

2026-07-05: 4th Sunday of Paone - "Love your enemies"

"But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you." (Luke 6:27-28)

Love your Enemies

- The Lord recognizes that we will have enemies... but enemies are those who hate us, not those who we hate. We respond to them in love, trusting that God will protect our cause.
- Many times we are concerned lest when we show love, people will take advantage of us... but if we trust in God, He will protect our cause
- Love your enemies
 - This is a radical new teaching
 - In the Old Testament it was said "love your neighbor and hate your enemy" - we never heard before the Lord Jesus Christ that anyone said "love your enemies"
 - It is a very simple command to understand, but very difficult to obey - unless you receive grace from the Holy Spirit
 - Love is not emotion (warm fuzzy feeling) but a **decision**
 - If we wait for our emotions or feelings, we may never love them
 - I need to make the **decision** that I will love my enemy and do good for them
 - The Lord is speaking about acts of love.
 - "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink" (Romans 12:20)
 - When God sees me doing this, then this love will be processed by the Holy Spirit from the mind and will and intellect to the heart and emotions
- How to love enemies:
 - Do good to those who hate you
 - If someone hates me, what is my gut feeling? Maybe my gut feeling is to hate him back.
 - Maybe by self-control, I am able to ignore and avoid him and do nothing - be neutral.
 - But the commandment of God is even one level higher... to actively go out of my way to do good for him
 - Bless those who curse you
 - If I am cursed at, what is my gut feeling? Maybe my gut feeling is to curse back.
 - Maybe by self-control, I am able not to respond and to ignore and to walk away.
 - But the commandment of God is even one level higher... to bless him.
 - Pray for those who spitefully use you

- The Lord gives some examples

How?

To him who strikes you on the *one* cheek, offer the other also. And from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold *your* tunic either. Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him who takes away your goods do not ask *them* back. And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise.

- For us, this commandment is so foreign - how can I just let someone strike me? How can I just take it or accept it? I will appear weak! I will be enabling him! I will be taken advantage. Actually, if I just let him abuse me, then he won't learn and maybe he'll do it again to someone else... no, I need to teach him a lesson! It is good for him, God would want someone to teach him a lesson. Actually, God sent me to teach him a lesson...
- This is the conversation I'd probably have in my head within a moment of being struck...
- But the commandment of God is clear. Offer the other also.
- There was a man who was demon possessed and they took him to see an elder hermit that God had graced with the power to cast out demons. The demon caused the man to slap the hermit... the hermit turned the other cheek and the demon immediately left the man. The demon cried out "I must leave - I cannot stay any longer. The commandment of Christ is casting me out." Nothing puts down the pride of the devil as humility and obedience to the commandment of God.
- Practical Examples:
 - Someone cuts you off in traffic - so I start honking and getting mad and tailgating him, etc. That's retaliation... turning the other cheek is that I tap my brakes, and let him go. And maybe later on when he wants to come in, I let him come in the lane.
 - Someone posts about you on social media in a sarcastic or mean way - so I start posting about them and making fun of them, etc. That's retaliation... turning the other cheek is ignoring it, and speaking about that person graciously.
 - Your spouse comes home from a long day, irritated... so you start bringing up what he did 5 years ago and how he doesn't contribute around the house, etc. That's retaliation... turning the other cheek is pausing, giving him some space, and going to serve him.
 - Someone at work takes credit for your work... so I start publicly embarrassing them, sabotaging their work, etc. That's retaliation... turning the other cheek is that I clarify my contribution if needed and I am calm and without bitterness.
 - Someone gossips about me... so I gossip about them. That's retaliation! Turning the other cheek is that I speak the truth about myself, speak generously of the person, and go about my day
- Let me always consider whether or not my response is for retaliation, or given out of anger... or if it is graciousness and to be a peacemaker.
- This commandment doesn't mean I should allow myself to be abused or taken advantage of, but it means that I am a peacemaker. It means that I let the small things go. It means that I am gracious. It means that I don't allow my spirit to be disturbed.
- Christianity demands a standard that surpasses what is normally expected

- We have the grace of the Holy Spirit - so we are expected to behave in a behavior which surpasses the normal
- The Lord urges us to pursue a lifestyle that demonstrates God's mercy to everyone
- If we are grounded in God's love, trusting fully in the Holy Spirit, it will be easy for us to live in this way

No Credit Otherwise

“But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to *those* from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

- I was talking to someone once who had gotten upset from one of his brothers. And he said to me “I am very humble usually, but when someone goes against me I can’t hold myself.”
 - So I told him, Okay... that means you are not humble! Humility is not proven until it has been tested... Unless I can be humble in the face of a decision I disagree with, and in the face of tribulation, then I am not humble!
 - The same with love!
- If I only love those who love me, it doesn’t count! It’s not love! “What credit is that to you?”
- If I only do good to those who do good to me, it doesn’t count! It’s not doing good! “What credit is that to you?”

The Reward

“Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”

- Measure of grain so pressed and shaken that it could hold no more and has started to run over
- With the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you
- It is a powerful motivation for us - if we want more from the Love of God and forgiveness and goodness, then give more to the others and you will receive

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