

Title: The Master's Mighty Message – Part 5

Text: Luke 6:29-31

Date: December 28, 2025

And before we get started, I just wanted to take the brief moment to just take the opportunity to praise the Lord for his faithfulness. That we can all praise him for as we consider that this is the last Sunday of 2025 and we're about to start a new year. Just to praise him for the simple fact that you and I are here this morning is a testimony of the undying faithfulness of our God.

First, he is faithful to sustain that which he has created. He who created all things by the word of his power so upholds them all by the word of his power each and every day. As we are met with many issues and effects of living in this fallen world of sin and its curse, illness, disease, death that we are here this morning and have life. And it is because of the faithfulness and the sustaining grace and power of our God, and we should praise him for that this moment. Also, we should praise the Lord for his faithfulness because you and I are still here this morning not just physically but spiritually as well.

If we were to be honest about the impulses of our heart apart from the grace that is ours in Christ Jesus, we are prone to wander Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love. And I think we can think of many examples over this past year in which we have seen that tendency, that bent of our heart often away from the Lord and away from our good shepherd. And yet here we are still walking this morning on paths of righteousness for his name's sake and are among the congregation of those he has made righteous through faith in his son Jesus Christ because he as our good shepherd has faithfully kept us here. Many times, have we played the fool of Proverbs, of dug a pit and almost fallen into it and yet God by his faithfulness has sustained us and directed us by his grace ever more back to him.

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith he has kept our faith firm on Christ over this past year and we should praise him for his faithfulness in that regard. And then beyond even that we can praise the Lord for his faithfulness for our faith has not only been tested by our own sinfulness within but by trials and circumstances without. It is through many dangers, toils, and snares that we have already come throughout our life and over this past year. And yet here we are still worshiping the Lord, praising him this morning and we can give God the praise for that. For that is a testimony of his faithfulness as well. That he is testing our faith day by day, hour by hour and by his grace he sustains us even till today. And the God who has been faithful to us in all these different ways and so much more over this past year is going to be faithful towards us over this next year and so we can look forward to that.

We don't know what 2026 has in store but he who has been faithful to us thus far will be faithful until the end. *"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I know that I will dwell in the house of the Lord my God forever."* Praise the Lord for his faithfulness today. And may he bring us the adventure that he has set before us. Proverbs 3:15 says that *"wisdom and understanding is more precious than jewels and nothing that we desire can compare to it."*

And so, if you have your copy of God's word with you this morning and I hope you do please turn to Luke 6. We're going to be looking at verses 29-31 this morning which is a passage that further unfolds for us the wonderful transformation that Jesus imparts to all those who repent of their sins and embrace Christ by faith become united to him in faith. And this is a very crucial section of scripture that we're working through as I was thinking about it this week because this passage of scripture really all of Luke 6 is one that directly connects the ethics of Jesus to the person of Jesus.

See a lot of people in our world today give a lot of lip service to the ethics, the morality, the teachings of Jesus Christ but they will largely ignore the nature of his person and scripture's clear testimony of who he is. They will say things like well Jesus was a great teacher. He said a lot of wonderful things but to use the season we've just come through but this whole thing called Christmas that whole concept of the incarnation that whole idea of Jesus being Emmanuel of being God with us of being God the son and human flesh well, I mean that's all-fairy tales and rubbish. Jesus was a good man, and he can give you good pointers on how to live a good life but that's really it and they try to divorce Jesus's ethics from his person.

Well Luke by the way that he crafts his entire introduction and especially chapter 6 of this gospel he utterly blows that attempted approach to Jesus out of the water. You cannot separate Jesus's ethics from his person and the reason why is because Jesus's ethics are absolutely impossible apart from Jesus's power. And we saw this last week or at least I hope it was something that stood out to you as we learned that the very first commands ever to be issued by Jesus in this gospel to his followers are commands to demonstrate to all men and unbelievably radical and supernatural love. Jesus says in verses 27-28, "*Love your,*" what, "*enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.*" Those are the first commands spoken out of the mouth of Jesus in the gospel of Luke. Jesus there is calling on those who would follow him to love others with such totality, actuality, generosity, and integrity that anyone who takes a half an honest look at themselves would have to admit that is impossible.

How in the world can anyone demonstrate that type of love to people who hate, curse, and abuse you? The answer is you can't apart from the transforming power of the divine son of God, Jesus Christ. You cannot "*love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, or pray for those who abuse you.*" It just cannot be done. The only way you can reflect the supernatural love of Jesus is if you first receive the supernatural life of Jesus through faith in him. You cannot separate his ethics from his person. You must be born again. And when you are, when you surrender to Christ saving sovereignty, he transforms you from the inside out. And he imparts to you as Luke points out in this passage a yearning hope, a radical love, and a desperate dependency on him who is life itself.

He who can command Satan to flee and he flees. He who can command fevers to leave and they leave. He who can command fish to come and they come. And who can command cripples to walk, and they walk. This same divinely omnipotent powerful one can command sins to be forgiven and they're forgiven. And he can by his power and compassion make you brand new. That's how it works. His ethics are only able to be accomplished by his person, his power. And he can fill you with a divine love that is so radical and so supernatural that it is used by God to draw others to himself just like his miracles were used of, of old.

And Jesus is going to unfold for us more than nature of this radical love in the verses that are before us today by showing us in verses 29-31 the reactions of one who has received divine love. The reactions of divine love. When God's love has been poured into our heart through faith in Jesus Christ what does that radical love look like particularly in that moment when we are wronged by somebody else? What are the reactions of divine love? Well, there are five that we're going to see this morning. We're going to see that divine love reacts with restraint that's at the beginning of verse 29. With renunciation at the end of verse 29. With readiness that's at the beginning of verse 30. With release at the end of verse 30. And then with respect in verse 31. That is how divine love reacts. It reacts with restraint, renunciation, readiness, release, and respect.

And so, with that in mind if you're able please stand with me out of honor and attention for the word of God as I read our passage before us today from Luke 6:27-31. Just backing up to remember what we have just learned. In Luke 6:27, Luke under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit writes these words for us today. The words of Christ himself,

"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." Verse 29, "To the 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."

This is the word of God who keeps us from the pitfalls of the insolent by living according to his law.

Let's pray.

Father, I thank you so much for the love that is described in this passage. Father, we thank you that it ultimately finds its source in the heart of our great Savior Jesus Christ. Father, I pray that by your grace and by your truth and by your spirit you would transform us from one degree of glory into another this morning. So that as we look upon our Savior Jesus Christ, we would become a little bit more like him as we learn about the reactions of divine love. Father help us to be people who not only show intentional love but intuitive love. Love that flows out of our hearts when we come in contact with others. Father, we know that this is impossible apart from the work of your spirit within us. So do your work by your grace.

We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

You may be seated.

Now just so you remember Jesus has just commanded those of us who can hear him spiritually to *"love your enemies, to do good to those who hate you, to bless those who curse you, and to pray for those who abuse you."* And if you think about it, you'll realize that all of those actions are actions that we're supposed to initiate on our own. We're supposed to take the initiative and to demonstrate divine love and goodness and blessings and prayers to others. It is something that we're supposed to do on our own initiative. But

what happens when we're the recipients of what's being initiated by others? In other words what happens when we're the ones being acted upon by others not in love but in hate? What are we ought to do in those cases? What are the reactions of divine love? And Jesus lays them out for us here in verses 29-31 when he says, *"To the 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 the 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."*

These are instructions that Jesus gives for us when we are acted upon by others. And he shows us phrase by phrase how those who have received divine love from Christ ought to react. And Jesus begins all of this by highlighting first the truth that divine love reacts with restraint. That's the beginning of verse 29 when he says, *"To the one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also."* Now I need to state right up front before I even go through any of these verses that we're about to look at this morning two very basic clarifications concerning what Jesus is about to say here. First understand that in these verses Jesus is communicating a personal ethic here not a governmental or institutional one. I think that's very important to highlight. In other words, none of Jesus's commands here towards the individual and how we're supposed to act in personal relationships are meant to cancel out or replace any of God's expected roles or responsibilities for government or other institutions that he has created.

So, for example the beginning of verse 29 is not teaching that if someone attacks your nation's civilian populations that you let down your missile defense shield and let them take another shot. That is not what Jesus is teaching. The end of verse 29 is not teaching that if Somalians steal a staggering 9 billion dollars through social services that you have to give them another 9 billion dollars on top of that because clearly, they must need it. The beginning of verse 30 is not teaching that these verses are not teaching that we need to keep on handing out 71 billion dollars of taxpayer money every year to foreign aid simply because there are countries that beg us for it. And the end of verse 30 is not teaching that if China or other foreign countries steal our national secrets that we just pretend that that didn't happen and that there's no needed economic repercussions to be exacted, right? In other words what I'm saying is you're not to look at these verses and say let's run government this way. Jesus is not communicating a governmental ethic. He's communicating a personal ethic in relationships.

None of what Jesus says here contradicts what his spirit says later in Romans 13:4 about the obligations of a government to protect its citizens. Or what he says earlier in Exodus 22:2 about the obligations of a husband and a father to protect and to provide self-defense for his wife and his family. And I hope you all understand this. At least for me it's one thing if someone slaps me on the cheek if I'm going to take this extremely literally. And it's something else if someone slaps my wife's cheek. I respond to that very differently. Because in one I'm dealing with a personal relationship with this individual. And another I'm dealing as the head of an institution called the family of individuals that I am meant to protect. So, I hope that explains something that Jesus is communicating, a personal ethic here not a governmental or institutional one.

Second, we need to understand that Jesus is phrasing here is slightly hyperbolic. In other words, he is stating truths in these verses in a rather extreme and shocking way in order to wake us up and pay more attention to his important point or emphasis. Jesus does this regularly by the way when you go throughout the Gospels when he talks about hating one's family, or tearing one's eye out, or shoving a camel through the eye of a needle, or moving mountains, or straining out gnats while you're swallowing camels, right. Jesus will often word things in rather shocking ways in order to get us to sit up, pay attention, and understand an important priority or point that he's trying to make. And Jesus is doing that here by using shocking imagery. Jesus is illustrating the importance of showing divine love and how we react to personal wrongdoing.

And Jesus shows us first the importance of showing loving restraint when he states here at the beginning of verse 29, *"To the one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also."* Now this is amazing because I want you to really put yourself into the situation. Imagine someone getting angry at you and coming up to you in wrath and yelling at you to your face. If you've ever worked in customer service, I know you understand exactly what this looks like. Like I've worked there and with some great stories to tell. And then not only that, imagine them yelling at you not because of anything that you've done wrong. In fact, they're the ones that are wrong for yelling at you. You have nothing to do with anything, right. Talk to the manager, right. I'm just the person you see now. Now I want you to imagine having to listen to this livid individual deriding you to your face for something completely ridiculous. And then suddenly in the middle of it all this person who's ridiculously angry at you for no reason at all suddenly gets so angry that they slap you across the face. What would your first knee-jerk reaction be in that moment? Your basic instinct? Be honest. It would be to punch that person's lights out, right? I sadly speak from experience. You see I didn't punch anybody lights out don't worry, no. But I understand that impulsion.

Let me tell you a quick story. When I was back in college in South Carolina I served in an inner-city bus ministry. And after church one Sunday I went out and I was shooting hoops with a couple of the kids that I'd been working with as we were waiting for the pastor who had just preached to come out and shoot hoops with us. And I was talking to them about that week, I was sharing some of the verses that we had learned, and I was trying to figure out how they were doing spiritually while we were just shooting some hoops. Well, all of a sudden someone grabs my right ear as I'm doing a layup in midair and pulls me down to the ground. It hurt worse than anything I've ever had. And I spin around, and I see standing in front of me an older short gentleman about 60 years of age that I've never seen before in my entire life. His face is as beet red as can be and he keeps twisting my ear as he's lecturing me, and I stand about a foot taller than him. Lecturing me about how disrespectful I am being to God because my tie is loose, my shirt is untucked, and I'm playing basketball on a Sunday. And then if that wasn't enough that short old man let's go with my ear and then slaps me, a 22-year-old young man across the face and growls at me boy you better get some respect in you. Let me tell you something, I ran off of that basketball court and away from that man as fast as I could because if I'd have stayed there let's just say it's not good to punch a guy's lights out in front of your bus ministry kids.

Now some people might look at that and say well hey pastor I mean that's not bad at least you didn't knock that guy out. Yeah, but don't you see even in that moment I was so so far from having the reaction

of love that Jesus calls on here. Jesus is saying here that if someone walks up to you yells at you in your face and then slaps you across the face, you're to be so settled into a mindset of radical divine sacrificial love towards others that your reaction in that moment is one of self-restraint and not anger. That when someone strikes you on the cheek, you're already so settled in ministering love to them that you're able to stay even if that means you're offering up the other cheek for another slap. Now Jesus showed this very type of love and self-restraint when he walked on this earth.

If you remember later on, we're going to see in this gospel of Jesus's trial in Luke 22:64 we're told that those around him struck him with their hands saying, *"Prophesy! Who is it that struck you?"* And yet as Isaiah 53:7 had long predicted though *"he was oppressed, and afflicted, he did not open up his mouth."* They struck him unjustly and repeatedly and in love he stood firm and never even said a word in response. Beloved, this ethic of Jesus is only possible by the power of Jesus through the Holy Spirit. As Galatians 5:22-23 states, *"the same fruit of the Spirit that produces love.... also produces self,"* what, *"control."* Love is often expressed when there's wrongdoing through self-control. And this is why self-control is talked about so much in the pages of scripture. Like in Proverbs 25:28, *"A man who has no control over his spirit is like a city that's broken into and without walls."* Or in Proverbs 16:32, *"Whoever is slow in anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his own spirit than he who conquers the city."* Or again in Proverbs 19:11, *"A man's wisdom and discretion makes him slow to anger, and it is a glory to overlook an offense."*

See if you're ever going to have spiritual reactions of love just as Christ commands here then you've got to be in control of your emotional reactions towards others. You've got to be developing the virtue of self-control for the sake of your love. And praise God, he gives us both by his Holy Spirit who dwells in us. So that when one strikes us on the cheek we can react in love and keep on ministering to them in love and offer the other also through our self-restraint. This is the type of radical love that's to be shown by Jesus's disciples and it's absolutely remarkable when you really think about it. Now before I move on, I need to be clear. Jesus is not saying here that we are to willfully endure abuse. He is not saying to keep yourself in an abusive situation or relationship or that if your spouse or someone else is beating you or threatening you physically that you're just supposed to stay there and take it if you have an opportunity to get away, no. To come to such a warped conclusion would be to ignore what God's word says even at just a broad and a basic level. Proverbs 27:12 says, *"The wise man sees danger and hides himself."* Or again Proverbs 14:16, *"A wise man is cautious and avoids evil and danger."* God gives us wisdom. Wisdom to exercise self-preservation and protection. When something is thrown at our heads, what do we do? We duck. And when someone is beating you, what do you do? You leave.

General wisdom tells us to avoid situations where we will be placed deliberately into physical danger. And on top of that God gives us specific wisdom as well to avoid the violent one and to not enable them in their violence. Proverbs 22:24-25 says, *"Make no friendship with a man that is given to anger, nor go with a wrathful man, lest you learn his own ways and you entangle yourself in a snare."* See not only general but specific wisdom tells us that we ought to get out of violent situations like that and not enable them but rather expose them. As Proverbs 19:19 says, *"A man of great wrath must pay the penalty, for if you deliver him, you will only have to do it again."*

So, Jesus is not saying to stay in an abusive situation or circumstance, no. He's telling you in great wisdom to get out and hide yourself from it. And so, I just want to take the opportunity because I don't always get the opportunity to say this, that if you are in an abusive relationship this morning often many people do not even know. It is something that abusers can show great restraint in public and show great lack of restraint in private.

And so, if you are in an abusive relationship this morning and you feel like you are trapped, and no one will ever help you or listen to you. Listen to me. As a church family here in Grace Chapel we will. It is our obligation and commitment to God according to James 1 & 2 to help you act in all wisdom. To take care of those who are in affliction. We will take you in. We will help you. We will house you. We will feed you. We will do everything in our power to protect you until perhaps by God's grace the individual who is abusing you their heart might change. But if you or your children are in physical danger, we will take you in and keep you safe. For while God's love says do pray for your abusers. God's wisdom also says do not stay with them. Do pray but don't stay. Get away and let God's wisdom work in that situation.

So, Jesus isn't saying to stay with the persistent abuser here, he is saying that when in your testimony for Jesus Christ someone gets so angry at you that they slap you in the face as a rebuke, do not respond in kind. That's what he's saying. React in love. React in loving restraint. That's the first reaction of divine love. Love reacts with restraint.

Second Jesus shows us that divine love reacts with renunciation. At the end of verse 29 he says, *"and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either."* In other words, if someone steals your outer garment don't withhold your inner garment either. Now here's one of the reasons why we know Jesus is speaking hyperbolically. In other words, slightly extreme language because if we followed this to the letter all the time, we would all be a bunch of nudists okay. So, Jesus is trying to communicate something here that we ought to be paying attention to. He's saying that you need to be willing to renunciate things that you think are yours in order to minister to others in love. You have to understand what Jesus is saying here at the end of verse 29 was a big deal back then.

See most people in the area of Capernaum or Galilee back then were relatively poor. They only had one outer cloak. A thicker exterior garment that they would not only use as a coat but also as a blanket to keep them warm at night. And Jesus is saying here, if someone takes your cloak while you're on the mission of showing my mercy and message to them, don't retreat from that mission for the sake of your own personal belongings. Don't put your personal belongings of a higher priority of doing what I'm calling you to do. Be willing to renounce all of that. Stand fast and keep on loving them even if it means you have to give them the shirt off of your back.

As Romans 12:17 says, *"never repay evil for evil."* Now Jesus showed this very same type of love and renunciation when he walked on this earth. Philippians 2:6-7 is the greatest example. It says, *"though he was in the form of God, he did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, by being born in the likeness of men."* Jesus set aside his divine rights and prerogatives for those who seek to steal glory for themselves each and every day. And not only that, but

we're told that he had no place to lay his head. And even on the cross we're going to see later in Luke 23:34 that those who crucified him *"cast lots and divided up his,"* what, *"garments among them."* The king of glory, the king of glory to whom all heaven and earth belongs literally renounced all rights and privileges until he hung naked as a criminal on a cross by false charges. He was willing to renounce all of that and react in love. And we who are recipients of that love are to react in love with renunciation also and understand that our personal belongings should not hold a candle to Christ commands to our lives. *"For one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either."*

It's like what we see from the life of Elisabeth Elliott, she left behind a life of academic respect and economic comfort and traveled into the unreached jungles of Ecuador with her husband Jim. Only to have Jim get speared to death in 1956 by those that they had come to save. Everything that had been hers, her husband, her plans, her future, her sense of safety had been ripped away from her. She could have turned back, and no one would have blamed her but instead Elisabeth Elliott renounced all of that and she returned to the jungles of Ecuador. She went back to the very people who had taken the most away from her and she brought them the message and the love of Christ. Many of them were saved.

This is what Jesus is teaching here, that love reacts with renunciation. It does not think what have I lost. Instead, it thinks what have I been given and how much more can I give. We're to be so steadfast in loving others with totality, actuality, generosity, integrity that if someone doesn't like the way that I'm loving them and tries to get me to stop loving them by taking something away from me, they're going to have to keep on taking stuff because I'm not going to stop loving them. As a follower of Christ, I must never stop loving an enemy no matter what they do. I will ever only do you good and wish you good and pray for your good regardless of the costs. Because I've already renounced it all for the sake of testifying for Jesus Christ. This is the second reaction of divine love. Divine love reacts with restraint, with renunciation.

Third divine love reacts with readiness. Jesus said at the beginning verse 30, *"Give to everyone who begs from you."* Now again this is in a borrowing context as Luke verse 34 & 36 is going to make clear later. So, someone comes up to you personally, this is the situation, they come up to you and they say hey I am genuinely in a really tight place, and I need to borrow something from you. What should your response as a follower of Christ be? It should be just to give it. It should be just to meet their genuine need without any further thought or consideration given. Now this is not talking about continually being duped by a con man or a professional beggar.

1 Timothy 5 makes it clear that we're to be discerning with our resources and that we're to make sure that our goods are going to those with genuine needs. We're not to condemn evildoers in their evil deeds. Even as scripture says, *"if someone is not willing to work neither let him eat."* But when someone comes to you with a genuine need you are to meet it without any further thought or consideration given. This is how divine radical love reacts with readiness and we see this reaction of love from the very heart of Christ throughout the gospels. We're going to read later in Luke chapter 8 that is Jesus is walking through a crowd a woman who had been bleeding for 12 years reaches out to Jesus and just touches the fringe of his garment. And we're told that immediately power went out from Jesus, and she was healed.

Immediately her discharge of blood ceased. We're told in Luke 8:44. Jesus didn't interrogate, he didn't delay, he didn't question her worthiness, he just reacted with love and reacted with readiness.

Again, in Luke 18 we're going to see Jesus walks through another crowd again and in the midst of this crowd a blind man starts crying out to him, *"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"* The rest of the crowd ignores that blind man. The rest of his disciples ignore that man. But we're told in verse 40 that *"Jesus immediately stopped and he commanded him to be brought to him."* And he healed him because that's what divine love does. It reacts with readiness. Always ready to show love. We see this with Jesus, and we are to reflect it as his followers as well. Give to everyone who begs from you.

Our family actually had the joy of experiencing this reaction of divine love over this past year when our van suddenly broke down right before vacation Bible school. I've shared this a little bit during business meetings, but I want to share it with all of you. It was a really cool moment for me to see because when several families of this church came to know of that need, they immediately reacted. They gave us their own vehicles. They immediately volunteered to fix our van. And they immediately came around us in our need with no further thoughts or considerations needed or given. We didn't even have to ask, let alone beg. They just reacted in love and readiness. And it is a joy to see that same type of love continually happen to all sorts of members in our body throughout the year. That I as a pastor often have the privilege of seeing from behind the scenes. People come to know of needs and immediately there is a reaction from someone in this body to meet that need through meals, through money, through skills, through time given. It's a joy to see this picture because it is a picture of Jesus and his divine love. A love that reacts with readiness because that's what divine love does. You've been given so much in Christ you want to give to others around you. It reacts with restraint with renunciation with readiness.

Fourth divine love reacts with release. The end of verse 30, it says *"from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back."* So, if someone takes something that's yours while you're on mission to personally share with them the love and the message of Jesus, don't jettison your personal relationship and your ministry with them for the sake of getting your stuff back. That's what Jesus is saying. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6:7 *"Why not suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded?"* Keep focused on your overall mission. Don't demand reciprocation in your relationships. React with release.

Have you ever met people that always are wanting reciprocation? Right, it's almost the type of thing where they come up and they're wanting to help you and you're like oh please don't. Please don't because if I take that I know I'm going to have to do something later, right. Right and Jesus is saying don't be known like that. Let your gifts be gifts with no strings attached and just simply love someone and help someone and not expect them to do anything back. Don't demand reciprocation. React with release. Keep on loving them and let everything go. Forgive them if they never give it back. Release that debt we see this reaction of release once again in Christ himself when he was hanging on the cross. Did he say father make them pay for what they're doing? No, he said, *"Father,"* what, *"forgive them for they know not what they do."* He did not demand from sinners what was justly owed. In fact, he took the penalty upon himself. He took the loss upon himself. As Colossians 2:14 states *"he canceled the record of debt that stood against us when he was nailed to the cross."*

He reacted with release, and we are to do likewise. From one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. Now do you see the common denominator in all these examples that we just looked at? All these reactions? If they slap you don't slap them back, if they take something from you don't take something back. In fact, offer the other cheek. In fact, meet their needs. In fact, do good to them. Jesus is saying through all of this do not treat your enemies as they have treated you. Instead treat your enemies as they should have treated you which is exactly where Jesus is going to go next. Because divine love reacts with restraint, with renunciation, with readiness, with release, and finally divine love reacts with respect. Even to the people who have disrespected you. You don't respond in kind. You react in love. Which means reacting with respect.

He says in verse 31, *"And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them."* Not that they have done but that they should and would do. In other words, don't respond in kind. React in love. To do to others what they do to us, return evil for evil is the standard of the unbeliever as Jesus is going to teach next. But to do to others as we would wish them to do to us and to return good for evil is the standard of Christ himself. Even though they treat you terribly always always always treat them the way that they should be treating you with respect. But they slapped me, they disrespected me, right. Love your enemies. But they were wrong when they accused me, that was completely false. Love your enemies. But they took my stuff and they're not going to give it back. Love your enemies. But when am I ever not supposed to love them? Never. That's the point.

This is a love that never ends. Yes, it goes on and on my friends. Jesus is describing here a radical supernatural love that no one can ever work their way out of. Because it is a radical supernatural love that no one has ever worked their way into. In every way we are to imitate the love that God has shed upon us. Just as he has set his love on us, so we are to set our love on others. Just as there was nothing that we could ever do to merit God's love so there is nothing that they can do to ever merit our love. And just as there was nothing that we can ever work ourselves out of God's love, there is nothing they can do to ever work themselves out of our love either.

No matter what they do we are to react towards them in love. If they slap you on the cheek react in love. If they take away your cloak react in love. If they take away your goods react in love. No matter what they do don't respond in kind. React with restraint, renunciation, readiness, release, and respect. Always react to your enemies with love. So you have to ask the question why? Why is Jesus teaching this? Is he just wanting to give some ethic that is impossible so that we sit there and say boy I am failing miserably. Thank you very much Jesus. No, he is wanting to give us an ethic like this so that it is only by his power that we demonstrate his love so that the world might come to know that he is who he said he is.

That he is the God of all compassion and power who can transform your heart and your reactions and your relationships. That is why it is to bring him glory. And the way that we bring him glory is by as Christians understanding that our enemies are our mission field. The people who are perverting and corrupting our culture and there are many and our communities and our faith even never forget they must be loved by us. Not with a cowardly love that tolerates their iniquity or retreats from their hostility, but a divine love that calmly and courageously seeks their ultimate good. That continues to speak into their life

the glories of the gospel even if that means they slap us in the face. Even if that means they take away from us the things that we own. No matter how much it cost us we will courageously keep on loving them with the truthful honest courageous love of Jesus.

Jesus calls us in this passage as disciples to such a relentless and redemptive love. One that reacts with restraint, renunciation, readiness, release, and respect towards all men, even those who hate us. By this will all men know that we are Christ's disciples when we have this love towards others, each other, and to our enemies. *"To the one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from the 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."* This is the divine irresistible persistent love of Jesus, and it is to be our love as his disciples as well. A love that shows itself even in our reactions. Make no mistake, this type of love is absolutely impossible apart from the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Only the spirit of Christ can produce a Christ like love. Only the spirit of Christ can produce a Christ like self-control. The world cannot love this way. The world says I will love you as long as you don't hurt me. I will love you as long as you don't cross me. I will love you as long as it doesn't cost me anything. And we've elevated that attitude through social media almost to a virtue. But Jesus says and he shows us something radically different here. Which is exactly why the culture that we're living in right now is a perfect moment in mission field for us. Because it is this type of love that will stand out and makes no sense apart from Christ.

The world has to ask when they see this type of love what kind of power produces that. And the answer is the power of a very real very living very saving Jesus. As Peter perfectly says it in 1 Peter 2:21-24, *"For this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but he continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree."* You hear what Peter is teaching there? Jesus is not simply teaching this ethic. He lived it and he lived it out for you and me.

When he was struck, he did not strike back. He showed restraint. When things were taken away from him even as dignity, he renounced his rights. When those in need cried out for mercy he responded with readiness. When eternal debts were owed for the glory of God he released them at the cost of his own blood. And when he was being mocked and crucified, he treated sinners with dignity and respect praying for their forgiveness. In the midst of being hated Jesus loved. In the midst of being sinned against Jesus saved.

And if you're here this morning and you have never trusted in Christ, I want you to hear this clearly. This love of Christ is for you. You cannot live this way and Jesus is not asking you to. He asked you to first to come to him to repent of your sins, to lay down your self-rule and to trust in what he has done for you at the cross. He bore your sin. He paid your debt and he rose again to give you a new life and a transformed heart. And it's only after giving you this new life does he call on you to live in a new way.

So, I'd encourage you this morning if you have not done so, repent of your sins this morning and trust in Jesus Christ and be born again. And if you are a believer then the call on you from this passage is not a call to grit your teeth and try harder. This is a call to look again to Jesus. To depend daily on his spirit and to entrust yourself to the righteous judge who judges justly and to always react and love just as Jesus loved you. When you're shamed react with restraint. When you suffer loss react with renunciation. When you see needs react with readiness. When you're taken advantage of react with release. And when you are confronted with anything always react with respect. As you wish that others would do to you do so to them. Because our enemies are not our obstacles, they are a mission field. And when the world sees a people who love like this there's only one explanation. God is real, Christ is reigning, and his spirit of power and compassion is at work among his people. May God give us grace to react with such divine love for the good of others, for the advancement of the gospel, and for the glory of his great name among our body and our community.

This is the word of God from Luke 6:29-31 which I consider a great privilege to be able to share with you today. In which I now commit to your further study and your faithful obedience until Christ the great example and shepherd of his sheep returns.

To that end, let's pray for his grace. Let's pray.

Dear Heavenly Father, I thank you so much for showing us the heart of Jesus clearer this morning. Father, I thank you that it is a reminder that no matter how long we have walked with you we are continually a part of an upward call that you have given us in Christ Jesus. To be transformed from one degree of glory into another. And Father, we thank you that every circumstance in our life is driving us towards that great calling. That you are working all things together for good. And that good is to reflect the very image of your son Jesus Christ. Father, may we have the hearts of honesty and humility this morning to say thank you for giving us enemies. Thank you for giving us those people who do mistreat us, who do lie about us, who do misuse us. Father thank you for giving us these circumstances so that we might be transformed by your spirit more into the image of our great savior Jesus Christ. Who loved when he was hated, who spoke not a word when he was reviled, and who trusted in you to be the just judge when everything seemed to be in justice around him. Father help us to follow in his footsteps. Help us to react with his love and help us to show his power and compassion to a world that desperately needs to know of it. Change our hearts, Father we pray for the glory of your son in our day and age.

We ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.

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