

Luke 6:27-36

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- [0 : 0 0] But, if you listen close enough, you'll find that God's Word encourages us to press on in the midst of trial and affliction, hurt, and pain and discomfort.
- On the other hand, if you find your satisfaction in anything else than Jesus, God's King, you can expect discomfort and challenge and warning.
- Words that will probe you and urge you to hear God's King, Jesus Christ. So, we come this morning to Luke chapter 6 verses 27 through 36.
- And what comes into view is the ethics of God's kingdom. As a matter of fact, if this stretches on past this verse 36 on to verse 39, 49, the ethics of God's kingdom come into view.
- What we have is the teaching that concerns the behavior. We've looked somewhat at the principles, but here we're talking about the practices of the kingdom, of those who are following Jesus Christ.
- [1 : 1 5] And what we have here, right at the top, we have a priority lesson. It's a lesson about love. Given what we know in the Gospels and in the rest of Scripture, it really should not surprise us that love, love God's style, comes into focus in this particular text on today.
- Love that expresses itself, and this is a phrase that you'll hear me repeat throughout the message this morning. It expresses itself in uncommon kindness.
- Kindness that sort of is, in a sense, out of bounds. Kindness that is both counterintuitive as well as countercultural.
- It's not the kind of kindness that you will expect maybe to hear, say, even in the university classroom as far as advocating that. But it's kindness and love from God's vantage point and his perspective, and it really is modeling or mimicking the very love that God himself has to us.
- So, look in verses 27 through 31, and there we find the command for uncommon kindness. The command for uncommon kindness.
- [2 : 3 5] You see it there in verse 27? For I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.
- It's a command, friends, to uncommon kindness. While the command to love one's neighbor as oneself, from Leviticus chapter 19, verse 18, was clear.
- And it was even taught in that day. Rabbinic teaching and tradition also taught that there should be hate for one's neighbor.
- As far as we listen to Matthew chapter 5, verse 33, Jesus challenging the teaching of that day, said, you've heard, and it has been said, that you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.
- Huh? But Jesus corrected that particular notion in his teaching. And his call was to the moral high ground of love for one's enemies.

- [3 : 35] And that was a shock both to the religious system of that day as well as those who adhered to it. Love for them had been restricted, and it had been restricted by reason of their misinterpretation of Scripture.
- If you look in our text, particularly 27 through 35, you see the mention of love four different times. You see it in verse 27. Twice you see love in verse 32.
- As a matter of fact, three times you see it in verse 32, as well as once at the end of the inclusio in verse 35, where the command is repeated to love your enemies.
- The word used, of course, is agape. This is the kind of love, not primarily a feeling of the heart, but it is kind, generous action.
- Action that seeks the highest good of its object, even at the risk of hurt or injury to the one who is giving that kind of love. That's a God kind of love, friends.
- [4 : 47] And given the quality of this brand of love, it's rather strange to hear that the objects of this high quality love, enemies, huh? Some of us know something about enemies.
- Might there be a face of an enemy that you would have? Or maybe you might have a group of people that might be an enemy.
- Someone that we may label as a foe or as opposition, an unfriendly force, antagonists, rivals, adversaries.
- Those are synonyms for enemies. Dallas Willard, the late Dallas Willard now in his book called *The Divine Conspiracy*, gives us these comments.
- Few of us manage to go through life without collecting a group of individuals who would not be sorry to learn that we have died.
- [5 : 47] By far, most of the people who have ever lived on earth have been confronted with certain kinds of other people or other tribes who would gladly kill them.
- Enemies, huh? We are challenged, friends, to respond positively to those kind of people, let alone lovingly.
- Yet it's those kind of people, if you will, those people that God has called us to love them. So, what might that kind of love involve?
- Note the text. Bless those who curse you, verse 28. Pray for those who abuse you. Huh? Kind words to those who target you with hate.
- Good for hate. That's the kind of action that he's talking about. Kind words for those who curse us, who invite ill upon us. Blessing for cursing.
- [6 : 55] Earnest intercession like Stephen in Acts 7 for those who abuse you. Huh? That's the kind of action that this kind of love, this kind of uncommon kindness calls for.
- Huh? Such were the principles that were to guide Jesus' followers. Then, as well as now, Jesus had already pronounced a blessing on those who would be hated for his sake.
- Look back in chapter 6, verse 22. Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you, that's verbal abuse, and spurn your name as evil.
- Notice this. On account of the Son of Man. Huh? Here he gives the principles to guide their conduct when such hate would be expressed toward them.
- And those who heard his words, particularly his disciples, apostles on that day, would have an opportunity to put these very words in action, action at various junctures.
- [8 : 02] We see them in Acts, where in chapter 4, they're gathered, and they come back after being whipped and beaten. They gather back with their company, and they lift their voices to God in prayer in view of what they had suffered.
- Huh? Friends, Jesus raises the bar. That's what it amounts to. He calls his followers, you and me, to a different standard, a higher standard.

For Jesus, the scope of love broadens for us also. Huh? There are not those who are, these are not those who are naturally disposed.

We are naturally disposed to care for. Huh? There's an unnatural element to what we're talking about here on this morning. Notice the transition in verse 29.

There's a shift from the principles to the practices of uncommon kindness. Notice what it says. To the one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also.

[9 : 10] And from the one who takes away your cloak, do not withhold your tunic either. You say, well, Pastor Jay, isn't Jesus using the little hyperbole there? Well, that's one way to see it, but there's another way or other ways to see it also.

Because Jesus' teaching here illustrates, gives some illustrations that highlight the extreme personal offenses and he is calling his disciples to a higher standard.

So, in verse 29, the first part of it, when you are violated with physical abuse, physically, in a bodily sense, he's saying, extend uncommon kindness.

Huh? The blow to the right cheek in that day was a very serious kind of insult in the ancient world. And serious, I mean, if there was other kinds of physical harm were serious, but this was serious also.

And Jesus, what he is saying here is that as his followers, we must be willing to suffer the most humiliating blows, blows that even could be challenged or prosecuted in that day, a backhand lit to the right cheek.

[10 : 34] Huh? He's saying, in both Jewish and Roman courts, the laws would offer prosecution for this kind of offense. It was that humiliating.

Huh? When you're violated, it's in concerns, not only that, your personal property. So, physical and bodily harm, but also personal property comes in view.

When you suffer a blow that targets your personal property via court action, extend uncommon kindness. Huh? You see that?

When one takes away your cloak, do not withhold your tunic either. Here's the idea. The poorest people had only an inner, internal, and an external kind of garment.

And the theft of a cloak, this external garment, could lead, again, to legal recourse. Even a creditor could not take a poor person's outer cloak, according to Exodus chapter 22, verses 26 and 27.

[11 : 39] This outer cloak was sometimes used as a bed covering or a spread. And it could not be held overnight as security for debt.

That serious, huh? Jesus said, in spite of the fact that such was the case for taking one's cloak, would be an open and shut kind of win when somebody asks for that.

Takes it away. What he says, give him your inner tunic also. Again, that could certainly be disarming. Extend to them uncommon kindness when that happens to you.

When you're violated, when people veer into your financial space, that's what we see in verse 30. Give to everyone who begs from you and from him who takes away your goods, do not demand them back again.

And that day, beggars were widespread. These persons had no legal right or familial claim on another's finances. But yet, payback is not an option.

[12 : 43] It said, extend uncommon kindness to those that we see in verse 30. The one who begs and the one who would take away your goods.

don't argue with them as far as taking them back again. Uncommon kindness is what's in view here. To the extent that Jesus teaching, it is corrective.

It was corrective for that day. But the love bar is raised by Jesus for those who seek to follow him. A distinctive quality of love that goes beyond the norm.

the standards that are in play in our world. Just think about what you and I are called to as those who follow Jesus. I mean, he continues to build his case having given those particular practices.

But, so we have the call or command for uncommon kindness. But then, in verses 32 through 36, he gives us a case or the case for uncommon kindness.

[13 : 50] Huh? You see that there? If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.

Huh? So, in other words, we see that what he commands us to do, but then he tells us why we are commanded to do it. Huh? Why is uncommon kindness right for the followers of Jesus?

Put simply, because uncommon kindness is the family code of conduct. Huh? Because we are children of the one who shares his love with those who oppose him and his kingdom values.

Huh? I have a picture here of my wife's family and it's very interesting because in this particular family picture here, I see people that I recognize in my day.

I pointed out to my wife, hey, that looks like Rosie, her sister. That looks like Thelma. That looks like Melody.

[15 : 01] I mean, these people in this picture have a family likeness, but guess what? This picture's probably 50 years old. These are not people that I've ever seen on the one hand, but I do see them because there is a likeness today of those.

They bear the family resemblance. They carry the genes that identify with those of yesteryear and yesterday.

And even so, here's the point, as those who are God's children, I mean, if you will look in verse 35, it says, you will be or demonstrate yourselves to be sons or children of the Most High.

In other words, when you exercise this kind of uncommon kindness, you reflect the image of your Father. You reflect His likeness when you exercise this kind of love that He is demanding here.

Before that, you get three rhetorical questions in verses 32 through 34. Here's, look at verse 32. If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you?

[16 : 30] Another way of saying, if you love those that love you, duh, even sinners love those who love them, not only that, if you, verse 33, if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit, what grace, what benefit is that?

Sinners do the same. And if you lend to those who, from those who expect to receive that kind of worldly reciprocity, what benefit is that?

Sinners, I mean, you're on the same level with everybody else, even those who have no relationship with God. What's the big deal if you love those who love you? No prize, no reward to those, huh?

Loving those who love you back, loving those who are like you, it's no big deal, huh? Those without a relationship with God can do that. Irreligious people, sinners, do that.

They unleash their love on those who unleash their love on them, huh? But what Jesus is saying here is that your love has got to go outside of family boundaries, extending even to those that are considered your enemy.

[17 : 57] you are children of the heavenly father, live like it as far as the extent to which you unleash your love should pattern the extent to which he unleashes his love.

So God calls us friends to a love that looks like his, huh? Such love extends beyond the deserving. It travels outside the family.

It goes next door. It invades new territory. It even trespasses, even extending love to those that may not want it or don't feel that they need it.

It goes beyond fences and over borders and boundaries. That's the nature of God's love. It doesn't stop. It doesn't break at the color of one's skin or the clothes that one wears.

It doesn't break it because of their appearances. Huh? It's unleashed in a way that is almost indiscriminate as far as the reach and the extent of God's love.

[19 : 04] It's uncommon kindness. That's what's in view. Huh? The love of God that treats enemies as friends. It's the very kind of characteristic that transforms enemies into friends.

And that's the kind of love the father has. Huh? Just think about it. the theological implications of that. That God extended his love toward us and that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Huh? Brotherly, brother only love. Huh? It's not the kind of love that the father has. It's inclusive and extensive.

Huh? Brother only kind of love is human and earthly and consistent with the kind of love that everybody else, even those without a relationship with God, can't extend.

Huh? There are some very practical implications of this particular teaching that we have from the lips of Jesus. Huh? What are Jesus' disciples to be about in this world?

[20 : 12] What are we to do? Huh? He calls us to a radical kind of love and kindness that contrast with some of the things that we see in this world.

You and I must not, must beware of allowing other people to dictate who you should love and who you should hate.

You may have heard this week about the death of Fred Phelps. Ring a bell? He was the anti-gay preacher who would target military funerals and rail that we're in these wars, these things are judgment because of this and because of that, just spewing over with various kinds of hate.

And you know what, friends? That kind of hate is very infectious. And other people grab hold to it. And some people even feel that they have a biblical license for hate.

Huh? In the name of the Lord. How? How sad. Such is a corruption of biblical truth. Sometimes, not only through religion, but we are given license to hate even from within our own families and from within society.

[21 : 37] Youth can be programmed to hate. How sad. Especially true of race relationships. But the love of God does not stop and should not stop by reason of who we are externally or even internally.

Huh? If you use that kind of license for hatred, let me tell you, it's bogus.

It should not be used. It does not and did not come from God. If society or family has given you a license to hate, not God.

He didn't give that to you. It's bogus and it must be discarded. Huh? God's word moves us to cancel any such license.

the truth comes and it helps us to see the error of our ways. So what are the implications? The model for family love, the family's love, is the father's love.

[22 : 49] Unleashed, unbounded, and available in this world through the likes of you and me.

And friends, you and I must see ourselves as agents of that kind of love and embrace the privilege of sharing it broadly. We have the privilege of accurately representing God in this world and the love that is off the charts.

It's out of bounds, but it's mimicking our father. And if we feel love, we feel that our mission to reveal a loving God with the kind of love that validates our message, the gospel message.

And oh, the great gospel implications of this text. Jesus would illustrate the principle that he commands here. Here he is, the son of the most high who would model what he called his followers to do.

He extended his love and we'll, I mean, as we get further into the gospel, we'll see the extent of those who were recipients of his love, his mercy that went beyond those of that particular day, particularly the religious leaders, manifested itself in great kindness.

[24 : 20] When he was reviled, Peter writes, he did not revile in return. When he suffered, he threatened not, but continued trusting himself to the one who judges righteously.

For while we were yet weak, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous man, though perhaps for a good man, one would even dare to die.

But God demonstrates his love toward us and that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. What are we saying today? Love-based, uncommon kindness is to characterize those who follow Jesus Christ.

That's you. That's me. And granted, the kind of love that we're talking about is beyond our natural reach. but you and I, having received the gospel, having been filled with God's spirit, you and I are God's agents and we want to represent him well in this world by extending the kind of uncommon kindness, love base, that Jesus commands in the text, demonstrates in his life, and calls you and me to follow him in it.

Let me pray. Father, we bless and honor you this morning and give thanks to you for a demonstration of your love to us through your son and this very clear call to the uncommon kindness that we see in this text.

[26 : 13] Pray that you would be glorified in us and Lord, I thank you that this teaching falls right at the forefront, right in the beginning that demonstrates his priority for us.

So we pray that you would be glorified in us and through us through Jesus Christ, our Lord, in whose name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. God