

9/7/14

SERIES: LUKE: THE SON OF MAN, THE SAVIOR
HAS COME, WEEK 46

TITLE: HOW TO LOVE YOUR ENEMY

TEXT: LUKE 6:29-36

INTRODUCTION: (1) R. KENT HUGHES IN HIS COMMENTARY ON LUKE 1-11 GIVES A GREAT REAL LIFE ILLUSTRATION OF HOW TO LOVE YOUR ENEMY.

* HE TELLS THE TRUE STORY ABOUT HOW AFTER THE COLLAPSE OF THE BERLIN WALL IN 1989, NO PERSON IN ALL OF EAST GERMANY WAS MORE DESPISED THAN THE FORMER COMMUNIST DICTATOR ERICH HONECHER.

** HONECHER HAD BEEN STRIPPED OF ALL HIS OFFICES AND EVEN THE COMMUNIST PARTY REJECTED HIM.

*** AS A RESULT OF THAT, HONECHER WAS KICKED OUT OF HIS VILLA AND THE NEW GOVT. REFUSED HIM AND HIS WIFE NEW HOUSING. THE HONECHER'S WERE HOMELESS AND DESTITUTE.

**** ENTER PASTOR UWE HOLMER, DIRECTOR OF A CHRISTIAN HELP CENTER NORTH OF BERLIN.

(2) MADE AWARE OF THE HONECHER'S STATUS PASTOR HOLMER FELT IT WOULD BE WRONG TO GIVE THEM A ROOM MEANT FOR EVEN NEEDIER PEOPLE. SO THE PASTOR AND HIS FAMILY DECIDED TO TAKE THE FORMER DICTATOR INTO THEIR OWN HOME!

* ERICH HONECHER'S WIFE, MARGOT, HAD RULED THE EAST GERMAN EDUCATION SYSTEM FOR 26 YEARS. DURING THAT TIME 8 OF PASTOR HOLMER'S 10 CHILDREN HAD BEEN TURNED DOWN FOR HIGHER EDUCATION DUE TO MRS. HONECHER'S POLICIES, WHICH DISCRIMINATED AGAINST CHRISTIANS.

** NOW THE **HOLMER'S WERE CARING FOR THEIR** PERSONAL ENEMY – THE MOST HATED MAN IN GERMANY.

*** THIS ACT OF LOVE WAS SO UNNATURAL, SO UNCONVENTIONAL, SO SUPERNATURALLY SUBLIME, SO CHRIST-LIKE.

**** AND BELOVED, BY THE MERCY AND GRACE **OF GOD, THE HOLMER'S LOVED THEIR** ENEMIES, DID THEM GOOD, BLESSED THEM AND PRAYED FOR THEM. THEY TURNED THE OTHER CHEEK.

(3) THEY GAVE THEIR ENEMIES THEIR COAT (THEIR OWN HOME.)

* THEY DID TO THE HONE**ACHER'S WHAT THEY** WOULD HAVE WISHED THE HONE**ACHER'S WOULD** DO TO THEM. THEY WERE MODELS OF HOW TO LOVE YOUR ENEMIES.

** NOW IN OUR TEXT TODAY, OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST TELLS US HOW TO LOVE OUR ENEMIES.

***** AND HE DOESN'T CALL HIS FOLLOWERS TO SAY "I LOVE YOU" TO THEIR ENEMIES, HE TELLS THEM ACTION WISE, HOW TO LOVE THEIR ENEMIES.**

**** AND BASICALLY, IT IS NOT BEING VENGEFUL AND HURTFUL, BUT OVERCOMING EVIL WITH GOOD.

(4) JESUS TELLS HIS DISCIPLES TO DO EXACTLY WHAT PAUL TOLD THE ROMAN CHRISTIANS TO DO IN ROMANS 12 WHEN HE SAID IN VERSE 10 (QUOTE IT). ALSO QUOTE ROMANS 12:14 AND ROMANS 12:19-21.

* NOW HOW DO WE OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD?

** WELL ACCORDING TO JESUS WE NEED TO BE MERCIFUL AND TO TREAT OTHERS THE SAME WAY YOU WANT THEM TO TREAT YOU, AND GIVES SOME CLEAR ACTIONS OF HOW WE CAN DO THAT.

*** SO **JESUS'** WORDS FOR HIS DISCIPLES ARE NOT THEORETICAL, OR PHILOSOPHICAL, BUT ARE ACTION OF HOW TO PRACTICALLY LOVE OUR ENEMIES AND HOW WE CAN ACT LIKE OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN.

**** **WE LIKE "HOW TO'S" PRACTICALLY** SPEAKING, AND JESUS IN OUR TEXT TODAY TELLS US HOW TO LOVE OUR ENEMIES WHICH IS THE TITLE OF MY SERMON TODAY.

**** JESUS FLESHES OUT HOW TO DO GOOD TO OUR ENEMIES, TO BLESS OUR ENEMIES WHICH I TALKED ABOUT IN VV. 27&28, IN OUR LAST STUDY OF LUKE AT THE END OF JULY, IN FULFILLING THE COMMAND TO LOVE OUR ENEMIES.

(5) AND UNDER THAT TITLE OF HOW TO LOVE YOUR ENEMY IN LUKE 6:29-**36, WE'LL LOOK AT 4** POINTS TO HELP US WORK THROUGH THIS TEXT.

* NO. 1 THE REACTIONS WE SHOULD HAVE TO OUR ENEMIES WHEN THEY DO NEGATIVE THINGS AGAINST US, VV. 29&30; NO. 2 THE RULE, SPEAKING OF THE GOLDEN RULE, V. 31; NO. 3 THE RESPONSES TO OUR ENEMIES IN CONTRAST TO THE WORLD, VV. 32-34; AND NO. 4, THE RESEMBLANCE OR LIKENESS WE HAVE TO OUR FATHER WHEN WE LOVE OUR ENEMIES, VV. 35&36.

**** SO WE'LL LOOK AT THE REACTIONS, THE RULE, THE RESPONSES AND THE RESEMBLANCE UNDER THE THEME OF HOW TO LOVE YOUR ENEMY.**

*** AND WITH THOSE POINTS TO DIRECT US, **LOOK AT V. 29 PLEASE WHERE WE'LL START TO SEE OUR FIRST POINT TODAY, THE REACTIONS.**

I. THE REACTIONS, (READ V. 29)

A. NOW LOVING OUR ENEMIES IS REVEALED, MARKED OUT, NOT ONLY BY HOW WE ACT TOWARD OUR ENEMIES, BUT ALSO BY HOW WE REACT TO OUR ENEMIES.

* AND JESUS GAVE FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS IN VV. 29&30 OF HOW TO REACT PROPERLY TO ILL TREATMENT BY OUR ENEMIES.

** AND THE FIRST ILLUSTRATION WHICH BY THE WAY IS A COMMAND IN THE **GREEK, FOR IT'S IN** THE IMPERATIVE MOOD, IS WHOEVER HITS YOU ON THE CHEEK OFFER HIM THE OTHER ALSO.

*** TO TURN THE OTHER CHEEK.

**** NOW THIS COMMAND HAS BEEN GREATLY MISUNDERSTOOD OVER THE YEARS TO ALLOW YOURSELF TO GET BEAT UP, OR WHEN WE SUFFER PHYSICAL ABUSE, SUCH AS A WIFE MAY SUFFER FROM HER HUSBAND, OR A CHILD MAY SUFFER FROM A BULLY, WE HAVE TO KEEP TAKING IT.

1. JOHN MACARTHUR IN HIS COMMENTARY ON LUKE 6-10 SAID IN RESPONSE TO THAT AND I **QUOTE: "JESUS WAS NOT FORBIDDING HIS FOLLOWERS TO DEFEND THEMSELVES IF THEY WERE DANGEROUSLY ATTACKED. IN LUKE 22:36 HE INSTRUCTED THE APOSTLES TO BUY A SWORD FOR PROTECTION IF THEY DID NOT HAVE ONE."**

*** JOHN WENT ON TO SAY: "THE TURN-THE-OTHER-CHEEK RULE CANNOT MEAN TO KEEP CIVIL GOVERNMENT FROM PUNISHING EVILDOERS. TO APPLY THESE PRINCIPLES IN THE CIVIL ARENA WOULD BE TO SURRENDER SOCIETY TO CHAOS. CIVIL GOVERNMENT IS ORDAINED BY GOD PRECISELY FOR THE PUNISHMENT OF EVILDOERS AND THE PRAISE OF THOSE WHO DO RIGHT (I PETER 2:13&14; ROMANS 13:4.)**

** JUSTICE OBLIGATES US BOTH TO UPHOLD THE LAW AND TO INSIST THAT OTHERS DO AS WELL. REPORTING CRIME IS BOTH A CIVIL RESPONSIBILITY AND AN ACT OF COMPASSION. TO EXCUSE OR HELP COVER UP THE WRONGDOING OF OTHERS IS AN ACT OF WICKED COMPLICITY WITH EVIL. TO FAIL TO PROTECT **THE INNOCENT IS ITSELF A SERIOUS EVIL.**" (END QUOTE)

*** NOW TO GO BEYOND THAT, JESUS DEMONSTRATED THE PROPER RESPONSE TO BEING UNJUSTLY STRUCK OR HIT DURING HIS TRIAL BEFORE THE HIGH PRIEST IN JOHN 18:22.

**** FOR WHEN ONE OF THE OFFICERS STRUCK HIM, HE DID NOT TURN HIS HEAD AND ASK TO BE STRUCK AGAIN, BUT HE CALMLY POINTED OUT THE INJUSTICE OF THE ACT IN JOHN 18:23.

2. NOW WITH THAT SAID, IF TURNING THE OTHER CHEEK DOES NOT MEAN ACCEPTING PHYSICAL ABUSE, THEN WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

* WELL CERTAINLY CHRISTIANS WILL BE PERSECUTED, AS JESUS TOLD HIS DISCIPLES THAT THEY WOULD SUFFER FOR HIS SAKE, AND 11 OF THE 12 APOSTLES WOULD BE MARTYRED.

** HOWEVER IN THIS CONTEXT, IT APPEARS WE HAVE A CULTURAL MEANING TO CONSIDER.

*** **FOR IN JESUS' DAY, STRIKING SOMEONE'S CHEEK WAS MORE OF AN INSULT THAN AN ACT OF VIOLENCE.**

**** AND IT IS LIKELY JESUS HAD IN MIND AN INSULTING SLAP. FOR TO SLAP SOMEONE IN **THE FACE WAS AN ATTACK ON ONE'S HONOR** AND WAS CONSIDERED TO BE TERRIBLE INDIGNITY.

3. IT WAS TO BE TREATED WITH DISDAIN, AS BEING LESS THAN A HUMAN.

* IN FACT, ONE SOURCE I READ A WHILE BACK COMMUNICATED THAT EVEN A SLAVE WOULD RATHER HAVE BEEN STRUCK ACROSS THE BACK WITH A WHIP THAN BE SLAPPED IN THE FACE **BY HIS MASTER'S HAND.**

** SO TO SLAP SOMEONE ON THE CHEEK WAS A CULTURAL ACT OF INSULT.

*** HENCE WHEN WE ARE INSULTED, MALIGNED AND TREATED WITH CONTEMPT FOR JESUS, WE ARE TO TURN THE OTHER CHEEK, TO ACCEPT THAT FOR HIM, WHEN OUR ENEMIES TREAT US THAT WAY.

**** BELOVED, THE POINT IS, WE SHOULD BE WILLING TO SUFFER HUMILIATION AGAIN AND AGAIN FOR CHRIST.

4. AND RATHER THAN RETALIATING OR TAKING SOME FORM OF REVENGE ON OUR ENEMIES, WE SHOULD ENDURE INSULT WITH PEACE AND PATIENCE AS JESUS DID, FOR IT SAYS IN I PETER 2:22&23 (QUOTE THEM).

* AND BELIEVER TO BE LIKE OUR SAVIOR, WE MUST TURN THE OTHER CHEEK AND NOT BE VINDICTIVE OR VENGEFUL OR RETALIATE WHEN SOMEONE INSULTS US OR DEMEANS US BECAUSE OF OUR FAITH. WE MUST RESPOND RATHER THAN REACT.

**** NOW MOVING ON THE 2'D ILLUSTRATION**

JESUS GIVES OF HOW TO LOVE YOUR ENEMY IN V. 29 IS WHEN YOUR ENEMY TAKES AWAY YOUR COAT, DO NOT WITHHOLD YOUR SHIRT FROM THEM.

*** AND JESUS HERE IS BASICALLY TALKING ABOUT HAVING A GIVING SPIRIT TOWARD YOUR ENEMY, TO OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD.

**** FOR THE COAT IN THAT DAY WAS AN OUTER GARMENT LIKE AN OVERCOAT, IT WAS A CLOAK, AND WOULD EVEN BE USED AS A BLANKET WHEN PEOPLE SLEPT, AND MOST PEOPLE WOULD ONLY HAVE ONE COAT OR CLOAK.

5. NOW THE SHIRT WAS THE INNER GARMENT, A TUNIC, WORN NEXT TO THE SKIN.

* SO IF YOUR ENEMY TAKES YOUR OUTER **GARMENT, DON'T STOP THEM FROM TAKING** YOUR INNER GARMENT.

** AND THE TRUTH IS, HAVING A GIVING SPIRIT EVEN TO YOUR ENEMIES, A GIVING SPIRIT THAT **IS MORE CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR ENEMY'S** NEED THAN ABOUT THE PROTECTION OF OUR OWN PROPERTY.

*** THE PRINCIPLE IS KEEP A LOOSE GRIP ON POSSESSIONS WHICH ULTIMATELY BELONG TO THE LORD ANYWAY. AND IF OUR ENEMY MISTREATS US WE SHOULD GIVE THEM ABOVE AND BEYOND WHAT THEY NEED, TO THE POINT OF MAKING A REAL SACRIFICE.

**** WE ARE TO VALUE PEOPLE WITH SOULS **MORE THAN THINGS! EVEN OUR ENEMY'S** SOULS IN THIS CONTEXT!

6. FOR IF THEY NEED TO TAKE YOUR COAT, THEN PERHAPS THAT PERSON ALSO NEEDS YOUR SHIRT. THIS IS RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP. THIS IS THE SACRIFICIAL HEART WE ARE TO HAVE AS FOLLOWERS OF JESUS.

* AND HOW CONVICTING IT IS FOR SOME TIMES WE HOLD TO THINGS PRETTY TIGHTLY. BUT WHAT WE HOLD ON TO TIGHTLY WE LOSE FOR CHRIST, BUT WHAT WE GIVE AWAY, WE GET BACK.

** BUT I NEED TO CONTINUE MOVING ON. LOOK AT V. 30 PLEASE WHERE **WE'LL SEE** ILLUSTRATIONS 3&4 IN HOW TO TREAT YOUR ENEMY.

B. READ V. 30. NOW IF YOUR ENEMY ASKS OF YOU, THE BETTER TRANSLATION OVER BEGS IN THE ESV, IF HE ASKS OF YOU, CONTEXTUALLY A NEED, AND IF YOU HAVE IT, GIVE IT.

* JESUS IS NOT TALKING ABOUT GIVING TO PANHANDLERS OR TO PEOPLE WHO WILL USE IT FOR EVIL AND WRONG PURPOSES, BUT THOSE WHO HAVE GENUINE NEED, PROBABLY FROM EXTREME POVERTY IS THE IDEA HERE.

** HOWEVER, NOT TO SLOTHFUL OR LAZY **PEOPLE WHO DON'T WANT TO WORK.**

*** AND PROBABLY THE CONTEXT HERE COMMUNICATES BORROWING AND LENDING. FOR VERSES 34&35 OF LUKE 6 COMMUNICATE IF YOU LEND TO YOUR ENEMY **AND IN MATTHEW'S** PARALLEL COMPANION TEXT IT SAYS IN **MATTHEW 5:42: "GIVE TO HIM WHO ASKS OF YOU, AND DO NOT TURN AWAY FROM HIM WHO WANTS TO BORROW FROM YOU."**

**** NOW THE TRUTH IS, IF YOUR ENEMY ASKS FOR A LOAN TO MEET A NEED, OR WANTS TO BORROW SOMETHING FROM YOU THAT YOU **HAVE, MEET THE NEED, EVEN IF THEY DON'T** RETURN IT, GIVE IT BACK OR PAY YOU BACK.

1. AND THIS IS FURTHER ILLUSTRATED IN THE LAST PART OF V. 30. IF THEY TAKE AWAY WHAT IS YOURS, DO NOT DEMAND IT BACK.

*** IN OTHER WORDS, IF THEY DON'T RETURN** WHAT THEY HAVE TAKEN, LIT. BORROWED, **DON'T DEMAND IT BACK, THE ITEM, OR EVEN** MONEY THAT YOU HAVE LOANED TO THEM.

** GIVE IT UP FOR JESUS, GIVE IT OUT OF LOVE, OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD, AGAIN RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP, ESPECIALLY WHEN THE CONTEXT CONCERNS OUR ENEMY.

*** LET ME PUT IT INTO PLAIN LANGUAGE, IF YOUR ENEMY HAS A NEED AND YOU CAN MEET IT, BE WILLING TO GIVE THEM THE SHIRT OFF YOUR BACK!

**** **THAT'S HOW WE ARE TO REACT TO THEIR** WRONG TREATMENT OF US, WHICH THE MOTIVE AND RATIONALE FOR THESE KINDS OF REACTIONS IS GIVEN TO US BY A RULE OF **THUMB IN V. 31, OUR 2'D POINT TODAY, THE** RULE. LOOK AT V. 31 PLEASE.

II. THE RULE, (READ V. 31)

A. NOW HERE WE HAVE THE TRUTH OF WHAT HAS BEEN CALLED THE GOLDEN RULE. AND REMEMBER JESUS GIVES IT IN THE CONTEXT OF OUR ENEMIES.

* TREAT YOUR ENEMY IN THE SAME WAY YOU WANT THEM TO TREAT YOU, KEY WORDS, IN THE WAY YOU WANT THEM TO TREAT YOU, NOT THE WAY THEY ARE TREATING YOU. TREAT YOUR ENEMIES IN THE WAY YOU WANT THEM TO TREAT YOU.

** FOR IF WE TREATED OUR ENEMIES THE WAY THEY TREATED US WE WOULD BE VENGEFUL, VINDICTIVE, HATEFUL AND UNLOVING.

*** BUT FOLLOWERS OF JESUS NEED TO LIVE BY A HIGHER STANDARD, THE STANDARD OF HOW JESUS TREATED HIS ENEMIES WITH LOVE AND MERCY.

**** BELOVED, JESUS IS CALLING FOR SELFLESS LOVE, LOVE THAT FOCUSES SOLELY ON THE WELLBEING OF ITS OBJECT.

**** FOR THE LOVE THAT JESUS COMMANDS, THE VERB TO DO OR TREAT IS AN IMPERATIVE, SO THE COMMAND CALLS US TO TREAT OTHERS THE WAY WE WANT TO BE TREATED, IN SPITE OF THEIR LACK OF LOVE.

1. AND BELIEVER, THIS IS HOW GOD LOVES, AND THAT SUPERNATURAL LOVE IS IMPOSSIBLE ON THE HUMAN LEVEL.

* FOR ONLY CHRISTIANS ARE CAPABLE OF IT FOR ROMANS 5:5 SAYS: (QUOTE IT).

** AND CHRISTIAN SINCE WE WERE TREATED IN **A WAY THAT WE NEVER DESERVED IN GOD'S** MERCY, WE MUST TREAT OUR ENEMIES THE SAME WAY, AND THE ASSUMPTION IS, IF WE ARE TO TREAT OUR ENEMIES THIS WAY, WE WILL CERTAINLY TREAT OUR LOVED ONES THIS WAY.

***** FOR IT'S EASY IN OUR RESPONSE TO** TREAT PEOPLE WHO LOVE US RIGHT, BUT THE CHALLENGE IS TO TREAT THOSE WHO DO NOT TREAT US RIGHT, TO TREAT THEM RIGHT.

**** AND JESUS WILL GIVE US 3 COMPARISONS TO ILLUSTRATE THIS IN VV. 32-**34, WHERE WE'LL** START TO SEE OUR THIRD POINT TODAY, THE RESPONSES. LOOK AT V. 32 PLEASE.

III. THE RESPONSES, (READ V. 32)

A. NOW TO SHOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HIS LOVE AND OUR LOVE, JESUS GIVES A SERIES OF 3 COMPARISONS, 3 ILLUSTRATIONS.

*** AND I'M NOT GOING TO SPEND A LOT OF TIME** HERE, BUT THE TRUTH THAT JUMPS OFF THE PAGE IS, MOST PEOPLE, NOT ALL PEOPLE, MOST PEOPLE ARE WILLING TO LOVE PEOPLE WHO LOVE THEM IN RETURN.

**** TO SAY IT ANOTHER WAY, THE WORLD'S LOVE**
IS LOVE THAT RECIPROCATES, YOU FEEL
OBLIGATED, **IT'S EASY. YOU RETURN THE**
FAVOR, IT'S TIT FOR TAT, IT'S QUID PRO QUO.
BUT WHAT KIND OF LOVE IS THAT.

******* SO JESUS SAYS IN V. 32, IF YOU LOVE THOSE
WHO LOVE YOU, WHAT CREDIT IS THAT TO YOU?
WHAT BENEFIT IS THAT TO YOU? BIG DEAL!
THAT'S NOT HARD, NO BIGGIE.

******** FOR EVEN SINNERS LOVE THOSE WHO LOVE
THEM AND SINNERS REFERS TO UNSAVED
PEOPLE, TO UNBELIEVERS, THOSE OUTSIDE OF
THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH, PUBLICANS OR TAX
COLLECTORS AND THE DREGS OF SOCIETY DO
THAT.

1. SO WHAT KIND OF LOVE IS THAT? THAT
LOVE IS COMMON, **IT'S THE NORM, NO BIG** DEAL,
SO WHAT.

*** LOOK AT V. 33 PLEASE FOR THE 2'D**
COMPARISON.

B. READ V. 33. **NOW AGAIN THE POINT IS IT'S EASY TO DO GOOD TO THOSE WHO DO GOOD TO YOU, AND UNSAVED PEOPLE, SINNERS DO THAT ALL THE TIME.**

* SO NO CREDIT FOR THAT. HITLER, STALIN AND EVEN SOME TERRORISTS DO THAT. SO WHAT! I MEAN THAT KIND OF BEHAVIOR CAN BE SELF-SERVING AND CERTAINLY IS NOT SACRIFICIAL.

**** THEN LOOK AT V. 34, FOR THE 3'D COMPARISON.**

C. READ V. 34. NOW IF YOU LEND TO SOMEONE AND THEY PAY YOU BACK, THAT IS EXPECTED. IT IS EXPECTED THAT WE PAY BACK OUR DEBTS, EVEN SINNERS DO THAT, ALTHOUGH OBVIOUSLY **SOME DON'T.**

* BUT THE POINT IS OBVIOUS, PAYING BACK IS IMPORTANT IF YOU ARE GOING TO BORROW IN THE FUTURE. THAT IS LOGICAL, NOT LOVING. THE GIVE TO GAIN MENTALITY IS COMMON SENSE, SINNERS DO THAT ALL THE TIME, IT IS THEIR OBLIGATION.

** HOWEVER, JESUS IS CALLING HIS FOLLOWERS TO A SUPERNATURAL SACRIFICIAL LOVE THAT GOES BEYOND RECIPROICATION OR WHAT IS EXPECTED, OR WHAT IS EASY, TO WHAT IS **HARD. IT'S EASY TO LOVE YOUR FRIENDS. BUT REAL LOVE, THE FATHER'S LOVE IS SHOWN BY WHAT? LOVING YOUR ENEMIES.**

*** IN OTHER WORDS, WE NEED TO LOVE LIKE OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN AND SHARE THE FAMILY RESEMBLANCE.

**** **LOOK AT V. 35 PLEASE, WHERE WE'LL START TO LOOK AT OUR LAST POINT TODAY, THE RESEMBLANCE.**

IV. THE RESEMBLANCE, (READ V. 35)

A. NOW IN V. 35 WE GO BACK TO THE MAIN TRUTH, TO LOVE OUR ENEMIES, NOT JUST OUR FRIEND, NOT JUST PEOPLE WHO CAN DO THINGS FOR US, AND WHO DO NICE THINGS FOR US, **THAT'S EASY.**

* BUT JESUS CALLS HIS FOLLOWERS TO A HIGHER LOVE, A SUPERNATURAL LOVE, THAT DOES GOOD WHEN EVIL IS DONE AND LENDS TO PEOPLE WHO CANNOT RETURN THE LOAN, NOT EXPECTING REPAYMENT.

** AND WHEN YOU DO THAT YOUR REWARD IS GREAT. THE REWARD OF JOY, THE REWARD OF ACTING LIKE YOUR FATHER, THE PEACE AND COMFORT THAT FOLLOWERS RECEIVE WHEN YOU ACT LIKE YOUR FATHER. SO TEMPORAL AND POSSIBLY ETERNAL REWARD ONE DAY FOR YOUR LOVING OBEDIENCE.

*** AND YOUR SACRIFICIAL ACTIONS SHOW YOU ARE THE SONS OF THE MOST HIGH. IT IS TO SAY, WHEN YOU LOVE LIKE THIS YOU SHOW YOU **ARE GOD'S TRUE CHILDREN, THE FAMILY RESEMBLANCE IS UNMISTAKABLE.**

**** WHY? FOR GOD IS WHAT? GOD IS LOVE. AND JESUS IS NOT TALKING ABOUT EARNING **GOD'S LOVE, HE IS NOT TALKING ABOUT** BECOMING SON OF GOD OR MERITING SALVATION.

1. HE IS SAYING YOU SHOW YOU ARE SONS OF GOD, THAT YOU ARE SHOWING THE LOVE OF GOD, YOU ARE ACTING LIKE YOUR FATHER, THE FAMILY RESEMBLANCE IS UNQUESTIONABLE.

* THE SPIRITUAL **APPLE DOESN'T FALL FAR** FROM THE TREE!

** FOR HOW DOES OUR FATHER ACT IN LOVE? WELL, HE LOVED HIS ENEMIES – US, AND IN THE GREATEST DISPLAY OF LOVE SENT HIS SON TO DIE FOR HIS ENEMIES, AND THERE IS NO GREATER LOVE! QUOTE JOHN 15:13, ROMANS 5:6-8, ROMANS 5:10

*** GOD THE FATHER IS KIND TO UNGRATEFUL AND EVIL PEOPLE HE SAVES, BUT ALSO IN COMMON GRACE, GIVING PEOPLE FOOD, WATER, AND LIFE AND CHILDREN.

**** HE SENDS HIS RAIN ON THE JUST AND THE UNJUST. AND TO UNSAVED PEOPLE TO HAVE THE GIFT OF LIFE FOR A MOMENT IS GRACIOUS WHEN ALL OF US DESERVE TO BE IN HELL AT THIS VERY MOMENT.

2. AND THE BOTTOM LINE IS WE ARE TO BE MERCIFUL. LOOK AT V. 36 PLEASE.

B. READ V. 36. NOW THE CLEAR SIMPLE TRUTH IS, IF WE WANT TO ACT LIKE OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN, AND BEAR HIS RESEMBLANCE, WE MUST BE MERCIFUL!

* AND WE THAT HAVE BEEN SHOWN MERCY, MUST BE MERCIFUL. HOW CAN WE NOT?

** IT IS THE EPITOME OF AN UNGRATEFUL HARD SELFISH HEART THAT DOES NOT SHOW MERCY WHEN WE HAVE BEEN SHOWN MERCY IN THE SOVEREIGN GRACE OF GOD SAVING US.

*** NOT GIVING US WHAT WE DESERVE IN MERCY, BUT GIVE US MORE THAN WE DESERVE IN HIS GRACE AND LOVE IN FORGIVING OUR SINS.

**** BELOVED, WHEN JESUS SAID BE MERCIFUL JUST AS YOUR FATHER IS MERCIFUL, HE IS TELLING HIS FOLLOWERS TO IMITATE THE FATHER. MAY WE BE SPIRITUAL CHIPS OFF THE OLD BLOCK.

IN WRAP UP AND IN APPLICATION: (1) JESUS LOVED HIS ENEMIES. FOR HE WAS HATED, HE WAS CURSED, HE WAS MOCKED, HE WAS ABUSED, HE WAS BEATEN, HE WAS SWORE AT, HE WAS STRUCK, HE WAS INSULTED, THEY TOOK AWAY HIS COAT AND TUNIC. THEY STRIPPED HIM OF EVERYTHING HE HAD, DOWN TO HIS DIGNITY.

* NOW WHAT DID JESUS DEMAND FROM HIS ENEMIES IN RETURN? NOTHING EXCEPT, HE WOULD DIE TO SAVE SOME OF THEM.

** JESUS SHOWED HIS LOVE FOR HIS ENEMIES WHICH HE IN TURN CALLS HIS DISCIPLES TO SHOW IN A SELFLESS SACRIFICIAL WAY. THE FATHER AND JESUS DISPLAYED THEIR LOVE WITHOUT EQUAL ON THE CROSS.

*** AND THAT IS WHERE WE LEARN TO LOVE OUR ENEMIES, AT THE CROSS.

**** AND YES IT IS A HARD COMMANDMENT, BUT IN ORDER TO KEEP IT, WE HAVE TO STAY CLOSE TO THE CROSS, HOLDING ON TO LOVE THAT THE FATHER AND JESUS SHOWED THERE.

**** AND BELIVER, GOD THE FATHER AND JESUS THE SON HAVE CALLED US TO LOVE OUR ENEMIES SO THAT WE CAN SEE THE SIN OF OUR OWN LOVELESS HEARTS AND LEARN THE GREAT POWER OF THE LOVE THAT COMES FROM THEM.

(2) JESUS LIVED THE LOVE HE GAVE AND
COMMANDED AND NOW HE GIVES CHRISTIANS
THE LOVE HE LIVED.

* AS AMBROSE OBSERVED WRITING IN THE 4TH
CENTURY, THE GOSPEL GIVES US "LOVE FOR
HOSTILITY, BENEVOLENCE FOR HATRED, PRAYER
FOR CURSES, HELP FOR THE PERSECUTED,
PATIENCE FOR THE HUNGRY AND GRACE OF
REWARD." (END QUOTE)

** AND BROTHERS AND SISTERS, IT IS ONLY BY
THE CROSS THAT WE ARE ABLE TO BE LIKE OUR
SAVIOR AND LIKE OUR FATHER TO OUR ENEMIES
- LOVING THEM WITHOUT DEMANDING
ANYTHING IN RETURN.

*** MAY WE LOOK BACK AT THE CROSS TODAY
TO LEARN TO LOVE OUR ENEMIES.

**** FOR THE SAVIOR WHO DIED FOR US NOW
CALLS US TO GIVE HIS GREAT LOVE TO OTHERS,
INCLUDING THOSE WHO HATE US.

(3) SO WHO ARE THE ENEMIES THAT GOD IS CALLING US TO LOVE TODAY? DO GOOD TO THEM. BLESS THEM AND PRAY FOR THEM. LET US SHOW THE LOVE OF THE FATHER IN CHRIST.

** PRESENT THE GOSPEL FROM THE CROSS AND PRAY.