

# Shine with the Light of God's Mercy

## Luke 6:27-38

The psalmist proclaimed and prophesied that the light of God will draw nations to himself, and urged God's people to be still, and know that he is God.

This image is one of peaceful stillness, of strong faith in God to fulfil his promises. A peaceful scene, not unlike last week's image from the prophet Isaiah of trees flourishing and evergreen,



because they are planted and stand firm with roots reaching deep into a permanent supply of life-giving water.

What is God's light, other than his love and mercy? Is he drawing nations to the people of his old covenant — the nation of Israel?

Let's take a moment to examine ourselves. Are we examples of peaceful stillness, standing sure and fruitful with roots deep drawing on the living

waters God supplies? Or, are we frequently upset by issues and the noise of the world, exchanging peace for anxiety, stillness for agitated anger? Does the world know us for our mercy?

As the church, and as individual disciples, we are called to be merciful as God our Heavenly Father is merciful. The light of God's mercy in Jesus Christ is to draw the nations to him through the church; but non-Christians perceive the church to be judgemental and harshly insensitive. By lack of mercy and love shown them, they are repelled instead of drawn. They are quick to point out any lack of love, or other failures to live what we profess.

Rage in no way shows God's mercy. Thankfully, the light of God is not of human origin, and not based on law-based living. Pronouncements against the wrongs of the world and the lives of people we are called to love and serve do not draw people to God.

The church is spiritual body, with Christ as its head, that is to shine with His light. We are not perfect, and not without sin, but by the power of the Holy Spirit, we can be at peace with one another, show mercy, and even love our enemies as God desires.

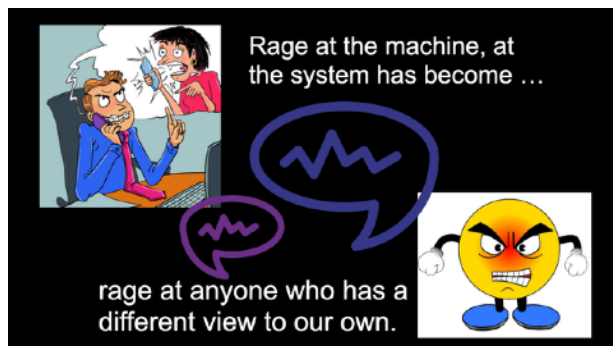


Be still and know I am God. But it is hard to not react, and to keep our composure, when we witness wrongs, or experience them personally done against us. We are tempted to respond as the world responds in such situation.

Is our Church known as a place of mercy and acceptance? Are we different from the culture of accusations, judgement and condemnation that surrounds us today?

Rage against the system has become rage against anyone with a different view from our own. Surely we are being influenced by the current rise in anger and protest, complaint and a readiness to insult and disregard the welfare and reputation of those holding opposing views in the public domain.

We may have stood by, complicit, whilst on social media witnessing anonymous character assassination. When views differ, reactions get way out of proportion and end up harming relationships. Peace and tolerance are seen less and less, and division around issues is more and more common. Is this not time for us to spend time seeking a reset?



We have talked about taking time to repair the nets we fish with. When a net is weakened by disharmony, where there are gaping holes of judgemental and unloving actions, how can that net bring people into the kingdom of God?

Examining ourselves — as we are called to daily in our baptism, and in our shared public confession of sin on Sundays — we may find that we have become more likely to condemn and express outrage because of the way we are being

conditioned by social media. There may be other stressors and unresolved issues in our lives that cause us to shout at the TV because of what we perceive to be ignorance, or outright criminal deceptions and untruths. Fake news, and the last few years of COVID stress, can't be blamed for everything. We need to own our behaviour.

Are we prepared to do the work, to resist the world, to seek the leading of the spirit of peace, and to grow in stillness and the mercy of God?

Every week, the greeting 'The Peace of the Lord be with you' is pronounced as a blessing on our community from God. And we extend that peace to one another — that is, peace with, and from, God to fill our daily lives. Peace to be shared with our neighbours, and even with those who oppose us. Peace to let go, and let God. That is, to be stilled and know that He is God who has forgiven me and my neighbour.



If I find myself raging, I can reset and turn the TV off. I can take positive steps to change my patterns of behaviour in other areas. Spend less time in exposing myself to the noise of the world,

which disturbs my inner peace. I can go to the Word of God, and meditate on the peace that he desires for me and the world.

When I do, I find myself calmed, and less reactive, because I hand my rage and my desire to judge over to Him.



It is not our calling as Christians to be full of rage, but to be at peace, to be still and be peacemakers, and intercessors. Pray for our enemies and ourselves, seek the peace, and resist rage that is likely to harm others.

Why let anything that has nothing to do with the salvation of souls, result in unloving judgement and division? What can possibly be so important that it should cause the loss of a brother or sister in Christ?

Lack of love, patience, peace and generosity, cannot witness to the truth and power of the gospel. It is of the very opposite spirit to the Holy Spirit. It needs confessing and cleansing from our hearts, and from within the faith community where it has no place.

God's kingdom challenges our world and many false attitudes we hold. Today we are again challenged by Jesus who says:

"Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back."

Jesus challenges and cautions us with these words...

**'Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Luke 6:37**

The way you respond to others, the measure you use to either show patience, peace, forgiveness for perceived wrongs, or the way you are quick to judge or condemn will be applied to your life by God.

Certainly, injustice and wrongful teaching should be challenged, but we are to do so carefully, making sure we are not responding with the outrage of the world. Our central purpose as disciples is to share God's peace and mercy with the world.

A judgemental harshness of heart on our part can never win the hearts of the lost. The net of the Gospel needs to be whole and uncompromised by the behaviour of those in the boat of the church. The power to love our enemies and show mercy stems from the love and mercy of our God who brings us his perfect peace.

Jesus says:

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."  
"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy."  
and "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God."

Nowhere does he say blessed are the judgemental.

#### Who does Jesus say are the Blessed?

Nowhere does Jesus say, 'Blessed are the judgemental, or those who condemn.'  
Instead he names the **meek**, the **merciful** and **peacemakers**, urging us to ...

**'Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.'**

Instead, he urges us to “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”

Yes, God is a judge, but he judges righteously and with mercy in order to save, not to condemn. Jesus calls us to be merciful and resist the temptation to judge others.

We ask for the help of the Holy Spirit to grow in the gifts of love, hope, patience, kindness befitting of those who bear witness to the love of God in Jesus Christ.

Be slow to anger, and resist the rage of the world as you work for peace, and witness to the kingdom of God among us. Shine with the light of God’s mercy.

Father, forgive us as we forgive those who sin against us. Bring us your peace. Transform our hearts and make us to shine with your mercy. By your Holy Spirit, draw the nations to yourself through the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.



Video of the service including the above address: <https://youtu.be/S6vOMh46SII>