

Sunday, May 21, 2023 | Everyday Disciple

Week 6 | Luke 6:27-36 | "Love the Unlovable"

Last week, we started unpacking the so-called 'Sermon on the Plain,' where Jesus presented some beatitudes and woes. And we learned that, depending on our values, God will call us blessed or cursed. Should we value His Kingdom and his principles, we'll live in a state of blessedness. However, should we value this kingdom over God's, we are cursed, no matter how "good" our life may seem.

Today, we'll study Jesus' most challenging commandment: love your enemies. This directive would've left his audience speechless because, at this time, Israel was under Roman rule. Enemies were meant to be hated, not loved. How could Jesus expect his disciples to do something like that? It doesn't make sense.

But as we saw with the beatitudes and woes (cf. Lu. 6:20-26), God's values are different from the world's. And so, we shouldn't be surprised that what we might think of as logical—i.e., hate the bad guys—is entirely different than what God thinks of as logical—i.e., love the bad guys. Admittedly, this may seem insane at first glance, but if God did not love the sinner, where would that leave us? Thus, since we have been adopted into the household of God, he will expect his children to love others as he has loved them, even if that means loving the unlovable.

In today's passage, Jesus compares two rules:

i. **The Golden Rule (vs. 27-31).**

READ: Luke 6:27-31 (ESV)

²⁷ "But I say to you who hear, **Love** your enemies, **do good** to those who hate you, ²⁸ **ble**ss those who curse you, **pr**ay for those who abuse you. 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. ³⁰ **Give** to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods, **do not** demand them back. ³¹ And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.

The Golden Rule is unique to Christianity. No other teacher said what Jesus said here. Admittedly, they do get close. But they are always in the negative—i.e., don't do to others

what you wouldn't want done to you. But Jesus frames this in the positive. In fact, the entire passage is an application of the principle "love your enemies."

Love your enemies by doing good for those who hate you.

Love your enemies by blessing those who curse you.

Love your enemies by praying for those who abuse you.

Has your enemy struck the side of your face? Love them by giving them your other side.

Has your enemy taken your jacket? Love them by giving them your undershirt.

Has your enemy become a beggar? Love them by giving them your money.

Has your enemy taken something from you? Love them by not demanding it be returned.

In the same way, you wish your enemy would treat you, you treat them that way.

This was radical back then, and it is revolutionary today. Jesus paints for us in contrasting colors that love is not a feeling but an action. When we only focus on what we shouldn't do, we are amending behavior. But when we start caring about what we should do, we form character. God doesn't just want us to refrain from doing certain things. He wants us to be peddlers of goodwill, not bad will. He wants us to bring a little light into a world without light.

ii. **The General Rule (vs. 32-34).**

READ: Luke 6:32-34 (ESV)

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. 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.

Today, the law of reciprocity governs society (i.e., quid pro quo, "If you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours," etc.). Jesus shows us that this kind of love is not extraordinary; it's a general fact of life. So much so that "even sinners love those who love them." This does not mean it is wrong or bad or should be ignored. The Lord is trying to explain that this is just par for the course. And while this may be how the world runs, make no mistake, God's kingdom operates under the Golden Rule, not the General one. And so, if we only do what is expected of us, we

will have very little to show in the world to come. God does not give prizes for being a decent human being.

So, what's the takeaway?

Children of God return virtue for vice.

READ: Luke 6:35-36 (ESV)

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. ³⁶ Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

As children resemble their parents, the child of God ought to resemble God. How? By acting like God. By loving the unlovable. By blessing the undeserving. By praying for the unworthy.

Video Description

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Pastor's manuscript can be found here: