

Luke 6:27-36 – Love your enemies

- Have you ever had a real enemy?
 - Maybe someone you have fallen out with and been at odds with for a while?
 - Maybe a neighbour who you have a disagreement with
 - We can have big enemies, long term enemies but enemy also covers those who wrong, hurt us in a brief fleeting moment.

- This passage carries right on from where we left off last time
 - Remember we were working through the blessings and woes list that Jesus gave in that great sermon.
 - His purpose in that sermon was to reveal the heart attitude of a true follower of Jesus.

- It finished up with the final blessing being when you are hated and woe if everyone loves you
 - Jesus is saying if you are a true follower of Him then expect to have enemies
 - As you live as a Christian with eternal values, living for heaven, then you will get into trouble with the world who live for the here and now.
 - Christians are called to be the salt of the world and light in the darkness
 - Salt stings as it cleanses a cut and light hurts when you have been in darkness for a while.
 - So as Christians live a life for Jesus and not this world it will cause non-believers to show their dislike, and maybe even hatred as Luke puts it, of us by
 - Avoiding and rejecting us v22
 - Insulting us v 28
 - Physically abusing us v 29
 - Suing us v 30
 - If you are living your Christian life as God calls you to, this is what you should expect
 - 2 Timothy 3:12 says 'In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted'.

- So here in this passage Jesus is unpacking for us how we deal with these enemies, those who hurt and do wrong to us, when we encounter them
 - And once again Jesus here is radically counter cultural.
 - He is teaching us how he wants us to live, so we all need to tune in.

- The main lesson from this passage is this.
 - Followers of God, those who have put their faith in Jesus, should love their enemies as God has loved them.

- This is certainly one of the difficult sayings of Jesus
 - And he said some difficult things.

- Jesus says these difficult things to challenge believers and to call them to live in a way that greater imitates His example.
 - Its living in a way that comes from a response to what Jesus has done for us.
 - Which means it is not a rule to be obeyed but a natural out working of the gospel in our lives.
- This will be a practical sermon and to unpack this passage we are going to look at 2 questions:
 - What does Jesus command us to do?
 - Why should we do it?

What does Jesus command us to do?

- Jesus says 'Love you enemies'
 - I am sure no one is asking the question, what's hard about that?
 - In John 13:34-35 Jesus gives a command for Christians to love one another and we see that throughout the Bible.
 - Loving Christians should come naturally because we are united by Jesus but that's even hard at times as personalities clash.
 - Jesus says it here
 - Loving the lovely is what everyone does
 - But this command goes one step further and says to love you enemy
 - Jesus is calling you to love everyone.
 - The lovely and the unlovely.
 - We all will have someone who comes to mind who it the person who you find the most difficult and who has wronged you the most.
 - Yep Jesus is saying love them too.
 - Not just the ok people but everyone.
 - And it's not even just speak kind words and think nice thoughts about them
 - Jesus goes even further and says you have to do good to them
 - Tough huh!
 - Look at the command words Luke uses of how we are to display this love.
 - Love, do good, bless, pray, give, don't demand
 - It requires action on our part
 - We can't just ignore our enemies, Jesus is calling us to take action towards them.
 - How do kids naturally respond when something happens to them that they don't like?
 - When another kid snatches a toy off them?
 - They get mad and angry

- That's the human nature's natural response and Jesus here is calling us to the opposite of it.
 - Do good to them!
- Jesus then puts our selfishness to good use
 - Who listening today thinks they are at times selfish?
 - I may have just started a few arguments and caused a few enemies!
 - All of us? Good because that's the correct answer!
 - We are all selfish
 - V31 - do to others as you wish they would do to you.
 - Jesus knowing you are selfish and want to be treated well says that's how you should treat others.
 - Want people to be kind to you – be kind to others
 - Want people to listen to you – listen to others
 - Jesus takes our selfish desire of how we want others to treat us and flips it around to say that's how you should treat others.
 - We want the best for ourselves, Jesus says do the best for others.
 - Not so that others will treat you well but do it expecting nothing back.
- That expecting nothing back is hard isn't it?
 - I find it tough
 - To give to people knowing they will repay is sometimes hard enough but when you know you will get nothing back it really difficult.
 - Jesus in this passage says to give to those who have nothing and cannot repay.
 - We have been blessed by God with life in him, we already have the greatest reward possible.
 - So out of that give to others.

Why should we do it?

- Jesus is about to show us why it's important that we love our enemies.
 - It's the difference between natural and supernatural love.
 - It's natural to love those who are good to us and who are like us.
 - That's normal
 - When we meet people and find we have something in common we unite over that thing and it becomes a basis for friendship
 - Sports fans get on with sports fans.
 - Movie lovers love movie lovers
 - That's what everyone does.
 - It's good but nothing special
 - Jesus is calling us to the supernatural love
 - To love those who hate us.

- If you are to love your enemies, you need God's power at work within you
 - It is God doing it within us
 - And that's what brings us back to the focus Jesus has on our heart attitude?
- Is our heart filled with sin or with a desire to live how God calls us to live?
 - God changes our heart and gives us the ability to love our enemies in this way.
 - It's the final 2 verses of this passage.
 - It's a love that comes from and imitates God.
- Loving like this is the exact thing that God does and has done for those who follow him
 - We were enemies of God living lives of sin far from God.
 - We only wanted what we wanted but God was kind to us and loved us whilst we were still enemies of Him
- The gospel tells us were all sick with sin, living messed up lives as enemies for God
 - Yet whilst we were still sinners God sent His Son into this world to die in our place.
 - We hated God and wanted nothing to do with Him but in His grace and mercy he offered his son so that we might have life and so that he can give us a new heart
- So, God is calling us to love our enemies and He is entitled to because he is asking us to love as we have been loved
 - As we experience the grace, mercy, forgiveness and love of God we are then called to express that back to the world and to the sinners around us who hate us and are our enemies.
- But you can only do it when you have had your heart changed by God.

Wrapping it up

- If you love God this morning, are you living in this way?
 - Do you express the love, mercy, grace and forgiveness that you have received?
 - How do you respond to those who you disagree with? Culturally, theologically, politically?
 - Do we victimise them, vilify them, criticise them and reject them?
 - Or do we love as we have been loved?
 - Respond in grace and praying for them?
 - This teaching applies to our who lives in the little things as well as the big things.
- If you follow Jesus what Jesus is showing in the difference between natural and supernatural love is that if we only love the people who are like us and who don't annoy, anger, and frustrate us then we are no different to the world and those who don't follow Jesus.

- But we should be different because Jesus has changed our hearts and transformed our lives.
 - Go and love as we have been loved.
 - It won't be easy, and it won't come naturally
 - You can't do it in your strength, you need God to do this.
 - So turn to Him in prayer.
- If you don't yet know God
 - There is a loving God who you currently see as your enemy, but he loves you and wants you to know him, trust in him and follow him
 - There is grace, mercy and love for you from a heavenly father.
 - Will you accept it?