

Luke 6:27-36 Love Your Enemies

Because the Kingdom of God is ruled by One who is holy love, the subjects of the Kingdom are called to practice holy love.

1) Holy love is God's mercy in action through us (vv. 27-31).

- a) Who are the enemies?—"those who hate you . . . curse you . . . abuse you . . . strike you . . . steal from you . . . demand from you . . . take from you"; from OT background: those outside of the covenant community
- b) What is love (agape)?—God's mercy—not executing the penalty that we deserve (Rom. 5:8-10); "love your enemies"—do not give them the penalty they deserve; instead, give them the kindness they do not deserve
 - i) Do good—action; may involve many emotions, but this love is not equated with an emotion or feeling
 - ii) Bless—seek God's kindness for those who seek your harm
 - iii) Pray—victims of abuse can pray from a distance; you are not to subject yourself to dangerous abuse
 - iv) Offer the other cheek—non-retaliation in an honor and shame context; this is not disallowing self-defense
 - v) Give your clothes/goods—that this is speaking of heart attitudes toward people and things is obvious from the fact that Jesus is not advocating going nude
 - vi) "As you would have others do to you, do so to them."—notice the positive action required; this is not simply "do no harm" but seek to do good

2) Holy love does not depend on reciprocation (vv. 32-35).

- a) Most societies govern relationships for mutual benefit.
 - i) Reciprocating friendships among social equals
 - ii) Benefactor/Client relationship between social superiors and inferiors; payback may be in the form of expressions of loyalty
- b) Jesus advocates the ideal benefactor or friendship in which one gives without any expectation of getting in return.
- c) Holy love depends on grace from God, not on expectations of mutual benefit. "What benefit (charis) is that to you?" could be translated "What grace is that in you?" In other words, worldly standards for friendship/relationship do not require divine grace—"even sinners" can do that. But holy love does require God's gift to us.

3) Holy love has the great reward of resembling our Heavenly Father (vv. 35-36).

- a) "Your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High"—the latter clause is most likely explanatory of the first clause: "Your reward will be great—you will be sons of the Most High!!" This does not mean that we earn our status as the children of God by loving our enemies. The language "son of" indicates the source and character of someone.
- b) "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful." Holy love is God's mercy in action expressed through us.

How are you responding to your enemies? Do you fight fire with fire—hatred with hatred? Are you doing good to people who hate you? Are you speaking words of grace to those who curse you? Are you more interested in your honor than in displaying a Christ-like spirit to those who insult you? Do you value your stuff more than you value other people, namely your enemies? Are you praying for the conversion of unbelievers who oppose you and who may seek your harm? Is your response to evil a "natural" response or a Spiritual response? Does your love for your enemies resemble God's love for you when you were His enemy?