

Love With Compassion

Luke 6:36-38

October 8, 2017

Turn your Bibles to Luke chapter 6. And we're going to start this morning, by reading the main body of the sermon, because as we transition next week, we're going to go into another section of that Sermon on the Mount. So we want to hear the final section of this main body of the sermon, uh, read in its context as we cover it this morning.

So starting in Luke 6:27, Jesus says, "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 you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who begs from you, and 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, 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.

"Be merciful, even as your father is merciful. Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you."

Just a short summary of that section, the main body of the sermon. Jesus is expounding upon the ethic that's to characterize the people of God. It's stated clearly, very simply, powerfully in the Old Testament command in Leviticus 19:18. "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." The word here for love is *agape*. We've talked about that. It has its highest and its fullest expression in the love that God showed in Jesus Christ.

In the love that Jesus showed for his people when he died on the cross for their sins. As Jesus said, Ephesians 5:2, Christians are to walk in love, walk in that kind of love, live

that way. And how is that? As, Ephesians 5:2, "As Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." That verse really describes *agape* love for us in a very vivid and poignant summary.

In Ephesians 5:2, we see that the love Jesus commands us to walk in, to live in, is the love that he himself showed, which is a love of action. It's a love of personal sacrifice, as we see in his life. It's a love that seeks the highest good of the object of that love. And it's also a love that's always and only aligned with the revealed word of God. That's the kind of love that we are to show because it's patterned on the love of Christ, which is divine love. The love of the eternal triune God.

So we're to love our neighbors. Even the ones who treat us like bitter enemies because of Christ. We're to love them, even if it results in injury or loss. We're to do to them as you would have done to you. Do not love with motives of self interest. But love expecting nothing in return, without any concern for what you think you may have lost.

We're to love with a motive and an interest in glorifying God, manifesting his kindness and his compassion. Compassionate concern of God is, is demonstrated through how we love others.

When you love like that, it demonstrates your *filial* your family connection with God. Notice the language there, in there, verse 35, "Your sons of the most high." Verse 36, "Your children of your Father."

And so what this gives us is the great reward of deep settled assurance. The confidence that you belong to God and assurance of the reality of your eternal hope in him. Now that's just a quick summary of what we've seen so far. So for this morning we're going to get right into this section of the text and so we have time to finish this section.

So for the first point, the outline you should find printed in your bulletin there. Love grounded in the character of God. Love grounded in the character of God. We're to love others with a love that is grounded in the very character of our God. That's what we saw last week in verse 36, "Be merciful, even as your father is merciful." Or, as we said in that term mercy, be compassionate. And the grammar there, "Even as compassionate your Father is."

The point is that God is compassionate and as his children, if we truly are his children, that compassion is going to come through because it's in the spiritual DNA. It's, it's in us to do

as he does. This, this text in verse 36, it points us to God's compassion that which drives his actions of grace and mercy toward us. His kindness is toward the ungrateful, even the evil. That's the very compassion that should drive all of our love as well. All of, all of our loving actions, all of our loving sacrifices, and our loving concerns for the highest spiritual good of others, and for our concern to do it all according to the revealed will of God.

All of that on a human level, we are considering the plight of our fellow man suffering under their own sins. Suffering under the sins that others have done to them. Suffering under the very curse of sin. All of that should evoke our compassion, our sympathy, because we know what it's like. This is what drives our extension of *agape* love to them.

Last week we surveyed the compassion of God for sinners who suffer in misery. We're looking at evidence from the Old and New Testaments about God in his mercy, his compassion. We saw the proclamation of, that God made to Moses in Exodus 34:6, "The Lord, the Lord a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness."

We connected that text to the, the proclamation there to its fulfillment in Christ in John 1:14, "The word became flesh and dwelt among us." We've seen his glory. Glory is the, of the only son from the father, full of grace and truth. Same language in John 1:14 as you find in Exodus 34:6. And the reason we said that that, that connection is so important, the mercy of God for fallen sinners that's proclaimed and demonstrated repeatedly throughout the Old Testament, now fulfilled in Jesus Christ, that the reason that that connection is so essential is because what it has meant for us.

Without the fulfillment of God's compassion in what Christ accomplished, dealing fully and finally with sin. Executing his perfect and terrible justice. Meeting out his terrible wrath when he crucified Christ on the cross. Without the fulfillment, a divine compassion for sinners on the cross, none of what Jesus commands here would be possible for us to follow. Because Jesus died on the cross for our sins, because he lived a perfect life of obedience as our perfect representative fulfilling all the righteousness of God, God has, because of Christ, given that new nature, to all who believe.

That's 2 Corinthians 5:17, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

The new creation now possesses a new nature, one that has been according to Ephesians 4:24, "created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness." So because of him, because of what's been accomplished of the divine compassion fulfilled in Christ, we are now able to obey him.

Look at the text again, I want to show you a subtle but very important shift in wording. You see, in verse 35 how Jesus says, "You'll be sons of the most high," and then in verse 36 how he says, "You're to be merciful even as your father is merciful." Jesus first calls God "The Most High" and then he calls him, "Your Father." In the titles that Jesus has used for God, he has shifted from what's an ultimate transcendent title, God Most High, to a title that conveys the imminence of God, the nearness of God as Father.

This, this shows us there's been a change in relationship. God has drawn us nearer to him. By the cross work of Christ, by the regenerating and adopting power of the Spirit, we now know God as Father, and we are therefore able and enabled by his grace to manifest the character and the works of the most high. Because we're sons, he is our Father, we now share in the divine nature, 2 Peter, 1:4.

And like Jesus Christ, our forerunner, we're able to manifest the communicable attributes of God's goodness, like his love, like his mercy, his grace, his compassion. That is what Jesus has revealed by what he has said here. And again, you just find, I just find this over and over as I'm studying such a short economy of words here, but Jesus has said so much. I'm having to truncate and shorten everything I'm saying every single week.

But Jesus has said so much more than we have time to ponder. The eternal, infinite, transcendent God, Most High, drawing near to us in Christ. His immanence, his nearness made known through intimacy by making us members of his family. He is our father. Our father is God. And as his children we show forth his love for people, we're driven by a heart of compassion, the same heart of compassion that God has for people. Again, its love grounded, rooted deeply in the very character of God. So let's consider how Jesus intends us to practice that love. A love that's grounded in the compassionate character of God. That's the first point.

Here's the second point, love informed by the mercy of God. Love, you love others informed by the mercy of God. What I mean here by informed is that the mercy of God teaches us something. It instructs us, it informs, it trains our thinking. As we just

said, God is now our Father. We don't simply know him from a distance as the Most High, which he is, but now we know him through faith in Jesus Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit we now know God personally, intimately, like a son knows his father.

How did that happen? Because God showed us mercy, he redirected the judgment that we deserved to Christ. God demonstrated his compassion, by helping us in our direst, gravest need. He sent us a savior, the perfect and only sufficient sacrifice to satisfy his demands of his own justice. God gave us grace, the unmerited favor of making our salvation a reality by causing us to be born again to a living hope that we might trust in Jesus Christ and be justified by God's grace.

In other words, we owed an unpayable debt. We owed an infinite debt, and as Colossians 2:13-14 says, God has forgiven us that debt, "You, dead in your trespasses in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with all of its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross." He forgave it all. Now, being united to Christ in faith, we're accepted in the beloved, Ephesians 1:6. And having received a new nature by the Holy Spirit, such incredible kindness and mercy on the part of God, right?

So let me ask you a question. Does that mercy of God, does that kind compassion of God, does the manifold grace and infinite kindness of God in Christ, is the way he has loved you personally, does it teach you anything? Does it inform the way you in turn love others? The way you even love enemies? Take another look at the text. What follows in verse 37, first part of verse 38, elaborates more, more fully on a beatitude of Jesus that Matthew records. Matthew 5:7, Jesus said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy."

We don't find that same form here, but what we do is, find is the elaborated thought. Luke 6:37-38, "Judge not and you will not be judged. Condemn not, and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and it will be given to you." As I uh, even as I read that right now, I realize what many of you wonder about those words, as you hear them and they come to mind. There is a common cultural misunderstanding about the command, "Judge not," right? So I think it's probably wise before we go any further and expand on the actual meaning, we probably need to pause for a moment and invest just a little time to clear away the latent confusion that exists about this command, "Judge not."

Does Jesus mean we cannot judge others under any circumstances, no matter what? "Did Jesus mean," asks William Henders, Hendrickson, the commentator. Does, "Did Jesus mean that all manner of judging is absolutely, and without qualification, forbidden so that with respect to the neighbor, we are not allowed to form or express any opinion whatever, or at least with that, that with respect to him we must never voice an adverse or unfavorable opinion."

Well, when you put it that way, it seems ludicrous that that's not the meaning. I'll tell you folks though, I have interacted with people who professed to be Christians who believe exactly that. They treat the injunction "Judge not," as the very *sine qua non* of the Christian virtue. The most essential mandate of true Christianity. They believe that if you voice an adverse opinion or judgment, harboring it in your heart seems to be okay, letting it fester into bitterness, that's fine, but if to speak something out loud, anything negative about somebody else, you have violated the greatest commandment that has never been written, thou shalt be nice.

I'll tell you folks, if you try to follow that ethic, this makes church discipline really, really hard. It makes obedience to biblical commands to exercise church discipline, frankly

impossible to practice. In fact, I believe that by following, what many assume is the only ironclad absolute within modern day relativism, "Judge not," tolerate everyone. For that very reason, many churches have dropped the practice of church discipline altogether.

It's impossible to practice church discipline without making some kind of judgment and yes then expressing that judgment. Oh and by the way, expressing it even if it goes to that step, publicly. If you, or if someone you know, has held such an opinion, I want to read something to you, to you from Scripture, and let you wrestle with it a bit in your conscience before the Lord about the true meaning of all this.

You can turn in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians 5. There are many biblical texts that, that give the lie to that opinion, that we can never judge anything or judge anyone or voice it. Including what Jesus said in Matthew 18:15 -21 when he actually commanded the church to practice church discipline, he required Christians to make judgments about sinning individuals, individual Christians, small groups of Christians, then the collective body of Christians and the entire church as well, in public, out loud, making a judgment, Jesus commanded that in Matthew 18.

But for now, just one text will suffice in 1 Corinthians, and you'll see how Paul applied what Jesus commanded in a case of immorality among the members of the Corinthian Church. In fact, in 1 Corinthians 5:9-13, Paul actually rebuked the church for holding two re, really what was, a judge not, tolerate everyone ethic.

Look what it says there, 1 Corinthians 5 starting in verse 9, "I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people not at all meaning the sexually immoral people of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you'd need to go out of the world. But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard or swindler, not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders?

"Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. 'You purge the evil person from among you.'" The word in that rhetorical question, "Do you not judge those inside the church?" That's exactly the same word that Jesus uses in our text. It's a verb *krino*. God judges those outside the church, that's unbelievers. We understand unbelievers do what

unbelievers do. That's why we bring the gospel to them. They need to be saved from all wicked works.

But he expects Christians to judge other professing Christians within the church, exercising discipline for the purpose of holiness. And where there is no repentance, we're to express the judgment that we believe this professing Christian is actually not a Christian at all. And then remove him from the membership. Why? Is this to embarrass the person? Not at all.

It's first of all to favor God's interests over man's feelings and to purge the evil person from among us. But secondly, it's also for the sake of love. It's to clarify that sinner's actual status as a non believer and then pursue him with the gospel.

So what the Corinthians here were loath to do, some even boasting about their broad mindedness, their judge not, tolerate everything ethic, Paul modeled for them. He actually, as an apostle pronounced an immediate judgment. He played the man and made a decision. Look at verses 3-5, "For though absent in body, I'm present in spirit and as if present, I've already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. When you're assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and my spirit is present

with the power of our Lord Jesus, you collectively, are to excommunicate this guy. Deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that [there's the loving concern] his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord."

I have already pronounced judgment, Paul said. Perfect tense of the verb *krino*. Paul had already formed a judgment by contrasting the behavior of this immoral man with the standard of divine law, and then he expressed that judgment, in writing, in black and white on the pages of Scripture to be recorded for all time. So Jesus commanded it, Paul practiced it, then he commanded the church to follow his example. Whatever Jesus meant by "Judge not," he's not precluding the practice of church discipline.

He's not precluding the scrutiny of Christian behavior. The concern that we have, that our practice match our profession. How we live matches what we say we believe. We have a loving concern about one another for that, and if you don't, you really have to question the nature of your love. Because God loved us and he confronted us with our sin, didn't he? He sent the Holy Spirit to convict us of sin and righteousness and judgment. In the same way we express that love toward one another.

Now we're going to get into this, not being judgmental. There's a difference between judging something and having a judgmental spirit, we're going to get into that. But listen, we need to love one another. We need to love God first, taking his interest in holiness, in the church in mind and then love others. Forming judgments about doctrine, about practice, if Jesus here is saying you can't do that at all, well you know what, he's contradicting, Scripture. He's contradicting himself, as we'll see.

Well, love demands that we make such judgments. Holiness demands that we exercise church discipline. Go back to the Sermon on the Mount, Luke 6:37. There's a professor over at Southeastern Seminary named Charles Quarles, and in his exposition, the Sermon on the Mount, he writes this: "These," he's referring to the text we just went through, "These are probably the most frequently quoted verses from the New Testament in the 21st century America. They're also among the most misunderstood. The verses are typically used to argue that no one is qualified to comment on whether another persons actions are right or wrong, even if that person's behavior is clearly condemned in the scriptures. This interpretation of the verses is clearly mistaken. It ignores the grammar of Jesus command. Jesus' illustration of the command in Luke 6:42, that is, 'Removing the log before the splinter.' Jesus

teaching about discerning false prophets and false disciples by their behavior, as we see in Luke 6:43-45. It ignores Jesus' own stern warning about failing to obey his teachings in Luke 6:46. As well as later teachings about, of, of Jesus, of, such as his instructions about relating to a sin, sinning brother, which we already saw in Matthew 18:15 -20."

So the modern ethic, judge not, tolerate everyone, say nothing negative, is entirely wrong headed. In many cases it leads people, even whole churches, into outright disobedience to the clear instruction, command of Jesus and his apostles. And as you heard, Professor Quarle say, at the top of the list of reasons why that's wrong-headed in a wrong interpretation, evidence against the judge never ethic, he started with the fact that it's unsupported by the grammar. It's not supported by the grammar, and that's exactly right. By looking at the grammar, we can begin to understand what Jesus actually did mean by "Judge not," and all the rest that he says there.

The commands in verse 37, "Judge not, condemn not," and all that, are all in the present tense. And that is to say tha, what Jesus is talking about here, is a habitual way of thinking. Habitual behavior, regular habits of thinking. So he's saying, and this is actually much more convicting, he's saying, "Do not

be continually, habitually judging. Do not be continually, habitually condemning. Instead, be habitually, continually forgiving." He's making a contrast here between someone who is in a continually, condemning frame of mind, and someone who's in a continually, acquitting frame of mind.

Think about your own thing, your, your own mind.

Do you typically have a pretty critical view of other people? Do you tend to have an attitude toward other people that's pretty condemning, self affirming, but condemning of others? Or are you quick and ready and eager to find reasons why, "No, that isn't what they meant. I know that sounded a little rough, but it's probably not what they meant." Do you want to acquit them? Do you want to let them off the hook? In your thinking, that's the idea here.

You'll notice by looking at verse 37, the first part of verse 38, there are pairs of commands here, they're joined together to clarify the meaning. There are two negative commands and then two positive commands. There's "Judge not and condemn not," they go together. And then positively, "Forgive and give," go together. The pairs of commands actually explain each other. Also notice, there are two negative prohibitions, two positive prescriptions, and they're connected with promises.

Grammatically, these are called conditional imperatives. If you do X, and you must do X, then Y follows. Or to say this, say it this way, if this condition is fulfilled, and by the way you're obligated to fulfill this condition, then here's the consequence. So judge not. It's not a suggestion, it's a command. And if you judge not then you will not be judged. Condemn not and if you are not a condemning person then you will not be condemned. Forgive and if you forgive then you'll be forgiven. Finally, give, if you give then it will be given to you. Those are conditional imperatives.

So, for now let's consider the commands Jesus gives and then in our final point we'll consider the consequences which for the true believer, make note, they're promises, promises. Because listen, this is the good news here. I can't wait till the final point to tell you it, okay? So by doing what Jesus says, which is what true believers do, because we have a new nature. Because our nature longs to please God, because we want to obey his word, because we want to forsake sin and pursue righteousness. If we do what he commands us to do, which is what is in our nature to do, his commands produce our obedience and all of that contributes to our Christian assurance.

This is an excellent passage on giving us full assurance of our salvation. Now, remember the context. The point we're making in its context, Jesus is commanding us here to love others with a love that is informed by the mercy of God. God showed us mercy, expressed his compassion for us, by not judging and condemning us to the death that we deserve, but by delivering us from just condemnation and forgiving us instead.

In fact, he not only forgave us, but he gave us the perfect righteousness of Christ, a new nature, the Holy Spirit, he adopted us as his sons and he gave us eternal life. Is that not magnanimous? God withheld the bad that we deserved. He gave us instead, the good that we didn't deserve. This is what should inform our love for others, even our enemies.

So let's take these commands, each one at a time. Do not judge, or do not continually habitually be judging, the word judge, *krino*. It has a number of meanings, with a, with a semantic range here, all in this kind of sense of judgment, uh, to select, to prefer, to think critically, to consider carefully, to engage even in a judicial process, like in a civic judicial process, to ensure justice for somebody, that's also in the purview of this word.

To see that justice is done. Obviously, none of those meanings really fit the context here. If we try to make one of them fit, we'd really contradict all kinds of other scriptures, so. There's a, but there's another meaning for the word *krino*, which gets to the point here, one that does fit the context, and it's the verb, or it's the meaning to pass judgment upon and not merely in the sense of passing judgment or expressing an opinion, but a decidedly unfavorable judgment upon somebody. It's that judgment that we pass. A negative opinion in judgment.

Now, that could be in the sense of faultfinding, like having a critical spirit, but it could also be in the sense of condemnation. In fact, because of the next command, do not condemn, it's clear that what Jesus is pro, prohibiting here, is the fundamental condemnation of another person. It's basically to mentally write them off. The word condemn, *katadikazo*, means to find guilty or to pronounce guilty.

Now again in context, Jesus isn't here talking about the court system. He's not talking about proper civic jurisprudence. He's not talking about conducting a formal public trial. His prohibition of condemning judgments has to do with the informal trials that we set up in our own heads, right? Our own hearts, to try, convict, condemn other people and then to relish the idea

and rehearse it through fantasy, of executing a sentence of vengeance upon somebody else.

Then we judge others in this condemning way, we have become judgmental. Which means that we start and we harbor, we start to think about a person negatively. We start to examine everything they say and do with a faultfinding critical spirit. We never give them a pass on anything, all because we know what they're like. Oh I know what that comment meant. I know what they're like. Really?

We start to harbor a censorious, criticizing spirit. We say we want justice for that person. We want justice in this situation. That's all we're concerned about, really it's just justice. Yeah right. That demand for justice is really just a mask for a vengeful spirit.

It's not divine justice, we're concerned about with that. What we want is revenge. We want retaliation. We want our pound of flesh. We want to see that person get their due. We want to see them be punished for what they've done to us. Don't misjudge for yourself, the fact that this spirit can be very subtle within us. It's not always this overt.

As if we say to ourselves, "I want justice." Which means I want that person dead. It's not what we, that's not how we articulate it. We'd be horrified if we articulated that plainly. But it's very subtle in us, isn't it? It's in all of us. And you need to understand from this text, Jesus summarily forbids that kind of thinking for us as Christians.

Harboring a fundamental, fundamental, judgmental, condemning attitude towards somebody else. That has to be among the most unchristian ways that we can think. Why is that? Because we have been so completely and so totally guilty of sin against an impeccably Holy God. And he, with all power, with all the authority, with all sovereignty, and possess, possessing every right to judge us, and condemn us to an eternity in hell, instead he acquitted us.

He forgave us. He set us free. And that's why Jesus commands the opposite attitude of a judgmental condemning attitude. Luke, Luke, 6:37, "Forgive and give." To forgive, the word is *apolyo*. *Apo* is a, a direction kind of prefix, uh, from *lyo* means to loose, to set loose. So literally, it's to loose away from. To set free, to pardon, to release.

Whenever I think about the power of forgiveness to set somebody free, I remember an illustration that John, John MacArthur used to use that I absolutely loved. I, I found it, a, in a book called *Forgive and Love Again*, in which the author cite a number of biblical word pictures that portray the releasing power of forgiveness.

Here are a few. "They say to forgive is to," and this is coming all from Scripture. "To forgive is to turn the key, open the cell door, and let the prisoner walk free." Think about this. In fact, as I go through these, think about that person in your heart that you have trouble, every time that person's face, name comes to mind, it starts, you know what I'm talking about. It starts to churn, you know, start to feel the stomach acids start to boil a little bit.

Think about that person, or if it's a number of people, let's just think about one of them, okay? Just think about one. Think about that person and think about how this, these little word pictures, need to do this with them.

"To forgive is to turn the key, open the cell door, and let the prisoner walk free. To forgive is to write in large letters

across a debt, nothing owed. To forgive is to pound the gavel in a courtroom and declare 'Not guilty.' To forgive is to shoot, to shoot an arrow so high and so far that it can even, never be found again. To forgive is to bundle up all the garbage and trash and dispose of it, leaving the house clean and fresh. To forgive is to loose the moorings of a ship and to release it to the open sea.

"To forgive is to grant a full pardon to a condemned criminal. To forgive is to loosen a stranglehold on a wrestling opponent. To forgive is to sandblast a wall, like of graffiti, leaving it looking like new. To forgive is to smash a clay pot into a thousand pieces so it can never be pieced together again."

To summarize all that, the authors say, "When we forgive, we consciously, before God cancel the debt, we discard the note, we pardon the prisoner, we release the offender." End quote. Folks, that's forgiveness. And there is such a sweet, refreshing aroma that comes through the entire life when you let, when you let people go like that. God has forgiven us. And we're to forgive others. And again, when we think about the context of this sermon, Jesus preached, he begins with the hardest thing in the command, verse 27, "To love our enemies." Our enemies.

That means there is no one outside the pail. There is no one from whom we're allowed to withhold forgiveness. I'd like to give you a biblical illustration of this, in Matthew's gospel, turn over there to the well known 18th chapter of Matthew. I'd like to remind you of this story that Jesus told very, very powerful. He reinforced this very point that we must forgive, "Not harboring a condemning judgmental spirit, but we ready and eager to forgive."

This was right after the church discipline section that Jesus commanded Matthew 18:15-21 or 20. And then Peter comes up in verse 21. And I love Peter 'cause he, he expresses everything that's on our hearts as well, right? He just gives voi, I mean in scripture, he's there to give voice to our questions that we aren't as bold as Peter sometimes to ask.

So Peter asked him for us, he says, comes up to the Lord and says, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me and I forgive him?" Like can we maybe put a little limit on this, Lord, because, you know there are some real knuckleheads out there and how often? As many as seven times? Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but 70 times seven."

And then he tells him this story just to illustrate that he doesn't mean like a numerical count, like, start checking off

every time. No, he's trying to tell, here's the principle illustrated in this story. Verse 23, "Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. And when he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed 10,000 talents."

Just put that, you know I'm putting in a modern sum of a billion dollars, okay, you can't pay it. If you're this guy, unpayable debt. "And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children, and all that he had, and a payment to be made."

So he doesn't even get released to the payment, his, his own liberty is removed from him. He's, his wife and his children sold into slavery. So he's suffering and he's in, he's jailed and there's no possibility of ever repaying this debt. But the payment required still hovers over him. "So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me and I'll pay you everything.'" No, you will not. That's dreaming. "Out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him, forgave the debt."

"But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him three hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.'" Now, 300

denarii, that's 300 days wages. That's about a years worth of work. Put it into modern terms of your own paycheck, think about that, that's a lot of money. It is, it's not insignificant. This guy had been harmed. Pay what you owe.

"So his fellow servant fell down." Tried the same routine, "Pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me. I'll pay you.' He refused, went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and when they, they went and reported to their master all that had taken place.

"And his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant. I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should you not have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger, his master delivered him over to the jailers until he should pay all his debt. So also my Heavenly Father will do to everyone of you if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

Man, those last three words, they penetrate, don't they? I mean, I can say, yeah, I release you, I forgive it, but in the heart I can still hold a grudge, can't I? Oh, he doesn't let me wiggle out of that one, does he? From your heart. Go back to Luke

6. To refuse to forgive. No matter what the offense, no matter how severe, no matter how much it hurt, no matter how much it costs you financially or timewise or in any other way.

To refuse to forgive is a greater injustice in God's sight than whatever supposed injustice has been done to you. If we refuse to give in to the temptation to judge and condemn others, and instead we forgive them quickly and eagerly, this is the heart of God.

It's been said, "You're never a little more like God than when you forgive." There is truth to that statement. I like how the commentator Frederick Godet summarized it, he said, "It is the anxiety of love to find a neighbor innocent rather than guilty." It is the anxiety of love, I love that phrase. "Anxiety of love to excuse rather than to condemn." That is very well put.

We should always be ready. And even anxiously eager to love in that way. To excuse and to acquit. To be giving and to be forgiving. And we should mortify with extreme prejudice. Every impulse inside of us, every desire to keep accounts, to harbor bitterness, to condemn, to be judgmental, this is the spirit of mercy and compassion that we find in our God, don't we? Toward us. This is what saved us, and we should be desirous that God

saved many others as well, especially, particularly those who have hurt us the most.

It's the heart of Christian love and compassion to want to see that offender standing next to us before Christ, bowing and worshipping for all of eternity. If you can't picture that person in your mind and have that heart and attitude, pray, pray that God will help you and bring you there, 'cause I know it's hard.

I know we've suffered a lot of hurt and some of us have suffered very, very badly. I don't take that lightly. I recognize that. But God, by God's grace, by his strength, we can manifest his heart toward others. We've considered point one, love that's grounded in the character of God and, point two, love that is informed and instructed by the mercy of God.

Here's a final point for this morning. Love, you love others motivated by the bounty of God. Love motivated by the bounty of God. We're to love others, being motivated to do so because of the bountiful, generous love of God. In the previous point, we looked at the first part of those conditional imperatives. And if you obey Christ, which as a true believer you will, you must, it's inevitable, then there is a consequence. And here's the good news, it's a good consequence.

This is the promise of Christ for us. If we are habitually nonjudgmental, if we are habitually non-condemning, but instead if we're continually giving, or forgiving and giving, then what can we expect? What is the consequence? Two promises here. Number one, God will take away your sins by his infinite mercy and number two, God will give to you from his infinite bounty.

So two promises, God will take your, away your sins by his infinite mercy and God will give to you, number two, from his infinite bounty. This is verse 37, "The extent of God's love for us, he forgives and gives. So judge not and you will not be judged. Condemn not, you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and it will be given to you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, be put into your lap. For the measure you use, it will be measured back to you." The first three promises are about the assurance of forgiveness. What won't happen to us.

The last promise is about the assurance of blessing. What will happen to us. So for those of us who are believers, going back to verses 20-22, "We're the poor, the hungry, the weeping and the hated." Going back to verse 27, "We are the, the ones who are able to hear. With eyes open, ears open, because we have a

new nature, a regenerate heart open to everything that Jesus teaches us here." For all of us who believe, Jesus gives promises of assurance, our future here is all good.

First, let's start with what won't happen to us. God will not count our sins against us, but he will remove our sins and he'll make us absolutely clean in his sight. From his infinite mercy, come three promises, you will not be judged, you will not be condemned, but instead you will be forgiven. And the way Jesus communicates, what won't happen to us, that is, you won't be judged, you won't be condemned, these come across in English to us as, as future tense verbs about what's going to happen in the future. They're not actually future tense verbs, though. They're aorist subjunctives, and because they are negative-ised here, you need to realize this grammar is really, really good for us.

Take your medicine, you're gonna like it. Okay, as a Christian this is the strongest possible way to express your security in Christ. Now I realize grammatical terms like aorist subjunctive probably means very little to most of you, but you're about to appreciate why this grammar, grammar here is so beautiful. As, as we've learned, we prove our parentage when we live and interact with others, not as judgmental condemning people, but his gracious, forgiving people.

And the grammar here emphasizes the certainty that God will never, ever judge and condemn us, not ever. Now for those of you whose eyes glaze over whenever I talk about grammar, feel free to check out for a second or two here and then I'll tell you when you can re-engage your intention. I don't want you to waste your energy, okay?

Here we go grammar, aorist tense, okay. The emphasis in the aorist tense is on a kind of action, it portrays an action as a kind of action that's completed. It's completed, okay, subjunctive mood. The subjunctive conveys potentiality, possibility. Now take the aorist completed action and the potentiality of the subjunctive, something that possibly might happen, and make that whole thing negative. The strongest way to make something negative in the Greek is to join two negative particles *ou* and *mae*. That's what we have here, *oumae*. So completed action, *oumae*, joined with future possibility in the strongest negative, never happened, okay?

Now, non-grammarians time to re engage, time to come back. Jesus has promised in the strongest possible manner in the Greek language that true believers will not be condemned or judged by God, that is to say, true believers will not ever be judged or

condemned by God. The assurance is so certain and so final and so decisive that Jesus has precluded even the potentiality. Even the possibility of future condemnation.

He has denied the reality by denying even the potential of that reality. So for the true believer, who lives like this, proving his parentage, by the way he lives, by the way he thinks about others, true condemnation is not even possible. That's how certain it is. That's how nailed down it is with decisive finality and the strongest grammar possible.

Now again, I just want to be clear about this, Jesus has not introduced the idea of conditional forgiveness. It's not as if he's saying, "If you do what I say, then you'll be rewarded with forgiveness." He's not holding out a little carrot for you and saying, perform, perform, perform. If you're like a monkey on a chain, you do what I say then I'll give you, I'll give you the treat. This is not some kind of a work salvation that contradicts the rest of Jesus teaching in all of Scripture.

Rather, Jesus is saying here, if you're not judgmental and condemning, and if you are forgiving, and here we bring from the context what's already conveyed in the language of family connection, sons in verse 35, father in verse 36, we bring those

ideas forward. So if you're forgiving like God is forgiving, then there is no possibility that you will ever enter into God's condemning judgment, period. End of paragraph, end of chapter. Turn the page.

Jesus is not contradicting scripture here in the least. He is emphatically reaffirming and reinforcing what has been true of God since Abraham. Romans 1, Paul talks about this from verse 1 and following, he says, "What thou, what then, shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh. For if Abraham was justified by works [that is he was performing], he has something to boast about, not before God. For what does the scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness. Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift, but as his due.

"But to the one who does not work, but who believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted or reckoned, or imputed as righteousness, just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one whom, to whom God counts righteousness apart from works. Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin."

Paul made that argument quoting from Genesis 15:6 and then saw Psalm 32:1-2. "The forgiveness of Abraham, the forgiveness of David, guaranteed because God had justified them both on the basis of Christ's work on the cross through their faith." Romans 8:1 "There is therefore now, no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." No condemnation. That's what Jesus is saying here.

For his true disciples, for those who practice love and manifest the character of God, they will not practice judgmentalism, nor will they nurture a condemning spirit, instead recognizing how much they have been forgiven by God. Instead, that infinite debt that's been paid for them. As they reflect on that, they will likewise forgive others who offend them and offend them much less, and they'll also remember that anything offense done to me, I didn't actually make any commands, did I?

I didn't set the standard of God's law, God did. So anything they've done to me is actually, their offense is not with me, it's actually with the Holy God. Remember David, Psalm 51. In a statement that should shock you, after committing adultery with Bathsheba. After involving well, basically his entire kingdom in making that adultery happen, covering up the adultery. Sending her away, covering over the pregnancy by having her husband killed, trying to get him drunk, and when that didn't

work so that he could blame the pregnancy on his, her husband, Uriah, send him off to the battle line with his own death warrant in his hand. Delivered it to Joab, he's dead on the battlefield because Joab put him in the wrong place, pulled back, left him there. Man, David involved a lot of people in his sin.

Remember what he said in Psalm 51? Astounding. "Against you, and you only, have I sinned and done this evil in your sight." How can he say that? Did Bathsheba say thou shalt not commit adultery? No, God did. Did Uriah say thou shalt not murder? No, God did. Did Joab or any of his servants say, thou shalt not bear false witness? No, God did. "Against you and you alone have I done this evil? Against you and you alone have I transgressed." Oh yes, our sin hurts people. But it's against God and God alone, and any sin done against us, so yeah, it hurts us. But it's against God and God alone. We dare not hold against that person, what is God's and God's alone to forgive.

Jesus' disciples are gonna wish that God, God's salvation comes to them all. Particularly to those who have treated us as enemies. So listen, that's what won't happen to us as true believers. If we forgive, we will be forgiven. God will not pronounce a condemning judgment over us because Jesus has paid our penalty on the cross. We belong to God, we're adopted into

his family, and that's a fact that's proven when we refuse to nurture a judgmental condemning attitude toward others. That's a fact that's proven when we desire to see God equip others to forgive enemies, to pardon, to release.

We actually rejoice in the forgiving, pardoning work of God's redemption. But take a look at verse 38, and notice the second promise. Not only will God take away your sins, that's one promise. He will also number two, give to you out of his infinite bounty. Give and it will be given to you. "Good measure, press down, shaken together, running over, it will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you."

One commentator put it, "The moral enshrined in this proverb is a variant of the golden rule, as we treat others, so shall we be treated." That's true. That's why we don't want to give in any kind of a stingy or a miserly way to others. Do we want God to be stingy and miserly with us? No, we don't want that.

So when we forgive, and when we give, we should do so, as this principle is stating here, we should do so lavishly, generously, without any concern about getting repaid by people.

You can't out give God, right? He's always gonna recompense your generosity and he's gonna do so lavishly. And the imagery that Jesus uses here comes from ancient Near East marketplace, uh transactions when an honest seller measures out grain to the buyer.

In his commentary on Luke's gospel, Darrell Bock quotes from Joachim Jeremias, who paints the picture for us. Here's the quote "The, the measuring of the corn, is a process which is carried out according to an established pattern. The seller crouches on the ground with the measure between his legs and first of all, he fills the measure 3/4 full and gives it a good shake with a rotary motion to make the grains settle down. And then he fills the measure to the top and gives it another shake, and next he presses the corn together strongly with both hands. Finally, he heaps it up into a cone, tapping it carefully to press the grains together, from time to time he bores a hole in its cone and pours a few more grains into it until there is literally no more room for a single grain. In this way, the purchaser is guaranteed and absolutely full measure; it cannot hold more." End quote.

Can you imagine God being that concerned to squeeze all the vacant space out of his bounty and blessings and gifts for us?

Taking that kind of care, that what Jesus is saying. What's the limiting factor here? In how much grain is given, how much is pressed down, shaken together, running over and poured out into your lap? What's the limiting factor? Isn't it the size of the measuring cup? Small cup, small amount of grain. Big cup, big amounts of grain. We didn't even have to turn to the back of our Bibles to the tables of weights and measures to figure that out, right? Very simple math.

How do we increase the size of our measure? How do we grow in our capacity for blessings so that our lives overflow with bountiful goodness of God? Again, pretty simple. We increase our generosity toward others. We increase it. Now before you accuse me of prosperity preaching, and if you're thinking that, I'm really glad to hear you're thinking that, 'cause you should think that stuff. That's false gospel. But keep in mind, Jesus doesn't specify what it is that we give here. This isn't merely about money. Though money can be involved, but Jesus here is teaching about something far more valuable than money. He's teaching about love.

So that means doing good to others. This is about love, which means selecting sound words, targeting them to the blessing encouragement of others for the need of the moment. This is about

love, which means praying for others, investing time in them, attention toward them, concern for them, interest for them and bring it all to the one who could do something about it, God.

Way more than money, is involved in loving others. And not only that, but remember to whom Jesus says we're to be giving. He's expounding here on the love your neighbor ethic from the Old Testament and here in the Gentile context of Luke's gospel, he's defined neighbor very broadly, from the very start, to include our enemies too.

So we're to give our love and compassion to those who hate us, to those who curse us, to those who even abuse us all for the sake of Christ. For the sake of his gospel. And you know something, here's a little secret. this actually is prosperity preaching because Jesus said, it is more blessed to give than to receive. The more we practice loving like this, giving like this, forgiving, and blessing, and praying like this.

The greater our capacity to know and understand the love of God in Christ toward us. You don't wanna learn. Small cup, you want to learn and practice. Your cup enlarges. God, make it overfloweth. Trust Christ folks, you cannot out give God. He'll

keep on giving to you, "A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, it'll be poured out into your lap."

It's not just a matter of proper repayment, it's not just a matter of just reward and righteous recompense, even though it's at least that. But this is way more than that. The giving of God toward us. It's the giving of a loving father to his most beloved children. As Paul said, in Romans 8:32, "He who did not spare his own son but gave him up for us all. How will he not also with him, graciously give us all things?"

From the very beginning, Jesus has told us, Luke 6:20. "The Kingdom of God is ours." Ours. Which means the God of the Kingdom is ours too. So don't, don't worry about what you think you might lose in this life. Just obey your Lord and savior, Jesus Christ. Love others, being firmly grounded in the character of God. Love others, being informed and well taught by the mercy of God. And love others, motivated, overjoyed by the eternal bounty of God.

Loving others like that, is what makes us meek Christians, so confident in the love of God that we boldly, generously love others like that. And particularly, those who treat us as enemies for the sake of the son of man, that folks, is the heart of the Sermon on the Mount.

Let's pray. Father, as we've studied over these past weeks, we realize that there's so much more here, so much that we weren't able to cover and expound upon, but just because of our own limitations, human limitations, our time limitations our, even our attention or understanding or even our scholarship. It only goes to one level. But Father, we just, we pray that we would have had enough for it to encourage us and provoke us to love and good works.

We pray that you would do your mighty works in and through us by your spirit, all because of Jesus Christ, we want to see him known. In the way we live, yes, but we also want to see him known by others as we tell them the gospel.