



The unfolding of your words gives light.

To Seek and to Save

An Exposition of the Gospel of Luke

²⁷“But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you^a, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you^b. ²⁹Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also; and whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either^c. ³⁰Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back^d. ³¹Treat others the same way you want them to treat you^e. ³²If you love those who love you, what credit is *that* to you? For even sinners love those who love them^f. ³³If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is *that* to you? For even sinners do the same^g. ³⁴If

^a 6:27 **love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.** It is unnatural for a sinner to serve those who hate him. Jesus’ ministry was directed toward His enemies.

^b 6:28 **bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.** It is unnatural for a sinner to speak well of someone who mistreats him. Jesus prayed for those who put Him on the cross: “Father, forgive them.”

^c 6:29 **Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also; and whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either.** It is unnatural for a sinner to take any kind of shot from another person without retaliating in some way. Jesus was not teaching national pacifism. The idea here is that we naturally think it is a greater evil to let someone take advantage of us than it is to demand our rights. Paul told the litigious church at Corinth the same thing:

Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded? On the contrary, you yourselves wrong and defraud. You do this even to your brethren. 1 Corinthians 6:7-8

^d 6:30 **Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back.** It is unnatural for a sinner to stay calm when others borrow things and do not return them. But God is the ultimate Lender. There is nothing we have that is not either a gift from Him or borrowed from Him. And we treat these things as if they are ours. Like Paul wrote: “What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?” (1 Corinthians 4:7).

^e 6:31 **Treat others the same way you want them to treat you.** This is known as the “Golden Rule.” Some have said that all major religions have the same Golden Rule. Let’s examine some of those statements:

- Buddhism: “Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.”
- Confucianism: “Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you.”
- Hinduism: “This is the sum of duty: do not do to others what would cause pain if done to you.”
- British Humanist Society: “Don’t do things you wouldn’t want to have done to you.”

Notice that these statements are phrased in the negative: “Don’t do to others what you don’t like.” Jesus came to serve and taught His people to serve. So His emphasis was a positive one: “Treat others the same way you want them to treat you.” The foundation for the Golden Rule is Leviticus 19:18: “You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD.”

^f 6:32 **If you love those who love you, what credit is *that* to you? For even sinners love those who love them.** Even those who hate God can love their friends and family. The emphasis is on being different. Holy people stand out because they have different hearts.

^g 6:33 **If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is *that* to you? For even sinners do the same.** It is easy to be good to people who have something to offer you.

The Gospel of Luke
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you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is *that* to you? Even sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back the same *amount*^a. ³⁵But 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^b; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil *men*^c. ³⁶Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful^{d,e}.

^a 6:34 **If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is *that* to you? Even sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back the same *amount*.** There is nothing heroic about letting people borrow from you when there is no risk of loss.

^b 6:35 **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.** Notice He gets to the bottom line here. This is about looking like our Father. All the of the neighbor-loving commands in the Old Testament (particularly in Exodus 20 and Leviticus 19) had as their foundation “I am the Lord your God.”

Notice also that He is calling us to expect our heavenly Father to even all scores. Our mistake when we become self-focused and self-preserving is to discount God’s involvement in the matter. Does He see that person defrauding or otherwise hurting you? Do you think He will do anything about it? Are you really in the hands of those who abuse you? Does your Father take care of His children?

^c 6:35 **He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil *men*.** Perhaps our fear is not that God does not see the injustice but that He will not punish our enemies in a way that will satisfy us. Sometimes we want a higher price than God does.

^d 6:36 **Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.** He is our pattern.

^e 6:27-36 Look at all the values in this text that are upside-down from our usual way of looking at things. We just looked at a text that calls us to see ourselves as “lucky” when life falls apart. Now the message is about loving and serving enemies. This is really no different than God’s call to Israel to show mercy to strangers and to the vulnerable. In both cases this unnatural behavior communicates the character of God to all who see it.

You become very vulnerable to others when you follow Christ the way He calls you to follow Him. Think of all the positive, neighbor-loving actions connected with the attitude of those who follow the One who gave His life a ransom for many. Here is the lifestyle you can display to advertise how different is the God you serve:

1. You refuse to even scores.
2. You repay evil with good.
3. You serve others even when you do not get recognized.
4. You give generously even when you do not get repaid.
5. You submit to authority even when you would have led a different direction.
6. You are gentle toward others even though you have the ability to be harsh.

But all of these are responses to redemption rather than behaviors that bring redemption. In fact, your very inability to pull off this kind of behavior is God’s reminder that your best efforts to change your heart are insufficient. As the Lord journeyed toward the cross He took disciples with Him.

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