

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. **Enjoy discovering more about Him!**

"LOVE YOUR ENEMIES" | LUKE 6: 27-36 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

WARM-UP QUESTION:

What is a strange or funny way people try and get revenge?

"Love Your Enemies" (Luke 6: 27-34)

Jesus commands his followers to love enemies both in action ("do good") and in their hearts ("pray for" and "bless"). **Which is more difficult to do? What happens when actions and heart aren't on the same page?**

Jesus commands his followers to respond to persecution with generosity, not just forgiveness. **What would that look like today in our culture and community?**

"Love Your Enemies In View Of Your Father" (Luke 6: 35-36)

Jesus says his followers will "sons of the Most High" if they do good to their enemies and are generous, encouraging them to be like their heavenly Father. **What are ways God has been generous and merciful to enemies?**

REFLECTION QUESTION:

Pastor Brian states that loving people who have persecuted us is "unnatural". Going against our natural instinct for revenge takes God's supernatural presence in someone's life, and when that happens it is powerful. **Have you faced persecution or attack this recently? How has your heart and actions been towards that person(s)? Pray and ask God to help you love like Him.**

Love Your Enemies

I. Slide1 Announce:

A. Slide2-9 Lar: Prayer. Men's Brkfst. Easter. Baptism. Ukraine Relief.

II. Slide10 Intro: Love Your Enemies

A. We have the most challenging passages here. When it comes to *loving others* you might find it difficult in *loving some of your friends, or family, or even church family*. But your enemies?

1. This sounds *unnatural, hard, even impossible*. *Yep. This is supernatural. This is living the gospel. This is kingdom living. This is love!*
2. Our lives are to be marked by radical love, generosity and mercy.
3. We are told here to love the world *as* God loves the world. (*Impossible, until* we remember *as followers of Jesus, He empowered us to do just that*).

B. Let's clear the runway (Hinche, Haiti. *dirt runway*. 1st fly-by *then* land).

1. This passage raises a lot of questions that it *doesn't* answer.
2. We actually need *the whole Bible* to answer some of these questions that it raises. (It is right to report a person who assaults you on the street. *It's OK to practice self defense*, doing justice and acting w/compassion, we still must *report cases of abuse*).
3. Jesus is *not* addressing issues like: *proper force used by a government or law enforcement*. (In Lk.3 John the Baptist was speaking to soldiers and *didn't* tell them to *resign*).
 - a) He's speaking to **his disciples** and how they should *handle opposition* in their *following of Him*.
 - b) See each of these as especially relevant when it comes to **Persecution**. *How do we respond to those that oppose us?*
4. Jesus is talking to us about the *great cost* in following Him, *but also* the *great reward* in doing so. *It's about being persecuted for his name sake*.

5. This text is really about **dealing with outsiders**. Next week we'll talk about dealing with those **inside the faith** & how we **care & love** for each other.

a) We as Christians haven't always responded *Christianly* when **dealing w/outside**s

b) We need to long for **their spiritual good**. We must remember that when we were enemies, **Jesus loved us and brought us in**.

C. We'll look at this text in **2 parts**: to **Love Your Enemies**, and to **Love Your Enemies in view of your Father**.

III. Slide11 **LOVE YOUR ENEMIES (27-34) READ**

A. This is the first time in Luke that **love** is used *in the verb form*. (agape)

B. This is challenging when we live in such an **angry society**. Where no one is into loving their enemies. **Instead** everybody's into **canceling** their enemies, or **shaming** their enemies, or **smearing/slandering** their enemies.

1. **But** Jesus doesn't say, **stop hating**, or **don't be comfortable in just a cold neutrality**, **but** it's a command to love where **hatred** seemed *inevitable*.

2. Slide12a **And** not just **love them in just some abstract way**, **but instead** gives us **unnatural deeds** (do good to those who love us), **unnatural words** (bless those who curse us) & **unnatural prayers** (pray for those that abuse us) that show us how we love.

a) Each an **imperative** (in present tense) *implying a regular behavior* on the part of a Christian.

C. Slide12b **Doing good** - has to do with **action**. **Blessing** and **praying** has to do with your **heart**.

1. **Notice**: Jesus doesn't let us off the hook by **doing some things without your heart** being attached to them!

a) Slide12c So this **Jesus style love is not** just a feeling, **it's not** sentimentality, **it's not** superficially acting, **but having a heart that is inclined to love your enemies**.

b) It involves the kind of love that Jesus showed the world. That flowed from **His heart of love**, that lead to **actions on the cross** (where he reconciled enemies to God). [best way to conquer an enemy is to make them a friend]

- D. **Slide13a** Who are these enemies? Well they could be *personal, or religious, or political* (cuz in our age we need to ask, *can a Republican love a Democrat?* vice-versa)
1. **Remember**, Jesus is going to be sending all these disciples into the world to love those who will be **opposed** to you.
 2. **And** Jesus is going to *flesh this out* for them/us in this Gospel. He will show love for *Gentiles, Samaritans, & other enemies of Israel*.
- E. Be **hopeful** that God's enemies will change, **not resentful** when they don't change.
1. **Slide13b** "**Enemies are to be prayed for. Haters are to be treated kindly. Revilers are to be blessed. And maligners taken to the father in prayer.**"¹
- F. **Pray for those that abuse you** - *Prayer takes the Poison out of our Attitudes*. **But** again we need to bring in *the whole council of the word of God* for this word, *abuse*.
1. This **isn't** saying that there shouldn't be any punishment for injustice.
 2. When Paul alludes to this text in Rm.12, he follows it up with Rm.13 (where he talks of *legitimate use of Authority* by the government in its wielding the sword).
 - a) We know that **reporting a crime** is *a moral responsibility*, **and** it's also an *act of compassion* (and failing to do so, is evil).
 3. **Again I think what Jesus has more in mind here is persecution**.
 - a) When **Jesus** was hanging on the cross, he asked His Father *forgive them they know not what they do*.
 - b) When **Steven** was being stoned, *father do not hold this sin against them*.
 - c) **Peter** said about Jesus, *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*. 1Pet.2:21-23

¹ Tony Merida, Imago Dei, Luke 6.

G. Slide14a To offer our other cheek - it seems that he's talking more about the **insult** rather than the **injury**.

1. This is not if you're out walking and somebody walks up and hits you, do you turn the cheek and say, *hit me again!*

a) Slide14b Even Jesus didn't always turn his cheek in every situation.

When talking to the high priest in Jn.18:22,23 *Then one of the Temple guards standing nearby slapped Jesus across the face. "Is that the way to answer the high priest?" he demanded. Jesus replied, "If I said anything wrong, you must prove it. But if I'm speaking the truth, why are you beating me?"* [he didn't turn his cheek but give a firm rebuke to the man]

2. We don't need to interpret this too **woodenly** (stiffly). That we never engage in self-defense, or protect ourselves from injury.

a) **Story**: There was an **Irish boxer** who became a **preacher** who had an *interesting take on this text*. He was preaching at a church event and **3 hecklers** came by, they were giving them a hard time. **And then** one of them hit him ... he *turned his cheek* and *he hit him again*. **Then** he proceeded to knock all 3 of them out. He looked around and said, *"Jesus didn't give me any further instructions!"* :)

3. When **Matthew** explains this it is specifically on **the right side of the cheek**, which would be *a backhanded slap* (5:39). Which was more about the **insult** than the **injury**.

a) **Persecution** is the primary thing in mind. Slaps elsewhere in extra-biblical literature spoke of *an exclusion from the synagogue*. **And** we know that they were often de-synagogue'd for *sharing the gospel*.

b) So the point is ... when you are **insulted** for *sharing your faith*, **absorb the insult** ... hoping for that person to be *converted*.

H. Slide15a The **cloak** was the outer robe. The **tunic** was worn next to your body. *If they take the outer, give them the inner, "be a shirtless missionary."*

1. And if we were always *giving people stuff*, we would be out of stuff. We would be naked, with no money, with no way to contribute to the mission.
 2. *Slide15b* The point: Be **generous**. Hold on to your possessions **lightly**. **And recognize** that *we live for another world*.
- I. The writer of Hebrews encouragingly said, *you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one*. (10:34)
- J. (30) Be generous **and** don't keep score.
- K. *Slide15c* (31) **The Golden Rule** - is *a great truth* that is a **principal** given to govern our **attitudes** towards others.
1. It was often quoted in the **negative** ... Tobit 4:14 *"do to no one what you yourself disgrace."* It was also used by: *Philo, Socrates, & Confucius*. **And** is found in many religions.
 - a) Hallel said, *What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. That is the whole Torah.*
 - b) This is how most people understand the golden rule. **But** that's not it.
 2. *Jesus doesn't say, "don't do this, so someone won't do it to you."*
 - a) That's sometimes how we teach our kids behavior. (**Did you hit him?** Well, don't hit him, because he will hit you).
 3. Following the **negative** golden rule is for your own **self-preservation**.
 - a) **But** Jesus shares, *go beyond self-preservation to self-sacrifice*. The positive: *As you would have others due to you, go do that to them.* (positively & proactively)
 4. **Don't just** abstain from *abusing* people, *Harming* people, *cursing* people. Yes we should do that. **But** we must be *active and doing*. Regardless of how they respond or not respond to it.
 5. **And that is consistent with *the character of God***. Who was active and proactive in his **grace** and **mercy** towards us.

- a) Christians are not supposed to be only known for *what they don't do*. **We need to be known for what we do.** **Proactive** in blessing the world. **And** that kind of Christianity *changes the world!*
- b) **Slide16** NT Wright said, “***The kingdom that Jesus preached and lived was all about a glorious, uproarious, absurd generosity. Think of the best thing that you can do for the worst person, and do it. Think of what you would really like someone to do for you and do it for them. Think about The people in whom you are tempted to be nasty and lavish generosity on them instead. These instructions have a fresh spring-like quality. They are all about the new life **Slide17** bursting out energetically like flowers growing through concrete.*”**
- c) That's you, that's me ... *flowers growing through concrete!*
- L. (32-34) **Contrasts**. If you stay at the place in life of, *if you scratch my back, I'll scratch your back*, **then** you are only like *sinful humanity*. **How are you different?**
- Slide18a** **Returning good for good** or **evil for evil** is the **ordinary rule** for **humans**. **Underneath that** is *returning evil for good* which is from the **devil**. **Above it** there's a *returning good for evil* which is **divine**.
 - Slide18b** **4 Loves**: **Ordinary love**, loving people who **like us**. **Self-love**, loving people who **are like us**. **Extraordinary love**, loving people who are **unlike us**. **Revolutionary love**, loving people who **dislike us**.
- a) We are called here to a **Revolutionary Life!**

IV. **Slide19,20 LOVE YOUR ENEMIES IN VIEW OF YOUR FATHER (35,36) READ**

- A. (35,36) Here's our motivation: *your reward will be great!*
- Every action** you take in this life is **noticed** by **Jesus**. It's **recorded** in heaven. **And your reward is great.**
- B. **You'll be sons of the Most High** - you will demonstrate you're a son or a daughter of the Most High, *when you live this way of loving your enemies.*
- Jesus said the other way is by being a **peacemaker** (*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God*).

2. Love your enemies and be a peacemaker, those are the 2 ways you will show the world *you really do belong to God*.

a) Because that's exactly what **God** did for us. *He has loved his enemies, He has broken the hostility, and brought us peace.*

C. (35b) **And** if you don't leave with anything else this morning about who God is ... grab this, *He is kind to the ungrateful.*

1. How many days this week were you ungrateful, **and** yet He still loves you.

2. **He makes it rain on the *just* and the *unjust*.**

a) It's interesting, no one has a problem with "*the problem of good*" only "*the problem of evil*" (i.e. how can a loving God allow evil to exist?). **But** no one seems to ask (how can a holy God lavish any goodness on sinful mankind?). Probably because people think they're **entitled** to **God's grace**. *That it's God's job to be good to us! No it's not, it's His mercy, and unspeakable grace that God is good to us.*

b) **God had shown grace upon the most evil tyrants that have walked this earth. *Hitler* got to see a sunset. *Pol pot* got to experience common Grace. **Dictators** across history have. That's how **good** our God is.**

c) **And** so, you & I are going to run across people who are *ungrateful and evil*, **what do we do?** We need to *think about our God* in order to respond to them rightly.

3. Let's *adorn the gospel we preach with how we love this world*.

D. **Communion:**

1. Bread & Cup -

E. Keywords: Love, God, enemies, heart, heaven, Jesus, justice, mercy.