

Luke 6:29-31
January 6, 2019

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

When Jesus mentored his disciples, He emphasized that the command to love lies at the heart of His ethical teaching. In our study of Luke, we are learning that Jesus mentions seven aspects of unconditional love. These actions are not done naturally by human nature, but rather requires supernatural enabling—and are thus proof of true righteousness. As a quick refresher, here are the first four aspects of unconditional love that we covered in our last lesson for verses 27 and 28:

- (1) **Love your enemies.**
- (2) **Do good to those who hate you.**
- (3) **Bless those who curse you.**
- (4) **Pray for those who mistreat you.**

Transition: And to be clearer, these aspects of unconditional love expressed in the form of commands are *especially toward our enemies*. Jesus calls us to the high road when it comes to loving our enemies. But He's not expecting us to be able to do that in our flesh. Because we are Spirit-enabled, we are able to love our enemies or those who mistreat us – if we choose to.

So we will now pick up the last three aspects of unconditional love toward our enemies. Would someone read Luke 6:29-31 to get us started?

BOOK (NIV 1984):

V.29:

- If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic.

V.30:

- Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back.

V.31:

- Do to others as you would have them do to you.

Process Observations/Questions:

Q V.29: What are the next commands? [If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic.]

Background: This is an interesting one! This idea needs to be read in the context of religious persecution. The slap refers to exclusion from the synagogue (1 Esdras 4:30; Didache 1:4; Stahlin 1972:263 nn. 23-24.) Such a slap would be delivered by the back of the hand, though the context here suggests any action that communicates a **public rejection**.

Q V.29a: So, by “turning the other cheek,” what is Jesus’s point? [That even in the midst of such rejection, we forgive them in order continue to minister to others and expose ourselves to the threat of rejection.

To turn the cheek and forgive someone involves three things.

1. First, it means to *forego the right of striking back*. One rejects the urge to repay gossip with gossip and a bad turn with a worse turn.

2. Second, it means *replacing the feeling of resentment and anger with good will*, a love which seeks the other's welfare, not harm.

3. Third, it means *the forgiving person takes concrete steps to restore good relations*. Going the second mile when we are attacked and abused is not easy, going the first mile is not easy, but it can be done, by yielding our rights to the Lord and letting Him take care of our problems. We belong to Him (1 Cor 6:19-20-note). (Mattoon's Treasures from Luke, Volume 1)

Q V.29b: Jesus says, “If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic.” To appreciate this command, we have to understand the cultural context and how they dressed.

Background: John MacArthur explains "Many people owned only one coat, or cloak, which also served as a blanket when they slept. Because of that, the Mosaic law required that any coat taken as a pledge had to be returned before sunset (Ex. 22:26; Deut. 24:13). To keep a person's cloak would constitute serious abuse.

Q: What's the underlying principle behind giving your tunic on top of your coat? [Christ's disciples are not to retaliate, but rather to continue to lovingly minister to those who persecute them—even if that results in losing their shirt (inner garment) as well. Give the shirt off your back! This is another manifestation of "radical love" about which the world knows nothing but desperately needs to see practiced by Christ followers. We are the only ones who can possibly exemplify this quality of love because of the empowerment of the Holy Spirit!]

Q V.30: What is the next command? [“Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back.”]

Q: Jesus makes it clear that we give to everyone who asks. Why does He command this? [**The Master insists that we should cultivate an ungrudging, unstinting, and generous spirit.** "God loves a cheerful giver." Think of God in His incessant giving. Giving His sun and His rain; giving to the Church and the miser, the thankless and heartless, equally as to the loving and prayerful. Our Master is our great model. We are to always give love and help to the thankless and needy world. And we know that as we give, we shall receive; as we break our barley loaves and small fishes, our hands will be filled, and filled again, out of the storehouses of God. Freely you have received, freely give; and in whatever measure you use, it shall be measured to you again.]

Q: Are there any exceptions to “give to anyone who asks? [Let people engage]

Observation: It is clear, also, that we cannot literally obey the Lord's injunction to give to everyone that asks. Else the world would become full of sturdy beggars, who lived on the hard-earned wages of the thrifty. And this would result in the undoing of society, and of the beggars themselves. **Does God give to all who ask Him?** Does He not often turn aside from the borrower? He knows what will hurt or help us; knows that to many an entreaty His kindest answer is a rebuff; knows that if He were to give us all we ask we should repent of having asked so soon as we awoke in the light of eternity. So when the drunkard or the drone asks me for money I steadfastly refuse. It is even our duty not to give money indiscriminately, and without full acquaintance with the applicant and his circumstances, for we may be giving him the means of forging more tightly the fetters by which he is bound to his sins. A piece of bread is the most we may bestow upon the mendicant until we have some knowledge of his character, his mode of life, and his real intentions. If only Christian people would resist the impulse to give money to beggars of all kinds, and reserve themselves for the more modest poor who suffer without making appeals, how much of the evil and sorrow of our time would be remedied!

John MacArthur makes an interesting comment - being willing to give to everyone who asks of you, takes place in the context of borrowing and lending (cf. Lk 6:34; Mt. 5:42). The assumption is that the person asking has a legitimate need, since Scripture condemns laziness and indolence (cf. Pr 6:6-12; 20:4; 24:30-34; 2 Th. 3:10). That a person may take advantage of a Christian's generosity and not repay the loan should not keep the believer from graciously, lovingly meeting the need.

Q V.31: Jesus sums up these commands in this verse. What does He say? [Do to others as you would have them do to you.]

LOOK: Think of God in His incessant giving. Giving His sun and His rain; giving to the Church and the miser, the thankless and heartless, equally as to the loving and prayerful. Our Master is our great model. We are to always give love and help to the thankless and needy world.

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 193). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

People (vv. 29–31). We must not look at these admonitions as a series of rules to be obeyed. They describe an attitude of heart that expresses itself positively when others are negative, and generously when others are selfish, all to the glory of God. It is an inner disposition, not a legal duty. We must have wisdom to know when to turn the other cheek and when to claim our rights (John 18:22–23; Acts 16:35–40). Even Christian love must exercise discernment (Phil. 1:9–11).

Two principles stand out: we must treat others as we would want to be treated (Luke 6:31), which assumes we want the very best spiritually for ourselves; and we must imitate our Father in heaven and be merciful (Luke 6:36). The important thing is not that we are vindicated before our enemies but that we become more like God in our character (Luke 6:35). This is the greatest reward anyone can receive, far greater than riches, food, laughter, or popularity (Luke 6:24–26). Those things will one day vanish, but character will last for eternity. We must believe Matthew 6:33 and practice it in the power of the Spirit.

Martin, J. A. (1985). *Isaiah*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 220–221)

a. *True righteousness revealed by love* (6:29–31).

6:29–31. Jesus mentioned seven aspects of unconditional love. These actions, not done naturally by human nature, require supernatural enabling—and are thus proof of true righteousness:

- (5) Do not retaliate (v. 29a).
- (6) Give freely (vv. 29b–30).
- (7) Treat **others** the way you want to be treated (v. 31).

Stein, R. H. (1992). *Luke* (Vol. 24, pp. 207–208). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

6:29 At this point Luke gave four examples about how the four commands of enemy love should be carried out (6:29–30). The literary symmetry in these two verses involves the following: “to the one, turn/give; and from the one, do not stop/demand.” The four examples, however, do not correspond exactly in content with the four commands in 6:27–28.

If someone strikes you on one cheek. Whereas the “you” of 6:27–28 is plural, here and in the next verse it is singular due to the specific nature of the examples. (The use of the plural here would also be more clumsy.) What is being referred to involves insult more than injury (cf. Isa 50:6, esp. in the LXX) and should be understood as occurring “because of the Son of Man” (Luke 6:22).

If someone takes your cloak. The parallel in Matthew envisioned a legal situation in which the believer is sued for his inner garment (the tunic) and also gives up the outer garment (the cloak), which was exempt from legal suits because it was a basic essential for life (Exod 22:26–27). Luke in contrast envisioned a situation in which a thief takes the outer garment (the cloak) and is also given the inner garment (the tunic). The former example no doubt would have been more meaningful for Matthew’s Jewish audience, whereas for Theophilus, Luke’s example would have

been more relevant. The reader is urged to give up his or her possessions in such instances as willingly as Peter (Luke 5:11) and Levi (5:28) did.

6:30 Give to everyone who asks you. No exceptions are stated. Luke’s “everyone” is not found in Matt 5:42 and intensifies the command. It is best to understand this as an overstatement for effect, for we do find an exception in other NT examples (cf. 2 Thess 3:6–13). Nevertheless the use of overstatement in this command serves to heighten its importance, and this issue will come up again in Luke 6:34–35.

If anyone takes what belongs to you. Here as in 6:29 theft is in mind.

6:31 By this conclusion Luke indicated that the Golden Rule is a summary of what it means to love your enemies and, *a fortiori*, your friends. We find several examples of the Golden Rule in extrabiblical literature. Negative examples are found in Tob 4:15 (“What you hate, do not do to anyone”); *Sabb.* 31a (“What is hateful to you, do not to your neighbor”). A positive example is found in Lev 19:18, which is being alluded to here. Despite these parallels, Jesus’ teaching on enemy love is unique in its clarity and positive emphasis as well as in the numerous examples given to explain what this command means. The command furthermore is not simply seen as a prudent rule but as corresponding to God’s character of mercy (Luke 6:36; cf. Rom 5:8–10). The Golden Rule is essentially another way of saying, “Love your neighbor”; and, as the following verses clearly show, this love of one’s neighbor, which involves doing not feeling, goes beyond simple reciprocity toward one’s friends. Whereas the lawyer of Luke 10:29 sought to restrict the command to love one’s neighbor, the Golden Rule permits no such restriction, for Christian love is not dependent on others’ behavior.