

“Living for Christ: Part Two”

Luke 6:27-49

Read Luke 6:27-28... Jesus gives four commands to His true followers and believers; those who are able to “hear” [*understand and obey*] what Jesus is saying.

#1. Love your enemies...

Proverbs 25:21, “If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink.”

#2. Do good to those who hate you...

Romans 12:21, “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

#3. Bless those who curse you...

To bless them is to tell them the truth about God’s expressed love toward them (**John 3:16**), “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” (**36**), “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

#4. Pray for those who mistreat you...

The first recorded words of Jesus, while on cross were (**Luke 23:34**), “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”

Like Jesus, we should pray for those who mistreat us, showing them kindness, blessing them. When we do that, we may very well turn one who is an enemy of God, into a brother or sister in the Lord.

We were all enemies of God before coming to Christ for salvation.

Romans 5:8, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. **9** Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. **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.”

Read Luke 6:29... Last week we studied the first part of this verse, “Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also.” I showed you Matthew’s recorded words of this same section of the Sermon on the Mount (**Matthew 5:39**), “But I say to you, do not resist an evil person [unbeliever]; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.”

Most Hebrew-speakers and people of Jewish descent are right handed. For a right-handed person to hit another person on the right side of their face, would most likely be a slap, with the back of the hand, an act of contempt. This is not speaking about a physical attack, but instead this is a form of humiliation.

To turn the other cheek isn’t about being a pacifist, as God’s children we should expect to be despised and ridiculed, because of our relationship with the Lord; but when that happens, we are to seek reconciliation not retaliation.

1Peter 2:15, “For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.” 21-23, “For you have been called for this purpose, since

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Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting *Himself* to Him who judges righteously.”

1Peter 3:13-17, “Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame. For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.”

As a Christian, it is not about my rights, or the injustices done to me, nor is it about getting even; it is about Him who died for me, that I might live for Him (**Hebrews 12:3**), “For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”

Let’s look at the second part of **Luke 6:29**, “and whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either.” What is this talking about?

Matthew 5:40, “If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also.” During the time of Christ, most people didn't have large wardrobes, or storage units where they kept their overflow of possessions; and so, if someone had a legitimate claim against you, your clothes could be used to pay your debt to them, or to serve as a pledge that you would pay your debt.

The shirt [lit. tunic] was what you wore next to your skin (of which you might have several); the coat [lit. cloak] was your outer garment (of which most people only had one), it often doubled as your blanket during the cold season.

Exodus 22:26-27; Deuteronomy 24:13, give us more information about what Jesus was referring to, “If you ever take your neighbor's cloak as a pledge, you are to return it to him before the sun sets, for that is his only covering; it is his cloak for his body. What else shall he sleep in?”

So in **Luke 6:29; Matthew 5:40**, Jesus is saying that even if someone keeps your coat you are not to retaliate, even if that means you lose your shirt also.

Read Luke 6:30... Jesus now says, “Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back.” The first part of that illustration “Give to everyone who asks of you,” seems to be in the context of someone having a need and asking you to help him.

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Let’s look at the parallel passage in **Matthew 5:42**, to gain a better understanding of what Jesus is saying, “Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.”

... When someone has a genuine need and they come to you for help, and you have the means to help them, you ought to do so; this is not talking about enabling someone or helping them when they are unwilling to help themselves or work themselves, as Paul wrote (**2Thessalonians 3:10**), “For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.”

On the other hand, if we are aware of a genuine need and we know we can provide what is necessary, we should offer to do so, and not wait to be asked. God's people, above all people, ought to be generous and gracious to others, just as our Father in heaven is to us. If we are living for Christ, it will show for we will (**Ephesians. 4:32**), “Be kind and compassionate toward one another,” and we will (**James 2:8**), “love [our] neighbor as [ourselves].”

The second part of **Luke 6:30** presents a different scenario, “whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back.” What does this mean? I believe this is speaking about believer being robbed.

Theft or stealing is sin. Number 8 of the 10 Commandments (**Exodus 20:15**) says, “You shall not steal.” and in **1Corinthians 6:9** we read, “Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, **10 nor thieves**, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. **11** Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.”

I don’t believe Jesus is saying (in **Luke 6:30**), that we should let thieves get away with robbery. Jesus Himself drove the money changers and those selling animals out of the temple (**Matthew 21:13**) saying, “My house shall be called a house of prayer; but you are making it a robbers’ den.”

But clearly it may not be a good idea for you to go and confront the thief who robbed you and demand back what was stolen; instead, you should go to the authorities God has instituted, we have a system of Law and Order, so that we might legally and lawfully retrieve what is ours.

1Peter 2:13-16, “Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. *Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God.*”

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Romans 13:1, “Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.” **4-10**, “But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil. Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience ‘sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor. Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. For this, ‘You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,’ and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

Love is the fulfillment of the law, not retribution or retaliation. That may be hard for us to accept in our brain; but honestly, it is in our heart that this teaching must be understood and responded to.

The most important thing in this life is not personal property; the most important thing is the love of God in you, and the most important thing you can do is to share that love with others, even those you don’t like, those who mistreat you, curse you, persecute you, and even those who steal from you.

1Peter 2:11-12, “Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. *Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.*”

Our purpose on this earth is to be a witness of Jesus Christ: crucified, resurrected, and coming again. And as we have studied these past few weeks, it is clear that we should expect the world to hate us, just as it hates our Lord and put Him to death on a cross, although He was not guilty of any crime.

Hebrews 12:2-3, “Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of [our] faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ...Consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”

1Peter 3:14-17, “But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are

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slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame. For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.”

Next week we take a deep look at **Luke 6:31**, “Treat others the same way you want them to treat you.” This section in **Luke 6**, from the Sermon on the Mount, is indeed difficult to accept and understand, and quite impossible to obey, apart from the love of God in us, through Christ.

But for today, I would like for you to turn to **1John 5:3-5**, “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” **11-12**, “And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.”

Pastor Mike

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