

## Kingdom Currency (Luke 6:27-36)

Summary (v.20-26):

- Jesus selected the Twelve after a night of prayer on top of an undisclosed mountain (v.13-16) and addressed His crowd of disciples and a great multitude of people who came to hear and be healed by Him (v.17-18).
- Jesus preaches the “Sermon on the Plain” to teach the disciples (the Twelve) and the crowd, including other disciples and the great multitude of His kingdom which was inaugurated at His baptism.
- The kingdom principles are a reversal of culture and traditional ways of living. There are spiritual and physical elements in all the blessings, though not all physical attributes of “the poor, the hungry, and the weeping” (v.20-21) are spiritual.
  - Jesus acknowledges that poverty, mourning, and hunger can be mechanisms that lead them to faith and dependence on God, or can be the result of faith and dependence on God as a result of persecution (v.22-23, 26).
- Poverty, hunger, and weeping, as a result of persecution on behalf of righteousness, are what the Lord Jesus Christ is focused on. Some disciples of Jesus are poor, hungry, and mourning because they have followed Jesus, as they have been kicked out of the synagogue. There will also be others who will likewise follow the same course in the future if they choose to follow Jesus.
- The “rich, the full, the laughing, and the popular” who take advantage of the less fortunate without a Godward focus will be hungry, mourning, and weeping.
- Wealth, laughing, contentment, poverty, hunger, weeping, mourning, and joy are all morally neutral attributes. The question is “why” are they\_\_\_\_\_..?

Contextual principles to consider when interpreting Jesus’ radical teaching (v.27-36):

- Jesus speaks to the Twelve, the crowd of disciples, and the multitude. There will be some disciples who walk away and some in the crowd who follow Him.
- Jesus’ sermon is programmatic as it establishes an ethic of those belonging to His kingdom.
- The immediate context is persecution for righteousness (v.22-23, 26) as He is speaking to those who “hear” (v.27).
- These are not specific injunctions for the ethics of the Christian but principles.

### 1. The Command to the Disciple of Jesus to Love His Enemy (v.27-28)

The Greek language uses four words to describe love:

- Storge (natural affection), eros (passionate about something or someone), philia (friendship), and agape (goodwill or benevolence).
- Jesus uses “agape” love, which describes (as a verb) a love marked by self-sacrifice, self-giving, self-devotion, and self-denial for the well-being of the object of its affection.
- It is not motivated by the merit of the one who is loved. It supersedes natural inclinations and often exists despite these natural inclinations. It is a deliberate love rooted in the will, and a love by choice. It is a will that is energized and motivated by the Holy Spirit.
- Above all, it is defined by the redemptive love of God in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus (John 3:16).

Who is my enemy? Someone who hates you.

Jesus commands His disciples to love their enemies (v.27): this is revolutionary, as no Jewish literature prescribed love to anyone other than your kin (neighbor) or alien/sojourner (Lev. 19:18, 34; Prov. 17:5; 24:17; 25:21-22). How is the disciple to love his enemy?

- A. Do good to those who hate you (v.27c): this “good” is not explicitly defined, but only what would be most redemptive considering the context of the disciple.
- B. Bless those who curse you (v.28a): insult and slander are the primary means of persecution (1 Pet. 2:12-13, 23; 4:4).
- C. Pray for those who abuse you (v.28b): the prayer consists of God leading them to repentance and new life (Lk. 23:34; Acts 7:60). In praying for his enemy, the Christian confronts his own sin: in praying for his enemy, God cleanses the disciple in the process.

\*All three intentional responses to persecution are not natural but unnatural, and only possible through the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer. This kind of love is robust, proactive in the face of persecution, and highly resilient. The disciple is a victor, not a victim of persecution.

### 2. The Culture of the Disciple of Jesus (v.29-34)

- A. The Christian is to accept dishonor rather than reprisal (v.29a): As the disciple is dishonored, he does not retreat but perseveres in and through persecution. He will be insulted and remain vulnerable. The “striking of the cheek” is not physical but verbal, as it alludes to a “backhanded” fist, which would be typical of an insult.

Caveat: Jesus is not teaching “passivity” as we have a Christian and civic duty to ensure that physical, emotional, or verbal violence is dealt with accordingly (at home, church, or societal).

- B. His property will be confiscated (v.29b): taking the cloak and tunic is an allusion to legal matters and theft.

- C. He will be generous to those in need (v.30): this alludes to those in need, especially regarding their economic status. Jesus commands His disciples to be generous and not ask for the return of what is given. This alludes to the Year of Jubilee, the charging of interest among kin, and generosity (Ex. 22:25; Lev. 25:35-37; Deut. 15:7-11).

Caveat: the person must ask. Discretion is to be used in every request, for the generous man must discern between “wanting” and “needing” while at the same time not encouraging idleness and beggary (Prov. 6:6-12; 20:4; 24:30-34; 2 Thess. 3:10). Generosity must not foster an unhealthy dependency. In doing so, there is no love.

\*Jesus is teaching an abiding vulnerability of the disciple and acknowledges that wicked and deceptive people will take advantage of him and often “get away” with it.

- D. He will love others how he wants to be loved (v.31-34): this is known as the “Golden Rule” yet is directed to the disciple of Jesus. The law of reciprocity (lex talionis) limited retaliation to an equitable penalty: life for life, limb for limb, eye for an eye, etc. (Ex. 21:23-25; Lev. 24:20; Deut. 19:21). There is no quid-pro-quo for the disciple, nor anything distinct if he treats others in a “business-like-transaction” culture. He is to love and lend with no strings attached. He must be different and cause others to “scratch their heads.”

### 3. The Character of God in the Disciple of Jesus (v.35-36)

- The disciple is adopted into the family of God at regeneration (Rom. 8:14-17) and demonstrates it as he is gracious, merciful, and kind to his enemies.
- Since God is kind to the ungrateful and evil one (v.36) and demonstrated it through His incarnation, passion, and death in the person of the Son, His children will have a character that reflects their identity in Christ, as moral likeness to God proves “parentage.”
- The currency of the disciple flows from the riches of God’s mercy toward him, as he was ungrateful and evil before God’s love (agape) was showered on him.