



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Examining the text & our hearts:

Bible Reading: Luke 6:27-38

²⁷ “But I say to you who listen: Love your enemies, do what is good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. ²⁹ If anyone hits you on the cheek, offer the other also. And if anyone takes away your coat, don’t hold back your shirt either. ³⁰ Give to everyone who asks you, and from someone who takes your things, don’t ask for them back. ³¹ Just as you want others to do for you, do the same for them. ³² If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. ³³ If you do what is good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. ³⁴ And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners to be repaid in full. ³⁵ But love your enemies, do what is good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High. For he is gracious to the ungrateful and evil. ³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful. ³⁷ “Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. ³⁸ Give, and it will be given to you; a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over—will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.” (CSB)

I. Framing the scene – comparing Jesus with Moses

1. Moses at Mount Sinai

- a. Moses went up Mount Sinai
- b. Communed with God for 40 days and night
- c. Came down with the 10 commandments – how to live as God’s people

- d. Forty years later he repeated the covenant when they were about to enter the land
 - e. Warned with blessing and curse depending on their response
2. Jesus on the plain
- a. Went up to the mountain to pray – 6:12
 - b. Chose the twelve
 - c. The people of Israel are oppressed by the Romans, tax collectors. They are oppressed, they are reaping the curses due to not living as God's covenant people
 - d. So Jesus comes with a new covenant, a renewing of the covenant. It includes blessings and woes depending on how they will live
 - The 'Sermon on the Plain'...is not a collection of [wisdom] sayings. It is instead reminiscent of the covenantal teachings of Exodus, Leviticus, & Deuteronomy...[6:20-49 is a text of covenant renewal, much like Deut. & Josh. 24.] [Dale Allison, *Constructing Jesus*, p. 89]
 - "The *most important covenant renewal speech* we have from Jesus, known as the 'Sermon on the Mount' (Matt. 5-7), paralleled by the 'Sermon on the Plain' (Lk. 6:20-49), suggests how the covenant renewal worked to revive mutual social-economic assistance and cooperation in community life, and thus strengthening the people's ability to resist further disintegration of family & community by the predatory pressures of the wealthy and powerful." [Richard A. Horsley, "Jesus and the Renewal of Covenantal Economics," in R. Jewell (ed.) *Bible & the American Futures*, p.]
 - Note "the reference to the mountain. Jesus goes up to talk to God & to choose the leaders [i.e., the Twelve] among his followers. The...reference is clearly to the Sinai tradition. Moses goes up the mountain to talk with God, while the people wait below to receive God's word & make a covenant with him. The particular occasion...to which Luke [alludes]...relates is the ascent of Moses with Aaron, Nadab & Abihu, together with 70...elders of Israel, to see the God of Israel. At the foot of the mountain, Moses summons all the people & enacts a covenant with Yahweh sealed with blood (Ex. 24:1-18). The tradition differentiates between leaders & all the people... In the same way, Luke distinguishes... between the disciples and the crowds ...What is taking place is a renewal of God's covenant with Israel enacted by Jesus as a prophet like Moses. This is confirmed at the [Sermon's conclusion...] "And when all his words were completed in the hearing of the people" (Lk. 7:1), which is reminiscent of Deut. 32:45, '& when Moses had finished all these words to all Israel.' ...In the face of social & economic collapse in Israel...as the consequence of Israel's failure to keep the [Old] covenant—thus activating the curses of the covenant—Jesus renews the covenant with Yahweh and promises that the curses will be replaced by blessings in response to the obedience of the people...The covenant renewal ceremonies...recorded in the... [OT] (e.g., Josh 23, Neh 9, Dan 9:4-19, 2 Kgs 22-23, Jer 34:3 22...) all require the public recital before the people of the covenant stipulations and the blessings & curses." [JA. Draper, "Jesus' 'Covenantal Discourse' on the Plain," R. Horsley (ed.) *Oral Performance*, pp. 91-92]
 - e. The new covenant does not conflict with the OT.
 - Take care of your relationships with others
 - In OT they were to take care of the foreigner, the widows and the orphans (the disadvantaged)

II. How Children of the Most High Respond to adverse situations – the mark of children of the Most High – 6:27-30, 35

1. The Most High – a term for God

- "This name for the true God comes from Gen. 14:18-22 where Melchizedek, king of Salem, identifies Yahweh as "God Most High"... It became a common title for the Lord among the monotheistic Israelites, especially in the Psalms. (In Dan. 3:26; 4:24, 34 it is the title for God that both Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar hold in common...) Whereas John is the "prophet of the Most High" (Luke 1:76), Jesus is the "Son of the Most High."” ESV Study Bible
- "The Gerasene demoniac ...identifies Jesus as 'son of the Most High God' (Lk. 1:35; 8:28//...The title 'Most High' is repeatedly used to refer to the divinity [i.e., God] ...Those who love their enemies will be 'children of the Most High' (Lk. 6:35) ...The phrase '...of the Most High' [e.g.,

'servants of the Most High God' (Acts 16:17)] in Luke-Acts...is attached to the name of Jesus or other people whom God has given a special purpose or ministry to fulfill." [Mitzi J. Smith, Literary Construction...in Acts..., p. 41]

- The believers are called the children of the Most High – Luke 6:35
 - This name is attached to Jesus and people who have a special ministry to fulfill.
2. This section (27-38) continues the thought of v. 22 *Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you, insult you, and slander your name as evil because of the Son of Man.*
3. Responding to persecution – *Love your enemies, do what is good to those who hate you,* ²⁸ *bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.*
- *Love your enemies* is the first of four short exhortations that call for an unusual response to those who are persecuting disciples. Disciples are to relate to hostility in a completely unprecedented manner. NET Bible
 - “[Love] will be one of [the disciples] most effective weapons in evangelizing the world. However, when He speaks of **love**, He is not referring to the human emotion of that name. This is *supernatural* Only those who are born again can know it or display it. It is utterly impossible for anyone who does not have the indwelling Holy Spirit. A murderer may love his own children, but that is not love as Jesus intended. The one is human affection; the other is divine love. The first requires only physical life; the second requires divine life. The first is largely a matter of the emotions; the second is largely a matter of the will. Anyone can love his friends; it takes supernatural power to love one’s enemies. And *that* is the love (Gk. *agapē*) of the NT. It means to **do good to those who hate you, to bless those who curse you, to pray for those who are nasty to you, and ever and always to turn the other cheek.**” William MacDonald, *Believer’s Bible Commentary*
 - “The word ‘love’ (*agape*) must be understood in its classic Christian sense of having a genuine concern for someone irrespective of his or her attractiveness or of the likelihood of any reciprocation in kind.” Walter L. Liefeld, *The Expositors Bible Commentary*, p. 893
4. Responding to violence – *If anyone hits you on the cheek, offer the other also.*
- The phrase *strikes you on the cheek* probably pictures public rejection, like the act that indicated expulsion from the synagogue. (NET)
 - This command to *offer the other cheek as well* is often misunderstood. It means that there is risk involved in reaching out to people with God’s hope. But if one is struck down in rejection, the disciple is to continue reaching out. (NET)
5. Responding to theft – *And if anyone takes away your coat, don’t hold back your shirt either*
- The command *do not withhold your tunic either* is again an image of continually being totally at risk as one tries to keep contact with those who are hostile to what Jesus and his disciples offer. (NET)
 - “The point of both examples is that, even though believers will often be subject to abuse or taken advantage of, they are to face such rejection differently from the world, that is, by being generous and compassionate rather than retaliating.” ESV Study Bible
6. Similar to Matt 5:10-11 *Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.* ¹¹ *“You are blessed when they insult you and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of me.*
7. Responding to the needy – ³⁰ *Give to everyone who asks you, and from someone who takes your things, don’t ask for them back.*
- Christians should help those who are truly needy. They are not required to give foolishly (see [7:6](#)), to give to a lazy person who is not in need ([2 Thess. 3:10](#)), or to give where giving would do more harm than good. [The ESV Global Study Bible®](#)

III. The Golden Rule – 6:31

- “Jesus teaches that his followers should treat others as they want to be treated. This is known as “the Golden Rule,” and it is a good summary of OT teaching ([7:12](#)). Since God is kind and merciful, his children should be too ([Luke 6:32–36](#)).” [The ESV Global Study Bible®](#)

IV. Common responses don’t mean much – 6:32-34

1. Reciprocity is what sinners do
 - a. Loving those who love you
 - b. Doing good to those who do good to you
 - c. Lending to people who will repay
 - d. Who are sinners? – here common people in society

V. A repeat of the living of children of the Most High – 6:35-36

- ³⁵ *But love your enemies, do what is good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High. For he is gracious to the ungrateful and evil.* ³⁶ *Be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.*

1. Love enemies and don’t expect anything in return
 - There is a reward but what is that reward?
2. This is the life of the children of the Most High
 - “His disciples’ deportment under the pressure of persecution should be so different that it astounds the world. They are to act in a way that no one else acts. They are to be marked with a love that makes the pagans go round scratching their heads.” Dale Ralph Davis, *Luke 1-13*, p. 118
 - **You will be sons [children]** does not mean “you will become sons” but “you will demonstrate that you are sons” by imitating God’s care and compassion even for those who are evil. For **Most High** as an expression for God, see note on 1:32. [The ESV Global Study Bible®](#),
 - “...Jesus repeated that we should **love our enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return**. Such behavior is distinctly Christian and marks out those who are the **sons of the Most High**. Of course, this is not the way men *become* sons of the Most High; that can only happen through receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior ([John 1:12](#)). But this is the way true believers *manifest* themselves to the world as sons of God. God treated us in the way described in verses [27–35](#). **He is kind to the unthankful and the evil**. When we act like that, we manifest the family likeness. We show that we have been born of God.” William MacDonald, *Believer’s Bible Commentary*
 - “The kingdom that Jesus preached and lived was all about a glorious, uproarious, and absurd generosity. Think of the best thing you can do for the worst person, and go ahead and do it.... Think of the people to whom you are tempted to be nasty, and lavish generosity on them instead.... Jesus’ point was not to provide his followers with a new rule-book, a list of dos and don’ts that you could tick off one by one, and sit back satisfied at the end of a successful moral day. The point was to inculcate, and illustrate, an attitude of heart, a lightness of spirit in the face of all that the world can throw at you. And at the centre of it is the thing that motivates and gives colour to the whole: you are to be like this *because that’s what God is like*.... only when people

discover that this is the sort of God they are dealing with will they have any chance of making this way of life their own.” N. T. Wright, *Luke for Everyone*, pp. 73-74

- “There are two particularly astonishing things about these instructions. First, their simplicity: they are obvious, clear, direct and memorable. Second, their scarcity. How many people do you know who really live like this? How many communities do you know where these guidelines are rules of life? What’s gone wrong? Has God changed? Or have we forgotten who he really is?” N. T. Wright, *Luke for Everyone*, p. 75

3. The nature of God the Father

- He is kind to the ungrateful and the evil
- He is merciful
 - “To be **merciful** means to forgive when it is in our power to avenge. The **Father** showed us mercy by not giving us the punishment we deserved. He wants us to show mercy to others.” William MacDonald, *Believer’s Bible Commentary*

VI. What does love look like? – 6:37-38

1. Not judging, not condemning

- “The point of the statement *do not judge, and you will not be judged* is that the standards one applies to others God applies back. The passive verbs in this verse look to God’s action.” (NET Bible)
- “Building on the principle of loving one’s enemies, Jesus calls people to forgive rather than condemn others. The parables provide pointed criticisms against the Jewish leaders of the time ([39-42](#)).” NIV Zondervan Study Bible
- “**Judge not . . . condemn not**. Literally, “Stop judging . . . condemning.” Jesus is not ruling out the legitimate use of discernment, church discipline, and law courts. Rather, he is teaching against focusing on other people’s faults (see notes on Matt. 7:1–5). **be judged . . . condemned**(by God). **Forgive** and **give** go beyond not judging and not condemning to seeking the positive well-being of others. **For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you**. Compare [7:2](#); [Mark 4:24](#).” [The ESV Global Study Bible®](#)
- There are two things that love doesn’t do—it doesn’t **judge** and it doesn’t **condemn**. Jesus said, “**Judge not and you shall not be judged**.” First of all, we must not judge people’s motives. We cannot read the heart and so cannot know why a person acts as he does. Then we must not judge another Christian’s stewardship or service ([1 Cor. 4:1–5](#)); God is the Judge in all such cases. And in general we must not be censorious. A critical, fault-finding spirit violates the law of love.
- There are certain areas, however, in which Christians *must* We must often judge whether other people are true Christians; otherwise we could never recognize an unequal yoke ([2 Cor. 6:14](#)). Sin must be judged in the home and in the assembly. In short, we must judge between good and evil, but we must not impugn motives or assassinate character. William MacDonald, *Believer’s Bible Commentary*

2. Forgiving and you will be forgiven

- ““**Forgive and you will be forgiven**.” This makes our forgiveness dependent on our willingness to forgive. But other Scriptures seem to teach that when we receive Christ by faith, we are freely and unconditionally forgiven. How can we reconcile this seeming contradiction? The explanation is that we are speaking of two different types of forgiveness—*judicial* and *parental*. *Judicial forgiveness* is that which is granted by God the Judge to everyone who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. It means that the penalty of sins has been met by Christ and the believing sinner will not have to pay it. It is unconditional.

- *Parental forgiveness* is that which is granted by God the Father to His erring child when he confesses and forsakes his sin. It results in the restoration of fellowship in the family of God, and has nothing to do with the penalty of sin. As Father, God cannot forgive us when we are unwilling to forgive one another. He doesn't act that way, and cannot walk in fellowship with those who do. It is parental forgiveness that Jesus refers to in the words **"and you will be forgiven."** William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary*

- story of Corrie ten Boom about forgiveness

3. Give and it will be given to you

- Love manifests itself in giving (see [John 3:16](#); [5:25](#)). The Christian ministry is a ministry of expenditure. Those who **give** generously are rewarded generously. The picture is of a man with a large apron-like fold in the front of his garment. He uses it for carrying seed. The more widely he broadcasts the seed, the greater his harvest. He is rewarded with **good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over**. He receives it **into his bosom**, that is, into the fold of his garment. It is a fixed principle in life that we reap according to our sowing, that our actions react upon us, that **the same measure we use** to others is **measured back** to us. If we sow material things we reap spiritual treasures of inestimable value. It is also true that what we keep we lose, and what we give we have. William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary*

4. Continually forgiving and giving

- "Forgive and give emphasize the continual nature of these commands and go beyond not judging and not condemning to seeking the positive well-being of others. The result is it will be given (by God) in good measure (not meagerly), pressed down (filling all the space in the container), shaken (so that grain will settle and fill the container even more fully), running over (so that a rounded heap will form at the top) your lap. The folding of a man's cloak with his arms underneath, forming a "container." For with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. In other words, God richly blesses such an attitude." ESV Study Bible

5. Universality

- "Everyone who comes to me & listens to my words & puts them into practice—I'll show you what he's like..." (Lk. 6:47 NET)
- "Everyone coming to me & hearing my words & doing them...' (6:47) ... [Gk. 'Pas...' 'Everyone...'], marking Lukan universality, emphasizes Jesus' plan as the sure way to salvation for all who do it... ['Coming,' 'hearing,'] designating an approach to Jesus as the first step of discipleship..." [L. John Topel, *Children of a Compassionate God*, p. 214]

VII. Matthew's addition about fasting – Matt. 6:16-18

1. Fasting and prayer should go together – Luke 2:37; 5:33

- ..was a widow for eighty-four years.^[a] She did not leave the temple, serving God night and day with fasting and prayers.
- ³³ Then they said to him, "John's disciples fast often and say prayers, and those of the Pharisees do the same, but yours eat and drink."

2. Fasting without prayer is dieting and deprivation

3. The reason for fasting is to seek the Lord with greater urgency

4. Fasting is to detach – praying is to re-attach

- Detach from this world and take our eyes off of ourselves
- Re-attach to God, focus on God and his kingdom
- Take the time you eat or be on internet to pray

5. New year, – renewed consecration, restart, prayer on 16th

- Fast from 5th to 16th
 - Sign up to get a daily email
6. Detach from world's view, call to love that is the love of God

Corrie ten Boom story

Betsie and I had been arrested for concealing Jews in our home during the Nazi occupation of Holland; this man had been a guard at Ravensbrück concentration camp where we were sent.

Now he was in front of me, hand thrust out: "A fine message, *fräulein!* How good it is to know that, as you say, all our sins are at the bottom of the sea!"

And I, who had spoken so glibly of forgiveness, fumbled in my pocketbook rather than take that hand. He would not remember me, of course—how could he remember one prisoner among those thousands of women?

But I remembered him and the leather crop swinging from his belt. It was the first time since my release that I had been face to face with one of my captors and my blood seemed to freeze.

"You mentioned Ravensbrück in your talk," he was saying. "I was a guard in there." No, he did not remember me.

"But since that time," he went on, "I have become a Christian. I know that God has forgiven me for the cruel things I did there, but I would like to hear it from your lips as well. *Fräulein!*"—again the hand came out—"will you forgive me?"

And I stood there—I whose sins had every day to be forgiven—and could not. Betsie had died in that place—could he erase her slow terrible death simply for the asking?

It could not have been many seconds that he stood there, hand held out, but to me it seemed hours as I wrestled with the most difficult thing I had ever had to do.

For I had to do it—I knew that. The message that God forgives has a prior condition: that we forgive those who have injured us. "If you do not forgive men their trespasses," Jesus says, "neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."

And still I stood there with the coldness clutching my heart. But forgiveness is not an emotion—I knew that too. Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart.

"Jesus, help me!" I prayed silently. "I can lift my hand. I can do that much. You supply the feeling."

And so woodenly, mechanically, I thrust my hand into the one stretched out to me. And as I did, an incredible thing took place. The current started in my shoulder, raced down my arm, sprang into our joined hands. And then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes.

"I forgive you, brother!" I cried. "With all my heart!"