

Luke 6:27-38
A Call to Love and Mercy

Be loving in response to hostility—6:27-31 ²⁷ *But I say to you^{pl} who are listening:*

- 1) Love is difficult and realistic—6:27a
 - a) Love your^{pl} enemies,
 - i) This is an unprecedented response to religious persecution (cf. 6:22). The Law commanded love for those who had similar thinking (Leviticus 19:18).
 - 2) Specific examples/illustrations of loving your enemies—6:27b-31
 - a) Love is commendably active toward them—6:27b-28
 - i) Actions—do good to those who hate you^{pl},
 - ii) Words—²⁸ bless those who curse you^{pl}, (quoted by Paul in Romans 12:14; asking God to confer well-being on another)
 - iii) Prayer—pray for those who mistreat you^{pl}.
 - (1) Including false accusations (cf. 1st Peter 3:16)
 - b) Love is courageously vulnerable regarding insults—6:29
 - i) Positive—²⁹ To the person who hits you on the cheek, offer the other also,
 - (1) Probably in light of public rejection, including expulsion from a synagogue and a slap with the back of one's hand.
 - (2) This is not mere pacifism, and not teaching it is wrong to defend yourself when attacked.
 - ii) Negative—and from the person who takes away your (outer) cloak, do not hold back (i.e. refuse) your (inner) tunic either.
 - c) Love is selflessly generous regarding possessions—6:30
 - i) Positive—³⁰ Give to everyone who asks you.
 - ii) Negative—And from him who takes away what is yours, do not demand them (your belongings) back.
 - d) Love is selflessly considerate regarding preferences—6:31 ³¹ And just as you^{pl} want other people to do for you^{pl}, do the same to them.
 - i) Give the sensitive consideration to the preferences of others that we want from them.
 - 3) One will only accept these startling commands if one trusts that God will indeed reward the faithful, and that He will be just in His judgment.

Be merciful in spite of the response you get—6:32-34

- 1) A series of negative, penetrating questions—6:32-34
 - a) Concerning love—6:32 ³² And if (1st class) you^{pl} love those who love you^{pl}, what credit (from God) is that to you^{pl}? For even the sinners love those who love them. (Sinners love those who will love them in return.)
 - b) Concerning doing good—6:33 ³³ And if (3rd class) you^{pl} do good to those who do good to you^{pl}, what credit (from God) is that to you^{pl}? For even the sinners do the same. (Sinners do good to receive good in return,)

- c) Concerning lending—6:34 ³⁴ *And if (3rd class) you^{pl} lend to those from whom you^{pl} expect to receive, what credit (from God) is that to you^{pl}? For even sinners lend to sinners, so that they may receive back the equal amount. (Sinners make safe loans to each other.)*
- d) All three of these address the issue of being God-like in our actions toward our enemies who reject God's Word.
- e) "Jesus taught that the unsaved and sinners can do a measure of acceptable public good: 'If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same' (Luke 6:33). In Paul's theology of common grace, 'Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law' (Rom 2:14). No one is bereft of the rudiments of morality, civil righteousness, and a sense of the common good. Sinners and Gentiles do their non-redemptive good via the Holy Spirit and His ministry of common grace." (McCune, 2:299)

Summary of love—6:35-38

- 1) Be Godward in your response to the misery of others—6:35-36
 - a) What? (restated from 6:27 & 34)
 - i) ³⁵ *But love your^{pl} enemies, do good, and lend expecting nothing in return;*
 - b) Why?
 - i) Great reward—*and your^{pl} reward will be great,*
 - ii) Reflects your relationship with God—*and you^{pl} will be sons of the Most High, because **He** (emphatic) is kind to the ungrateful and evil.*
 - (1) You will bear a family resemblance to Him, as a son to a father. It reveals your spiritual line of descent.
 - c) Summary
 - i) The command—³⁶ *Therefore, be merciful,*
 - ii) The standard—*just as your^{pl} Father also is merciful.*
 - (1) God shows mercy to His enemies (cf. Exodus 34:6; Deuteronomy 4:31; Joel 2:31; Jonah 4:2; 2nd Samuel 24:14)
- 2) Be Godward in your non-judgmental response to others—6:37-38
 - a) Negative—don't take God's place in judging the motives of your enemy
 - i) ³⁷ *And do not judge, and you^{pl} will never ever be judged.*
 - (1) Jesus judged people (cf. 11:37-54)
 - ii) *Do not condemn, and you^{pl} will never ever be condemned.*
 - iii) Jesus is not eliminating all ethical evaluation. (cf. Matthew 7:6)
 - b) Positive—respond as God does to His enemies
 - i) What?
 - (1) Pardon—*Forgive, and you^{pl} will be forgiven.*
 - (a) This is a willingness to forgive enemies with a repentant attitude
 - (2) Generosity—³⁸ *Give, and it will be given to you^{pl},*
 - (a) How? *a good measure, ... will be given into your^{pl} bosom/lap.*
 - (i) *pressed down and shaken together, and running over,*
 - ii) Why? *For with the measure you^{pl} use, it will be measured out in return to you^{pl}.*

(1) People normally respond to you as you treat them.

Take-home truth: This type of startling love is possible, but only by the transforming grace of God.