

## Faith in an Us vs Them World

### Luke 6:27-36, 9:52-56

## Message Outline

### I. The Insidious Nature

### II. The Counter-Culture

- Kindness
- Forbearance
- Compassion

### III. The Sustaining Power

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## Looking Back

Data from Gallup and Pew show steadily rising political polarization since the 1990s, whether you ask people how much they dislike the other side, how much they think the other side is a threat to the country, or how upset they'd be if their child married someone from the other side. And it seems like it's increased exponentially over the past few years, even beyond political categories (though certainly including them). Amy Chua, a Yale Law Professor, on the state of culture says, "Whites and blacks, Latinos and Asians, men and women, Christians, Jews and Muslims, straight people and gay people, liberals and conservatives—all feel their groups are being attacked, bullied, persecuted, discriminated against."

In a world dominated by "us vs them" ideology and conflict, what does it look like for Christians to live out their faith in Jesus? Luke 6 and 9 tell us and show us the way, but the path forward will likely push our buttons in some uncomfortable ways.

## Thinking It Through

disagree|agree, consider|contemplate

*"The comments sections on YouTube are a greater testament to human depravity than all the reformers' doctrines combined. Arguments, bullying, conspiracy theories, vitriol and irrational cesspools of misinformation and misdirection abound in our digital communication and marketplace. There is outrage everywhere - sometimes targeting Christians, but unfortunately, often coming from Christians." Ed Stetzer*

*"May those who love us, love us, and those who don't, may God turn their hearts, and if He doesn't turn their hearts, may He turn their ankles..." Anonymous*

*"When I meet a man, I am not concerned with opinions but with the man." Martin Buber*

## Working it Out

1. Read the Ed Stetzer quote in the above section. Do you agree or disagree? Why do you think Christians are often found to be participating in this dynamic?
2. In Matt's sermon, he referenced the concept of the enemy making machine (by David Fitch), a process where .....

We define ourselves via a position.

In doing so, we define ourselves against someone (an "other") via our position.

Our motivations and desires get aligned with our position.

We defend our position at all costs and feel justified in doing so.

Do you see this process playing out in our culture today? How so?

Do you think you personally are affected by the "enemy making machine"? How so?

3. Read Luke 6:27-36. Have these words been largely ignored (or unpracticed) by Christians in general? If so, why do you think that is?
  4. Matt talked about three critical attributes to living out the counter-cultural way of Jesus. What are they? (kindness, forbearance, compassion)
  5. Of the three attributes, which one is most difficult for you right now personally? Why?
  6. What would it look like for you, in the area of your answer on #5, to by God's grace allow Him to work through as you intentionally choose to follow Him?
  7. How can Christians be anchored in the words and ways of Jesus in this area, so that we're not so influenced by the culture? What does that look like?
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