

Luke 6:34-49

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- [0 : 0 0] Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful. Judge not, and you will not be judged. Condemn not, and you will not be condemned.
- Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap.
- For with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. He also told them a parable. Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit?
- A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone, when he is fully trained, will be like his teacher. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?
- How can you say to your brother, Brother, let me take out that speck that is in your eye, when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite. First, take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye.
- [1 : 0 7] For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its fruit. For figs are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush.
- The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.
- Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do what I tell you? Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like. He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock.
- And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation.
- When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.
- [2 : 1 4] You may be seated. Well, if you have been with us for any length of time, you are aware that we are working our way through Luke's gospel, and we'll arrive just before summer gets in full swing to a conclusion of the Galilean portion of his ministry.
- In other words, we'll take it right up through chapter 9, verse 50, and then we'll go into a summer rest from Luke, and we'll return in the fall to his journey in 951 and following all the way to Advent to his journey to Jerusalem.
- The text before us today has been having its way with me all week long.
- They are words which are immensely helpful for me and for us and for the church.
- I've often wondered what it might be like to sit at the feet of Jesus and hear him preach. Two weeks ago, we began to see the formal content of his message, those life-altering words which came forth when he lifted up his voice, Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven.

- [3 : 53] And off he went. And when one looks at the content of his preaching, today we find ourselves again under the Word of Christ.
- When I hear him read the Scriptures today, I am not having to reach far at all to be someone who sat under the preaching of Jesus.
- For these words are his words. And they're for the benefit of us all. Spring is coming, and I hope that the message will put a spring in your step.
- Spring, of course, on college campuses, at least in my undergraduate days, meant that there were a number of people falling in love. Spring was a season for love, and we've come to a place in the text of Jesus' preaching where he's talking about love.
- Last week, he was preaching on love. What the world needs now. And that which we need and that which we long for, he begins to explain in all of its fullness, stretching all the way out to the love of one for their enemy, in hopes that he could capture for his congregation his thinking on love.
- [5 : 18] So here it is. Just a continuation of last week. Three powerful paragraphs, and I hope you have it open before you.
- The opening paragraph, 37 to 42, what love requires of us. And then a movement to how we can recognize the work of love in us.
- 43 to 45, and then 46 to the end, a test whereby you can truly know whether you have love for those around us. What does love require of us?
- Five parallel lines meant to give color and texture to what love looks like.
- If you find love, this is what you've come across. First, be merciful, even as your Father is merciful. Stroke two, judge not, you will not be judged.
- [6 : 34] Three, again layering color upon color. Condemn not, you will not be condemned. Four, forgive, and you will be forgiven.
- Five, give, and it will be given to you. Parallel lines. Like a poet, who forms lines, not so much that each line might be taken out on its own, but that together they might convey one potent idea.
- And indeed, that's what he's done. These are not distinct truths, or separate truths. They are bundled truths, in this moment, to explain the fullness of what love requires from us.
- The problem comes when you pull them apart. It's so easy to apply any one of these things with almost this kind of unrestrained force.
- We leverage a line from it. And, in a sense, can undo it. I think of the most common one in the list, judge not, and you will not be judged.
- [7 : 56] I mean, you pull that out, you stand it on its own, you apply it universally, as a banner before all behavior, and chaos runs the world.
- No judgments would be made on anything. And, think of the way Scripture uses the word. 1 Corinthians 6, 2, Do you not know that you will judge the world?
- John 7, 4, Jesus calling upon the people, Judge correctly. 1 Corinthians 5, I didn't write for you to judge the outsiders, but the insiders.
- In fact, I've already judged them. 2 Thessalonians 4, For Jesus will be the judge. But then, Jesus himself, in John 12, 47, I did not come to judge.
- I think of our recent Pope. Who am I to judge? Which, caused a stir among conversationalists, in regard to what he meant.
- [9 : 03] Was he changing the doctrine of the church, that, there were moral behaviors, that the church had listed in the past, as being, something to judge, as sinful, and now no longer held?

Or, was it merely one of style, versus substance? Well, until he speaks, in an ex-cathedral way, it's, all style.

It's, speaking the truths, of the text in this way. Judge not, God is the general demeanor, of the follower of Christ. Not that he makes, or she makes, no judgments, on any activity.

These five lines, then, these, these parallel lines, move together, they have to be moving together, or you're pulling it out, of a poem. They're interwoven strands, to convey one idea.

Namely, when you see those lines, and you hear his preaching, you are learning, what love looks like. Or, put differently, what it requires of us.

[10 : 09] And when I see it that way, boy, this is one, one convicting, little bundle of teachings. There's an irony, for me, we can fool ourselves, into thinking, that our struggles, to be merciful, or to be non-judgmental, or to be non-condemning, or forgiving, or giving, that, that those struggles, are due to a high sense, of justice.

I know, it's difficult to do these things, because I have such a high view, of justice. Moral certitude, sets an incredibly high standard, for how we treat others.

In other words, we treat people, justly. Well, but remember, God, is the most just, and yet, he has no struggle at all, in being the most merciful.

that's the truth, that, is emblazoned, upon us, in these verses. God, of supreme, moral certitude, is most merciful, and therein, we are least, like God.

God, we're not least like God, in that we haven't held, the line of justice, we're least like God, in that the one, who is just, is merciful.

[11 : 46] people. It's as if Jesus, was somehow aware, of how hard, love, is.

That as soon as he, rolls those out, he, he follows them, with a picture, from everyday life, meant to encourage you.

So that's the movement, of the text there. There's, there are these parallel lines, explaining to you, and me, what love looks like, followed by a picture, that will encourage us, in our effort to us.

Take a look, right there, the latter half, of verse 38. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap, for with the measure you use, it will be measured, back to you.

Five, intriguing, start and stop, phrases. I've come to believe, that they all move together, as well. That, that you almost, ought to think of good measure, as a noun, rather than, a quality.

[12 : 58] Think of it, as a thing. Think of it, as what you might find, in your kitchen, that, with this, you measure. And, get a good measure.

Get an ample measure. Get a, get a large measure. I, I think all of these, move together, in regard to one, picture from everyday life.

Namely, the picture of, getting paid, at the end of the day, in the ancient world. Or, think of Ruth, chapter 3, verse 15, when Boaz, gives her, six measures, of barley, we poured, into her lap.

She took her garment, from around her ankles, and she, lifted it high enough, to create, a, self-propelled, wheelbarrow. And, in came, the good measure, pressed, down, shaken together, where you can get more into it.

Running over, and off she went. It all came back to her. That's what Jesus is saying. Love is so requiring. But let me give you a picture, of what happens, if you begin to be merciful, and forgiving, and giving, and non-condemning.

[14 : 15] What a great image. It's as if Jesus says, you know, wow, do you want mercy? Well then, be big in mercy!

Do you want to stand, before God one day, and not be condemned? Well then, you better, get a little smaller, measuring cup, for the condemnation, you pour.

You want forgiveness? Forgive. You want to, you want to, be given? Literally, the word pour there, is the same in the text, as given.

Do you want to be given, the fullness, of the bounty, of Christ, for all time? Well then, it will all be given to you, in proportion, to what you give to others.

In other words, it's just a straightforward picture, of love your neighbor, as yourself. I mean, I think of it, in a different way, not at harvest, but of leaves, you know, at the fall. Some of you, might know what it's like, to have to go to the hardware store, and buy those big brown bags, and you begin to bundle your leaves, and there's an element, where you begin to put them in, but leaves are so light, that you could fill up that bag, real easy, and you don't want to waste your money, in fact, you want, you want to get good return, on all those bags, and so, you get your leaves in, and then you, you press those things down, you got a good big bag, first of all, then you press them down, then, then when it gets to the top, I start shaking it, so I can fill in all the cracks, and let everything run to the bottom, and I get in more, until it's overflowing, and indeed, until my bag breaks, and I have to get another bag, but I, I know immediately, which bags, when I have to take them to the dump, which bags, I've filled, and which bags have been like, those potato chip bags, you get at the supermarket, where, when they poured them in the factory, they might have looked full, but then, when they did get pressed, and shaken, and the rest of it, by the time they walked into your hand, you wondered how many chips, they put in there, that's what Jesus is saying, the measure with which you measure, it will be measured to you,

[16 : 27] I mean, stand in your kitchen, and you'll never see your tablespoon, or your cup the same again, love is a heaping tablespoon, it's an overflowing cup, it's flour that's shaken down, until it's almost hardened, in my, my thing that I'm measuring with, my problem, my problem, your problem, our problem, because I want you in this with me, is that we have a five gallon, thin lined, kitchen, bag, called love, and a thirty gallon, doubly reinforced, bag, called justice, justice, Jesus,

Jesus is saying, you're my followers, let me show you what love looks like, in other words, God wants you, this morning, to do for others, what he has done, for you, he who is most just, was most merciful, put differently, you are to do, to your enemy, what you would want your enemy, to do, to you, that is the great reversal, that's what's so, that's why it's so hard, I mean, think about, we could sit on these verses, for the rest of the year, I won't, think about what this means, in personal relationships, it means everything, it's a distance, it's a difference between, an ability to move forward, and not, think of it for families, for marriages, for friendships, and then consider the context, of these words, even your enemies, we need to trade in, our one third cup of mercy, for a thirty gallon bag, and believe me,

I know, it will be costly, but look, there's the encouragement, the measure, with which you use, it will be measured, back upon you, in other words, hey, I'm telling you, go big, or stay home, and if you go big, they're going to go big for you, and there's a bit of ambiguity, here in the text, does this mean, that the other people, are going to be forgiving to me, or does it mean, that God in the end, will be forgiven to me, I mean the tense, has changed the future, is this strictly, what God will do, or what I can expect, from the world, I think the ambiguity, ambiguity is intended, I think it's a general principle, in one hand, that merciful people, generally, receive mercy, stingy, stingy, stingy, stingy people don't, and so it will be, on that final day too, the exact measure, of our conformity, to the character, of the Father, will be, then given to us, and will, will I, be like a Ruth, watching it, pour into my lap, or will I have, lived my life, in a way, where it's a meager, eternal subsistence, and a reminder, of how little,

I actually grew, as a Christian, well that was supposed, to be the encouragement side, think of the Lord's prayer, you know, forgive us our sins, even as our trespasses, even as we forgive those, who have sinned against us, I mean there it is, right there, you want forgiveness, from God, well the very prayer, subordinates, the forgiveness, we get from God, even as, I forgive those, who trespass against me, the implication, of the Lord's prayer, is clear, if I am not forgiving, to those who have, trespassed against me, and knowledgeable, of the cost, that it takes to do so, I cannot rightly, expect God, to forgive me, that's it, such as the relationships, between our ethics, with one another, and our relationship, with God at the end, five parallel lines, that bring the fullness, of love into view, one picture, from everyday life, to encourage you, and then it's followed, in 39 to 42, with a parable, from the world, of sight, to instruct you,

I mean this is what, love worked out in us, looks like, I mean it starts, notice how it starts, with a blind person, can a blind man, lead a blind man, and notice how it ends, in verse 42, with the one, who's taking the speck, out of their eye, that they might remove, the log out of the others, this whole parable, parable works, in the world of sight, to instruct you, of how to make progress, in the way of love, so in contrast, to the blind, who can't see anything, is the one, who's trained, by the word of Christ, to begin to see, and begin to follow, and make progress, you want to be one, who's trained, not above his teacher, but trained, fully trained, to be like him, to be like Jesus, and of course, the way to do that, is to remember, that we've got to, work on ourselves, before we start, working on others, start the race, in the right place, the beginning point, in all human, relational conflicts, is me, not them, always, every time, me, not them, it doesn't mean, that you never, can help someone, with their problem, in life, no, but you can't do it, if you can't see, start, by working, on yourself, remove, the blind spots, from our own, lives, stop, becoming, a backseat driver, for everybody else,

[23 : 34] I think of, Alexander Pope, on this, thing on literary, criticism, to err, is human, to forgive, divine, divine, you know, that famous line, yeah, to forgive is divine, and I can't do it, otherwise, but I don't want, to be some blind person, stumbling around, in a pit all the time, do you ever ask yourself, why is it that, we always get to the same spot, why are we always, running into the same walls, why are we always, falling into the same traps, why are we always, in the same way, of working with another, why, because we're blind, and why are we blind, because we don't work on ourselves, because we just want to, be just, right, and clear, and make sure you own, what you know you need to own, rather than, be merciful, there were some other lines, from Pope's poem, I love this one, blunt truths, more mischief, than nice falsehood do,

I just want to speak, the truth to you now, sometimes blunt truths, do more mischief, than falsehood do, or this, of all the causes, which conspire to blind, man's erring judgment, and misguide the mind, when the weak head, with strongest bias rules, is pride, the never failing vice, of fools, well that, that found its way, right into the very core, of my being, Pope goes on, pride, where wit fails, steps into our defense, and fills up, all the mighty void, of sense, or how about this one, trust not yourself, but your defects, to know, make use of every friend, and every foe, yeah, this is a parable, on blindness, and on sight, to instruct you, in the way of, working, and the instruction, is clear, look in the mirror, not the window, mirror first, window maybe, mirror first, now I know, most churches you go to, we're all told, don't look in the mirror, too much, it's a matter of self-absorption, but when it comes to the mirror,

I'm talking about, the mirror of your soul, look into the mirror, drive by mirror, and you will make progress, in one being fully trained, unto Christ, so, what love requires of us, that second, little paragraph though, learning to recognize, the work of love, in us, 43 to 45, for no good tree, bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree, bear good fruit, for each tree, is known by its own fruit, for fig trees, are not gathered, from thorn bushes, nor are grapes, picked from the bramble bush, I would have loved, to hear him preach this, I just want to hear his voice, the tonal quality, the good person, out of the good treasure, of his heart, produces good, the evil person, out of the evil treasure, produces evil, for out of the abundance, of the heart, his mouth, speaks, learning to recognize, the work of love, in us, it's another picture, from everyday life, it's almost as if he's saying, hey the proof, is in the pudding, so too, the fruit of the heart, is revealed, in your speaking, notice, it's a fascinating thing there, for out of the abundance, of the heart, his mouth speaks, this is true for me, the fruit of my heart, is revealed, in the words, on my lips, whether they be, true, contrite, humble, deceptive, manipulative, angry, condemnatory, the fullness, of the heart, is put on display, most clearly, if I just look, at what I say, especially, then speech, because speech, is the one of the primary, ways we don't give mercy, we won't give it, and it's one of the primary, ways we judge, and condemn, and I won't say,

I forgive you, or would you forgive me, we don't say it, because our heart, is somewhere else, so, yes, love requires, many things of us, and there's a picture, to encourage us, but also, you can see, whether or not, you're making progress, this is why, some people, you know, when you come to Christ, all of a sudden, it's always fun, being a pastor, because their speech, always changes, as soon as they know, you're a pastor, you know, you'll be at a golf outing, or along the street, or in an airplane, and man, they're just running it off, boom, boom, boom, and you know, going about what they do, and all, and then you, they finally say, what do you do, and they say, well, I say, well, I'm a pastor, and they're like, oh, oh, sorry, sorry about all that, and then they go into this whole backtracking, it just wears me out, I'm tired of it, I didn't even want to talk to them to begin with, but there's a clear recognition there, isn't there, in the conscience, that from, from the depths of the heart,

I speak, finally, that little paragraph at the end, a test that reveals whether we really love those around us, yes, love is requiring of us, yes, you can learn to recognize the work of love in us, but the third paragraph, a test that reveals whether we really love those around us, why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do what I tell you, everyone who comes to me, and hears my words, and does them, I will show you what he is like, like a man who built a house, and dug deep, and laid a foundation on a rock, and when the bad days came, it stood because it was well built, but the one who hears, and does not do them, is like the man who builds a house on a ground, without a foundation, the streams break, immediately it falls, the ruin of the house was great, and here again,

[30 : 41] I think he intends ambiguity, the ambiguity of, you want to test on whether you're making progress, are you hearing the words and doing them, if you are, when today's troubles buffet you, and they will, you'll stand, likewise, if you're not doing them, and today's conflicts buffet you, the center will not hold, as it is also true, in that day, when we stand before him, and are either swept away, or find ourselves standing, on the day, on the day, of judgment, that's the test, it's not the one who hears, it's the one who does, it's not, it's not being, convicted of, I'm not merciful enough,

I hear that today, I needed to hear that, no, it's of going out, and being merciful, to fail, to put the five parallel lines, into practice, is to put your own soul, in peril, I mean, look what he calls them, spiritually blind, you're untrained, you're a hypocrite, you're a bad tree, you're a heart, that produces evil, well he's making quite a lot, of judgments, to those, who will not do, what he says, so here's the test, do it, give yourself, some shot, at being the last house, standing, on that great, and awesome, final day, love, is so, requiring, but it's not, without earthly, or eternal reward, so be encouraged, love, is, recognizable, for I taste, the fruit of my heart, through the words, on my lips, and the test of love, will be revealing, and upon it,

I will stand, or fall, our heavenly father, to come, to come, to the word, of Christ, is an awesome, and by that, I mean, uplifting, and terrifying event, I pray, oh lord, that you would help us, to cultivate, by the power, of your spirit, love, in all the direct, and immediate ways, that you know, we need it, even this week, even today, in Christ's name, amen.