

How Do You View Yourself | Luke 6

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 07 September 2021

[0:00] Amen. Please join me in Luke chapter number 6. Let that be our prayer of the day that as we leave here, that God would show his love to those that are around us as we build our life upon him as our foundation.

What a wonderful truth from God's word today. As I said, if you will turn with me to Luke chapter number 6. Any of you like bungee jumping or roller coasters in here? Any of those things like that?

You know, there's a moment when you bungee jump or go on a roller coaster where you're like, I don't want to do this. Why do I do this? Then about halfway down, you're like, oh, this is why I do this.

And not in the area of adrenaline, but in recognizing, oh, this is why I do this. That's the moment I feel when I get to say open Luke chapter number 6. The word of God can transform your life today.

And in doing so, it could express the love of God to some people around you. The decisions are going to be made in here in the next 30 minutes. They're going to make a difference in the life of those that are around you.

[0:56] And regardless of my fragility or how weak I am, God's word is powerful and is eternal. And if you will have ears to hear today and you will make decisions that will build your life upon him, you have that firm foundation, God can use you to demonstrate something that is more than earthly, that's supernatural, a mercy that can only be extended from us to other people because it was first extended to us.

So last week we looked at how we were to view ourselves. And we are supposed to, poverty, hunger, sorrow, rejection, those are a blessing to us. But also riches, satisfaction and happiness, popularity outside of the name of Christ, all of those are a curse.

And we were told to look at ourselves and say, how do you find your happiness? How do you find your satisfaction? Where do you go to find your worth? And if it's outside of Jesus, then woe unto you because that is not the characteristics or distinctive of people who belong to the kingdom.

And so if you don't view yourselves that way, then you aren't part of that kingdom as we were taught. Now we are supposed to look at our view towards other people. The love of God not only transforms the way in which we would see ourselves.

I came to Him poor and broken and I brought nothing to Him. But it also changes the way that I see everything around me and everybody and how we have a distinctive in the way that we would even view those that we would call our enemies.

[2:18] Read a funny story. A man was celebrating his 102nd birthday. And they said, what is the secret to your happiness? And he says, have no enemies. Don't have anybody that's against you. And they said, well, what's the key to that?

He said, outlive them all. All right. And since most of them aren't going to live to 102, we have to wrestle with what is this when it says to love our enemies. Because I asked Tinsley yesterday if she had any enemies.

And she said, not that she's aware of. All right. And I'm not aware of them either. And don't have the idea that when this was being preached here in Luke chapter number six in the Sermon on the Mount, that everybody was dressed up as a warrior looking across the field at an enemy in the most literal sense.

But they were living lives in their context very similar to ours, meaning that they would have enemies as described here, the same that you would. That none of you get to check out today and say, that's not about me.

I believe as you look at it, you're going to see that it is about you and that you need to let the love of God be demonstrated through you. So we need to be retaught about love. Matthew 5, 43, the same sermon here.

[3:21] You have heard that it has been said, thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. You have heard that it's said, and it's the world that teaches you and unbelievers teach you. Love your neighbor, of course. Do good to people that are good to you, but you ought to hate your enemy.

That's a common thing. People take pride in that. You better not cross me. I'm nice until a point. We take a lot of pride in the fact that we are the type of people that you can't cross us. You know, you can't fool us more than once, that we are going to get revenge.

I stand for my own. You better not hurt my family. And we take a sense of pride that people should not come after us. But it says, ye have heard that it hath been said.

I don't know what some of you might have went to training for or went to college for. But most, none of you have studied love as a major or as a minor. But up to this point in your life, you've been taught a lot of lessons.

Sometimes in a formal sense, in a Sunday school class, through a teacher teaching you what the Bible says. Other times being programmed by watching it maybe on television, being indoctrinated through a song, by having conversations, or through life experience.

[4:25] Maybe you've experienced the hurt of someone telling you they don't love you anymore. And that helped form your understanding of love. Or you've seen in the movies that if you have the perfect soulmate, then nothing's ever wrong.

If you find the right person, you never have financial trouble. Nobody ever gets sick. Or maybe you've heard it said by an angry father to your mother that she was worthless and unloving. And that not only hurt her, but it hurts your definition of love.

You have worked hard to be loved by someone and felt rejected. And not only did that hurt you, but it hurts your understanding of love. Or you've heard it sung in songs, I will love you until I die. But you've rarely seen it lived out in real life.

We sing about it and we talk about it, but we don't see it. Or maybe you're in third grade and you took Rachel Cook a box of chocolates and you're embarrassed by it because everybody else was giving out Valentine's cards.

And you found out Rachel Cook thought you spoke funny because you had a speech impediment. I don't know. That might be your story here today. But maybe that was it. And so even as a third grader, you begin to figure out what is love?

[5:28] How do I get it? I want it. I desire it. And you start asking people for it. And you realize that this world is not a place to go to to get love because it's so desperately seeking it for itself.

And so what we have heard said about love isn't very helpful. But we're getting instructions as believers. So I don't care what up to this point in your life, what bad examples you have, how many Rachel Cooks you've had in your life, or how many bad stories that you have, or how bad your things were for you, how many times your heart's been broken, that the King Jesus wants you, as a child of the highest, to understand what love is.

And it's beautiful. And it's possible to us. So there's some distinctions between us that hear and those that are unbelievers. 1 Corinthians 2.14 says, But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, not the things that are going to be taken today from God's Word, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Which is to say today, that if I tell you something that's from the Word of God, and you say, That is foolishness, I am definitely going to retaliate. I am definitely going to seek revenge. What you're saying is foolishness.

That I'm telling you that you are not able to discern the will of God and listen to his Word. And you have recognized that you have not put your faith and trust in him.

[6:48] So how do sinners love? You've seen it displayed all around you. But the Bible knew, oh, 2,000 years ago, what we would know to be true today. Luke 6.32, For if you love them which love you, what think ye have?

For sinners also love them that love them. Sinners love people that love them. In Matthew 5.46, it talks about even the publicans love them. Even the IRS loves you guys in here when you do everything they want you to do, right?

Even the people, when you do unto other people what they want done, and you show love to them, it's very easy for you to love people that are lovable. It's easier to love people that you know that love you.

And even the world would say that. Hey, why would you not be loving to that person? They're so loving, they're so kind to you. Sinners do good to those that will do good to them. Luke 6.33, And if you do good to them which do good to you, what think ye have ye for?

If you do good to them which do good to you, what think ye for? Sinners also do even the same. It's nothing to demonstrate love and to show that you're loving and caring to people. If you think you're going to get something in return, if you're doing a favor for them to get that back, that's just pragmatic.

[7:57] That's just good business. That's just a good way to live. But that isn't demonstrating love. That is just showing more self-love towards yourself to say, I will show love to you because I expect it back to me.

But that's the way that the world, as sinners, would think. But we're called to something greater. Luke 6.34 says, So not only loving people who aren't going to show you love back, but doing good to people that you expect them to do back, which I just spoke about, is that isn't demonstrating love.

Do good to somebody with no expectation of return. Do good to people that you know they could not if they wanted to pay you back. Do good because you're able to draw from a reservoir of treasuring Christ that will give to other people, and you don't need to replace that in your life.

You're not having to say, I can take this box out of my heart and give it to you because I need an equal or one back. There's a bunch of southern hospitality rules that we don't follow anymore.

One of them, I've been told, is that if somebody gives you a casserole dish, a good Baptist thing to do, right? They give you a casserole and it comes in a dish. You're not supposed to send the casserole dish backwards, backwards, back to them empty, right?

[9:13] You're supposed to put something in it. You're supposed to put some cookies in it or at least a thank you card. But something, they gave it to you like that, and you're supposed to give it back to them with something in it. But we're saying give casserole dishes when you're not even going to get your casserole dish back, all right?

Give casserole away when people say, I don't even like casserole. All right? Give casserole dishes with no expectation of anything in return. And in doing so, you give unto the Lord.

You give unto the Lord when you give, when you say, God, I'm giving this to somebody, but it's not really about them. It's about you. So teaching is addressed to those that can hear. And that's what we said in verse 27.

But I say unto you which hear, those that are believing and hear the day, those that have put their faith and trust in Christ, those that say that I will live based upon what Christ says is love, and I will not look to the world.

So those that which hear, that I want you to know that love your enemies and do good to them which hate you. You've probably seen it a lot in commercials. I remember it a lot in YouTube videos.

[10:12] My kids watch of Dude Perfect and things, and they'll say, do not try this at home. All right? They're always saying, do not try this at home. And I'm glad they tell that to them because I do not want them trying this at home.

Well, I want to tell you in here today, do not try this as an unbeliever. In here today, if you do not know Jesus Christ, if He has not met your need, if you're not satisfied in Him, I'm not asking you to love in this way because it is not given unto you because you have never experienced the love of Christ.

And so you'll never be able to love other people in the same way because it is not getting you a treasure in heaven, but treasuring Jesus Christ in heaven will allow you to do this. We're not earning our salvation on the Sermon on the Mount.

We're saying because you are believers, you now have this ability to love in a way that you never thought was possible, in a way that the world says is foolishness, in a way that is contrary to the things of this world.

And so we are to be different. I would encourage you to do a study on the effects Christianity has had upon the world's history. I mean, Christianity has done so many wonderful things.

[11:17] Elevated the role of women in culture. It has helped value female children as much as males. Men loving and caring for their wives and not pursuing relationships outside marriage.

Enjoying having joy even though there's persecution. Taking care of widows and the poor. Pooling our meager possessions together. The care for one another. That has been the testimony of Christianity ever since the time of Christ.

And even before that, the children of God, when they lived up to who they were, you would be able to pass by their fields and see there was some food left out for you. You would be able to go in as a stranger and be accepted. Psalm 86, which I never give the word of God justice, but on Thursday night, Psalm 86 said, Not only will Babylon and Egypt and Philistia and Tyre, not only will they be part of the city of Zion, but they will have a citizenship with you.

Such a wonderful truth that's being taught to us here. We are supposed to be the most loving and caring people in all of the world. In this book called The Rise of Christianity, there's a story about a plague of 165.

And this is a tribute of those Christians at the time. It says, Our lives ought to be distinctly different from those of unbelievers.

[13:10] And the way that it is is that I am willing to give of myself, even if it costs me something to demonstrate the love of God. And so once again, how is it you're able to hear what's being said from God's word?

How is it that you're unable to love this? You came hungry. You came weeping. You came knowing that you were sick. And you came poor to him. And you said, I have nothing. The opposite of what the world would have you to do, which is to say, which is to make up a resume and say, This is all that I have to offer to you, God.

But we came to God completely with an empty page and say, I have nothing to offer. But I come broken to you today. And then when you come to him like that, he fills your life with so much love that it's now able to overflow.

You brought nothing to him, but now you're supernaturally enabled to do what would not even be possible before. It's incredible. It's a transformation. And so there's seven things in this passage that are mentioned that are the opposite of the way sinners would see love.

And I'm going to mention them to you, and then we'll walk through them. First of all, it says, love your enemies. Second, do good to those who hate you. Third, bless those that curse you.

[14:20] Four, pray for those who mistreat you. Five, do not retaliate, but give freely. Number seven, treat others the way that you want to be treated.

In this short order, right in a row, Jesus Christ says, this is the way you should love your enemies. But I say unto you, which here, love your enemies. So first we have to identify, Tinsley, who is an enemy, right?

Who is an enemy in our lives if we don't believe we have them? And so it says in verse 27, it would be those that curse you. It would be those in verse number 28 that spitefully use you. Verse number 30 would be those that harm you physically or those that would rob you.

Verse number 35 is those who are unthankful. That's what Jesus is saying, those that would be unthankful towards him. So those that curse you, despise you, harm you, and that are unthankful to you.

Those of you, in summary, in verse number 32, for if you love them which love you, what have you? For sinners also love those that love them. And so who is our neighbor here is that loving those who do not love you.

[15:26] How are we defining our enemy of the day? It's simply those that don't love you. That's the simplest way to take it. And so it doesn't look like a soldier on the other side of a battlefield wearing an opposite side of a uniform.

It looks like a person that just simply does not demonstrate love to you, maybe because they don't have any in their heart to give to you. And they use you spitefully, they hurt you, they're unthankful towards you, and God tells you to love them.

You know, to be honest, Tinsley, there's even times that I'm sure your mom and dad feel like they are the enemy. And there's times that I may feel like my kids are the enemy. And the fact that I'm like, do you really love me?

And you're going to leave the milk out? You know how I feel about lukewarm milk, all right? And the spitefully, usually somebody that I'm not feeling like they're loving me. Anybody else know what I'm talking about? Milk needs to never get above a certain temperature.

If it does, you just got to throw it out and start all over. That's for another day. All right. But so who is your neighbor? It's not just friends and brothers. And Jesus answers that. So who is my neighbor?

[16:27] And Jesus gives the great story about the Samaritan. And he says, it's just not your neighbor, it's not your brother, but it's anybody that you come in the counter with that you have an opportunity to expend the love of God to it.

So what I want to bring that to you is because he makes one law, and it's the law of love. Love your neighbor even if your neighbor is your enemy. There's not two different standards.

Don't love your neighbor, hate your enemy. It says, no, love your neighbor, which is everybody you come into contact with, even if they are your enemy. There's only one law, which I'm so grateful, right?

Keep things simple for us here. You don't need one of those charts that you go to and it says, if yes, go this way. If no, go this way. And you try to figure it out. You don't have one of those.

Is it a person? Yes, love them. All right? Is it your enemy? Yes, love them. Is it your brother? Yes, love them. It's just simply love everybody and want to do good towards them that don't want to do good towards you.

[17:22] Here's a couple examples. Exodus chapter number 23. If you have your enemy's ox is in a ditch and you're passing by it and you see it, you should help get that ox out. Or if you're going down the road and his donkey has a burden that is too heavy on him and the donkey collapse, you should surely stop and help him.

So you're going down the road today and your friend's Chevy truck is stuck in a ditch, you in your Ford truck, right? You pull them out, whatever it is, and the time in which we would live them. And so if you're in the ditch, if they're seeing that, that you shouldn't even ask yourself.

There's no evaluating and saying, well, whose donkey is this? Do I like the person enough? There's not a sliding scale. You just simply say, I'm going to help this donkey out of this ditch.

Leviticus 19.18. 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. Don't hold grudges.

Don't hold bitterness towards people. But to let it, seek reconciliation. Don't hold on to those things. It will destroy you. And so here we see love your enemies.

[18:29] Why? Because we're told to love our neighbors even when they are our enemies. Number two. Do good to those who hate you. But I say unto you which hear, love your enemies. Do good to them which hate you.

Love here is shown in an action towards them. It doesn't say, just feel warm and fuzzy about people that feel warm and fuzzy for you, right? Or feel warm and fuzzy towards somebody who has bad thoughts towards you.

That's quite easy to do. Or you would think that it is, right? But it isn't possible. If you really feel the warm and fuzzy kind of love that you're saying that you feel towards somebody, it's going to come out in action.

You can't say, I know that they hate me and I know they don't love me, but I feel good towards them. I've forgiven them. I love them. I just want nothing to do with them. That's not loving. Love will always demonstrate itself in action.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. He did not just say, hey, on earth I'm going to let you die in your sins. I love you.

[19:26] I'm sending warm thoughts. I'm sending vibes down there to heaven. Warm thoughts and vibes down there to you. He says, no, I love you and I'm going to act in a way in accordance with that love that I have for you.

And so we're demonstrating something about the love of God when we do. Psalm 103 verse 10. He hath not dealt with us after our sins nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

You see, the love of God, I was forgiven a billion dollar debt and so I can turn around and I can forgive a person. A ten dollar debt, which is a story Jesus tells along these lines, is that I have received forgiveness not based upon who I am.

That he does not see me based upon my actions towards him, but he offers me forgiveness. And the same way we are supposed to demonstrate to people that we're not judging them based upon their last past performance in our lives.

That we love them in an unconditional way. So God is seen as merciful and all satisfying when we act in this manner. When he gives us all that we need, we know that we don't need it from anybody else.

[20:26] And so I'd ask you, even right now, before we get to an end, pray right now that God would show you what the good thing is. We'll look at three examples at the end. But what is something that God might lay in your heart right now towards somebody you know that is not loving towards you?

What is something that you could do good in their lives? And I'm praying that during the time of invitation, or even right now, that God would identify people and things that you can do for them that would demonstrate that God is all satisfying to you.

Number three, bless those who curse you. Verse 28, bless them that curse you. Pray for them that spitefully use you. What was commonly believed was in verse number 43 is that you're supposed to hate your enemy.

And so that's the ideal that we're supposed to have is somebody spitefully uses you. I was trying to think of a Bible example of somebody that I got spitefully used. And I know there's many good examples.

But the one that I just immediately want to was that poor father in the story of the prodigal son. I mean, it wasn't, I know we like the rush towards the end of that story. I know that I do.

[21:31] But there came a time where the son came to him and said, basically, I'm going to treat you like you're dead. I want my inheritance now. And not only did he say, I want to treat you like you're dead and take my inheritance now.

I'm going to move away from you and totally disassociate myself away from you. And that father was spitefully used. But we know what happened, right?

That father did not curse him in his prayers. He was not cursing his son. He was praying God's blessings upon somebody that would spitefully use him. And on that day when he was in his yard and his son comes out in the distance and he runs to him and he embraces his son.

He does acts of good to his son and he pours out God's blessing upon him. But then the older brother shows up who had been spitefully used or who felt like he was being taken advantage of.

And he says to his father, my brother is spitefully used us. He doesn't use these words, but he said, he's taken something from me. And I don't get what he has, a totally different heart. It's the heart of a father towards a son.

[22:34] And in verse number 32 of Luke 15 it says, And was meet that we should make merry and be glad. For this thy brother was dead and is alive again and was lost and is found.

Just like the father had become dead to the son and the father's heart it felt like he had lost the son and his heart was broken. He did not care about the details. He did not care about the money. He did not care that he was spitefully used.

He says, I love my son. Those of you that have children in here, we know what that love is like and we know that it would hurt. But I would say that that can be extended beyond those, the all people in our lives.

That we can love all people in the same way and say, I pray for the day that we could rejoice again in the front yard. And I pray for these blessings. Verse, the fourth one here.

Pray for those who mistreat you. Bless them that curse you and pray for them that spitefully use you. Stephen here is someone. And so, those that had hated the enemy that had been cursing.

[23:31] That the son had basically cursed his father and spitefully used him by saying, you're dead to me and I'm not going to live and separate it from you. But then here's Stephen. That when people are cursing at him and killing him for the cause of Christ.

And he says in Acts chapter number 7 verse 60. And he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice. Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

We go through the Psalms and we see people crying out to God. Because they have this strong desire to say, God, I need you to hear from me. It's not that you're deaf. It's not that you're far away.

But this is so boiling in my heart that I just want to cry out to you. Please hear my prayer. And normally our prayers are for us. And say, God, I need you to hear my prayers because my heart is broken.

But Stephen, what was on his heart was, God, I need you to forgive these people. I need you to not lay their sin at their charge. Take their sin and lay it at the foot of Jesus that had died for them.

[24:33] He is praying that they accept the gospel. He is praying that they would know Jesus Christ. Incredible. You know, that isn't the last story. It isn't the only story in the Bible. It isn't the only story in history.

And God, and it was probably not even the last story this week. This same thing has been repeated. People in Afghanistan that are part of the kingdom of God, many of them have probably said very similar things to people that have been persecuting them.

And how do they do that? Do they have better resources than you? Do they have a better education than you? Do they grow up better than you? No, their lives were transformed by the love of God. And now they're acting in a way in which the world cannot understand.

And then we're told not to retaliate. If somebody spikes you on the cheek, you're supposed to turn the other cheek. If somebody takes their cloak from you and him to take away your cloak, forbid him not to take the coat also.

Somebody takes something, some apparel from you, some clothing, and they keep it and say, hey, you might as well take the coat. It matches it, right? You need to have both of them. They go together. They're a package set. But it says we're not supposed to retaliate.

[25:38] David's such a prime example of this. On two occasions, he has a chance to kill Saul. But he isn't motivated by reaction to Saul. We know both of those occasions he could have. But he says, God, I'm going to honor you.

As it says in Romans 12, 17, recompense to no man evil for evil, providing things honest in the sight of all men. I am not going to play God. I am not going to receive retaliation.

I am going to live honestly before the Lord, and I'm going to leave you where you belong in the hands of God. And I'm going to leave me where I belong, which is in the hands of God.

And so how do we do this? How do you find a treasure outside of retaliation? Psalm 63, verse 3, Because thy loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.

What feels better than revenge? Obedience to God. What feels better than taking things into your own hands, leaving them in his? I know I've been picking on my kids a little bit today.

[26:36] I owe you extra ice cream. But every one of you know when your kids are on a path of revenge, right? You know, I don't know what the other one did, but I know that you are now on a path of revenge to go after them.

And why do we do it? It feels good. It really feels good. It feels like we are balancing the scale. But their charge, their scale is not in our hands.

We cannot change the scale for them. Their scale belongs to the Lord, and our scale belongs unto the Lord. And so we've got to say, regardless of how it feels in the moment, that my response ought to be, I want to obey Him.

Deuteronomy 32, 35, not only was it said in Romans, but it said all the way back in Deuteronomy, To me belongeth vengeance and recompense. Their feet shall slide in due time, for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.

That God in due season, that you will respond. Number six, give freely. Give to every man that asketh, him that taketh away the goods, ask them again. And so how do you live in a generous way when people are criticizing you?

[27:42] There's a woman, what a wonderful story, right? The woman with an alabaster box, that she comes to Jesus, and we learn in the story of Mary, and it appears that she understands that Jesus is headed to the cross, even though a lot of people around don't seem to know that about Jesus, but she's paying attention.

And she goes and brings him an ointment, which is preparing for the day of his death. It's an incredible picture of worship. And while she is there, there's some that have indignation towards them, and that criticize her.

And they criticize, how are you able to do that? Why would you do that? You could have sold that and given it to the poor. Like, what are you doing? How would you do that? It doesn't make sense. You know, your actions shouldn't always be understood by unbelievers, and that we can be generous in the same way even people don't understand.

A lot of times there's a peer pressure that you want to retaliate because the people around you don't understand how you could give forgiveness, how you could break that alabaster box, because they're living according to a different paradigm.

They're living in a different way. And so do you want an alabaster box today? Do you want something that you could break and give to the feet of Jesus that doesn't make any sense to this world? Then pour out to someone who doesn't deserve it, to somebody who doesn't love you, the love of Christ on them.

[28:56] And you can break an alabaster box and say, God, everybody around me doesn't understand this. People are filled with indignation towards me. I've been doing this, but I'm going to demonstrate love and treat others in the way that you want to be treated.

And you should know that men should do this, that you do to them likewise. And so what is it that we want? We want understanding. We want compassion. And even what we don't know about this word, we want it.

We want grace. Even if you don't know the word, people want grace. And we'd want somebody to share the gospel with us. If you were the one that was not loving towards somebody and you did not know the gospel, you weren't able to give the show love because you didn't do it, if you're in that situation, you would want that person to get over all the bitterness and grudge and come to you and with a broken heart, share the gospel.

Don't allow the hurts of your past to keep you from sharing the gospel with people that God has placed in your life. And so God's love for us is so great to give us what we deserve.

God's love he gives us, God's love for us is too great to give to us what we deserve. You know, he loves us too much to give us what we deserve. Your love for other people ought to be too great to give them what they deserve.

[30:06] Don't measure it out, but give it full and plentiful. Let us be an example that he follows. And so what are three ways that we can show our love to our enemies? In the Sermon on the Mount recorded in Matthew 5, if you salute your brethren only, what do you more than others?

Do not even the public and so? Don't ignore them, but embrace them. Don't turn a cold shoulder towards them. Don't ignore them. The picture of the embracing would be maybe if we were in this room today, it'd be one thing for you to come to somebody and that you have been friends with and all that, but there's somebody that there is something between you and them that you would go to them and you embrace them.

If a lot of you line up to hug me today, I might be a little offended, all right? But that's what it's saying there. It says that those in your life, which means that we can't ignore them. When you know there's somebody that's not loving towards you, then you have to initiate that because Jesus was the one who initiated the relationship with you.

And to be Christ-like means that we cannot be indifferent towards them. So don't, to greet them. Number two, meet their physical needs. The evil are those who hate God, but God gives them sunshine and rain.

Matthew 5, 45, But they, my children, a father which is in heaven for they maketh his son to rise on the evil and on the good and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. And we're told in the like manner that we should feed them that hunger, even if they are our enemy, and to give them drink.

[31:29] God lets it rain upon the farm here in Forsyth County of the unbelieving man, and he lets it rain upon the man who is a believer, because even though the unbelieving man is a man of evil, who has not loved Jesus Christ, has not responded to that gift, God does good towards those that hate him.

And in like manner, you should do good to those who do not love you. And then lastly, pray for them. Prayer for your enemy is one of the deepest forms of love, because it means that you have to really want something good to happen to them.

If you can't come to a point where you say, God, I want you to do good towards them, then your heart is not yet loving, because love is the ultimate form of caring for somebody. And this is how we demonstrate the love of God to a broken world.

Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. It's incredible that we get to extend this wonderful thing called mercy. You're not going to find it in this world.

It doesn't exist here. You can look at the periodic table, you're not going to find mercy. It doesn't exist outside of God. But God extended it to us, and now we're the benefactors of it, and we can now extend it to other people.

[32:37] It does not exist outside of him, and we would not have access to it unless we were the children of the highest. We have it because our Father makes it available.

You shall be the children of the highest, for he is kind, and unto the unthankful, and to the evil. Loving your enemy doesn't earn you a reward, as I said, but treasuring the reward of heaven empowers you to love your enemy.

And so as Charlotte comes to play the piano, I want to ask you to make a couple decisions based upon God's word. I believe that God's word can transform you in this moment if you had recognized your ability to love is greater than what you've heard.

What you have heard about love is far short of what it is. Love your neighbor? Yes, everybody should do that, and that's even a hard challenge, right? But love your enemy? It's absolutely impossible unless you are a child of the Most High.

And so today I give you an invitation to come and be a child of God, to put your faith and trust in Him. But those of you in here that are believers, I'm going to pray for you, and I'm going to pray that you're going to make a decision, and you're going to say, God, those who do not love me, I'm asking that you would lay something upon my heart, that God, I'm going to begin praying for them.

[33 : 46] I'm going to do good unto them. I'm going to pray for blessings upon their lives, and not curses upon their lives. And I'm asking God today that as a result of the decisions that you will make as His children, those that are among us and outside of His kingdom will see a demonstration of His mercy.

Heavenly Father, I pray right now, first of all, for our brothers and sisters in Christ, and may the Word of God impact their heart in the same way that it is impacting mine even right now, Lord.

I pray that they will find love in their heart for those, Lord. They find it only in You. I pray that people will let go of a desire to retaliate, and they'll find that You are all satisfying.

I pray that those that have been praying blessing, that will pray for blessings upon those who spitefully use them. God, transform us into Your image.

With every head bowed, every eye closed, believers invited to pray here at the altar, to pray there in your seat. Because of Jesus Christ and His love for you, I want to be a demonstration of His love for you today.

[34 : 52] Jesus Christ knew you completely. He knows the sin that you've lived in. He knows when you've rejected Him. Nothing in your entire life has ever been hidden from Him. And because of that, you may not believe that He's able to love you.

But I want you to know that Jesus Christ loves you, and He gave Himself to die for you. And today, He wants you to experience that love and accept Him as your Lord and Savior.

And if you're in here today, and you have not experienced the love of Christ and put your faith and trust in Him, would you raise your hand so I can just speak to you a moment and give you some instructions so that you would not leave this place without knowing the mercy of Jesus Christ.

Heavenly Fathers, we continue to pray. Thank You for Your Word and that it has found a place upon the hearts of us as believers. Continue to pray there in your seat. And here in a moment, I will come up and I'll ask You to stand and we will sing together.

Amen.