



Lesson 6 October 10th, 2020

Love your Enemies

Study Scripture – Luke 6:27-36

Background Scripture – Luke 6

Key Verse:

But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

Luke 6:27-28

INTRODUCTION

Some professing believers seem to want a comfortable religion that makes them feel better

- when they are feeling down in the dumps
- will reserve a luxury mansion for them in heaven and better still on earth
- will not make too many ethical and moral demands on them
- will not insist that they serve others rather than themselves
- will not expect them to act with integrity even when no one is looking
- do not expect them to love everybody, and
- do not expect them to want to stand out from the world.

They believe that the “woes” in this chapter’s Sermon on the Plain or level ground are much too frightening and radical. Jesus could not really have expected believers not to look after themselves and their family, friend, and business associates first. Not because the world thinks that way makes it evil and unacceptable for believers to act like that.

Does Jesus really expect that people must be happy and leap for joy when they are persecuted just because their reward for so behaving will be great in heaven?

What kind of demands are those?

Is Jesus really teaching non-violence when one faces the hostility of the world?

Is the witnessing community of believers expected to show the mercy of God in their dealings, and expected to extend this mercy to those living destructive lives and facing an unpleasant end of time experience from which they can never recover?

How should we live given the situations of conflict, hate, recrimination and threats from people who treat believers as the enemy?

The answers on how to live come from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He, on the instructions of His Father had chosen 12 disciples and He now begins to prepare them for ministry with Him. We therefore in this Study have to wrap our minds around how He defines the people with which believers have to deal.

The issue therefore is that of “eternal life”

Believers have a much higher calling than simply to protect their personal and property rights.

What therefore are the principles behind “loving our enemies” in the midst of a fallen and evil world system? One writer helps us define our position and our divine instructions when our Saviour Jesus Christ says

“Love your enemies

Do good to those who hate you”.

He states:

Jesus uses some heavy words to describe the Christian haters:

1. Greek *echthros* means “the (personal) enemy (1) from *echtho*, ‘to hate’. *Ethros* means “hateful”, and as a noun, “adversary, enemy, foe”.
2. Greek *miseo* means “hate, persecute in hatred, detest, abhor”. (2) These are people with an active desire for our hurt. *Miseo* is particularly used as “to persecute”. There is a malicious attitude. These are people you can’t turn your back on.
3. Greek *kataraoimai* means “to curse”. Curses are utterances that are designed to bring harm by supernatural operation (3).
4. Greek *epereazo* means “threaten, mistreat, abuse”. (4).

And to emphasize that we are expected to know we are dealing with heavenly matters given that believers operate in the realm of the heavenly realm as they are possessed by the Holy Spirit, this writer states that Jesus matches the “hate” believers will experience with the following “active” verbs, not words in the “passive” voice, but words which speak of deliberate actions to do good to one’s enemies:

“Jesus uses four very strong action words in these verses:

1. Greek *agapao* – **love your neighbour**
2. Greek *poimeo kalos*—**do good to those who hate you**
3. Greek *eulogoeo*—**to speak well of**
4. Greek *proseuchomai*—**to pray for, to intercede for.**

Actively trying to do good in the face of hatred and mistreatment is the call.

Note we are being told therefore Jesus is not dealing with

eros, erotic love

philos, love for family or brotherly love

stergos, natural affection,

but

agape, a completely different category of love which comes from the divine.

It is therefore most important that we ask ourselves the extremely serious question, “How do I love my enemies?”

Is Jesus going to provide me with a heart change so that I can forgive despicable, vulgar, cheating, lying, greedy, selfish haters, people who love to abuse their wives and children? How can Jesus give me the power so that I will not quit loving such people, who are really loveless?

We will therefore see in this Study how we can do as Jesus instructs.

Luke 6 contains an account of what has traditionally been called the ‘Sermon on the Plain’.

Much attention has been given over the years to the relationship between the Sermon on the Plain and Matthew’s account of the Sermon on the Mount, (Matthew 5-7).

The introductions to the two sections have led many students of these passages to conclude that Jesus gave two different addresses on separate occasions. Matthew wrote Jesus was on a



mountainside when He delivered this address (Matt. 5:1), but Luke said that He was "*on a level place*" (v. 17). Some commentators have seen them as different versions of the same event. Others have understood them to be independent of each other.

The differences between the two sermons are readily apparent. The Sermon on the Plain is about one-quarter the length of the Sermon on the Mount. The Beatitudes, which open the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:3–11) contain blessings only; the Sermon on the Plain opens with (fewer) blessings that are followed by a set of corresponding woes (Luke 6:20–26).

The similarities are also striking. Both sermons show great concern for the poor and socially outcast (Matthew 5:5, 10; Luke 6:20–22), teaching love for enemies (Matthew 5:43–48), the centrality of mercy in the nature of the kingdom (5:7), opposition to hypocrisy (6:2, 5, 16; Luke 6:42), and on. That both of these sermons deal with these themes indicates just how commonly they appeared in Jesus' preaching and ministry.

In Luke 6, the sermon comes on the heels of a controversy with the Pharisees (Luke 6:1–11), after which Jesus left to pray on a mountain (6:12). As on other occasions, deep prayer preceded a significant moment in Jesus' ministry (3:21–22). On this occasion, prayer preceded Jesus' choosing of the twelve Apostles (6:13–16).

Jesus' next step was to prepare the "disciples" to work with Him in His teaching and healing ministry. They too will soon be given authority to cast out demons and to heal the sick and so Jesus begins the time of teaching and preparation. Note that the term disciple refers to a learner or student. There were many in the crowds that followed Him at varying levels of commitment.

When Jesus opened His mouth to speak, "*he lifted up his eyes on his disciples*" (Luke 6:20). In other words, it was the disciples, those who were already committed in word and deed to follow the Lord who were the primary audience for what He had to say. Others were present ("*the people,*" 6:19), but they were overhearing a message directed at Jesus' followers, not primarily at them. This is an important point to bear in mind as we undertake our Study.

The Sermon opens with a series of blessings and woes (Luke 6:20–26). These undercut the conventional view of the world that justified the way in which most of Jesus' hearers lived out their daily lives. Most people, both then and now, would point to the rich and powerful, the popular and elite, as successful and honored in this life. Jesus taught otherwise; rather, it is the poor and hungry, the bereft and the persecuted, who are truly blessed.

Jesus spoke of two groups one that was blessed and the other subjected to woes. Surprisingly those blessed can generally be described as poor and oppressed and their condition is somehow linked to their relationship to the '*Son of Man*'. The other group can be described as the rich and popular and their interest lay in the here and now and as a result, they can expect woes. Jesus pinpointed the reality of each group and the disciples were to think carefully about which of the two groups had the most appeal. Note spiritual considerations are also in view with these characterizations.

The word "blessed" was used to describe the happy situation of the gods who were above earthly sufferings and labors and so it came to mean that those who were "blessed" were in a very happy condition; God would treat them with special favour. They would look to God for satisfaction rather than to the world. They would be very aware of their deep spiritual poverty and hence their spiritual need. They would be spiritually hungry and were willing to weep over



their sins and to bear persecution for Jesus' sake. Their place in the Messianic Kingdom was secure!

In contrast, Jesus pronounced woes on those who were rich, well fed and able to laugh at life, who instead of acknowledging Jesus as Messiah, lived to please men. They would one day hunger, mourn and weep. To these Jesus said "woe", which means "alas". By using this word Jesus express pity for those who would place themselves under the divine judgment. The spiritual establishment in Israel at this time were steeped in ritual and external religion and belonged to this group.

There was a clear choice to be made here and today the choice remains for the people of God! One of Luke's main concerns in the Text and his emphasis throughout his Gospel, is the recurring theme of Jesus' concern for people. True disciples must demonstrate a genuine concern for people.

The Study Text presents one of Jesus' most difficult commands to His followers. He called for a radical kind of love. He was not simply telling us to love our children and our spouses he was requiring disciples to go much further. The actions Jesus required were contrary to all the norms of His day and ours. Jesus required disciples to love as He loved; impossible for normal human beings.

A great crowd from all over Palestine as far north as Tyre and Sidon provided the setting for the Study Text. Jesus' disciples were also present. The crowd had come seeking healing and Jesus did not disappoint them. Luke tells us that the whole multitude wanted to touch Jesus, for it seemed that simply touching Jesus produced healing. We are told that the power that came from Jesus was such that every single person seeking healing was in fact healed. It was in these surroundings that Jesus

turned to His disciples, in earshot of those around Him and said, "*But I say to you who hear...*". We may consider these as rules for 'kingdom living'. Jesus' teachings were completely radical, counter-intuitive and totally foreign even to those who considered themselves righteous. We are told in

1 Cor 2:12-14 that the natural man cannot receive the things of God. As we come to the Study Text, let us note Jesus' commands, consider His rational and keep in mind that His sermon was directed to "*... you who hear*".

THE TEXT

Verse 27. "*But I say to you who hear...* this phrase is parallel to "*He who has ears to hear, let him hear*" of Luke 8:8; 14:35; Rev. 2:7, 29; 3:6, 22; 13:9; et al). Only those whom God has made sensitive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit can understand these spiritual truths because they are so different from the worlds.

The one who hears is not merely capable of making out audible sounds or speech. Rather, hearing requires understanding and more critically obedience to what is heard (Luke 11:28; James 1:22).

It is about receptivity to the message, a willingness to transform one's life in accordance with the demands of the message.

Luke's use of this phrase shows that the target group (disciples) for these sayings (Luke 6:27-38) was different from that of Luke 6:24-26 ("*woe to you*").



...love (Gr. *agape*) your enemies... love is demonstrating in action genuine concern for the welfare of another person, regardless of that one's attractiveness or ability to return love (Rom. 12:14-21). Love is essential actions!

The 'enemies' in view would be people who oppose the disciples because of their commitment to Jesus.

Jesus' command was and still is, counterintuitive. There is nothing else like it in all the texts that have come down to us from the ancient world. For instance, the poet Hesiod gives the typical understanding of one's obligations to his enemies: "Love those who love you, and help those who help you. Give to those who give to you, never to those who do not" (*Works and Days*, lines 353–354). It is not a part of unregenerate human nature to love ... *enemies*.

The demand that Jesus makes in this verse is one that most of us will resist almost instinctively. It is a high standard and not natural for us, but it is surely attainable. The key lies in the perfection that Jesus calls for elsewhere (Matthew 19:21). Perfection (except in reference to God) connotes not absolute, unblemished sinlessness. Rather, perfection assumes a process of continual, steady growth toward maturity (2 Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 10:14; 11:40). The believer who is growing becomes increasingly able to extend love to enemies. Love is defined by action (*do good*), not sentiment or feeling. Love costs something; it does not come cheap.

Jesus' command to love enemies challenged the misinterpretation of the Law which came from the Scribes and Pharisees. Over time Israel was threatened by neighbors, occupied by the Greeks and presently under Romans rule. One writer describes the situation as follows:

"The Greeks, barbarians and the Romans made life miserable for them. The Jews had a deep-seated hatred for the Romans. From the high priest down to the poorest beggar the Jews abhorred them. The Romans in turn treated the Jews with contempt, and sentenced them to unjust beatings and instant imprisonments on the most trivial charges.

This hatred gave fuel to the Jewish Zealots who sought every opportunity to terrorize the Romans. Further, these self-righteous Jews hated those whom they regarded as unrighteous Jews within their own nation -those who broke the law by not attending the temple feasts and the synagogue service of instruction, etc. Finally, they loathed tax collectors, harlots, wine-bibbers and swine herdsman. They regarded them as the lowest members of society."

The Jews reacted to their ill-treatment by ignoring the teachings of Leviticus 19:18 which taught that they should love their neighbor. They added to Leviticus 19:18, "*You shall love your neighbor*" the unbiblical statement "and hate your enemies".

In addition, they used verses like Psalm 5:5-6 which among other things stated that God "*hates all who do iniquity, you destroy those who speak falsehood; the Lord abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit*"; (imprecatory Psalms - Psalm 69 and Psalm 109, Psalms 6, 11, 12, 35, 37, 40, 57, 58, 59, 79, 83, 94, 137, et al). These they considered gave them the right to join God in hating sinners in their country and in the surrounding Gentile nations. The Dead Sea Scrolls left behind by the Essenes who lived during the time of Christ, stated that Jews should love the "sons of light and hate the sons of darkness".

Culturally, there was no shortage of legitimate hate targets to the Jews. Jesus disciples however must follow their Master, He loved His enemies!

This series of commands (vs. 27-30) deals with an attitude of sacrificial, self-giving love (Luke 6:35; Matt. 5:44). These acts are to be done even in the presence of abuse by others.



We act in such a way because of who we are in Christ, not how we are treated. Our witness of sacrificial, self-giving love is even more powerful in the face of abuse.

The first **technique and practice** which will help us as we start to grow in the faith is that we start with actions not based on emotion but based on love, an action of the “will”.

So we are advised that if you want to grow in becoming a “good” Christian and showing God in you, is to seek and find a way to do something good for your enemies, even if they are your worse enemies. You do that so that your own evil heart which is being change by the Spirit will grow to love your enemy for Jesus’ sake.

So practicing this strategy of “**doing good**” in little ways will make obeying Jesus’ commandment progressively easier. Remember you are not doing this to shame your enemy. You rather are doing this as a good and helpful spiritual exercise to mature you.

Verse 28. “*bless those who curse you...*” this verse deals with love demonstrated in speech. These are examples that most likely would have come from the daily experiences of Jesus’ hearers. Many of them were socially marginal or poor, thus already not commanding the respect of their peers.

To “bless” (Gr. *eulogeite*) here means to wish someone well, contrasted with cursing or wishing someone evil. We can add to this picture the social pressures (from family, friends, neighbors, and religious leaders) that would have resulted from the decision to follow Jesus. It would have been easy and perfectly natural for the believers to return curses for curses or to otherwise retaliate for the abuse they suffered. Instead of this, Jesus called them (and us) to do the opposite, to *bless* those who *curse* them and to offer up prayers for those who took advantage of them (Acts 7:59–60)

SECOND HELP TOOL

One writer advises:

“Think of someone who is slandering you, and saying untrue and nasty things about you.

Find ways to work blessing into your thoughts.

Speak a blessing out loud.

When you are with friends, instead of complaining about your unjust treatment, go out of your way (actively) to speak well of your enemies. Why? To shame them? No—though it will. But to find it in your won heart to love them”.

Remember that doing these things will be hard at first. But as you practice them it will become easier and easier. It will become the same as your experience with praying. As you discipline yourself to pray regularly it will like these become easier and easier.

...*Pray...* (Gr. *proseuchesthe*, the general word for prayer) in this context means asking God to do them good when they do you evil. When mistreated we must retaliate with prayer; prayer for God’s mercy and salvation to be extended to our enemies.

...*Pray for those who mistreat you...* if believers take offense or try to avenge themselves, they lose the blessing, the joy, the contentment. Anger, hatred and other emotions of the flesh can rob even believers of peace and contentment. They can also open a spiritual door for Satan to attack. We must give the pain to God. Often our love breaks down the barriers and provides an opportunity for witnessing (Rom. 12:14-21). Our forgiveness releases a joy in us and guilt in the abusers!



HELPFUL TIP

Look around you for every opportunity to pray for and intercede for the enemy. As often as you can ask God to help them, heal the hurt inside them, and show mercy to them.

You will find by doing that you will come more and more to think like God who provides rain for both the just and the unjust. The Holy Spirit will use your efforts to change your heart increasingly. He will help you do what seems to be to you now the impossible.

Verse 29 ... *offer also the other...* love is demonstrated in specific actions. Indeed, the love Jesus calls for is demonstrated by going beyond: the disciple of Jesus should offer *also the other* after being struck on the one cheek.

Again, it is not at all in our nature to take this kind of treatment. The desire for retaliation is very strong in these kinds of situations. Jesus' standards are not based on what people do naturally. Instead they are based on God's own character and conduct. Jesus would demonstrate this truth in His last days. We need only consider His suffering and how easily He could have put an end to it, to realize that Jesus modeled exactly what He preached (Matthew 26:36–27:50).

He laid out the basic principle that His disciples (which includes all his followers) were to love their enemies. In order to forestall those who would argue about how this basic principle was to be applied, He gave six spiritual principles as examples which the disciples would use, when faced with personal conflicts.

Disciples should do good even to those that would like to murder them. Hatred of course was akin to murder. They were to continue to bless those that cursed them. Disciples should return the curse of people with blessing.

Disciples were to continue to pray for those that would abuse them. Jesus did precisely that after He was arrested. Stephen, the first martyr, followed Jesus' example.

Now Jesus was adding to these some very specific instructions. People still argue today about whether or not Jesus' instructions should be taken literally. Some consider that these principles do not teach passive resistance, but rather teaches aggressive love. They point to Romans 12:17-21 in which the Apostle Paul dealt with these principles as supporting their position. It must be recognized however that there is some controversy among Christians about how one should behave to one's enemies and what one should do to one's enemies. Some will deal harshly with their enemies and draw a line which does not allow one's enemies to get away with much, while others will take a lot of punishment from enemies, since they feel that this is the right way to behave. We should approach this however remembering that Jesus expects His followers to live a life of goodness. Some describe this as continuing actions of goodness, on receiving power from Christ to invade the world with love.

We are not unlike the people of Jesus' day in respect to how we naturally think or react to those we consider our enemies. Surface readings of this verse are often interpreted that Christians should be passive and accept any kind of treatment, and to be used as a "doormat". One has to tread carefully for of course misinterpretation leads to misappropriation, improper behavior, loss of blessing and a rejection of the Scripture.

"Turning the other cheek..." does not mean that we foolishly or with false piety offer ourselves to be abused; rather as believers we are to understand that we will not escape the malicious treatment of those who are really under Satan's influence and control.



Generally, the world will either avoid or ostracize the Christian and if we are really salt and light, we will attract the attention of Satan and the hatred of those who love the world. The following Scriptures teach believers what to expect from the world. *“For to you it has been granted for Christ’s sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,”* (Phil.1:29). *“Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”* (2 Tim. 3:12).

We are engaged in a battle with the kingdom of darkness and as such there will be casualties; but in the midst of this we are blessed when persecuted for the Christ sake.

Clearly Jesus is telling us that we should not resist the violent attacks of our enemies whether it be insults (Matthew 5:39) or a rather violent punch on the jaw. The words used in this Text and the Matthew Text indicate that Jesus is urging caution when one is attacked.

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Note that Jesus was speaking to people who lived under Roman occupation and the Jews did not have much civil rights. Neither did they have respect from their own leadership. So Jesus was really insisting that when the enemy would give them a violent punch and it hurt and embarrassed them, and the natural desire for revenge exploded, the aggrieved disciple should respond to the insult by relying on the Holy Spirit to respond with words and acts of love.

We can look at the life of Jesus and see how he responded to insults and abuse. When Jesus himself was struck on the cheek by the high priest’s guard, he did not literally turn the other cheek and neither did he respond with violence, but quite softly pointed to the wrongness of their action,

(John 18:22-23. See also Mark 14: 65, Matthew 26: 67, Luke 22:64). 1 Peter 2:21-23 discusses this matter and we can learn much by examining that passage.

Jesus’ teaching on love is a tough lesson. Our society has interpreted this in legislation to instruct our citizens that they must do only what is required to defend themselves against attack, even if this occur when a stranger enters the home and attacks the family, but in no case should those in the home employ more that the absolutely necessary defensive action against the attacker.

He wanted His disciples to understand that to follow Him meant a total surrender of their rights. The disciple was to live a life of goodness and behave like the Heavenly Father toward His enemies, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

One must exercise discernment and know when to turn the other cheek. John 18:22, 23; Acts 16:35-40, show how Jesus and Paul acted. *“But Paul said to them, “they have beaten us in public without trial, men who are Romans, and have thrown us into prison; and now are they sending us away secretly? No indeed! But let them come themselves and bring us out.”*

In refraining from doing evil, the disciple may suffer evil. This is how Jesus behaved and what He experienced (23:34; 1 Pet. 2:20-24). It is what He taught His disciples to do, and to expect.

Verse 30. *“Give to everyone who asks of you...”* In a literal sense one would not have the resources to give endlessly, the point of this saying is that one must give freely and generously. This kind of giving comes from a heart filled with the love and knowledge of Christ.

Note that this instruction comes from Deuteronomy 15:7-11 and observe the force of the passage. Christians generally take this matter of generosity rather lightly and if they do give something to the poor, a gift which is often quite stingy, they still think they are doing something great.



This is a serious command. We have no choice but to obey. There must be no evil thought when we open our hands wide.

'Enemy love' extends to our attitude toward our possessions as well. If the *cloak* is required of a man, he should offer also his *coat*. This goes well beyond the Law, which would not allow the coat to be taken as surety for debt owed. Followers of Christ are not to be stingy with our things, because they are not ours to begin with (2 Corinthians 9:6–11). Moreover, we should trust God's provision enough to not expect to be repaid for what we give, much as Israel was called to trust Him when they sacrificed the best of their flocks and fields (Lev. 22:21).

Pertaining to the believer's call, freely we have received; we must give in like manner. We were the recipients of God's love and mercy, when we were His enemies. We must learn to demonstrate to others the love God demonstrated to us.

Verse 31. We often refer to this verse as the Golden Rule;

"Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the Lord" (Matthew 7:12).

It has actually existed in some form in many cultures before the time of Christ, however they have all been expressed in a negative form – for example "What is hateful to yourself, do not to someone else".

God Himself teaches this lesson in Leviticus 19:18. Jesus frames the Golden Rule in a positive light as a picture of the fulfillment of the Law and the prophets (Matt 7:12).

Jesus used simple language and common phrases that all could understand; people have a natural instinct for survival, even those who live in abject poverty want to live; as we often hear, *"while there is life there is hope"*. No man hates his own body, but nourishes it; everyone desires love, compassion, mercy etc., and so we ought to give what we desire for ourselves. The world relies on the notion of reciprocity, you do something nice for me and I do something nice for you. This norm is not to be the standard for believers; we are to exercise a higher standard, that of 'initiating love'. We seek to do good first, and we do so without the expectation of receiving anything in return for the good we have done.

Jesus turned to a new line of discussion. Whereas Luke 6:27–30 describes specific behaviors that characterize the kingdom Jesus had come to establish, verses 31–36 speak to the motives for those behaviors. It is noteworthy here that we are no longer strictly focused on treatment of one's enemies but on people in general. The focus of Jesus' words had broadened to include everyone with whom the believer interacted.

Verses 32–33. Jesus next compared the courtesies that non-disciples extend to others, with those that His disciples should extend. He proceeded from the general concept of loving (v. 32), to the more concrete expression of it as doing good (v. 33), to the specific example of lending (v. 34). His point was that disciples should not only love their enemies but also love and express their love to their friends more than other people do.

Simply put, it is this principle of initiating love that separates us from the world; if all we do is love those who love us, then the love of God in us has not produced anything more than what we see in any unsaved sinner. If we only do good to those who we know will be good to us, there is no heavenly credit or blessing or reward. There is no promotion of the Kingdom!

If all we can muster is the same self-serving love that the world displays, we have failed to show the love of Christ, and our payment or reward comes from man rather than God.



The disciples of Jesus, Christians, are to excel and rise vastly over the rest of the world in virtue. We are to do good and that is to be as natural as breathing.

All these attitudes come from the divine concept of loving. Our actions must be an expression of love and which is doing good.

Verse 34. This initiating love is the rule that we ought to live by, our action is motivated by the love of God in us to meet the needs of others.

Aside from our typical business transaction or employment earnings, Jesus demonstrates how this principle extends to our lending and how it must differ from the way the people of the world lend. They do so with the expectation that they will receive as least what they have lent and often with some sort of interest.

Our lending should not be to obligate others to lend to us. When the people of God make personal loans it should be motivated by love to meet a person's need and done without expectation of receiving anything in return.

How then do we protect ourselves from being taken advantage of by unscrupulous people? It must be clearly understood that when we do good, we should expect the recipients of our kindness will often not behave properly. Before we get heated and upset at this bad behavior, we should remember the times when we have not thanked God and have done things to displease Him. We have the expectation that God should forgive us.

If you lend to another believer, then the principle "*to owe no man anything but love*" should be in operation; this means that if they have the ability to repay, which may not always be the case, they will. Secondly, we only lend what we can afford to lose and this is guided by the measure of faith that we have. Jesus had to re-educate His disciples on this matter, for they also wanted to know what they would receive because they had given up everything to follow Him. Jesus assured them that whatever is given for Christ's sake and the gospel will be rewarded many times over. Man will always be indebted to God; God will not be indebted to man; therefore, we ought not to worry, even if some people try to take advantage of us. God is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

The observant reader will have noticed that Luke 6:32–34 constitutes a three-part question. All three make the same basic point: The way of life expounded by Jesus makes demands on those who would follow Him; demands that fall outside the boundaries of "normal" human relationships and cultural expectations. Roman society was based on the fulfillment of obligations between patrons and clients, between the elites and the masses. The kingdom of God is marked by a new approach to human relationships that explodes our ideas about status, possessions, what we believe we are entitled to, and many other subjects.

What is our attitude toward lending our possessions or resources? This is arguably one of the touchiest aspects of interpersonal relationships. How many friendships have ended over the loaning of money or other possessions? This is to say nothing of relationships that are not nearly as close to begin with.

Verses 35-36. These verses end with the repetition of the command to love our enemies, the reason why we should do so and the reward for doing so.

It is not easy to love one's enemies, every natural instinct of the flesh cries out in protest; yet in the power of the Holy Spirit we discipline ourselves and obey God's law and in doing so we will receive great rewards. These rewards are both present, finite, future and eternal.



“Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.” Luke 6:38 (NASB)

The reason we love our enemies is that we may emulate the Father; in this way we are to be like God. *“...you will be the sons of the Most High ...”*

Note that this is not the reward, but the reason; we must of necessity already be sons and daughters, else we do not possess the Holy Spirit who enables us to love in this manner. If as believers we refuse to love our enemies, we relinquish any great reward that we would have received, though not our salvation.

Note this applies only to believers. If we behave like unbelievers, we might very well be people who are simply pretending to be believers. So let us examine ourselves. Scripture tells us that we will be known by our fruits.

If our Heavenly Father is kind to the unthankful and the evil, we must do likewise. As the Scripture says *“do not render evil for evil...”*

We must be merciful and just, especially when it comes to dealing with brethren who have done us injury. Sadly, that is a common occurrence. Many people will tell you that they do not go to church because of what other professing believers have done to them.

As we have received mercy, we must be merciful. This is the disposition that we should possess and demonstrate. The Lord required it of his then disciples and he requires it of us.

CONCLUSION

God is measuring the life that we lead. God sees all things and He calls on us to have the kind of life and mercy like that of our Father. Our heart must be like that of our heavenly Father. It must be full of generosity both toward the sons and daughters of God and toward our enemies. We have to live the kind of life which will draw men to Christ and we also must pray that they will come to Christ as their Lord and Savior and receive the gift of eternal life. Our lives must give substance to our evangelistic endeavors.

We live in a community and in a world which is goaded to hate God and his son Jesus Christ. People have many difficulties in life and some are so encouraged or even discouraged by the lies of Satan, that they think God hates them or just does not care about them at all. So when we meet people we have to show the gracious mercy of God. We have to treat all men including our enemies, the way we would like to be treated. We must extend the love of Christ to everyone.

At stake is not what belongs to us or what our rights are. At stake is the eternal destiny of the people around us. So those who belong to Christ, must live in such a way that our enemies will see and understand the aggressive, ‘agape’ love of God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son and the Holy Spirit. T

The Text gives us very important instruction on how to relate to one’s enemies. Empowered by the Holy Spirit we must love our enemies and in doing so we identify with our Heavenly Father as sons and daughters of the Most High and receive great rewards.

The Study Text is not a difficult passage to understand. It is, however, a difficult passage to put into practice. This is so because the way of life Jesus described here runs counter to the fundamentals of human nature: the deep-seated desire for revenge, for redress of injustice, for



the respect of others. In light of this, it is common to view the teachings of Jesus in this Sermon as impractical or unrealistic, even among Christians and to seek ways to get around the implications of Jesus' words. The truest and best application we may make of Jesus' words is simply to reject this way of thinking, thus clearing the way for His words about love of enemies to reshape our hearts and our lives.

Remember that Love is more important than the possessions you might have.

Unbelievers have a sense of goodwill. But believers must have a sense of goodwill to others that exceeds that of the unbelievers.

Believers must learn from meditating on God's mercy

There are real tests of agape love, for agape love means that you can love your enemies and do not have to fail this test.

Start by treating others the way you want to be treated. Remember that as you grow in the Spirit there will eventually be no limit to your Love.

