

See the sermon as given at: <https://vimeo.com/317844580>

We are continuing Luke's parallel to the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus had just warned the disciples that their enemies would persecute them. He continues in verse ²⁷ *"But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,* Luke 6:27-36 This teaching from Jesus was different from His present Jewish culture (Matthew 5:43ⁱ; see noteⁱⁱ), but it was not an entirely new concept (Exodus 23:5ⁱⁱⁱ). When the king of Aram sent troops to capture the prophet Elisha, God blinded the troops and Elisha led them into the city of Samaria where they were completely defenseless. The king of Samaria asked Elisha if he should kill them. Elisha told him to feed them and let them go. The king prepared a great feast and sent them on their way (2 Kings 6:22,23^{iv}). The most frequently mentioned attribute of God is steadfast love (1 Chronicles 16:34^v), and other often mentioned attributes include compassion and mercy.

Jonah reluctantly went and preached repentance to one of the fiercest enemies of Israel, Nineveh, and was disappointed when they did repent (Jonah 4:1,2^{vi}). But God taught him to have compassion. Most of us have struggled in a similar way when God challenges us to forgive and love those who have abused us.

I have heard several stories of Muslims who were converted to faith in Jesus through the power of the words, "Love your enemies." It is so contrary to Islam that it demands that the hearer consider the way of God (1 John 4:8^{vii}).

Only God knows how many have been won to Christ because a believer reacted in accord with this verse. We can't do it without the love of Christ in us (2 Corinthians 5:14^{viii}). Our old nature would never love an enemy and do good to them. That is why it is such a powerful witness. **Did not God love us when we were enemies, rebelling against Him and despising His kindness (Romans 5:8^{ix})? That is why we are to do the same.**

While this was right out of Old Testament examples and consistent with the nature of God, no one had ever before so radically and clearly said it. It stops us in our tracks. It is without exceptions. It doesn't leave us room to argue for our natural inclinations. The fruit of the Spirit is always love. The culture of Jesus' time hated the Romans. To ask them to love them was bound to be rejected as absurd by most who heard it. But remember, this is spoken to the disciples to help transform their thinking to that which is more like God's thoughts. *Caird says, 'He who retaliates thinks that he is manfully resisting aggression; in fact, he is making an unconditional surrender to evil.'* - Tyndale New Testament Commentaries – Luke.

Does someone hate you? What good thing can you do for them? Of course we should pray for them, but when we express some outward act of kindness it shows we have forgiven them and do not hold their hatred against them. Is the Holy Spirit prompting you to carry out some kind act to show your forgiveness?

²⁸ *bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.* Luke 6:28 Bless those who curse you. It will mess with their head in a good way. Conviction of sin is a blessing from God. Your request of a blessing may bring that kind of a blessing into their lives. Can you imagine the scene when after someone rants a string of curses toward you, you respond, "May God bless your life"? We don't mean to bless them so that they can enjoy their sin, but that they might see the light, repent, and know God's forgiveness. It is usually God with whom they are most angry.

Pray for those who abuse you. Jesus set the ultimate example by praying for forgiveness for those who nailed Him to the cross (Luke 23:34^x). It had a powerful effect on the Centurion who declared Jesus was truly the Son of God (Mark 15:39^{xi}). It has affected all who have read those words since. We realize that our enemies don't know they are storing up wrath against the day of wrath; that is unless they repent and accept the forgiveness Jesus provided (Romans 2:5^{xii}).

²⁹ To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. Luke 6:29 Jesus brings His teaching into the practical realm in the same manner that John the Baptist did. What does loving our enemies look like? If your enemy strikes you on the cheek (the Greek is literally jaw), you do not hit back, but offer the other cheek for him to strike. This was quite a change from a tooth for a tooth. Even that was much more restrained than most cultures' responses (Exodus 21:23-25^{xiii}). If he takes your cloak, that is the outer garment which was often used for a blanket, do not withhold your tunic either. The tunic was a thinner material worn under the cloak. These were very expensive items in that day.

The cloak was sometimes used for short term collateral, but the Old Testament demands it be returned before nightfall so that the person will not sleep in the cold (Exodus 22:26^{xiv}). The point of both illustrations is that **love does not hold injustice done against us as a reason to seek revenge, but instead it is an opportunity to show forgiveness and love.**

Leon Morris explains: "If Christians took this one absolutely literally there would soon be a class of saintly paupers, owning nothing, and another of prosperous idlers and thieves. It is not this that Jesus is seeking, but a readiness among his followers to give and give and give." Love for possessions should never keep a Christian from giving. Love must be ready to give everything or have it taken away if need be. Love must decide when to give and when to withhold our possessions. - Preaching the Word – Luke, Volume I: That You May Know the Truth.

³⁰ Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. Luke 6:30 Generosity should be one sign of a believer. Give to genuine need. In the first century there was a lot of need. Injured, maimed, or infirmed persons depended on begging to survive. This does not mean to support those who refuse to work. The Apostle Paul tells us that if any will not work, then they should not eat (2 Thessalonians 3:10^{xv}). He was telling the church to stop being generous to those who were living from others generosity simply because they did not want to work. That is supported by verse 31. You would not want others to support you in a bad habit. But if you were in genuine need, you would want others to be understanding and supportive.

There is a whole subculture in our country who beg as a way of life because they don't want to work. They want to travel, party, meet like-minded people. A few hours at the exit of a frequented parking lot and they can get enough for their food and drug of choice. Some are even so bold as to have a sign that says they accept herb, a way of asking for marijuana. If you are going to give to those types, give a small amount with a tract or Gospel of John, or better yet offer to take them to lunch and share the salvation message with them. They will usually turn your invitation down. I know from experience. But sometimes you meet a truly lost sheep who will listen to the Gospel.

Jews had a saying similar to the Golden Rule. *The great Hillel, for example, said to an inquirer, 'What is hateful to you, do not to your neighbour: that is the whole Torah, while the rest is the commentary thereof' (Shabbath 31a).* –(from Tyndale New Testament Commentaries – Luke). Jesus turned it around with the positive statement of doing to others what you wish them to do to you. ³¹ *And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.* Luke 6:31

What do you want others to do to you? I want people to be respectful, kind, understanding, and considerate. That is exactly how we should be to others, whether they are that way toward you or even if they are abusive. Love is more powerful than hate. Watch how it will soften their responses. It is supernatural, and people realize they are witnessing something extraordinary when love responds to hate. The Golden Rule is to be as gracious, loving, and kind toward others as God is toward us.

³² *"If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³ And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.* Luke 6:32,33 Jesus went on to explain that godly love is much more than natural love that unbelievers have for those who love them. The benefit they seek is the favor of others, almost as if they give to get. In Eastern cultures there are customs that demand repayment for gifts. If someone desires for you to hear them or act on their behalf, they bring a gift which should be in proportion to the benefit they desire from you. It is an oppressive and demanding "give to get" tradition. Jesus is speaking of the spiritual benefit of laying up your treasures in heaven and demonstrating the presence of the kingdom of God.

³⁴ *And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount.* Luke 6:34 Lend is literally "to lend on interest". Anyone would do that. It is when someone has a bad credit history but is in real need that we must be willing to help. And if they can't repay, don't hold it against them. Money must not be our master. Love must be the motivation and assessment of the need. Sometimes giving can make their situation worse. It takes discernment and the leading of the Holy Spirit to know what is best.

³⁵ *But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.* Luke 6:35 Love, do good, and lend. The verb translated "expecting nothing in return" is *apelpizo*. It is never translated this way in all its uses. Translators do so because of the context. In most cases it means without despairing. If you have lent money and it is wasted or never paid back, don't despair. Or it can mean despairing no one. You did what you thought right. God will give you a great reward. That's how His children act. Our reward is in heaven one day and communion with God and opportunities for greater service now.

³⁶ *Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.* Luke 6:36 God's way is upside-down from the world's way of thinking. While sin is acting the opposite of God's nature, righteousness is acting like He acts toward us. He loves us, and that love expresses itself in mercy towards our weaknesses. If we act righteously we will love others with His love expressed in mercy towards others' weaknesses and failures. The Bible tells us to be like God is toward us. Other examples of how we are to be like the Father are: being perfect, (Matthew 5:48^{xvi}), kind (Ephesians 4:32^{xvii}), and forgiving (Luke 11:4^{xviii}).

37 “Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven;” Luke 6:37 The world's favorite verse! It must be counterbalanced with John 7:24^{xix} which tells us to make righteous judgments. In the above verses we are told to be like God. God judges, but He does so with full knowledge of all the facts. He is a righteous judge, the judge of the whole earth (Genesis 18:25^{xx}). Paul told the Corinthians they would judge angels; therefore, they should be able to judge between brothers in the church (1 Corinthians 6:2^{xxi}, 5^{xxii}). The Word of God judges us by defining sin. The point of this verse is that we are to live the Golden Rule from the magnanimous spirit of our Master. *A merciful father has merciful children!* -Kent Hughes If you don't want to be judged, condemned, or not forgiven, then you should sow mercy and forgiveness (Galatians 6:7^{xxiii}).

I'm taking some liberty to try to give an illustration of the difference between judging righteously and not judging. Because we are located on the main street we have unusual guests at times. We've had homeless that wreaked of alcohol and whose clothes were dirty. Some people judge them as hopeless sinners and avoid them while others go out of their way to talk with them and find out why they have come. Did the Spirit draw them? Are they seeking to change? Others have come who are dressed in fine clothes and carrying a big Bible while smiling and greeting you. Which one of these two is ready to enter the kingdom? You can't tell by outward appearance. We've seen the opposite of what one would expect. Only by a person's consistent actions can you truly judge righteously (Matthew 7:20^{xxiv}). We'll see a few verses later (43-45^{xxv}) that the proper way to judge is by observing what comes out of the heart.

If you have ever been with an individual who was judgmental, you may have found yourself tempted to join in their negative way of seeing the world, constantly pointing out what is wrong with others. It is a tendency of our fallen nature. The tendency to accuse others of the things we are guilty of is readily seen. We see it often in politicians who are caught condemning another when the same or worse is later found to be true in their own lives.

38 give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.” Luke 6:38 This verse is misused by those who preach the prosperity gospel. They say that if you want to get rich, then give away money like sowing seeds, but of course they want you to give to them. That was never demonstrated by Jesus or the Apostles. They gave and gave, and they were spiritually blessed beyond measure while enduring poverty and persecution.

We don't give to get, but we give because we are partakers of God's nature (2 Peter 1:4^{xxvi}). We give from the abundant love and grace that God pours into our lives to the extent that our hearts can't contain it all. Picture a person buying a measure of wheat. Normally the vendor tries to put in as little as possible. But the picture here is of the grain pressed down, shaken to make space for a little more, and then more piled on till the measure overflows. That is God's promise of grace for those who extend His grace to others (Matthew 10:29,30^{xxvii}; 2 Corinthians 8:9^{xxviii}).

These verses are examples of the concept of sowing and reaping. If we want God's continued grace and generosity, we should give the same to others. Otherwise, He might withhold those graces to help us to see the error of our ways (2 Corinthians 9:6^{xxix}).

³⁹ *He also told them a parable: "Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit?"* Luke 6:39 To grasp the above kingdom perspective is to truly see. Jesus used this expression of the blind leading the blind to refer to the Pharisees (Matthew 15:14^{xxx}). They could not see heaven's paradigm and so they were blind to spiritual truth and leading other blind people into calamity. The goal of a rabbi is to see his disciples become like himself in all that he has learned and how he responds to situations. If the rabbi is spiritually blind his disciples will be too. If he sees clearly, the disciples will mature to see like he does. *Prayer, the study of God's Word, and the illumination of the Holy Spirit enable the Christian to see* (John 16:13). *Great disciples possess great sight.* -Kent Hughes With that sight they can help other disciples truly see. The Word renews our minds, and it reminds us of heaven's perspective on life in this world (Psalm 119:105^{xxx}; 98-101^{xxxii}).

⁴⁰ *A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.* Luke 6:40 There is more opportunity to learn in our time. A computer can hold volumes written by many of God's humble servants. A disciple today can learn from many teachers and even catch their authenticity and dedication to Jesus. This is one reason the creation of the printing press was world transforming. Do we take this opportunity to learn from great saints who have gone before us? I encourage you to read their testimonies and to study the Bible with the aid of their commentaries. Borrow some of their biographies from me. You'll be blessed and disciplined by the best!

This also applies to our great teacher, the Holy Spirit. We can't presume to know more than He, and yet every time we ignore the prompting of the Spirit, that is what we are doing. He is constantly teaching and directing us. Our attitude should always be that of a disciple eager to learn our Master's ways (John 16:13,14^{xxxiii}).

The message today has challenged us to be more like our heavenly Father, more loving, merciful, forgiving, and full of grace. Only in Christ can we be as God desires us to be. Let us live in Christ Jesus for without Him we can do nothing (John 15:5^{xxxiv}).

Questions

- 1 Where was loving enemies in the Old Testament?
- 2 How is it possible to love our enemies?
- 3 Why does it bear fruit?
- 4 Why is generosity an essential to Christian living?
- 5 What came before the Golden Rule?
- 6 What example of mercy are we are to follow?
- 7 What kind of judgments are we to make?
- 8 What does verse 38 promise?
- 9 Why must we see clearly if we are to lead others?
- 10 What are we to do before we help another who has a problem?

ⁱ **Matthew 5:43 (ESV)**

⁴³ "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'

ⁱⁱ The Qumran community taught: love the sons of light... hate the sons of darkness.

ⁱⁱⁱ **Exodus 23:5 (ESV)**

⁵ If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying down under its burden, you shall refrain from leaving him with it; you shall rescue it with him.

iv **2 Kings 6:22-23 (ESV)**

²² He answered, "You shall not strike them down. Would you strike down those whom you have taken captive with your sword and with your bow? Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink and go to their master." ²³ So he prepared for them a great feast, and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. And the Syrians did not come again on raids into the land of Israel.

v **1 Chronicles 16:34 (ESV)**

³⁴ Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!

vi **Jonah 4:1-2 (ESV)**

¹ But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. ² And he prayed to the LORD and said, "O LORD, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster.

vii **1 John 4:8 (ESV)**

⁸ Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

viii **2 Corinthians 5:14 (ESV)**

¹⁴ For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died;

ix **Romans 5:8 (ESV)**

⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

x **Luke 23:34 (ESV)**

³⁴ And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments.

xi **Mark 15:39 (ESV)**

³⁹ And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!"

xii **Romans 2:5 (ESV)**

⁵ But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

xiii **Exodus 21:23-25 (ESV)**

²³ But if there is harm, then you shall pay life for life, ²⁴ eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, ²⁵ burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

xiv **Exodus 22:26 (ESV)**

²⁶ If ever you take your neighbor's cloak in pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down,

xv **2 Thessalonians 3:10 (ESV)**

¹⁰ For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.

xvi **Matthew 5:48 (ESV)**

⁴⁸ You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

xvii **Ephesians 4:32 (ESV)**

³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

xviii **Luke 11:4 (ESV)**

⁴ and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation."

xix **John 7:24 (ESV)**

²⁴ Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment."

xx **Genesis 18:25 (ESV)**

²⁵ Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?"

xxi **1 Corinthians 6:2 (ESV)**

² Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases?

xxii **1 Corinthians 6:5 (ESV)**

⁵ I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers,

xxiii **Galatians 6:7 (ESV)**

⁷ Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.

xxiv **Matthew 7:20 (ESV)**

20 Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

xxv **Luke 6:43-45 (ESV)**

43 "For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, ⁴⁴ for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush.

⁴⁵ The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

xxvi **2 Peter 1:4 (ESV)**

⁴ by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

xxvii **Matthew 10:29-30 (ESV)**

²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰ But even the hairs of your head are all numbered.

xxviii **2 Corinthians 8:9 (ESV)**

⁹ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.

xxix **2 Corinthians 9:6 (ESV)**

⁶ The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

xxx **Matthew 15:14 (ESV)**

¹⁴ Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit."

xxxi **Psalms 119:105 (ESV)**

¹⁰⁵ Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

xxxii **Psalms 119:98-101 (ESV)**

⁹⁸ Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies, for it is ever with me. ⁹⁹ I have more understanding than all my teachers, for your testimonies are my meditation. ¹⁰⁰ I understand more than the aged, for I keep your precepts. ¹⁰¹ I hold back my feet from every evil way, in order to keep your word.

xxxiii **John 16:13-14 (ESV)**

¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

¹⁴ He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

xxxiv **John 15:5 (ESV)**

⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.