

(Luke 6:27~36)

It is here in this passage, that we find one of the most powerful teachings on *the true meaning of love*... It speaks of a love so deep, so pure, a love so great, that it embraces its enemies. That's a stark contrast to "*the love of this world*..." The love of this world cannot even begin to fathom the kind of love that Christ is calling for here...reason being; the love of this world is superficial, self-centered and self-absorbed. It is a love that loves on the basis of merit, on the basis of worth, a love that is limited to who and what is considered worthy of love. The love of this world is selective, meaning that it picks and chooses who or what it loves. Much of what is considered love today, is nothing more than superficial, lip service, having *no substance*, based on emotions and feelings alone. The word love itself, has been used so loosely, that it doesn't mean anything anymore. You ever notice how we "*love*" everything and everybody?

(Story) I was talking to a woman on the phone one day that told me something I'll never forget... She was telling me, no one ever called here, no one ever came by to see her, and she felt, no one truly loved her. To stress her point, she said that recently, some of her kinfolk died, and no one contacted her until after it was over. She went on to say, later she ran into a family member somewhere and they were talking about the funeral, and she said that when she died, she didn't want a funeral, she simply wanted to be put in a box and buried. Her family member said, oh now, you don't want to do that, why you need to have a funeral, so people can come and pay their last respects. (This is what she told her family member.) If no one cares enough to come and see me while I'm alive and can talk...then I see no need for them to come and see me when I'm dead.

There's a good lesson we can learn from that story... I don't know about you, but I believe it would be a hard sell, to convince someone we love them, *without some kind of act of love*...

We're quick to say...we LOVE God... DO we?

It would be a hard sell, to convince God we love him, yet NOT SERVE Him...

(Vs 46) *Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things, which I say?*

Church, let me ask you... Do you think that *sinner*s out here really believe *God loves them*?

It would be hard to convince we love and are concerned about those out here dying in sin...if we DO NOTHING...right?

Someone said, "*I'd rather SEE a sermon, rather than HEAR one any day*..."

The truth is, "*Actions speak louder than words*..."

Much of *what we call love*...is nothing more than *empty rhetoric*... Speaking to the church in Rome, Paul says, "*Let love be without hypocrisy*..." Hypocrisy refers to saying one thing, yet doing another. True love, love without hypocrisy, requires that rather than just say we love someone, we are to show them that we love them. It means that our actions of our life, match the words of our lips! When the two don't line up, it's hypocrisy... Given that the church is referred to as the "*Pillar and ground of the truth*," may it be that model to a lost and dying world, true, genuine love... The kind of love that Jesus is calling for here, a love so deep, a love so profound, a love so great, that it even embraces its enemies!

(Vs 27) ²⁷ *But I say unto you which hear*... Those of you, "*which hear*..." is the key that kind of opens this passage, to help us grasp the fullness of what Jesus is teaching here. Those of you "*which hear*..." refers to "*those who are of the truth*." Referring of course to his disciples, those who had turned from this world, to follow him. This is in contrast with the Scribes and Pharisees, the religious leaders of the day, who professed to be of truth, *but walked in darkness*! Of them Jesus said, "*Hearing they hear not, and seeing they see not!*" Which is to say, that even though they professed to be men of truth, men of God, they were not. By their outward appearance, they appeared righteous, by their adherence to the Law, but

based on the way they treated others, especially the those out in sin, revealed they were anything but Godly! Filled with self-righteousness, these men felt they “*lived*” in a way that earned them God’s approval, while the surrounding Gentile nations, had not! Rather than reach out to them in love, they judged and condemned them, and separated themselves from their company, and wanted nothing to do with them!

(Vs 22) Here Jesus warns his disciples, that as a result of identifying with him...they too will be hated, rejected, railed on, spoken evil of...by these men. ²²*Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, (Speaks of Rejection) and shall reproach you, (Revile, taunt, “Nash with teeth”) and cast out your name as evil, (Slander, Condemn, seek to destroy you) for the Son of man’s sake.*

Here Jesus warns his disciples, that as a result of identifying with him...they too will be hated, rejected, railed on, spoken evil of...by these men. This commandment, “*to love your enemies,*” came as instruction, as to how his disciples were to respond to such! Though they would be rejected and persecuted by these men, the disciples were to respond in love. By doing so, they would manifest who the “*true children of God...*” were! Jesus says by “*loving our enemies,*” by “*doing good to those who wrong us,*” we will bear witness to this world what God is REALLY like. In verse 30 he says, “*ye shall be the children of the highest!*” That is to say, that we will bear the IMAGE of the one, true living God. Thus exposing these “*Self-Righteous,*” “*Judgmental,*” “*Condemning*” men for what they are, the “*children of Satan!*”

²⁷*But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.*

Jesus explains, that we love our enemies, by DOING GOOD to them that DO bad things to us... Jesus explains that we love our enemies, by BLESSING them that Curse us... Jesus explains, that we love our enemies, by PRAYING for them that despitefully USE us... It’s important to point out, that rather than simply “*saying,*” love your enemies and leaving it at that, Jesus gives the practical side of what he means. Given his knowledge of human nature, Jesus declares that in order to show true love to someone, it requires action.

(Vs 29) Jesus offers a couple of practical examples of how we are to “*love our enemies...*”

²⁹*And unto him that smites thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that takes away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also. ³⁰Give to every man that asks of thee; and of him that takes away thy goods ask them not again.*

The point he is making here is simple...we are not to retaliate! We are not to render evil for evil...

In Matthew’s gospel where he speaks these in regard to the teaching of an “*Eye for Eye and Tooth for a Tooth.*” ³⁸*Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: ³⁹But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. ⁴⁰And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.*

Again, the point is simple...we resist not evil...we are not to retaliate or seek vengeance when we are wronged by our enemy! Jesus says, that when smitten on the cheek, love says, “*I will not seek revenge. In fact, if need be, I am ready to take another blow.*” The example of the coat deals with being sued in court, and it is still in the context of being treated wrongfully. (If we are guilty of doing someone wrong, and they sue us, that’s only right.) The point here is, if someone unjustly sues us, when we are done wrong, Jesus says we are not to resist evil by fighting, but rather give them what they want, and more...

The point is, suffer the loss of your pride, and turn the cheek. Suffer the loss of your personal possessions is necessary, and if someone takes something of yours, let them have it... As Christians, we have much more important matters and issues in mind, specifically that of the souls of men.

(Vs 31) He sums his point up in a simple principle...commonly referred to as the “Golden Rule.”

³¹ *And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.*

“Do unto others as you’d have them do unto you...” The point being, our treatment of others is based on how we want to be treated, and **not on the basis of how we are treated**. The rule of *this world* is “Do unto others as they do unto you...” In this world, if someone does you wrong, we’re through with them! In this world, the rule is, you treat good those that treat you good. But in Christ, we no longer walk by the ways of the world. We walk by a new rule, the love of Christ...“Do unto others, as you’d have them do unto you...” Big difference.

In verses 32~34, Jesus asks a series of questions aimed at emphasizing his point...

³² *For if ye love them which love you, **what thank have ye?** for sinners also love those that love them.*

³³ *And if ye do good to them which do good to you, **what thank have ye?** for sinners also do even the same.*

³⁴ *And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, **what thank have ye?** for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.*

In all three cases, the point is the same...that it’s not enough to love those who love us. It’s not enough to love that who do good to us, those who treat us good, and to love those who will pay us back. Point being, that even sinners do that, lost people love that way! Our love is to be vastly different, our love ought to stand out if it is the love of God...right?

Three times Jesus asked, “**What thank have ye?**” Which is a very interesting statement when understood. “Thank” is the Greek word “Charis”, which comes from the word “Grace.” It means to “bestow pleasure,” to “bestow delight”...that which causes “favorable regard.” The overall meaning speaks of the beauty or gracefulness of a person. Given that, each time Jesus asked, “**what thank have ye?**” he was asking **what made them any better than sinners?** In other words, if you merely love, as sinners love, then you are no different than them! They love those who love them, they do good to those who do good to them, they lend to others, for the purpose of getting back... And if we do the same, than we’re no better than them, no different. But on the contrary, as God’s children, we love the way God loves, by doing good to those who hate us, by blessing those who curse us, by praying for those who spitefully use us...

By loving our enemies, we will manifest the same, beautiful spirit, as that of our Heavenly Father...

³⁵ *But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.*

(Example: Parent/Child... Use a couple of examples from audience) It is only natural that the children take on the same characteristics as their parents... For years, we have “loved” as the world loves, with good reason, we were “of the world.” When we walked in darkness, it was only natural to love only those who love us, to hate those who hate us, to have nothing to do with those who treated us wrong. But now that we are God’s children, we should be vastly different than those of this world.

Simply put...³⁶ *Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful...* Mercy is defined as not getting what we do deserve. To not get what we do deserve, is to be shown mercy. And beloved, if there’s anything that we know to be true about our Father...He is full of mercy! Mercy is at the heart of the gospel, “For God so loved **his enemies**, that he gave his only begotten son...”

Most people cannot fathom the thought, that they are enemies of god...but that is the case. “*He that is not with me...is against me.*” You are either with Christ, following him, or you are of the world. And all of us, being “Sinners,” were the “enemies” of God, but through the love and mercy displayed on the cross, we have been saved from certain death!

(Romans 5) Jesus died for his enemies...⁶ *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.* ⁷ *For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man*

*some would even dare to die. ⁸But God commended his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. ¹⁰For if, **when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.***

That is to say, if God loved us enough, to die for us when we were his enemies...how much will he love us now that we have returned to Him?