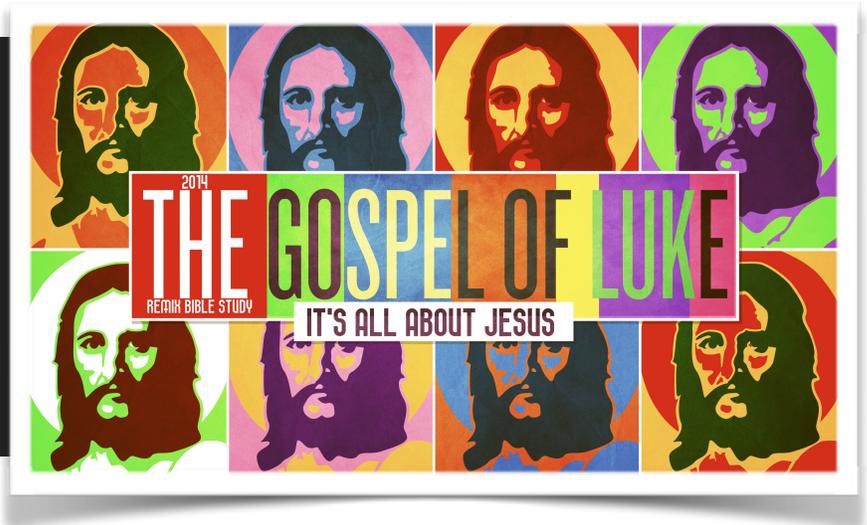


Luke 6: 27-36



“But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, . . .” (v. 35)

Who’s your favorite movie villain? Why?

If it were ever committed against you, what’s one sin you might have a really really hard time forgiving? Why?

It is sometimes hard identifying who our actual enemies are, so to help you think of how to apply this passage to your life, compile a quick list of people in your life you would describe as people who:

- “Hate you”
- “Curse you”
- “Mistreat you”
- Have at some point “struck you”
- “Stolen from you” (tangible, emotional, personal)
- “Taken your stuff from you” (without permission and with no intention of returning it)

How would Jesus have you treat each one of these groups of people?

- The Haters?
- The Cursers?
- The Mistreaters?
- The Strikers?
- The Stealers?
- The Takers?

Does Jesus really want you to suffer physical abuse in the hands of an abuser who keeps “striking” you on the cheek with their fists? Does Jesus really want you to allow thieves to have their way with your property? **What do you think Jesus is really getting at in these verses?** [READ RESOURCE: “TURN THE OTHER CHEEK???”]

How does loving “those who love you” and “doing good to those who do good to you” and “lending to those who will pay you back” not have as great an impact on those you’re trying to reach?

Why will doing the opposite of the above statements result in great reward according to verse 35? What is the reward?

[Look up Matthew 5:3-12]

Why is God kind to the “ungrateful and the wicked” and what does that imply for you?

Can you think of a time (past) when you forgave someone for a great offense against you? Or showed love to an “enemy”? What did it cost you? What did you gain? Lose?

What relationships in your life do you need to apply this passage to this week? Write down at least one name and let’s pray for them (and you) now.

RESOURCE:

TURN THE OTHER CHEEK??

In Jesus' day among the Jews, to slap someone was one of the most demeaning of acts. It was a symbolic way of insulting someone's honor. The act of getting slapped was worse than the physical pain itself. Even the slaves would rather be flogged on their back with a whip than be slapped in the face by their masters hand, because it was considered a terrible indignity.

So when Jesus talks about turning the other cheek, you need to understand that He's speaking in the same hyperbolic manner that He spoke in a few verses earlier when He said if your right eye or arm causes you to sin, gouge it out and cut it off. It wasn't to be taken literal then, nor is that the idea here. What Jesus is speaking about here is how to react when you're unjustly insulted or humiliated; because what is the natural human reaction when this happens? ALL OUT WAR!

If you do or say something terrible, untrue, or humiliating about me or about my family, my inclination is to retaliate by finding fault in your life and exposing it, and it will more than likely be worse than your original insulting act. By doing so, I actually end up escalating the violence into something worse.

Instead of that combative plan, Jesus says when our dignity is attacked we are to LET IT GO. Leave the protection and defense of our name in God's hand, allowing him room to fight on our behalf. So this verse is to be understood in the context of interpersonal relationships, not physical acts of violence. Allow God room To Fight on Your behalf.

LEGAL MATTERS: Secondly, this hard teaching of Jesus Christ calls us to be willing to give up our right in legal matters. Let me read verse 40 to you in The Message Translation because it paints a better picture, "If someone drags you into court and sues for the shirt off your back,

giftwrap your best coat and make a present of it.” To be clear, Jesus is speaking here of when someone has a rightful lawsuit and legal judgment against you. So this is a scenario where WE are clearly in the wrong.

In those cases where someone has a legitimate claim on something that you think was rightfully yours or should belong to you, Jesus says as His follower, not only should YOU NOT fight it and pay up what you owe; but allowing God room to fight on your behalf means that you should also be willing to go above and beyond to demonstrate to the other person that you are remorseful about your wrong action towards them and are willing to go to any extent to make things right again.

So here’s what that looks like. If your neighbor has a rightful lawsuit against you for \$1000, but you think it’s only worth \$500, Jesus says that as His followers, not only should you pay up the \$1000 they’re asking for, but go above and beyond and offer them \$1500 to show that you are willing to make things right again with them!

How many of you have a knot forming in your stomach because you’re uncomfortable with Jesus’ teachings? Well that knot is about to get tighter because the third areas in which He calls us to give up our perceived rights has to do with dealing with authority figures in our lives.