

## Bible Study Guide: Week of 2-14-2022

1. Read through the passage below
2. Read my notes and commentary
3. Read the questions at the end and ponder or discuss with others

Pastor Andrew

### Luke 6:27-38

<sup>27</sup>“But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup>bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. <sup>29</sup>If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. <sup>30</sup>Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. <sup>31</sup>Do to others as you would have them do to you. <sup>32</sup>“If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. <sup>33</sup>If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. <sup>34</sup>If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. <sup>35</sup>But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. <sup>36</sup>Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

<sup>37</sup>“Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; <sup>38</sup>give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”

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Jesus continues the Sermon on the Plain. Last week, his words were a challenge to us because he made it clear that one’s blessings are not defined as the world typically defines them: wealth, health, happiness, and popularity. Rather, in the kingdom Jesus has come to bring, blessedness is promised to the poor, the hungry, the mourning, and the reviled. Today’s lesson is a challenge in that Jesus redefines the proper actions of those who belong to the kingdom. While those who belong to this world hate enemies, render evil to those who mistreat them, curse those who curse them, and lash out at those who abuse them, Jesus says his followers are to live in a counter-cultural way. Importantly, Jesus embodies this seemingly impossible love on the cross where he prays for forgiveness for those who are killing him, gives himself without resistance to his abusers, gives up his garments, and bestows favor on the thief who begs him for mercy. While we may be tempted to ask, “Who can live up to this absurd and impossible standard of love?” the answer is that Jesus can and does live up to this standard. We are those called to emulate his amazing love.

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Jesus invokes the so-called “golden rule” here and, as cliched as that may sound, this difficult teaching encapsulates the entire message of this passage. Jesus urges those who follow him to treat others the way they would want to be treated—that is, kindly and with mercy. Jesus notes that even the worst of people look out for those who can benefit them. The true display of love in Jesus’ kingdom is how we treat those who are not “our people.” Further, he says that the motivation behind our mercy is the mercy of God which has first come to us.

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Jesus makes clear that mercy is a two-way channel. If one way is blocked, the other way is blocked, as well. In other words, if we refuse to forgive we will have a very hard time receiving forgiveness. If we withhold generosity, it will be difficult to receive the generosity of others. If we condemn others, we unwittingly expose those parts of ourselves that deserve condemnation and are thus condemned. Jesus urges us to be doers of good so that we may also be recipients of good.

**Discussion/Reflection Questions:**

- 1. How do you think the first hearers of Jesus or of Luke's gospel would have heard these words of Jesus? As words of comfort or challenge?**
- 2. Who are your enemies and what does it mean to love one's enemies?**
- 3. Which of these commandments of Jesus is hardest for you to keep? Why do you think this is?**