

Lifeline

Jesus is Our Savior from Bitterness

Luke 6:27-36

“Left to fester, righteous anger eventually becomes the corrosive ulcer that is bitterness.” **Leon F Seltzer (Psychologist)**

“Bitterness is a chronic & pervasive state of smoldering resentment. It is one of the most destructive & toxic of human emotions...nursing wrongs may eventually come to define some essential part of ‘who we are’ & we become victims, not of anyone else, but of ourselves.” **Dr. Stephen Diamond**

Bitterness is Deadly (Psychology Today):

- Causes great emotional pain with chronic anxiety & depression
- Instigates a cycle of vengeance or getting even that could be violent
- Prevents living fully present by constantly dwelling on past wrongs
- Overall sense of pessimism that creates distrust & cynicism
- Prevents healthy, satisfying relationships
- Adversely impacts personal search for purpose & meaning in life
- Robs energy & prevents achievement of goals
- Raises stress baseline, taxes immune system
- Blinds from accepting personal responsibility in conflict

Main Idea: Jesus gives us a Lifeline out of a Life Controlled by Bitterness

“But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To one who strikes on the cheek, offer the other also, & from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who begs from you, & from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them. If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. But love your enemies, & do good, & lend, expecting nothing in return, & your reward will be great, & you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful & the evil. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.” **Luke 6:27-36**

I. Love Clearly Defined

“The most foundational mark of a genuine believer in Jesus Christ is love.”
John MacArthur

Three words for love in the Greek language: **Eros**: passionate adoration of lovers; **Phileo**: affection for nearest/dearest, warm affection of the heart; **Agape**: active benevolence toward someone

“Jesus did not command his followers ‘to feel’ in a certain way but to act in a certain way. Emotions can be elicited, but not commanded. Actions & the will can be commanded.” **Robert H. Stein**

Love is a Choice, Not an Event. Love is an Action, Not an Emotion!

“Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed & in truth.”
1 John 3:18

“And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.” **Luke 6:31**

II. Love Properly Directed

“But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies...those who hate you...those who curse you...those who abuse you...one who strikes you...one who takes away...everyone who begs from you...But love your enemies...the ungrateful...the evil...” **Enemies in Luke 6:27-36**

“Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.” **1 Peter 3:9**

“See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no ‘root of bitterness’ springs up & causes trouble, & by it many become defiled.” **Hebrews 12:15**

“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” **Romans 12:21**

III. Love Thoroughly Experienced

“Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.” **Luke 6:36**

“If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners (those who haven’t experienced God’s love) love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? Even sinners (those who don’t know Jesus) do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners (those who are still dead in their sins) lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. But love your enemies, & do good, & lend, expecting nothing in return, & your reward will be great, & you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful & evil.” **Luke 6:32-35**

“For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin & live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd & Overseer of your souls.” **1 Peter 2:21-25**

“For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person – though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die – but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.” **Romans 5:6-10**

Sources & Further Reading Opportunities:

- *Bible Exposition Commentary* – Warren Wiersbe (1996)
- *Luke* – R.H. Stein (1992)
- *The Gospel of Luke* – William Barclay (1975)
- *Luke for Everyone* – N.T. Wright (2004)
- *Luke* – Trent. C. Butler (2000)
- *MacArthur NT Commentary: Luke* – John MacArthur (2011)
- *Word Pictures in the New Testament* – A.T. Robertson (1933)
- *Don’t Let Your Anger ‘Mature’ Into Bitterness* – Leon F Seltzer (2015)
- *I Feel So Distant from God* – Washington Post (2019)

