

Love Your Enemies

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- [0 : 00] Father, we come before your throne of grace and mercy today. Lord, that is what we seek, grace and mercy.
- ! We ask, O Lord, that you would cause your word to come alive so that your saints would be enriched and edified.
- Let us see Christ in your word today. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen. Amen.
- All right. Well, today for a short while, we will consider Jesus' command to love your enemy.
- Anyways, I'm going to ask you to turn in your Bibles to Luke chapter 6. Luke chapter 6.
- [1 : 06] I must confess that there will be no deep theology today. Forgive me, Brother Shambi, no deep theology.
- And I'm also doubtful that there will be opportunities to shout today. Those of you who have Baptist blood flowing in your veins.
- But rather, this is a practical message about how we ought to live, how we ought to live with each other, and how we ought to live with the world.
- I want to ask you to do a couple things for me. And your participation is encouraged. We very much appreciate it.
- I want you to raise, those of you, if you who have at least one enemy, if you have one or more enemies, I'd like you to indicate by raising your hand.
- [2 : 19] I just want to see if you have one or more enemies. Raise your hands. Just so that we can see. I see, I'm raising my hands. Actually, I should raise both hands.
- One or more. Okay. Now. Now. Now. Now. I just want to make sure that everybody is participating. So. Those of you who don't have any enemies at all, if you have zero enemies, I want you to raise your hand.
- Now let me see. Now you see, some of you didn't raise your hands. Now we can try this again because this, this, you gotta, you gotta help the preacher out a little bit. If you don't, if you have one or more enemies, kindly indicate by raising your hands.
- Okay. Raise those hands. Alright. Very good. Right. If you have no enemies at all, raise your hands. I want to see who these special people are.
- These special, special people. I think Danielle wants to raise her hand, but she, okay. Alright. Alright. As I've meditated on the sermon topic this week, love your enemies.
- [3 : 40] I saw many examples in my own life where I was not living out this very clear command in Scripture. How do I do that?
- How do I love my enemies? In fact, why am I asked to do something that is so unnatural anyway? Where is the sweetness in loving one's enemy?
- That's not a sweet thing to do. Don't I have a right to express my anger and perhaps seek revenge?
- And here's this question I came up with. If God wanted me to love my enemies, why didn't he give me a chip?

He could have implanted a chip in my brain or somewhere, and then, you know, I'd be okay. I wouldn't have to think about it. Who are my enemies anyway?

[4 : 49] Do I really have enemies? Should I allow people to take advantage of me? Is that what we're talking about? And if I allow them to do that, is there any end to it?

Is there any end? Would there be an end to them taking advantage of me? And I suspect, no doubt, as you consider this topic, you're going to have similar questions and perhaps even more questions as well.

Let's listen now to what Jesus says in Luke chapter 6, beginning at verse 27.

Jesus says, 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 abuse you.

[6 : 08] To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also. And from one who takes away your cloak, do not withhold your tunic either.

Give to everyone who begs from you. And from one who takes away your goods, do not demand them back. And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.

If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? Question mark. For even sinners love those who love them.

And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.

And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you?

[7 : 21] Even sinners lend to sinners to get back the same amount. But love your enemies and do good and lend, expecting nothing in return.

And your reward will be great. And you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.

And Jesus concludes this portion of His message with these words. Be merciful even as your Father is merciful.

Today we will consider the command to love our enemies under five distinct headings. But before we plunge right in, I want us to consider a bit of a background.

The passage in Luke that we read was authored by someone of the same name. Luke is also the author of the book of Acts.

[8 : 39] And together, Luke and Acts represent some 27% of the New Testament. In Luke chapter 1, we find that Luke writes this letter to someone he refers to as the most excellent Theophilus.

Who was perhaps a Greek official. that he writes that he writes to Theophilus that I'm writing this letter to you so that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.

Luke writes to this Greek official Theophilus saying that I'm writing to you so that you might have certainty concerning the things that you have been taught.

It is not surprising therefore that given the culture and the circumstances of the day which included overt prejudice skirmishes and immorality that Luke would have incorporated those verses in his gospel.

The Greek needed to understand that what it meant to be a true disciple what it meant to be a true disciple a true follower of Jesus Christ.

[10 : 17] Luke thought that these words no doubt were important for him to understand that. The scripture that we have just read in Luke chapter 6 forms a portion of Jesus' sermon on the mount as set out more fully in Matthew.

Now then let's consider the elements of our message. as we look at verse 27 Luke 6 27 we find these opening words of Jesus but I say to you who hear but I say to you who hear I say to you who hear it is clear that those are words of instructions words of command not to be ignored I say to you who hear I say to you who hear moreover we see that the command is not to everyone this command that Jesus is about to utter is not to everyone it is to those who hear who are those who hear should that be taken literally in other words was

Jesus issuing a command to everyone who was listening to him the entire crowd everybody who was present likely not we know from scripture that not everyone who hears understands and accepts the word of God let me say that again not everyone who hears understands and accepts the word of God consider first corinthians 2 14 which says the natural man understands not the things of God to him they are foolishness to him they are foolishness he hears them but he doesn't understand them and to him they are utter foolishness Jesus says but I say to you who hear

Jesus was issuing a command to his disciples of that day and by extension he issues a command to his disciples of this day do we have an option do we have an option to keep or not to keep Jesus' clear command that's a question here is what Jesus says in John 14 15 that helps us to answer that particular question this is what he says Jesus says if you love me you will keep my commandments he says if you love me you will keep my commandments Jesus tied love for him notice not to what we say not to what we say he doesn't tie love for him to what we say or what we think but rather he ties love for him to keeping his commandments so we have no option if he commands it and we are truly his disciples we must follow what he says this command that

Jesus gives this command that follows these words but I say to you who hear love your enemies love your enemies say what love your enemies what did you just say Jesus love your enemies love that sounds like an oxymoron young people oxymoron is a figure of speech which apparently contradicts Contradictory terms are used together and that's what it sounds like how do you love your enemy doesn't seem to go together how do you love someone without to get you aren't you supposed to retaliate implicit in Jesus command Daniel is the fact that you do have enemies it's implied he says love your enemies so you gotta assume that you must have enemies by the definition he uses we'll see it a short while but we'll get a sense in a short while what your enemy really looks like but for the moment would you at least accept that it is unnatural to love your enemies that's not natural it's not natural to love your enemies it goes against our nature let me tell you you see

[16 : 20] I know us we're driving down the road and someone pulls in front of us I mean you know our blood starts to boil!

Are you talking about love your enemies? We're walking down the street and someone looks at us in a funny way and you're talking about love your enemies what?

But we don't do this to feel good no we don't we don't love our enemies to feel good though in time it will but I want to tell you something about this about striking back at your enemies the truth is and I don't know if you've had this experience I can tell you from my personal experience it feels good when you can get back at your enemies right away it really does I got to tell you the truth my personal experience my personal experience is you know you are in a verbal fight with your enemy and you have the last word man that feels good do I have an amen amen!

that was meant to cause you harm turns out to harm the other person it feels good immediately I mean the first thing you say oh wow I'm so happy for that the Lord moves in mysterious ways amen thank you Lord it's wonders to perform that's right it feels good immediately no we don't follow Jesus' commands because the way we feel impact is going to have on us we follow them because they are his commands but that said that said I believe many of you have been around long enough to know that the long term feeling one gets from loving one's enemies is really a good thing now in the short term it feels good when you can retaliate but you know if you're really a

Christian you know that thing bothers you and it hurts you but in the long term in the long term when you love your enemy as Christ commands it really does feel good whereas in the short term we want to strike out better and we see the wisdom in not retaliating let's take a look now let's move along and consider our second point how do we love our enemies how do we do it what does it look like before we explore further what Jesus says in this regard I think it's important for us to consider and to understand what love really is in the Greek language there are three kinds of love eros which is a passionate desire for something or someone that's a kind of love and that's not the love we're talking about here and then there's a second kind of love philia which is friendship or brotherhood and again that's not the kind of love that we're talking about here there's a third kind of love that

[20 : 12] Jesus is referring to here when he says love your enemies and it's agape agape is goodwill or benevolence it is the word that is used to describe God's love for man and our love for God and man which is unconditional agape it is God's covenantal love for man and our reciprocal love for him which is extended to others agape love is God's covenantal love for man and our reciprocal love for God which we extend to others that's the love that Jesus is referring to here the word love

Jesus uses here is agape love and in verses 28 and 27 Jesus tells us three things we must do for our enemies tells us three things we must do for our enemies in those two verses and then in verses 29 and 30 he tells us four things that we must give to our enemies and as we consider the things these things we must do for our enemies and what we must give them as we consider these things it should become easily apparent that one love is not hate love is not hate as we consider these things we'll see that love and hate are opposites the second thing that we will observe is that love is not lukewarm love just doesn't sit there love is not just lukewarm love is expressive the third thing that we will observe is that love is an action word love is demonstrable love can be sane and the fifth thing that we will observe as we consider these things is that love requires intentionality love requires intention you gotta be intentional to love your enemy you gotta really be intentional it ain't it just happen you gotta be purposeful but what should we do for our enemies what did

Jesus say that we should do for our enemies let's take a look at it Jesus says in verse 27 the second part of verse 27 he says do good to those who hate you do you see that do good to those who hate you there are people out there who just simply don't like you perhaps some of you haven't encountered them yet but trust me you will you live long enough you will and perhaps some of them do such a good job camouflaging it you just don't realize it but there are people out there who just simply don't like you they hate you but what is your response what is your response as a disciple of Jesus Christ Jesus says you ought to we ought to do good to those who hate us perhaps they hate us for whatever the reason good perhaps whatever the reason is they hate us hate is a real strong word when someone hates you he wants no good thing for you perhaps he wants you to suffer a physical harm or financial material or some other kind of loss it is hard enough to always do good for people we love much less for people who hate us but

Jesus says you got to do good imagine that do good to those who hate you that's what we are called to do you know I got a feeling you know this were not if the reward were not so great the reward of Christianity were not so great and we knew the rules before we enlisted some of us would have said oh my goodness this really is too weighty but Jesus says do good to those who hate you then he says that's not it the end of it in verse 28 he says bless those who curse you bless those who curse you someone comes and speaks ill of you curses you to your face or behind your back which is not unusual Jesus says your response should not be to curse them back young people you don't curse back as a disciple of

Christ Jesus says when they curse you bless you speak well off you speak blessings upon them you supposed to speak blessings into the lives of those who curse you then Jesus continues pray for those who abuse you my Lord have mercy for those who abuse you!

[26 : 27] for those who use you for those who hurt you for those who do it intentionally for those who malign you for those who walk all over you for those who don't give you the promotion for those who take advantage of you Jesus calls us to pray for them what a hard job we've got it would say Jesus says pray for those who abuse you pray for them and you know when Jesus says pray for them he doesn't mean you know you got those of you might not understand this he doesn't mean that you turn the Bible upside down that's not the!

the prayer he talked about Jesus is talking about praying prayers of petition on their behalf asking the Lord to bless them to help them through any difficulty that they might be encountering to bless their children to save their lives Lord cause their tomorrows to be better than their yesterdays Jesus calls us to pray for those who abuse us and then he says there are things that we must give to those who inconvenience us if you will he says to the one who strikes you turn the other cheek now you know Jesus wasn't on Aaron Bailey!

Park when he said this you know but really yes today he says to us today if someone strikes you on the left cheek offer the other also then he says from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic give to everyone who begs from you from one who takes away your goods do not demand it back wow can I tell you though from the practical perspective and I want you to hear this because I believe and I have seen this I think that there is a tipping point and some of us are guilty of this

I want us to be warned about it there are some people who claim that they are following Jesus instructions and they do it in a manner to shame I want you to hear me carefully they do it in a manner to shame they say yes I love my enemy I am going to pray for those who despitefully use me etc etc and they do it in a way to shame the offender so they might say something like this when somebody offends them or speaks a child I can pray for you I can leave that to the Lord and they think that they are demonstrating humility they're demonstrating humility hey you know since you warned that so badly you can take that with your greedy sir you know that's and you see it all the time you see it all the time I want to tell you that there ain't no blessing in that there ain't no blessing in that you know so let's be careful how we follow what

Jesus says in these verses now in Luke 31 we come to Luke 31 where we find what is known as the golden rule and that's my next point the golden rule the golden rule Jesus says in this verse and as you wish that others would do to you do so to them and all of us all of our young people in particular you ought to know this verse and you ought to live by it you want to be transformed you live by this verse it's a simple verse you know we used to say do unto others as you would have them do unto you right how many of you remember that do unto others Jesus says and as you wish that others would do to you do so them in that single verse

[31 : 26] Jesus provides Christians with an ethical code to live by it is a summation of everything he had said to that point we are not to retaliate when wronged strike back when shrug curse when cursed hate when hated we are not to do any of those things instead Jesus calls us to do to others what we would have them do to us how do we want to be treated you don't want people cursing us you don't want people hating us what would relationships what would this world be like if we lived this way if all of us lived this way we would be completely different what is now to consider point number four loving your enemy is a Christian distinctive! Loving your enemy is a Christian distinctive! It is a Christian distinctive or a distinguishing characteristic of Christians to love especially to love our neighbors that's the mark of a disciple of Christ in other words it sets the Christian apart consider what John 13 34 and 35 tells us Jesus says a new commandment I give you that you love one another just as I have loved you you also are to love one another by this all people will know that you are my disciples if you love if you have love for one another that was

Jesus message that was Jesus message when he said these words if in Luke 6 beginning in verse 32 if you love those who love you what benefit is that to you Jesus saying to us if you just love the people who love you what's the point what what distinguishes!

he said even sinners love those who love them then he asked and if you do good just to those who do good to you what benefit is it to you Jesus says for even sinners do the same I'm trying to show you that Jesus is requiring!

of us a different path he wants us to do more he wants! us to be extraordinary! he wants us to be disciples he wants us to demonstrate agape love and he says if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive what credit is that to you even sinners lend to sinners to get back the same amount but love your enemies and do good and lend expecting nothing in return Jesus did not come to this earth for us to be like sinners came that we might be Christ like Jesus point was that sinners do those things but we are called to a higher standard if we love like sinners love there is no witness in that we just love like sinners love there is no witness in that there is nothing special about that we are called to be special what an amazing witnessing tool even to the person who harms us but not only to him but also to those who observe when we can live like

[36 : 18] Jesus tells us to imagine the impact we have on the person who hates us on the person who abuses! us the person who curses us and not only to that person but to all those who observe it!

You see there are several things that we can glean from what Jesus tells us in these verses we can glean the fact that Jesus' perspective which must be our perspective was not on temporal stuff Jesus was not concerned about these temporal stuff but he was concerned about heavenly things you see if Jesus were concerned about temporal stuff he would not give us these kinds of instructions he's concerned about heavenly things these instructions demonstrate the low value Jesus placed on temporal things the next thing we can see here is that Jesus does not expect a Christian to live in a world where he expects reciprocity from sinners Jesus doesn't in other words

Jesus does not expect a Christian to live in a world where he expects a Christian to pay back to the sinner what the sinner does to him that's not what Jesus expects here Jesus expects the sinner to live out the command that he gives to live to love in spite of the next thing that we can glean from these words is that Jesus knew that a little leaven leavens the whole loaf what do I mean you say well listen I'm gonna this person I can't get rid of this little bit of hate no no no I keep this little piece here I gotta hold on to this I don't want him to abuse me next time I gotta hold on to this well you see Jesus says get rid of all of it get rid of all of it because Jesus understands how these things can grow and take over our lives so we gotta get rid of all of it we gotta release all of it to him

Jesus did not subscribe to compartmentalization see this notion that we can we can be alright we can be disciples in this area here and we can ignore this command over here Jesus didn't subscribe to that how often we have let our faith down when we did not follow these examples can I tell you those of us who subscribe to the notion that being a Christian is equivalent to being a prince on earth can't embrace what Jesus said here I want to say that again I want to say that again I want you to hear me those who subscribe to this notion that being a Christian is equivalent to being a prince on earth can't really subscribe to this they can't follow this to there are people out there who teach you that you know that you are supposed to be this and that and you're supposed to have this and that they can't subscribe to this because they tell you what boy if he slapped me

I can slap him right back if he cussed me I can cuss him right back pray for him yeah I'll pray for him all right but you've got to have faith really you've got to have faith in Christ to really do these things ultimately you've got to really have faith your faith has to be grounded and rooted you've got to believe that God is not going let you down God I follow your word you are not going let me down I'm following the Lord's word if you believe can I tell you and you know we all got to do this we believe we got to believe all the way we got to stop half stepping on this thing and we got to say Lord I'm standing on your word I'm standing on your word you told me to do good to those who cause me harm to bless those who curse me that's what

[41 : 08] I'm going to do and my expectation is that you are going to work it out you're going to work it out however you work it out Lord you're going to work it out we have to have faith enough to believe this now I come to the conclusion the last point is the perfect example of loving your enemy perfect example of loving your enemy Jesus concludes this portion of his message this way Jesus says in verse 35 but love your enemies and do good and lend expecting nothing in return and your reward will be great listen to what he says and you will be sons of the most high for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil be merciful even as your father is merciful you see when you and

I as disciples of Christ when we love our enemies we take on the nature of our father this is how the apostle Peter said it in 2 Peter chapter 2 verse 1 his divine power has granted us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of him listen to what he says listen to what Peter says through the knowledge of him that's God who called us to his own glory and excellence God has called us to his own glory and excellence yes we are called to exhibit in our lives the glory and the excellence of our father just as he is merciful we ought to be merciful just as he is kind to the ungrateful and to the evil we ought to be kind to the ungrateful and to the evil we are called to his own glory and his excellence there is none greater none greater in extending love to one's enemy than

God himself what an example we have in our father in our father children we have an example in our father we are sons of the one who is full of mercy and grace you ought to be like our father imagine if God refused to provide sunshine or air or water to people who deny him there are some people I read sometimes on the internet there's a particular guy out there a lot of atheists out there but there's this one guy!

out there sometimes they say Lord you don't deal with this love you don't I mean but imagine if God did that if God denied sunshine or air or water or food to those who deny him you deny me and all these things are mine well I'll deny you the benefits imagine God God denied those things to people who use his name as a curse word just imagine just imagine for a moment and he could he could imagine if God acted against those who spend their time trying to persuade others that he did not exist they themselves would cease!

to exist but aren't you glad today aren't you glad today that God does not keep an account of their sins and your sins and our sins imagine imagine if he did Matthew 5 44 and 45 tells us but I say to you Jesus says love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you so that you may be sons of your father who is in heaven and Jesus continues for he God makes the sun to rise on the evil and on the good and he sends the rain he sends the rain on the just and the unjust see once we were enemies once we were enemies with

[46 : 31] God but even in that state the Bible tells us that Christ died for us he died for us and what is astounding about that fact not just that he died for you and me but listen he died for us knowing that we were going to continue sinning now that that always boggles my mind Jesus knew when he died for me he understood my today my yesterday and tomorrow and he still died for me and he still extended grace mercy to me unto you I can't wrap my hands my head around that consider it if God who is perfect I want you to imagine think about this for a moment consider

God who is perfect is capable of being merciful you can bring no charge against him that sticks he's perfect yet he is merciful but what do you think about us imperfect old us very often when you and I are hated when you and I are cursed very often there's something we did to deserve that I'm not justifying it but I'm speaking here about our imperfection compared to God's perfection perfection the truth is in the end the truth is that we lack the ability to love our enemies on our own we can't do this on our own we need

God's Holy Spirit we need the help of the Spirit to help us and to remind us we need to be constantly reminded you know I bet you there's going to be something happening perhaps even as early as today you step out of these doors and you're going to be reminded oh you know I just remember I was supposed to love my enemy thank God for his Holy Spirit perhaps you're a believer perhaps you're a believer today and you're saying I am!

struggling with this notion this command to love my enemy I'm struggling with that in many different ways well I want to tell you the first thing I want to tell you is that you're not alone you're not alone you're not alone the second thing I want to tell you is that your remorse is evidence that the Holy Spirit is working on your heart already thank God for giving you a conscience thank God for giving you the desire to want to change can I invite you believer not to stop there I invite you I suggest to you that you ought to pray that you ought to take this to the Lord and ask him to help you and to help you on an ongoing way so that you might be a true disciple of

Jesus Christ I want to suggest to you also that you be intentional about extending love to those who hate you but what if you're not a believer if you're not a believer well the truth is you can't possibly follow these commands it's not possible you just can't do it you fail before you take the exam know what he just told us in his word.

[51 : 54] He stands ready to forgive you. So if you're an unbeliever today, I want to encourage you to hear the voice of the Spirit of the Lord as he speaks to your heart.

We're going to pray now as we invite the praise team to come. As we sing, your grace.