

FPFWC Christian Development



Inclusive Love

October 2020

Fall Quarter

October 10, 2020

Lesson #2 – Love for Enemies

SCRIPTURE TEXT – Luke 6:27-36

ICE BREAKER -

When is forgiveness most difficult to give? How do we overcome this?

Key Verse: I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.—Luke 6:27–28

LESSON BACKGROUND

Luke 6 contains an account of what has traditionally been called the Sermon on the Plain. Much attention has been given over the years to the relationship between the Sermon on the Plain and Matthew's account of the Sermon on the Mount. Some commentators have seen them as different versions of the same event. Others (perhaps most) have understood them to be independent of each other. This seems to be the best line of interpretation, and it is the one we will follow here.

The differences between the two sermons are readily apparent. One was delivered on a mountain (Matthew 5:1), the other on a plain (Luke 6:17). The Sermon on the Plain is about one-quarter the length of the Sermon on the Mount. The Beatitudes, which open the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:3–11), contain blessings only; the Sermon on the Plain opens with (fewer) blessings that are followed by a set of corresponding woes (Luke 6:20–26).

A cursory comparison of Luke 6:20–49 with Matthew 5–7 also shows how much these sermons have in common. Both sermons show great concern for the poor and socially outcast (examples: Matthew 5:5, 10; Luke 6:20–22), teaching love for enemies (example: Matthew 5:43–48), the centrality of mercy in the nature of the kingdom (example: 5:7), opposition to hypocrisy (examples: 6:2, 5, 16; Luke 6:42), and so forth. That both of these sermons deal with these themes indicates just how commonly they appeared in Jesus' preaching and ministry.

In Luke 6, the sermon comes on the heels of a controversy with the Pharisees (Luke 6:1–11), after which Jesus left to pray on a mountain (6:12). As on other occasions, deep prayer precedes a significant moment in Jesus' ministry (example: 3:21–22). On this occasion, prayer preceded Jesus' choosing of the Twelve (6:13–16). After that, He came down to the plain (6:17).

When Jesus opened His mouth to speak, "he lifted up his eyes on his disciples" (Luke 6:20). In other words, it was the disciples—those who were already committed in word and deed to follow the Lord—who were the primary audience for what He had to say. Others were present ("the people," 6:19), but they were overhearing a message directed at Jesus' followers, not primarily at them. This is an important point to bear in mind as we undertake our study. Jesus was describing the nature of the kingdom in these verses. He painted a picture of the community

that He was forming around him, of its way of life. These still are not words directed at outsiders or at the world at large.

The Sermon on the Plain opens with a series of blessings and woes (Luke 6:20–26; see above). They undercut the conventional view of the world that justified the way in which most of Jesus' hearers lived out their daily lives. Most people, both then and now, would point to the rich and powerful, the popular and elite, as successful and honored in this life. Jesus says this is not so. Rather, it is the poor and hungry, the bereft and the persecuted, who are truly blessed. They can look forward to unimaginable blessings on the last day.

LESSON COMMENTARY

In this section Luke presented his version of the Sermon on the Mount (see the comments on Mt 5–7). Matthew placed this event on a mountain (Mt 5:1), but Luke put it on a level place. Some see this as a contradiction, but likely it was a level place on the top of a mountain. Three groups of people were present: a **large crowd of His disciples** (6:17b), a **great throng of people** (6:17c), many of whom had come to be healed (6:18–19), and the Twelve. Nevertheless, Jesus' teaching was directed at the Twelve (6:20a). In the first section, the so-called "Beatitudes" (6:20b–23; *makarios* means "blessed," or "happy"; see the comments on Mt 5:1–6) and the "woes" (20:24–26), Jesus presented attitudes and values for His disciples that were contrary to expectation. Jesus' disciples should consider themselves "blessed" in situations that would otherwise produce sorrow (poverty, loss, persecution), for they knew that in the end they would have a **reward** in heaven. Likewise, they needed to be wary of situations that produce temporal and temporary comfort, ease, and popularity. In the second section (6:27–38; see also the comments on Mt 5:43–48) Jesus laid down some "rules for living as disciples": disciples must love, do good to, pray for, be generous toward, and be merciful and non-judgmental toward unbelievers. Such contrary-to-expectation living (1) contrasts with how unbelievers act (6:32–34), (2) conforms to the nature of **your Father** (6:35–36), and (3) is the way to be rewarded (6:37–38).

LESSON NUGGET – We must pray for our enemies, not that God would destroy them, but that He would change them. The best way to conquer an enemy is to make him a friend. Keep your heart with God and the Lord will produce the good fruit in your life.

Sources: *Moody Bible Commentary, Standard Lesson Commentary, and The Essential Everyday Bible Commentary*