

September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022 (full sermon notes)

## “Living for Christ – part 3”

Luke 6:27-49

Luke records, a shortened version of what is called the Beatitudes, from the Latin *beati* (*blessed*), Greek *makarios* (*happy, fortunate, to be envied*). Jesus is declaring a state of being, the heart attitude of those who have received eternal forgiveness for sins and eternal life with God through belief in Jesus Christ, God’s Son, Lord and Savior. Salvation brings genuine blessing; whereas, those who continue to reject Jesus Christ are cursed.

Last week we studied one verse, **Luke 6:31**, “Treat others the same way you want them to treat you.” The action of treating others the way we want to be treated ourselves, is central to the attitudes that we, as Christians, ought to have, if we are obeying the preeminent commandment in Scripture.

In **Mark 12:28-31**, Jesus is asked, “What commandment is the foremost of all?” He answered, “The foremost is, ‘Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

Those who recognize their own hopelessness apart from Christ’s forgiveness, repenting of their sins and believing in God’s Son, have received the love of God and are therefore blessed; it is to them that Jesus says (**Luke 6:20-23**), “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh. Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. Be glad in that day and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven. For in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets.”

The true believers and servants of God have always been despised and persecuted by those who reject God; but because we belong to God the Father by faith in God the Son, we have God the Spirit indwelling us and we are a new creation and are therefore not to be like those in the world who are without God’s Spirit (**Romans 5:1-5**), “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

We have been justified by God through faith in Jesus Christ, having received the grace of God that allows us to persevere through hard times; even when we are insulted, mistreated, persecuted, and hated by those who reject God; unconditionally, we are (cf. **Luke 6:31**) to treat others the way we want to be treated, no matter how they treat us.

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Look again at Christ’s command (**Luke 6:27-28**), “But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.” We can only do that (**Romans 5:5**), “because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

As Christians, we have been provided all we need so that we might express the love of God in and through our daily lives, as a testimony to this great salvation we have received through Jesus Christ (**Romans 5:6-10**), “For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. 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.”

As born-again believers, our lives should be lived in a manner that gives evidence to the indwelling of God’s Spirit, i.e., we should be living as new creatures (cf. **2Corinthians 5:17**) “the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.” We are to be living for God, not for ourselves, as Paul so aptly declared (**Galatians 2:20**), “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”

**Read Luke 6:32-34...** Those who genuinely belong to God in Christ are to live in direct contrast to those who don’t belong to God in Christ. Look again at **Luke 6:32-33**, “If you love those who love you, what credit is *that* to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is *that* to you? For even sinners do the same.”

The word “sinners” here is not talking about sinners in general, for Christians are sinners (saved by grace); Jesus is referring here to unbelievers, unrepentant sinners, people of the world who do not belong to the kingdom of God.

People of the world do good to those who do good to them; and they return bad to those who do bad to them. Believers and followers of Christ are to exhibit a different kind of love from the rest of the world; we are to do good even to those who insult, mistreat, and persecute us. Again, apart from God’s Spirit living in us, we are incapable of such behavior.

People of the world [unrepentant sinners] use a self-serving model of how they treat one another, reciprocating kind for kind, good for good, bad for bad. Jesus says (**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

We are not to love, do good, or lend to someone in order to create an obligation for them to do the same in return; for that is the way the people of the world operate. If believers and followers of Christ act the same way as those who reject Christ, we will have no witness in our lives for Christ.

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**Matthew 5:14-17**, “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light [witness for Christ] shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

**1Peter 2:12**, “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.”

**Read Luke 6:35-36...** Jesus commands us to live in a manner that is antithetical to the carnal, self-serving, unregenerate *quid pro quo* way in which the people of the world operate, i.e., you do for me, I do for you in return. We are to have no ulterior motives in the way we treat others, and in so doing, Jesus says, “your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High.”

The context of the “reward” spoken of here is not the eternal reward that was spoken of in **verse 23**, “your reward is great in heaven.” The context of **verse 35**, is in relationship to our witness here on earth, our influence on others for Christ; for when we love even those who don’t love us, we show that we belong to God and are in fact able to love others unconditionally, just as God loves us. This reveals that we are indeed sons and daughters of the Most High [50 times this title is used in the Scriptures as the name for God, emphasizing His Sovereignty].

We are servants of God here on this earth; and just as Jesus came from the Father to show us the Father (cf. **John 1:1-5, 14, 18; 14:6-7**), we also are to show Christ to the world and tell the world about Him, while showing God’s mercy to those who reject Him, even those who do evil to us.

**2Timothy 3:1-5**, “But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.”

**12-13**, “Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. But evil men and impostors will proceed *from bad to worse*, deceiving and being deceived.”

When we show mercy to others who do not deserve it, we testify that we belong to our Father in heaven, who has also shown mercy to evil men; in fact, we were once at enmity with God, and were by nature objects of wrath, but God showed mercy to us; and therefore we are to show mercy to others.

**Ephesians 2:1-10**, “And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 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. 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. But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our

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transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”

**1Peter 2:9-10**, “You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

**Titus 3:3-7**, “For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

When we, as Christians, God’s children, love others the way that God loves us; we give the greatest demonstration to the world that God is indeed our Father and that we are very different from all the rest of humanity, because of Jesus Christ.

**Read Luke 6:37...** What Jesus doesn’t mean here is that Christians should not make observations and discern a person’s spiritual condition, for we must be alert and sober minded to make sound biblical judgements in order to lovingly come alongside and confront a brother or sister in Christ, concerning their sin. But we must not set ourselves up as someone’s ultimate judge and executioner, for that is for God, and God alone.

In Matthew’s narrative (**Matthew 7:1-2a**), it is recorded that Jesus said, “Do not judge so that you will not be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged.”

We are not to judge harshly, void of compassion, in a critical sense, as if we were the ultimate judge and jury over humanity.

We are not to wrongly judge, nor to eternally condemn; but instead (notice again the last part of **Luke 6:37**), we are to “pardon, and [we] will be pardoned.”

The first part of **Luke 6:37; Matthew 7:1-2** are often misinterpreted to say you should not judge anyone's behavior or lifestyle; but it is the standard of judgment, “the way you judge,” that Jesus is criticizing, not the act of reproving and correcting a believer who is walking in disobedience to God's Word; where as, an unbeliever can do nothing to please God, for he/she is living according to the flesh and the ways of the godless world around them.

The authority and standard of judgment is always God, not man. When we pass judgment on someone using ourselves as the standard, it is wrong and it is SIN! This

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passage is sometimes used to try and prove that we should never confront anyone about anything, but that is not what the Bible teaches; in fact, to refuse to warn a person about his/her sin, is unloving, and in fact, it is antithetical to what is taught in the Scriptures.

**Leviticus 19:17**, "You shall not hate your fellow countryman in your heart; you may surely reprove your neighbor, but shall not incur sin because of him."

**Galatians 6:1**, "Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass [*sin*], you who are spiritual [*mature in the faith*], [*should*] restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; *each one* looking to yourself [*i.e., treat others the way you want to be treated*] so that you too will not be tempted" [*i.e., becoming prideful, self-righteous, as if there is no sin in you*].

**Matthew 5:9**, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."

God's children are to be peacemakers, and as humble servants of God, we should be willing and able to come alongside those who are caught in sin, encouraging them to repent and reconcile with God.

We are to show mercy to other sinners, just like our Father in heaven has shown mercy to us (**Luke 6:36**), "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

**2Corinthians 5:20**, "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."

**Luke 6:37; Matthew 7:1-2** are written to those in the Church, for we are accountable to walk in a manner that is obedient to God's Word; although, we cannot hold unbelievers accountable to God's Word, for that would be impossible.

Jonathon Edwards was a powerful preacher of the 1700's, he said: "I should never act as if nobody else has been as vile as me, but as if I had committed the same sins, or had the same infirmities or failings as others; and let the knowledge of their failings promote nothing but shame in myself, and prove only an occasion for me to confess my own sins and misery to God."

Christians are to be instruments of God's love, not agents of God's punishment. The truth is, we are either sinners who have been saved by God's grace, or we are sinners who remain guilty of sin, unforgiven, because we have not repented and believed in God's One and Only Son, Jesus Christ, who is both Lord and Savior.

Forgiveness through repentance is what God desires; and we are therefore, as peacemakers, to earnestly seek restoration and reconciliation between God and humanity. **Jude 22-25**, "Have mercy on some, who are doubting; save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh. Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen."

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