

Conversations on
Luke 6:27–38

Discuss this passage in light of the commentary below.

Idea! Watch The Forgiveness Project video story of Shad Ali at www.theforgivenessproject.com/shad-ali. Discuss: In what ways do Shad’s ideas echo Jesus’ teaching?

WHAT is important to know?

Matthew’s Jesus preaches righteousness. Luke’s Jesus affirms these behaviors and attitudes, but preaches that enemies, thieves, and beggars are, as well, to be blessed (*eulogeou*), a word not used in the parallel passage in Matthew. The writer of Luke seems to summarize the message of his Jesus in verses 35 and 36. Luke’s Jesus seeks to bring forth the kingdom of God and persuasively invites hearers to live into the future to which God calls them. (*Dena L. Williams*)

- ✠ How would you define the word “enemy”?
- ✠ Which of Jesus’ teachings in these verses would be the most difficult for you to follow? Why?

WHERE is God in these words?

Luke portrays the disciples both as poor and as those who truly possess a superabundance, who have been given all the good things of God’s reign. When the teachings of the Sermon on the Plain are not grounded in the disciple’s identity as God’s child, they become an onerous list of ethical demands that do not further justice and wholeness. When the disciple understands his actions as flowing out of God’s abundance, to which he belongs and which belongs to him, turning the other cheek becomes an act of resistance to evil that has the power to transform others and the world. (*Susan E. Hylén*)

- ✠ What light does this passage shed on the “how” and “why” of loving others, including one’s enemies?
- ✠ In what ways does this passage connect loving others with God’s love for us?

SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

Luke reminds us that the coming of the Christ into the world makes a difference. In fact, the inbreaking of God into human history makes all the difference in the way we respond to other people. Here is the dilemma. How do we move from the natural instinct to match blow for blow and word for word? To put it another way, how do we live our lives responding with grace and kindness, instead of reacting with words or actions that seek to answer hurt with more hurt? According to Luke, Jesus indicates that followers of Christ remember how God responds to us. “Be merciful,” Jesus states, “just as the Father is merciful.” (*Charles Bugg*)

- ✠ What reasons does Jesus give for repaying enemies with kindness instead of revenge?
- ✠ Do you think it takes more courage to retaliate and get revenge or to respond peacefully? Why?
- ✠ What conventional wisdoms in the world at large do you see at odds with Jesus’ teachings in Luke 6:27-38?

NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

Focus on the grace and transformation necessary for us to live out the radical faith Jesus demands. In other words, the “great reward” we receive is not full pockets, garages, or self-esteem, but who we become in the process. Jesus knows full well that we will never love our enemies without an amazing grace that transforms us and makes us different than we are. What changes us and allows us to love is a grace greater than our sin, our best intentions, or even our hard work. Grace transforms us, even as we resist. Jesus points his followers then and now toward a narrow and difficult path illuminated only by grace, but it is one that rewards us in ways we can hardly imagine. (*Vaughn Crowe-Tipton*)

- ✠ What is the good news of Jesus’ teaching in these verses for all of his followers today?
- ✠ What does it mean to be merciful even to ones who do not seek our good? What does that say to your life as a disciple? What does that say to the mission of this church?

O God, help us to follow Jesus’ teachings and expand the boundaries of our love and care for others. Amen.