

October 11, 2020

“Love For Enemies”
Lesson 2 of Unit

Luke 6:27 - 36

Intro

This is the story that our text uses to introduce the teacher to the lesson. It’s good for all of us, I think.

At 10:25 A.M. on October 2, 2006, Carl Roberts entered the West Nickel Mines School, an Amish one-room schoolhouse in Bart Township, Pennsylvania. After ordering the two teachers and all the male students to leave, Roberts tied up the 10 female students and settled in for a siege. Within half an hour, with Pennsylvania state police surrounding the building, Roberts had shot all 10 girls, killing 5 of them, before killing himself.

In the face of so much devastation to a tiny, rural community, what kind of reaction might we expect? On the day of the shootings, reporters overheard the grandfather of one of the victims say, “We must not think evil of this man.” In the wake of funerals where they had buried their own children, grieving Amish families accounted for half of the people who attended the killer’s burial. Roberts’ widow was deeply moved by their presence. The imperative to forgiveness went beyond even this: the Amish community also generously supported a fund for the shooter’s family.

The desire for revenge is one of the deepest of human impulses. Sadness, rage, powerlessness, and a host of other emotions drive us to this. Jesus calls us to something very different, a new way of living in the world. In this area and many others, Jesus undercuts the conventional view of the world that justified the way in which most of Jesus’ hearers lived out their daily lives.

The words that Jesus speaks in today’s passage are to His disciples (read you and me as well)—people who are already committed in word and deed to follow the Lord.

Read Luke 6:27-36

1. A similar thought for vs. 27 from a previous lesson: what does it mean to listen to what Jesus says? What are the implications for us of “listening” to Jesus?
2. Jesus defines in the second half of vs. 27 what it means to “love your enemies”; what is the “proof” to Jesus (and to ourselves, and to the world)? How does this contrast with the world’s view and definition of “love”? What are the challenges you might face in trying to carry out this command?
3. What contrast from the world’s expected response does Jesus command of His followers in vs. 28? What specific area of “loving others” is being addressed here?

4. Read vs. 29-30. What demonstration of love is Jesus asking of us in these verses? What is difficult about doing these actions? What effect would doing them have on the enemy you do them to, and why?

5. How might vs. 27-30 have been seen and understood by those Jews who expected the Messiah to be a military leader who would drive the Romans out of Israel?

6. Verses 27-30 dealt with specific behaviors that characterize the Kingdom; vs. 31-34 deal with the motives behind doing those behaviors. How is the group that's the target of our behavior in vs. 31 differ from the group(s) mentioned in vs. 27-30? How is that significant?

7. What three specific actions in vs. 32-34 reveal our motives about "loving our enemies"? How do these actions reveal our attitudes? How do Jesus' comments reveal what's different about His kingdom and the world in which we live?

8. Verse 35 serves as a summary of this passage. What actions are we to take and why, according to the verse? Why do you think Jesus repeats this idea (vs.27)?

9. What does it mean for Jesus to call us "children of the Most High"? What is suggested by being a child of someone (perhaps more in Jesus' time than now)?

10. Why is sacrificial love challenging for us? How does the end of vs. 35 and vs. 36 speak to us about this issue?

Application: This passage of Scripture isn't very hard to understand. But it is really hard to put into practice all the time. What Jesus asks of his followers is a higher way, something that's opposite of human nature and human practice. We want to get even, He tells us to love. We want to ignore an unfair demand, He asks us to give more. As Larry's message last week reminded us, sin begins in the heart and mind. When we find ourselves angry at how we're being treated, a little bell should ring in our heads, and we hopefully will hear the voice of the Spirit saying to us, "This is how the world works, but this isn't how the Kingdom works."

The lesson this week reminded me of a 1970's song from John Fischer called "Hard Line". I've put the lyrics below the prayer. You can find it on Youtube if you want to listen to it as well. It speaks to this very issue of Jesus calling us to something higher, and way different than the non-Christian world views as normal and acceptable.

Prayer: Father God, please forgive us where we have failed to even try to make our lives match up to Your character. Please give us courage to make the changes needed to pattern our lives after You, and to both hear and obey the Spirit's voice when we are reminded about the difference between Your way and the world's. In Jesus' name, Amen.

"Hard Line" by John Fischer

When I first started to follow You, I thought it would be easy to do
All the songs that I sang along gave me a rosy view
But I'm finding life a lot different than all the sweet songs that we sing
'Cause I learn that at every turn Your road's the hardest thing

You drive a hard, hard line
Thought I'd have an easier time
Oh, You drive a hard, hard line
Guess I've got to change my mind

I find myself lovin' people, who in turn are lovin' to me
But what you ask is a greater task, to love my enemy
Like the one who has hurt me and cut me down to the shreds
That's the guy I'm supposed to try to love instead

You drive a hard, hard line
Thought I'd have an easier time
Oh, You drive a hard, hard line
Guess I've got to change my mind

When I examine my actions, my life seems decent to me
One look of lust and you say I'm thrust into adultery
And if I'm hatin' my brother and puttin' him down in my head,
The angry thought is like a rifle shot, He's as good as dead

You drive a hard, hard line
Thought I'd have an easier time
Oh, You drive a hard, hard line
Guess I've got to change my mind