

Pastor Matthew Ude

Seventh Sunday after Epiphany

February 24th 2019

Yes, But . . .

Luk 6:27-38 NKJ ²⁷ "But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ "bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you. ²⁹ "To him who strikes you on the *one* cheek, offer the other also. And from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold *your* tunic either. ³⁰ "Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him who takes away your goods do not ask *them* back. ³¹ "And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise. ³² "But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³ "And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴ "And if you lend *to those* from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. ³⁵ "But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. ³⁶ "Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful. ³⁷ "Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. ³⁸ "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

I mentioned last Sunday that Jesus does sometimes over emphasize to make a point. When he talks about plucking out our eye he does not actually want us to do it. This is not one of those times. Jesus is not over emphasizing anything in our text. Jesus wants us to so love our enemies that we literally give the shirt off our back to the one who steals our coat.

Love your enemies

The first part of loving our enemies is learning to forgive all the real or imaginary sins we think they have done against us. I think it unlikely that there is not a single person sitting or standing in this room who is not right now holding something against someone.

Jesus forgive you and died for you. Yet when it comes to the sins of others, we always have an excuse ready. Yes, but . . . Yes, but they aren't sorry. Yes, but this is different. Yes, but I need time to forgive.

To forgive means to honestly put it behind you. You don't need time to forgive what we need is the almighty power of God because our sinful hearts always want to cling to the sins of others. We always want to make sure they get what's there. We think it will make us feel better.

Jesus instead describes here a forgiveness so complete that we gladly do everything we can to help them. If they steal our jacket we give them our shirt.

Judge not and you will not be judged

Jesus speaks here about that attitude of the heart that always thinks we know better than others. This passage is so often misused.

We misuse this passage when we use it as an excuse not to listen to others, especially those in authority. Jesus doesn't tell us "don't listen to those who judge you." He tells us not to judge others. Yet somehow, we only ever remember this phrase when we feel others are judging us. We never remember or think about it when we are the ones doing the judging.

We misuse this phrase when we use it as an excuse not to preach against sin.

It is a measure of the sinful of our hearts that we think there is any confusion between this sentence here "do not judge" and those where Christ calls us to preach against sin. "if anyone is caught in a sin you who are spiritual restore him." These commands are not opposites but in perfect harmony.

When Jesus says, "Do not judge" he speaks of an attitude of our heart that is always eager to pass judgment on others. Often for no better reason than because we want to show off how much smarter we are.

When he speaks of preaching against sin. He speaks about an attitude of the heart that so loves our brother that we want to help him with his/her problems. Correction is done privately, judgement is done publicly. Correction is done humbly, judgement is done in arrogance. When Jesus says do not judge He is talking about our enemies. When He says to rebuke sin He is talking about those we love.

To preach the word of God is not judging but love. To remind the world that fornication and abortion and homosexuality is a sin is loving for the same reason that warning people not to stick used hypodermic needles in their arms is loving. Because these things cause us harm.

To criticize others because of what they wear, or because their house is messy, or because their lawn or garden isn't as neat, or because we think they aren't doing their job right is arrogant and unloving and usually we don't know what we are talking about.

And you will be sons of the kingdom

When I was in second grade I went to get my first pair of glasses. I thought that was pretty neat because now I was just like my dad. Often little children want to be just like dad. Jesus encourages us that we like little children should desire to be just like our Father in heaven.

What did Satan say to Eve? "You will be like God." We like Eve want to be like our heavenly Father but usually in the wrong ways. Or to say that another way we want to be like the version of God in our heads, not the person God really is. We want the power and the glory and all men to praise us. Jesus wants us to imitate our heavenly father in mercy and forgiveness and in humility and love and service.

When we learn to forgive and not to judge and to do good to our enemies then we are seen to be children of our Heavenly Father.

So what did we learn about ourselves today? That I am pretty much the most miserable and sorry excuse for a being that has ever thought. Or if you didn't learn that than you are even worse, because you won't even acknowledge the sinful pride of your own heart.

But there is one little tidbit of really exceptionally good news tucked away in a corner of our text this morning, "He is kind to the unthankful and evil."

If we are pretty much evil, but at least we know that Christ had mercy on people as terribly sinful as I am.

We always use "yes, but . . ." as an excuse to judge and not forgive. Jesus uses it to show mercy even to such terrible people.

Christ who died for our sin calls us to forgive and live in love with one another, and we immediately respond with but . . . but . . . but . . . all the excuses we can as to why in this case we shouldn't forgive. Jesus response is to say, "Yes, but I forgive you."

I am Jesus little lamb,
Ever glad at heart I am;
For my Shepherd gently guides me,
Knows my need, and well provides me,
Loves me every day the same,
Even calls me by my name

Day by day, at home, away,
Jesus is my staff and stay.
When I hunger, Jesus feeds me,
Into pleasant pastures leads me;
When I thirst, He bids me go
Where the quiet waters flow.

Who so happy as I am,
Even now the Shepherds lamb?
And when my short life is ended,
By His angel host attended,
He shall fold me to His breast,
There within his arms to rest.

AMEN