

Luke Ch6v27-36 - Love For Others

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[0 : 00] Thank you, Rob.

Luke's Gospel, Chapter 6. We're going to read from verses 27 to 36 this morning.

This section that I'm reading from Luke starts back towards the beginning of Chapter 6. You've probably heard of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's Gospel.

This is the Sermon on the Plain. Some of the teachings are repeated, some are different. But Jesus is teaching a wide audience of people, some who are disciples, some are not.

So we're going to pick it up in verse 27. But to you who are listening, that's us, I say, love your enemies.

[1 : 24] Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who ill-treat you. If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also.

If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. Give to everyone who asks you. And if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back.

Do to others as you would have them do to you. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?

Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that.

And if you lend to those whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners expecting to be repaid in full.

[2 : 28] But love your enemies. Do good to them. And lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great.

And you will be children of the Most High. Because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful. Be merciful. Just as your Father is merciful.

Well, let's pray. Father God, be our teacher. And help us to listen.

And may the words that I speak be words that you use for our benefit and for our good. Bless us, we pray.

Amen. Well, in our series of this month, we've been asking the big question, what is a Christian?

[3 : 32] And today we're going to see that a Christian is someone who has a love for others. In other words, if you are a disciple of Jesus, you are known for your love.

love for our brothers and sisters within the church family, but for all those we meet in our community and those who we work with.

And as a way of understanding love, I just have a very simple definition to help us along this morning. love is an unconditional action to do good and be kind to those we consider undeserving and unlovely.

An unconditional action to do good and be kind to those we consider undeserving and unlovely.

You see, as Christians, we are not called to separate from those who we consider immoral or to avoid those who we don't agree with or to tolerate those we think difficult.

Now, we're commanded, do you see it there in verse 27? To love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you.

[4 : 55] bless those who curse you. Pray for those who ill-treat you. We are to move towards those we consider undeserving and unlovely and do good to them and to be kind to them.

Corrie Ten Boom, whom some of you may have heard of, was a remarkable young lady who helped her father hide and protect Jews in her own home during the Holocaust of World War II.

Eventually, Corrie and her family were caught and all her family were taken off to one of the notorious concentration camps. Corrie survived and after the war, she began to speak in various churches about her experience.

And in her book, which is called *The Hiding Place*, she recounts one particular encounter that she had at a church meeting.

Let me read to you from that encounter. A man approached to shake her hand, marvelling at the forgiveness of Jesus she had just described.

[6:14] She recognised him. He was her former jailer. His hand was thrust out to shake mine, and I, who had preached so often to the people the need to forgive, kept my hand by my side.

Even as angry, vengeful thoughts boiled through me, I saw the sin of them. Jesus Christ had died for this man.

Was I going to ask for more? I breathed a silent prayer. Jesus, I cannot forgive him. Give your forgiveness.

And she took the man's hand. Then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes. I forgive you, brother, I cried, with all my heart.

For a long moment we grasped each other's hands, the former guard, and me, the former prisoner. I had never known God's love so intensely as I did then.

[7:37] Do you see, in that one encounter, Corrie loved her enemies, did good to those who hated her, blessed those who had cursed her, and prayed for those who ill-treated her.

That's the kind of love we're thinking about today. And to help us see what this kind of love looks like for us, we're going to look at three things from the text we've read.

love as evidence, love in action, and love from God. So first, love as evidence.

Love is not the key into God's kingdom, rather it's the mark of those who are in the kingdom. Or to put it another way, love doesn't make us Christians, rather love is the evidence that we are a Christian.

So look at verse 35. Love your enemies, do good to them, lend to them without expecting to get anything back, then your reward will be great, and you will be called children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.

[9:01] Love doesn't make us children of God, rather when we love like God, we are demonstrating our identity that I'm a child of God.

Jesus goes on later to give an illustration, jump down to verse 43. No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit.

Each tree is recognised by its own fruit. People don't pick figs from thorn bushes or grapes from briars. In other words, we know a tree is a pear tree because it produces pears.

We know it's an orange tree because it produces oranges. Well, in the same way you know someone is a Christian because they produce love for others.

The fruit of a Christian is love. we produce delicious, tasty, refreshing acts of goodness and kindness.

[10:06] Verse 45. A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart.

For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. You see, whatever is in our hearts is going to overflow from out of our hearts.

And a Christian, we're told here, is one who is filled with love. So, whenever we're jostled by the actions of others, whenever we're knocked by the hurts of others, love is going to spill out in all kinds of kind words and good deeds.

Love is the supreme mark of a Christian. It reveals our identity as children of God. So, first, love is evidence that we are children of the Most High.

Second, we're going to look at love in action. The command to love is radical, isn't it, as we've been reading. It's upside down and back to front of how we think it should be.

[11:23] You see, it's not a call to love the ones who we see are decent. You're good, all-round friendly neighbour who's always up for a chat and ready to help.

Anyone can and does love that kind of person, but that's not the kind of love Jesus is talking about. Look at verse 32. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?

even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you?

Even sinners do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners expecting to be repaid in full.

In other words, he's saying you don't have to be a Christian to live like that. You don't need to be a child of God to love nice, decent people.

[12:33] You see, I think I'm rather good when I invite Mr. Nice and his family to a neighbourhood barbecue because I know that when they come they're going to bring a bottle of wine and a dessert without even asking.

And I, you know, maybe for you when you're at work, it's, well, somebody asks you for a lift. Well, it's no problem giving them a lift because you know they're going to give you a tenner for the petrol. It's easy to love those who love back and do good to you. No, says Jesus, there's nothing special about that. Don't go patting yourself on the back.

Look what it says at the end of verse 32. Even sinners love those who love them. Or the end of verse 34. Even sinners lend to sinners.

Those that hurt you and irritate you and wrong you and judge you, they're the ones we're to love.

[13:44] Verse 27. love your enemies. Verse 35. But love your enemies.

Maybe it would be helpful now, and please don't shout out the name, but to be thinking of the person who most irritates you, who most frustrates you, who do you not want to see tomorrow morning when you go to work?

Who do you not want to bump into when you're out shopping? Love them. So what does this kind of love look like?

Well, two things. First, don't retaliate. Let's pick it up again in verse 29. 29. If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also.

If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, don't demand it back.

[14:59] Now, we have to be very careful how we interpret this. Jesus is not saying to a wife who is physically being abused by her husband, oh, let him hit you again.

Jesus is not saying to a man who's been diddled by his accountant to give him more access to his funds. No, that would fly in the face of the command to seek justice and to be wise.

So what does Jesus mean by these words? Well, when we take what we've just read in verses 29 to 30, if we take these examples together, it's really commanding us, don't retaliate.

Don't take revenge on those who cause you harm. Instead, seek ways to be good and kind to them. Put yourself into, yes, a vulnerable position where you may be hurt again by their words or their actions.

You see, we tend to operate under the principle of do to others what they do to you. So if you're given a box in the jaw, well, give them a good thump back, maybe two.

[16:22] Or if someone won't give back what you lent them, go to their house and take it back and take something else while you're there. But that's not what Jesus is saying, verse 31.

Do to others as you would have them do to you. We are to intentionally seek ways of blessing those who cause us harm.

So loving others means don't retaliate. Second, be generous.

Look at verse 35. Love your enemies. Do good to them and lend to them without expecting to get anything back in return.

You see, non-retaliation, that's right, don't retaliate. But it doesn't stop there. It calls us to go further. It says, be generous.

[17:23] You see, when you give or when you lend something, don't look at it as something that you're going to get back or you hope that in some way you'll be getting some return on it.

No, treat it as a gift. You see, whatever we have in our possession, all that we enjoy, well, none of these things are ultimately ours.

They're all gifts from God. we have no right to hold on to anything. What we have, God has given.

So we are to act in generosity to those who cause us physical or practical or financial harm. Loving others means we are to be generous.

Alistair Begg, who is a teacher, pastor, and author, put it like this. You can follow on the screen.

[18:29] It's a refusal to treat others according to what they deserve. Even those who hate, exclude, revile, and defame you are not to be treated as enemies.

We are to live a life marked by a refusal to treat others as though they were your enemies. Love means don't retaliate, but be generous.

Now, I know this is hard and it's a big thing that's being said, love your enemies. And before we move on, let's just think for a moment about what about the wrong that has been done to us. You're saying love your enemies, but what about the harm they've caused us? What are we to do with that? Are we to pretend that it doesn't matter?

If we've been hurt or something's been stolen, are we just to sweep it under the carpet and take a deep breath and just push on and hope for the best? No, it's not saying anywhere here, let's overlook people's sin or let's just ignore everybody's flaws and failures.

[19 : 50] No, we should never treat sin lightly, not just because it's had an effect or it's hurt us, but because ultimately it offends God.

We should and we ought to always seek what is right and just and fair. However, when there is no recognition of wrong doing or where there is no repentance of sin, the text is calling us not to hold it over or against.

Instead, Jesus calls us to a high calling. Don't retaliate, but be generous. So second, love in action. love love from God. So off we go ready to love our enemies.

Love in action, that's what we're to do. Surely it can't be that hard. Loving is pretty easy, isn't it? Well, maybe your day goes like this.

[21 : 05] You see someone in the shop who has ill-treated you, and, well, you just turn in the opposite direction and get away from them as fast as possible. Or someone pulls out in front of you when you're driving home and you start shouting obscenities out the window.

Or your boss backtracks on his promise and you give her the silent treatment. You see, we don't have to go very far into our day, do we, when we realise that, well, loving our enemies seems quite impossible.

In fact, as we're listening this morning, we may be wondering, well, am I a Christian at all? Because love is not how I respond to those who hurt me.

I don't know about you, but I find it hard to love my enemy. I don't respond always in generosity. I want to retaliate.

Am I a Christian? So how do we love? What are we to do with it? Well, three practical steps to help us all.

[22 : 23] Here's the first one. Know who you are. Jesus' message is clear right from the start.

Verse 27, love your enemies. Now, I don't know if you know this, but if you're a Christian here today, before you became a Christian, that's how we're described.

That's right. An enemy. An enemy of God. I'm not sure if I have the, know I don't have the quotes. Let me just quote you two verses from scripture that tell us this.

Colossians 1 verse 21, once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.

Or Romans 5 verse 10, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his son. You see, let's get to grips with who we are.

[23 : 31] We weren't Mr. Decent or Miss Nice. We were unlovely. Remember what we read in Deuteronomy at the beginning? Why does God love us?

God loves us because what? Because he loves you. So, Johnny, and I speak this to myself, to all of us, never forget who you once were when you turn your back on your enemy.

Know who you are. Second, let us know what God has done because God loved his enemies.

Look at verse 35 with me. the last part of verse 35. Then your reward will be great and you will be children of the Most High because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.

That's God our Father. He is kind to the ungrateful, kind to the wicked. And we see this kindness in all its fullness at the cross.

[24 : 52] Let's jump forward to Luke chapter 23. Luke chapter 23. Verse 18.

This is leading up to the crucifixion of Jesus and the crowd are roaring and shouting and vying for the death of Jesus and in place of Jesus they want to release Barabbas.

And this account we see Jesus dying in the place not just of Barabbas but of all who turn against him. Let's pick it up in verse 18.

But the whole crowd shouted, away with this man. release Barabbas to us. Barabbas had been thrown into prison for an insurrection in the city and for murder.

Wanting to release Jesus Pilate appealed to them again. But they kept shouting, crucify him, crucify him. For the third time he spoke to them, why?

[26 : 06] What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore I will have him punished and then release him.

But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified and their shouts prevailed. So Pilate decided to grant their demand.

He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder the one they asked for and surrendered Jesus to their will.

Verse 33 When they came to the place called the skull they crucified Jesus there along with the criminals one on his right the other on his left.

Jesus said Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.

[27 : 11] Jesus loved his enemies. He did good to those who hated him. He blessed those who cursed him. He prayed for those who ill treated him.

He came and died in the place of sinners so that they could be forgiven so that we can be forgiven for the many times we do not love as we ought to love.

Let's go back to chapter 6. So first know who you are. Know what God has done that he dies for us. And third know how we can love. You see just as God has been kind to us just as God has loved us

verse 36 be merciful just as your father is merciful.

Don't retaliate be generous but how how do we do it? Well at the beginning of this morning we read the account of Corrie ten boom.

[28 : 33] Remember what she said? Listen to her words carefully. Remember she's facing her former guard. even as angry vengeful thoughts boiled through me I saw the sin of them.

Jesus Christ had died for this man. Was I going to ask for more? You see Corrie didn't just see the sin of her former prison guard.

She saw her own sin of withholding forgiveness and she saw that Jesus died for her as much as for him. She continues I breathed a silent prayer.

Jesus I cannot forgive him. Give your forgiveness and shook the man's hands. You see in that moment and in that time there was a natural struggle and tension and battle within to love her enemy.

And what did she do but cry out to God and ask for help by saying I can't but you can give your forgiveness. But as she did that she recalls then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being I cried out I forgive you my brother with all my heart.

[30 : 06] What caused a woman so terribly ill-treated who had only done something right and good who was harmed physically and psychologically what caused a woman to reach out and love and show forgiveness.

What caused her to show such kindness. Well in Corrie's own words she says I had never known God's love so intensely as I did then.

You see it was remembering and recalling and applying afresh the experience of God's love for her and God's love melted her heart.

She came to see again how much God loved her and he enabled her to reach out and love. You see that's the only way we can ever love is when we receive love from God.

When we know who we are and when we dwell afresh in all that God has done for us and how he loves us consistently and continually never giving up.

[31 : 31] And as we reflect on his love so we can love a world and a community in which we live.

let's pray together. Father, we admit that we we all struggle.

I think I can say that. We all struggle with this command to love. We battle. We feel the tension.

We want to retaliate. We don't want to be kind. Father, melt our hearts afresh.

Give us an experience afresh of your love to us, of your mercy and your grace. and your kindness and teach us afresh that we might love all who we come in contact with.

[32 : 51] And may their hearts be melted and changed and transformed that they too may run to the Savior and experience a love that never gives up.

Father, thank you that you love us today. In all our mess and all our failure, thank you that you treasure us as your children.

Not even our sin will ever separate us from the love that you have for us. how amazing is that? Amen.

Well, we're going to do exactly what we've been thinking about to stand and be amazed at the amazing love of God.

Wonder how he could love us. And he does. If you're able to, let's stand together as we sing. Amen.