

Luke 6D

- This morning we drop back into Jesus' first day of classes for his disciples
 - As we said last time, Jesus has the unenviable task of preparing the disciples for their ministry - to lay the foundations of the early church
 - But even as He desires to teach them the mysteries of God's grace and of the Kingdom to come, Jesus spends much of His time with them correcting their thinking concerning true love and righteousness
- Last week He had just begun the discipling process
 - He established the fact that there are 2 kinds of people in the world
 - These two different types can be illustrated in an infinite number of ways, but Jesus first chose to contrast their dispositions
 - On the one hand, you have those who are satisfied by this world
 - Who feel generally good about themselves and their achievements
 - Who feel secure in their future
 - Jesus speaks of this group as being well satisfied and laughing in verse 25,
 - As having need of nothing in verse 24
 - Essentially they are pleased with themselves, and by their disposition they betray themselves as lovers of self rather than lovers of God
 - They have not experienced the saving sorrow brought by the conviction of the Holy Spirit
 - Therefore they are sons of disobedience
 - These will have an eternity of misery as judgment for living their earthly lives in open rebellion to God, unrepentant and without a fear of God
- The second type of person is at all times the opposite of the first
 - Because of the conviction of the Holy Spirit and God's grace, he has become aware of his poor condition spiritually,

- He weeps over his sins
 - And He is hungry for true righteousness
 - And because he turns his back on the world and turns toward God, the world hates him and rejects him
 - But he will have his reward one day – in the Kingdom
 - And he has become an adopted son of Heaven
- Knowing the difference is merely step one...
 - How should one side respond to the other, and for what purpose?

[Luke 6:27](#) ¶ “But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,

[Luke 6:28](#) bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

[Luke 6:29](#) “Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also; and whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either.

[Luke 6:30](#) “Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back.

[Luke 6:31](#) “Treat others the same way you want them to treat you.

- Take a moment and notice a couple of things about how this teaching is fit together
 - First, notice what preceded these verses
 - Jesus ended in verse 26 by warning us to expect hatred and not look for praise as one of His disciples
 - So it would seem that Jesus is taking a moment to explain how a disciple should respond to his attacker
- But Matt’s account helps stitch these thoughts together even better
 - In his account Matt records Jesus exhorting the disciples to remain salt and light – to remain distinct in the world
 - Jesus first states that believing in Him and following Him – being a disciple of Jesus – will bring rejection and hatred by the world
 - So to the extent you make known that you are a follower of Christ, you will naturally find yourself at odds with the world

- And yet, that rejection and hatred cannot be our excuse to shrink back from our responsibility to stand out and to stand for Christ in a lost and dying world
- Then as we shall see in this the text today, Jesus actually asks for His disciples to go one step further – an all but impossible step – we are to love our enemies
- Have you ever considered why Jesus says His disciples will be hated and yet we must stand out and remain a target, as it were
 - Why must your faith and obedience in Christ result in the world hating you? Can't they just ignore us?
 - In a word, no
 - The world can ignore falsehoods, but it won't ignore the truth
 - The lost and dying world is not threatened by false faiths and false beliefs – it embraces them, it shares them
 - They naturally love their own – as we quoted in John 15:19
 - If you were of this world, the world would love its own.
- But the world – propelled by the schemes of the evil one – will always hate the godly, the prophets, the disciples of the true living God
 - There are only two kinds of people...

Every morning when I wake up, I read the Bible and the Newspaper... Because I want to know what both sides are up to.

- It is because we hold the truth that the enemy wishes us to be opposed and hated
- And in fact, we too were once one of those who opposed God and opposed His children
- Paul explains it this way in Eph chapter 2

[Eph. 2:1](#) ¶ And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,
[Eph. 2:2](#) in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

[Eph. 2:3](#) Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

- Paul begins by calling his readers “dead” – nekros – a corpse
 - We were as walking dead men – like walking corpses
 - And it was according to the course of this world
 - Course (aion) means age or from the beginning of time
 - We were walking as the world has always walked – by the power of the enemy
 - And he calls us the sons of disobedience
 - We were by nature children of wrath – God’s wrath
- Eph 2 goes on to explain that it was an act of God’s grace to change us and by faith bring us into a new relationship with Him – to become children of God
 - Now we can hear and understand the truth of Jesus’ words, if we have been born again by the Spirit and we now are believers
 - Jesus even began the passage today mentioning “for those who hear”
 - Not everyone can hear and understand His words – only those who have the HS teaching them truth
- And so now the enemy fiercely opposes those who are sons of God – because the enemy first opposed God Himself
 - This is why we rejoice at being persecuted for His name sake, because it confirms that we aren’t on the side of the enemy any longer – for the enemy will not oppose himself
 - As Jesus says in Matt 12:25 that a house divided against itself cannot stand
- So, a disciples must by nature be hated

- And yet we must stand out, being a target for Jesus
 - We aren't supposed to shrink back or hide so as to avoid persecution
 - Instead we greet our enemies head on, and forgive them
- Jesus says love your enemies, do good to those who hate you
 - He gives several interesting examples in the text of how we may be mistreated and how we should respond
 - He mentions being cursed, being struck on the cheek, having our possessions taken
- There is a certain sense intended here that may not be immediately apparent
 - Remember last week when Jesus said that we should count it joy when we are hated for the sake of the Son of Man – for Jesus' sake
 - We said then that we can't simply count misery for just any reason as being in our favor
 - But persecution in the name of Jesus is reason to rejoice
 - That same sense is still in view here
 - Who are the enemies of disciples? Those who oppose God and His Son
 - But as disciples we are to not hold it against the sons of disobedience when they oppose us because we are Christ's
 - Rather show them mercy and forgiveness
- Consider the specific steps Jesus says he expects His disciples to take in the face of this opposition
 - Bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you
 - Am I right in assuming that we have trouble remembering to pray for those we love, much less those who would curse us as Christians
 - What would you pray for? You say, sure I'll pray for them...I'll pray for them to fall into a deep pit filled with rattlesnakes,

- We can be sure that's not what He meant, but what was it he expected?
- Or for the one who strikes you on the cheek
 - The words in Greek here actually draw a more violent picture
 - The word for strike here – *tupto* – is the same word used for how the soldiers beat Jesus or how Paul was being beaten to death by the Jews in Jerusalem before Roman soldiers stopped them
 - The word for cheek is literally jawbone
 - So we're talking about a punch to the jaw
 - When they strike you in that way, you turn and show no resistance to their beating
 - And we're not talking about being passive – about refusing to ever fight back
 - This isn't a lesson in the morality of self defense or violence in any form
 - It's about how we respond to those who oppose us for our faith in Christ
 - Again, why would we do this? What is Jesus asking of us here?
- And Jesus when they take your cloak, offer him your shirt too
 - The cloak was the out garment, the most valuable part of the person's wardrobe
 - The shirt was essentially the undergarment – of less value than the cloak but more personal and private
 - The language here suggests a highway robbery – someone demanding your coat by force
 - But even in the midst of the robbery, Jesus demands that we try to make the other person feel comfortable and offer even more

- Again, what's the point here Jesus? How come I have to respond in these ways?
- Then Jesus gives us part of the answer in verse 31
 - Some often call this verse the golden rule – though Jesus was not the first to state it
 - This principle had been stated many times before Jesus day – a version of it can even be found in the Torah in Lev 19:18
 - But in every other case, it has always been phrased from the negative perspective: What you don't want done to you, don't do to others
 - Now Jesus states it in the positive sense
 - Do to others what you want them to do to you
 - We all know this rule and we understand it instinctively
 - But if you examine the situations Jesus mentioned carefully, you realize that Jesus is actually going a step farther
 - He gives example where the right thing isn't being done
- When someone has punched you in the jaw or cursed you or stolen your coat, they have already done the wrong thing unto you
 - They've already injured you
 - Your desire to have them do unto you has already failed
 - Now, you should be free to respond in kind, shouldn't you?
 - That's what the world would say
 - In Matt's account of this passage, the first verses begin with this:

[Matt. 5:38](#) ¶ "You have heard that it was said, 'AN EYE FOR AN EYE, AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH.'

[Matt. 5:39](#) "But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.
- Jesus quotes from Exodus 21:24, where the Pharisees and others often went to justify their acts of revenge

- The Pharisees just like the world today believed that once a wrong had been done, then the injured party had the right to respond in kind
- In fact, that rule had been given to limit the retribution of men, not to endorse it
 - The point of Exodus 21 was to emphasize that men shouldn't seek to take a greater step in response than what was done in the original offense
 - Much like when Jesus said that Moses allowed certificates of divorce because of the hardness of their hearts
 - That is, not because divorce was permissible but because men were leaving their wives and not giving them an opportunity to remarry
- And here's Jesus plainly refuting that principle
 - Jesus' golden rule goes beyond just trying to get a relationship started on the right foot
 - Jesus rule for His disciplines was that even after the relationship sours because of their error, we maintain our part of the bargain
 - So the golden rule isn't a two way street for a disciple
 - Their sin against you and I can never be our reason for responding in sin toward them
 - But here again, why? Simply to be nice?
- Well, consider where Jesus goes next, and we'll have our answer

[Luke 6:32](#) "If you love those who love you, what credit is *that* to you? For even sinners love those who love them.

[Luke 6:33](#) "If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is *that* to you? For even sinners do the same.

[Luke 6:34](#) "If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is *that* to you? Even sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back the same *amount*.

[Luke 6:35](#) "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil *men*.

[Luke 6:36](#) "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

- Let those verses sink in for just a moment
 - This may come as a shock to you, but when you're nice to those who like you – to your family, to your friends, to those you congregate with
 - You get no credit with God
 - You are doing what the world does – what the enemy does – what the sons of disobedience do
 - In fact, you were doing those things before you ever became a disciple of Jesus – a believer in the gospel
 - So why is it that you would turn to God today and demand that He favor you simply because you do what is natural for all men
- Let's review Jesus instructions
 - Jesus started by describing two kinds of people
 - Then Jesus said these two groups will always be opposed
 - And the one will hate the other for the sake of Christ
 - But yet the disciple must remain distinct from the world, making sure the differences remain pronounced –
 - So that we remain a target rather than shrink back and fade into the wood work of our society
 - Then he says, when the attacks come, we should adopt these ridiculous, nonsensical responses –
 - Responses that could only come with the power of the HS, because we would never think to do them ourselves
 - In fact, Jesus says we can only get credit as a disciple when we act in this counter intuitive way, since even the unbelieving world favors those who like them
 - But then Jesus adds the final piece: we should do these things because our Father in heaven is kind to ungrateful and evil men
 - We should be merciful as our Father is merciful
 - I suspect even now, the enormity of this escapes us

- Paul expressed it this way in Romans:

[Rom. 5:6](#) ¶ For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

[Rom. 5:7](#) For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die.

[Rom. 5:8](#) But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

- I don't know if when we've read this before, we've truly understood what Paul was saying
 - God in the man Jesus Christ – looked across all eternity at all humanity for all of time, and saw all men as sinners, as enemies of God – and then willingly died in their place even while they hated him
 - So when our Lord was paraded before the authorities on his way to the cross, and they spat on Him and cursed Him, we were there in the crowd spitting on Him – but he blessed His tormentors and prayed for those who cursed Him,
 - And when Jesus had his clothes ripped from his body, we were there agreeing heartily with the violence – and Jesus gave no resistance but let them take everything
 - And when the guards struck Jesus on the cheek and drew His blood, we were the ones throwing the punch – and yet Jesus turned the other cheek
 - And He did those things so that He might go sinless to the cross
 - Do see that when Jesus gave His life on the cross, He was dying for your sins and mine even while we opposed him – even as we were His enemies
 - Yet if he had responded as you and I might have desired – to strike back and oppose His enemies – He would have been opposing the Father's plan – He would have sinned
 - And had He sinned, His payment on the cross wouldn't have been valid for you and I
 - Think about that...be merciful because your Father in heaven was merciful to you
 - This is why Paul goes on to say:

[Rom. 5:10](#) For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

- So now I ask you, how might we pray for those who curse us or hate on account of Christ?
 - Pray for their salvation. Pray for them to know the truth. Pray for the Father to open their eyes as He opened yours
- And when they strike you because of your faith, why turn the other cheek? Or when they take from you or borrow from you taking advantage of your Christian generosity, why should you let them get away with it?
 - Because your Father in heaven has already forgiven us of so much more, we can never dare complain about injustice – about being owed anything
 - And because we are to be merciful as He is was merciful to us
 - For remember, the sons of disobedience who oppose you in the name of Christ will one day receive the full payment for their sins while you will go free
- Therefore, we have no basis to argue with Jesus when He says we are to show mercy to those who oppose us
 - And as disciples, our priority is not serving our own interests in any event – just as the disciples in Jesus day were being prepared to give their lives to the establishment of the church
 - We today are to give our lives to the spread and growth of the church
 - And by our actions when we follow these instructions we give opportunity to bear witness to our enemies of the Father's mercy – and perhaps persuade someone concerning Christ on the basis of our actions
- As James says, we are not to be merely hearers of the word, but doers
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