

“Living Godly Lives”

(Luke 6:27-36)

Introduction

➤ As we have already seen in our study of Luke’s Gospel, Luke 6:17-49 is often called “The Sermon on the Plain” noting its similarity to “The Sermon on the Mount” in Matthew’s Gospel (Matt.5-7). While these messages are similar, I think they are two different sermons delivered at different times and in different places. It should come as no surprise that, during His three-year public ministry, Jesus preached similar messages as He traveled through the regions of Palestine.

While Matthew 5:38-48 is a parallel passage, there are some unique aspects to Luke account of Jesus’ “Sermon on the Plain” found in Luke 6:27-36. This is a very challenging passage to understand and even more difficult to apply.

✓ Illust: After reading and before preaching Luke 6:27-36, R.C. said: “Here we have the heart and soul of the New Testament ethic taught to us by the Lord Jesus Christ. He speaks these commands by divine authority, and I hope that you will receive them as such. Let us pray: O God, if ever we needed Your help to understand a difficult text and apply it to our lives, it is this morning. We ask for the gentle conviction of the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Spirit, to accompany the hearing of these words, that He will take these words and cut between sinew and muscle. For we ask it in Jesus’ name. Amen” (R.C. Sproul; sermon: “[Love Your Enemies](#)”; Luke 6:27-36).

➤ This is my sentiment, and my prayer, for us this morning as we come to this very difficult passage of Scripture.

Luke 6:27-36 ~ “But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. ²⁹ To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. ³⁰ Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. ³¹ And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them. ³² If you love those who love you, what benefit 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 benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴ 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. ³⁵ But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. ³⁶ Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.”

➤ Jesus’ teaching was certainly viewed as a radical teaching. It goes well beyond the contemporary morality of His day, which was to not retaliate with evil for evil. That is, the religious leaders taught that a person should not repay a wrong with a wrong. Jesus’ teaching went further to say that a Christian must repay wrong with good.

It still is considered radical today. This is a difficult teaching because it is contrary to our natural inclinations. To do good to our enemy is contrary to our human (sinful) nature (it can be hard enough not to do bad to our enemy!).

➤ One thing needs to be cleared up, at the outset, before we study this passage. When Jesus said, “*But I say to you who hear*” (vs.27) – in Matthew’s Gospel, “*You have heard that it was said ... but I say to you*” (Matt.5:21-22, 27-28, 31-32, 33-34, 38-39, 43-44) – He was not correcting or updating God’s law. Jesus was not teaching some “new and improved” – never heard of before – version of the Ten Commandments. He was not saying, “You heard God say to you ... but I say to you” God does not, cannot, change nor contradict Himself (Mal.3:6; 2Tim.2:13; Jms.1:17).

As we will see, Jesus was not correcting God (or God’s law) but correcting the false (self-righteous) teaching of the contemporary scribes and Pharisees.

➤ In this passage, Luke 6:27-36, Jesus is continuing His teaching (in the immediate context) on suffering persecution for Christ.

Luke 6:22-23 ~ “Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! ²³Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.”

➤ Jesus’ teaching, however, extends to all of the Christian’s life. In a word, what it means to be “godly.” Godliness is an easy word to know but can be challenging to describe. Some define godliness as the state of being godly (which isn’t that helpful). To be godly, to practice godliness, is to live according to the will, character, and word of God – to live in a way that is obedient and pleasing to God.

“Godliness is having a regard for God’s glory and God’s will in every aspect of our lives, doing everything out of reverence and love for Him”

(Jerry Bridges, *Growing Your Faith*, p.45).

➤ The passage before us this morning, Luke 6:27-36, outlines four aspects of what it truly means to live godly lives.

A. The Commands for Godliness (vs.27-30)

➤ These commands represent hard teachings. Not because they are so difficult to understand, but because they are so difficult to faithfully live out. The call to be a disciple of Christ is not easy. In fact, it is impossible to do apart from the indwelling power and presence of God’s Holy Spirit (which only comes to those who truly receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior).

Rom 8:7-8 ~ “For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot. ⁸Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” (see Gal.5:16-26)

John 15:4-5 ~ “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”

Gal 5:16-17 ~ “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.”

➤ It is important to keep in mind that godliness is not mere morality or religion. True godliness is not merely living an ethical life of integrity – it is not just obeying a list of do’s and don’ts. All virtue apart from Christ is self-righteous, which is idolatry, that cannot save (Is.64:4). Jesus was not saying, “If you do these things, you will be truly saved” but “If you are truly saved, you will be doing these things.”

✓ **Illust:** “Morality may keep you out of jail, but it takes the blood of Jesus Christ to keep you out of hell” (attributed to Charles Spurgeon).

Luke 6:27-36 ~ “But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. ²⁹To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. ³⁰Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back.”

➤ From these verses we can identify eight specific commands for godliness. All of these do not come naturally to us, or according to our sinful nature. As Christians, we are called to live spiritual and sanctified lives – the opposite of what is found in the sinful and evil world. Those who truly belong to Christ are called to unnatural affections, unnatural words, unnatural deeds, unnatural prayers, and unnatural mercy.

1. “Love your enemies” (vs.27a)

- The command to “*Love your enemies*” (vs.27) can be shocking and even repugnant. Just not actively and passionately hating our enemies can be challenging enough. To sincerely, sacrificially, love those who hate us and harm us can seem like an impossible command to obey. And yet, we see this very attitude and virtue in God.

Rom 5:8-10 ~ “but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. ¹⁰For 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.” (see Col.1:20-21; Jms.4:4)

- In the Old Testament, we read that God commanded His people to love (and not hate) their neighbors.

Lev 19:18 ~ “You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.”

Incorrectly, and self-righteously, the Jewish leaders had narrowly defined “neighbor” as a fellow Jew (and Gentiles as their “enemies”). This neither correctly interpreted Scripture, nor did it accurately portray the heart of God. The Bible never commands us to hate, or do harm to, our enemies.

- Jesus restated God’s law and corrected the Jews’ false teaching.

Luke 10:25-37 ~ “And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, ‘Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ ²⁶He said to him, ‘What is written in the Law? How do you read it?’ ²⁷And he answered, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind [Deut.6:5], and your neighbor as yourself [Lev.19:18].’ ²⁸And he said to him, ‘You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.’

²⁹But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’ ³⁰Jesus replied, ‘A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. ³¹Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. ³²So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. ³⁴He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’ ³⁶Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?’ ³⁷He said, ‘The one who showed him mercy.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘You go, and do likewise.’”

Matt 5:43-45 ~ “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.”

Matt 22:35-40 ~ “And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ³⁶‘Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?’ ³⁷And he said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind [Deut.6:5]. ³⁸This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself [Lev.19:18]. ⁴⁰On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.’”

Rom 13:9-10 ~ “For the commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,’ and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ¹⁰Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

➤ As followers of Christ, and children of God, we are commanded to “*Love [our] enemies*” (vs.27) – not just other Christians, the people who are like us, or the people we like. But those people who are against us, who are not like us, and even those who hate and hurt us.

2. “do good to those who hate you” (vs.27b)

➤ Likewise, to “*do good to those who hate you*” (vs.27) seems like an unreasonable command. But this is another distinguishing characteristic of a true Christian. Unlike the world, filled with hatred and hostility, Christians are to be known for their goodness and love. The word “*good*” (*kalōs*) here refers not to some shallow or superficial goodness, but that which is morally good – to the benefit of one’s enemy.

1 Thess 5:15 ~ “See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone.” (see Rom.12:21; 1Pet.3:9).

Gal 6:10 ~ “So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.”

➤ Jesus, of course, epitomized doing “*good to those who hate you*” (vs.27). For He literally suffered and died on the cross for those who hated Him – including us, before we were saved (Rom.1:30; 8:7; Tit.3:3-5). Salvation is the ultimate good to those who are filled with hate! Contrary to worldly and false religious standards, Christians are called to “*do good to those who hate*” them (vs.27) – not hate those who hate them, or even not to do bad to those who hate them.

3. “bless those who curse you” (vs.28a)

➤ Similarly, Christians are called to “*bless those who curse*” them (vs.28). It is our human (sinful) nature that compels us to curse those who curse us. It takes no spiritual effort or discipline to repay evil for evil. To “*bless those who curse you*” (vs.28) is to give the exact opposite of what you have been given. To “*bless*” (*eulogeō*) means to speak well of or to praise, and to “*curse*” (*kataraoimai*) is to wish or speak evil upon.

Rom 12:14 ~ “Bless [*eulogeō*] those who persecute [*diōkō*] you; bless [*eulogeō*] and do not curse [*kataraoimai*] them.”

1 Peter 3:9 ~ “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 2:21-24 ~ “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. ²²He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ²³When 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.”

➤ This is particularly important for us, as Christians, to understand when we face persecution for our faith in (and faithfulness to) Christ. We are called, even in the midst of Christian persecution, to showcase the saving grace and sovereign love of God.

Luke 6:22-23 ~ “Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! ²³Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.

1 Peter 4:12-14 ~ “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.”

4. “pray for those who abuse you” (vs.28b)

➤ It is relatively easy to pray for those you love. It can be much more difficult to “*pray for those who abuse you*” (vs.28) – unless you pray the imprecatory (“to curse”) prayers in which you ask God to bring judgment upon your enemies (e.g., Psalms 7, 35, 55, 58, 59, 69, 109, and 139). While imprecatory prayers have their place, Jesus’ command implies praying for good to come to our enemies and not bad.

The Greek word (*epēreazō*) translated “*abuse*” (vs.28) can also be translated “to insult, harass, or revile.” This word is used only one other time in the New Testament (1Pet.3:16):

1 Peter 3:15-16 ~ “but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered [*katalaleō*], those who revile [*epēreazō*] your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.”

➤ We are to pray for those who are abusive to us (verbally, mentally, emotionally, physically). Again, the context suggests that Jesus is primarily speaking about suffering persecution. But a wider understanding is certainly applicable.

Luke 6:22 ~ “Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile [*oneidizō*; reproach, defame] you and spurn [*ekballō*] your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man!”

Matt 5:11 ~ “Blessed are you when others revile [*oneidizō*] you and persecute [*diōkō*] you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.”

Matt 5:44 ~ “But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute [*diōkō*] you,

➤ Rather than reviling those who revile us, or simply refusing to pray for those who abuse us, we are called to actively pray for them. Most notably, to pray for their salvation.

We see this exemplified in both Stephen and Jesus:

Acts 7:59-60 ~ “And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’

⁶⁰And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them.’ And when he had said this, he fell asleep.”

Luke 23:34 ~ “And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And they cast lots to divide his garments.”

1 Peter 2:23 ~ “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.”

➤ The next four commands must be understood as proverbial expressions rather than literal commands. There is a use of hyperbole in Jesus’ words to illustrate the radical nature of His teaching. For example,

Matt 5:29-30 ~ “If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. ³⁰And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.”

➤ While the principle is absolutely true, we do not apply this principle literally (that we are to literally gouge out our eyes, or cut off our hands, the moment we first sin). Here we understand the use of hyperbole to make a point. The same is true of Jesus’ teaching in Luke 6:29-30. Christians are not commanded to “doormats” for the world. We are not commanded to allow ourselves to be burglarized or victimized. We are not forbidden to defend ourselves or to flee from dangerous (or harmful) situations.

We must remember that Jesus is not teaching a new morality (or socialism) but reestablishing the biblical (godly) commands. Mainly, that Christians are not to be hateful or vengeful. We are not to retaliate with evil or repay people with wrong. We are to be like Christ – merciful, kind, patient, generous, gracious, loving, and good – in a word: godly.

5. “To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also” (vs.29a)

- When Jesus said, “*To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also*” (vs.29), He was referring to Christian persecution or unjust suffering. Again, this shows the radical nature of true godliness. Christians are not to repay evil with evil, but evil with good. Christians must not just passively accept unjust sufferings and hardships, but proactively respond with love and kindness. Jesus is not advocating passivism but forbidding retaliation. “Turning the other cheek” represents a humble, loving, and non-retaliatory response to any unjust suffering.

Matt 5:38-40 ~ “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ ³⁹But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. ⁴⁰And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. ⁴¹And if anyone”

- The religious leaders had taken God’s law of love and justice (“*eye for an eye*”; Ex.21:24; Lev.24:20; Deut.19:21), and twisted it an attempt to justify their hatred and vengeance. They weaponized God’s law to “lawfully” condone retaliation. This was never the intent of God’s law. The purpose of “*eye for an eye*” was for just restitution, not hateful or greedy revenge. The Jewish leaders were masters at interpreting Scripture to serve their own ungodly desires.

Mark 7:6-13 ~ “And [Jesus] said to them, ‘Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; ⁷in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ ⁸You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.’ ⁹And [Jesus] said to them, ‘You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! ¹⁰For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’ ¹¹But you say, ‘If a man tells his father or his mother, “Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban” (that is, given to God) – ¹²then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, ¹³thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.” (see Matt.15:3-9)

- Christians are called to the highest standard of godliness. To “error” on the side of mercy, love, and grace, and to be generous “to a fault.”

6. “from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either” (vs.29b)

- Christians are to live contrary to worldly (ungodly) standards. Again, as we see in Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus’ teaching is centered upon the command to seek vengeance.

Matt 5:38-42 ~ “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ ³⁹But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. ⁴⁰And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. ⁴¹And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. ⁴²Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.”

- Jesus used hyperbole to make His point: “*from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either*” (vs.29). Christians are allowed to seek restitution (“*an eye for an eye*”), but they must not seek retaliation. Christians are to be known as gracious and generous – not wrathful or spiteful. Rather than demand justice, or retribution, the Christian should respond with kindness and love – willing to suffer loss or injustice for the sake of Christ.

1 Peter 2:21-23 ~ “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. ²²He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ²³When 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.”

7. “Give to everyone who begs from you” (vs.30a)

- The idea of giving *“to everyone who begs from you”* (vs.30) is predicated on the fact that the person is in genuine need (*“begs”*; *aiteō* – “to ask”). To take this hyperbole literally would naturally leave every Christian destitute of all money and possessions, as they would be required to give to every person whatever they asked (and return it whenever the person asked for it back).

Matt 5:42 ~ “Give to the one who begs [*aiteō*] from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.”

Prov 3:27-28 ~ “Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it. ²⁸Do not say to your neighbor, ‘Go, and come again, tomorrow I will give it’ – when you have it with you.”

- The Bible never promotes socialism, and it condemns laziness and indolence (see Prov.6:6-12; 20:4; 24:30-34; 2Thess.3:10). However, again, the Bible commands Christians to be generous and kindhearted to those who are in genuine need (see Lk.10:25-37).

8. “from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back” (vs.30b)

- In Matthew 5:42, we are commanded to not refuse to loan money to the person in genuine need, in Luke’s gospel we read: *“and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back”* (vs.30). This implies that the money or possessions have been stolen or confiscated. While it is not wrong for a Christian seek restitution, it is wrong for a Christian to be vengeful, hateful, greedy, or evil.
- The fact that Christians are not to retaliate against their enemies, but are to show kindness and love to them, is taught throughout Scripture.

Rom 12:17-21 ~ “Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. ¹⁸If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord’ [Deut.32:35]. ²⁰To the contrary, ‘if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head’ [Prov.25:21-22]. ²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

1 Peter 3:9 ~ “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 2:21-23 ~ “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. ²²He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ²³When 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.”

- The principle here is to be willing to suffer (material or financial) loss for the sake of your Christian testimony and the glory of Christ.

B. The Crux of Godliness (vs.31)

- Verse thirty-one has often been called “The Golden Rule”: *“And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them”* (vs.31). This teaching is unique compared to all other religions. Such a high moral standard simply does not exist outside of Christianity.

Matt 7:12 ~ “So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”

- Once again, we see the radical nature of Jesus’ teaching. He is not just commanding that we do not do to others what they have done to us (the negative) – which was the common moral high standard in ancient times – but that we do to others what we wished they would do to us (the positive). Jesus was

not merely saying that we should have a passive response to the wrongs that have been done to us, or even that we should not respond in kind. He commanded His followers to proactively, positively, repay evil with good. To treat others the way we want (not deserve) to be treated.

- The concept of “The Golden Rule” is easy to comprehend and incredibly difficult to live out. But this is Christ’s call for all His disciples. He commands that we live godly lives that reflect His character. This means that we live unnatural (spiritual) lives that are contrary to our sinful nature, and contrary to this sinful world. In order for us to live as Christ has called us to live, we must realize that we are utterly dependent upon Him. We must constantly walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh (Gal.5:16-17).

C. The Case for Godliness (vs.32-34)

- As Jesus immediately made clear, the standard of true godliness is much greater than the standard of the world’s morality. Christians are not called to the highest virtue of godlessness, to be a paragon of goodness according to worldly standards. They are called an even higher standard: the standard of godliness.

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

Matt 5:48 ~ “You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

1 Peter 1:15 ~ “but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct”

1 Tim 4:7 ~ “... train yourself for godliness;

- Jesus highlighted this truth with three distinct but similar questions.

Question #1 (vs.32) ~ *“If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them”* (vs.32).

Question #2 (vs.33) ~ *“And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same”* (vs.33).

Question #3 (vs.34) ~ *“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”* (vs.34).

- There is something radically different about Christians. What should be obvious is that the Christian’s moral, spiritual, life surpasses the lives of *“sinners”* (vs.32, 33, 34). There is a notable, fundamental, difference between the lives of those who are saved and those who are unsaved. Christians are called to a higher standard – to the highest standard! They are called to live lives that reflect work and character of Jesus Christ. We are called to be truly godly.

✓ Illust: “As J. Oswald Sanders comments, ‘The Master expects from His disciples such conduct as can be explained only in terms of the supernatural’” (quoted in *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Matthew; 5:46-47*).

D. The Consequences of Godliness (vs.35-36)

- While living a godly life has its challenges and difficulties, the consequences of godliness are amazing and eternal.

Luke 6:35-36 ~ “But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.

³⁶Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.”

- The end of this passage gives three glorious truths regarding the consequences – blessings and benefits of godliness.

1. The motivation (vs.35a)

- First, we see that our motivation must be godly. If we are not careful, even our good works can be tainted by selfish or impure motives. *“But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return”* (vs.35).

Matt 6:1 ~ “Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.”

Col 3:23-25 ~ “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, ²⁴knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. ²⁵For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.”

2. The reward (vs.35b)

- We are to be motivated purely by the desire to be obedient and pleasing to God. The *“reward”* (vs.35; see vs.23; *misthos*) is not earning or securing one’s salvation in heaven, but reflecting God’s character here on earth. The reward is showcasing to the world that we are children *“of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil”* (vs.35).

Matt 5:16 ~ “In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

Col 1:10 ~ “so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”

Heb 13:16 ~ “Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.”

Heb 13:20-21 ~ “Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, ²¹equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”

1 Cor 10:31 ~ “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

- This is truly a *“great”* (vs.35; *polys*) reward! Living a godly life – a life that is pleasing and glorifying to God – displays His saving, sanctifying, supernatural work in us. For the Christian, there is no greater earthly reward than living a life that reflects the character and attributes of God who *“is kind to the ungrateful and the evil”* (vs.35).

3. The goal (vs.36)

- Quite simply, and quite convicting, the goal is to be godly – to live lives that reflect the righteousness, love, and goodness of God. This is the standard to which every Christian should aspire. Contrary to the thinking of many, pastors are not “called to a higher standard” (pastors are held to a greater accountability). The standard for every Christian is Christlike (Godlike) perfection – there simply is no higher standard than that.

Matt 5:48 ~ “You therefore must be perfect [*teleios*], as your heavenly Father is perfect [*teleios*].”

Col 1:28 ~ “Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature [*teleios*] in Christ.”

Eph 4:13 ~ “until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature [*teleios*] manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”

➤ In Luke's account, we see that Jesus emphasized the "mercy" (*oikteirmōn*) of God: "*Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful*" (vs.36). Simply put, "mercy" is not giving someone the punishment or justice that they deserve. We are called to be as "*merciful*" to others as God has been to us (Matt.18:21-35).

Eph 4:31-32 ~ "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³²Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."

Eph 5:1-2 ~ "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ²And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

1 Peter 1:15 ~ "but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct"

Col 3:13-14 ~ "bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive."

➤ Forgiven people should be forgiving people. Christians should be the most forgiving people on the planet, because they have been forgiven more than anyone else on the planet.

Conclusion

➤ Christians are to choose love over hate, kindness over cruelty, goodness over evil, mercy over judgment, grace over wrath, forgiveness over vengeance.

We are called by the highest calling, to live according to the highest standard, and for the glory of the Most High God. We are called to live sanctified, spiritual, and supernatural lives that reflect the character and attributes of God. In a phrase, we are to live godly lives.

This realization should continually draw us to our knees in prayer – humbly recognizing our utter dependence upon God to live as we have been called to live.