

Tommy Meador / General

The Gospel of Luke / Luke 6:27–36

Introduction

- <https://www.foxnews.com/lifestyle/woman-accidentally-eats-heart-shaped-potato-chip-worth-120k-i-didnt-realize>
- Probably times in your life in which you feel like your heart has been eaten away at by someone else. Every one of us in this room has been hurt by someone - and even hurt badly. Your enemies have eaten away at your heart.
- For some, friends that you haven't talked to in years because of something they did to you, said about you, etc. They're no longer a friend, but an enemy.
- Or, maybe it's not the former friend, it's the coworker who seems to be out to get you. The way they treat you on the job is hurtful. They're your enemy at work.
- Or, it's the teacher at school who has it out for your child. You're child just can't make the grade because of the teacher. That teacher is your enemy. Seeing your child struggle because of that teacher hurts your heart.
- Or, it's the bully that's constantly pushing your around at school He's your enemy.
- Everyone of us has some enemies. If you have an enemy, Jesus has a challenging word for you: Love your enemies.
- This may be the most radical challenge that Jesus gives His disciples. We have a hard enough time loving our friends and families, much less our enemies.

- If we're going to love our enemies, we need to answer three questions: How can I love my enemy? How should I love my enemy? How do I start loving my enemy?

How can I love my enemy?

- The greatest sermon ever preached by the greatest preacher to ever live.
- Sermon on the plain = what Kingdom citizenship looks like OR how a disciple should live.
- The King is on the earth telling us what it looks like for us to follow Him.
- Compared to Matthew's Sermon on the Mount, the Sermon on the Plain is much shorter and a bit different. Similar content likely preached multiple times.
- The message is radical: e.g., Blessed are the poor, and woe are the rich. Now, "Love your enemy..."
- Completely counterintuitive. What comes natural is to hate our enemy - to go to war with our enemy, to seek revenge on our enemy, to get even with our enemy, to slander our enemy, etc.
- Israel knew their law: Love your neighbor as yourself... Eventually, religious leaders ask Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?" ([Luke 10:29](#)) Jews knew to love their fellow Jews, but NOT their enemies... Not ROME, or, in OT times, not the Philistines, not the Moabites, etc. You're not supposed to love your enemies. You're supposed to go to war against your enemies. You're supposed to destroy your enemies. You're supposed to make sure that your enemies suffer.
- Now, Jesus looks at His disciples who He is going to send out into a world that would be hostile to them, and He says, "Love your enemies..." People were going to come against them because of their allegiance to King Jesus. People were going to hate them and despise them because of their faith in Jesus. As more people embraced Jesus, it would cost them their families, their jobs, etc. It would hurt, but the command of the New Testament is: "Love your enemy." Or, as Paul puts it: Do not repay evil for evil, live at peace with everyone ([Romans 12:17-18](#)).

- *Agape* love - NOT eros, philia, or storge (natural affection), but instead an unnatural kind of love that is given by choice to people who may not be worthy of receiving that love.
- How can I love my enemy this way?
 - **I can't love my enemy if I don't first understand God's love for me.** Jesus' sermon is a call for His disciples to PUT OFF the kind of character traits that define the sinful people of this world and PUT ON the character traits of Jesus. Your character matters. LOVE is a defining characteristic of God and should be a defining characteristic of you. The reason why you love God is because God first loved you ([1 John 4:19](#)). You were an enemy of God - [Rom. 5:10](#) - yet God pursued you because of His great love.
 - **I can't love my enemy if I love me more than I love the One who saved me.** The more I set my heart on me, the more I get jealous for me - my glory, my way, etc. If I am the ultimate object of my affection, I become easily offended, easily hurt, easily embittered, and easily vengeful. BUT... when I grow in love for Jesus, the focus is off of me and on what pleases Him. Maybe you can't love your enemy because you can't stop loving you.
 - **I can't love my enemy if I am not asking for God's help.** Love for enemy does not come naturally. I need God's help. I can't love without the help of His Spirit. I must constantly ask God to help me grow in love for my enemy.

How should I love my enemy?

- Jesus gives the command, and then He shows us what it looks like.
- Do what is good, bless (speaking well to and of), and pray (asking God to rescue your enemy from their own sin). **Love is ACTIVE** - Loving your enemy isn't merely refraining from repaying them with evil. Love is pursuing even the person that has wronged you. This is a POWERFUL response to the hatred that our enemies might spew at us.
- Jesus is not done. He gives more examples of how we're to love our enemies. Offer the other cheek. NOT teaching to let evil have its way,

but in Jesus' day a slap in the face was more of an insult than an act of violence. To Jesus' disciples about to face persecution: be willing to be humiliated again and again for your faith in Jesus.

- If your coat is stolen, give your shirt? (vs. 29-30) Give to everyone who asks? The point: people might hurt you, but the hurt that people cause you doesn't change your calling: to be a blessing, to give your life away for the sake of the Gospel.
- vs. 31-36 - If your love is going to display the Gospel, your love must look different than the way the world loves. The world loves with a self-seeking love: "I'll love you as long as you love me." OR, "If I invest in you, how are you going to invest in me." Rather than, "I'm going to invest in you even if you despise me because of what Jesus has already invested in me."
- The love of a Jesus follower = love without any expectation of anything in return. It's easy to love when your love is returned, appreciated, or acknowledged. BUT, agape love is given even when it is NOT returned.
- How God loves - [John 3:16](#) - God so loved the world knowing that many would reject His love. [John 1](#) - Jesus came to His own knowing that His own would not receive Him.
- Everyday, God shows love, grace, and mercy to people who will not return it. He gives good things even to people who do not Jesus as Savior (common grace). He gives the gift of family, jobs, food, etc.
- He continually showers YOU with love. He continues to bless you, gives you opportunities to grow in your relationship with Him, but how often do you fail to reciprocate His love?
- Jesus' sermon is aimed at your heart - who are you really? Someone who is vengeful - who loves with a conditional love - or someone who is being transformed by Jesus and learning to love like Jesus?
- How should I love?
- **I must want the best for my enemy instead of wanting the worst.** What is the best for my enemy? That my enemy sees his/need for Jesus and lives to glorify Jesus. ([2 Peter 3:9](#))

- **I must be willing to give my enemies my best instead of giving my enemies my worst.** What gain is it to you that you respond to your enemies with hateful speech? Attempts to get even? Harboring bitterness? Letting hatred for them overtake my heart? Giving the silent treatment?
- **I must be willing to let God deal with the hearts of my enemies.** Jesus NOT telling us to let people walk over us, to be weak, to not defend ourselves, to be victims of abuse. By all means, do not put yourself in a position where you might subject yourself to the abuse of someone else. He IS calling us to show love even when it's hard. He IS calling us to NOT lead with anger, bitterness, unforgiveness, and hate. Instead, He's calling us to lead with love. To pursue with love even when it doesn't make sense. You strive to be like Jesus to the best of your ability and you leave people in the hands of God. God knows how to administer justice. God knows how to move on the hearts of people. Trust that as you show Christlike love, God will be your defender ([Romans 12:19](#)).

How do I start loving my enemy?

- vs. 35-36 - Jesus restates the expectation and reminds us of the reward that is yet to come for His children. And, He reminds us again that our Father is merciful and gracious - even to those who don't deserve it (vs. 35).
 - God has called you to love your enemy - it's a seemingly impossible task. How do I start?
1. **Remember the Gospel** - Jesus died for His enemies. Jesus came to save His enemies! You and I were His enemies! Jesus nailed to the cross by His enemies. He was mocked, insulted, spat upon, beaten, tortured, yet in love, looked at those who were crucifying Him and said to His Father, "Forgive them, they do not know what they're doing." The Gospel = Jesus forgives you of every sin you have ever committed or will ever commit by sacrificing His life for you - suffering the punishment you deserve then rising from the dead. Until you understand the Gospel, you'll never understand Jesus' command to love your enemies.

2. **Get over it.** Easier said than done, but most of the grudges you hold are over silly things. [Prov. 19:11](#) - It is freeing to overlook the offenses of others. You don't have to let everything offend you. You can overlook. You can show grace. Even if the hurt is significant, you can begin to forgive and move on. You don't have to let the past hurt define who you are in the present. You can let mature believers help you move on from the hurt, or a good Christian counselor. If you choose to hold grudges and let bitterness and anger take root, it will end up hurting you far more than your enemy who you're mad at. Anger and bitterness will rob you of joy and will cost you a lot of time and energy.
3. **Change the internal dialogue.** You keep telling yourself how mad you are at someone, how you've been mistreated, how your enemy deserves what they have coming. Change the dialogue you have with yourself. Instead of saying to yourself, "I have the right to be hurt..." Tell yourself, "I have the opportunity to love like Christ in spite of the hurt... I have the opportunity to pray, encourage, and bless. I have the opportunity to be different than the world."
4. **Change the external dialogue.** The way we try to do the most damage is with our words. Speak well **of** the person who hurt you. Speak well **to** the person that hurt you.
5. **Make a step towards love this week.** What is a tangible way that you can bless your enemy this week? To offer forgiveness? To pray for and send a text message: "I'm praying for you." Take to coffee to try to work through the conflict?
 - Broken world... You can't change the past. You can't change the hurt someone has caused. You can't change the person who has hurt you, but you can change how you respond. You can't control others, but you can control you - how you cooperate with the Spirit of God. We all need to learn to love even those who are most difficult to love.
 - For some of you, the first step is to respond to God's love for you. Believe that Jesus died and rose again for you, and turn to Him by faith.