan may have been a real occurrence since Jesus doesn't call it a parable. Jesus was telling the story to the scribe to show him the serious flaws in his belief system, with the 12 also present (probably Luke's source for the story).

Although what the good Samaritan did was wonderful and kind, it did not include anything spiritual. Jesus seems to stress that His disciples should know the Scriptures like a scribe and care for those in need like the Samaritan. Both truth and grace must be what characterizes Christian disciples.

- Talk about why this balance of truth and grace must be true of Christians as it was/is of Jesus (*John 1:17-18*).
- Many denominations, churches, and Christians have the idea that being Samaritanish is Christianity. What's wrong with this thinking ('the social gospel')?
- Discuss the things the Samaritan did that define the *agape* (sacrificial love) we should show when using our spiritual gifts and ministering to others. What was the lesson for the 12?

The Sisters (truth and grace together)

Christianity – love the Lord God and love others as yourself

Luke 10:38-42

- Talk about which of the sisters 'you' are most like and least like. Why is it important to work extra hard at the part of you that doesn't come naturally?
- When there is imbalance of works over worship or worship without work, disturbance within our soul results (as in the story). Inner harmony within us and outer harmony with others depends on what Jesus said to Martha. Discuss how to do what He said.