

## BETTER TO EAT JESUS' WORDS THAN YOUR OWN

### I. Luke 6:27-36

A. Recently a woman near Philadelphia ran out of gas on I-95. She was approached by a homeless man who saw her in distress. He told her to return to her car, lock the doors, and wait for him to return. He soon came back with a full can of gas, having used his last \$20. She had no money on her at the time but was so grateful for what the man did, she started an online fundraiser to raise support for him. She very quickly raised over \$360,000. The homeless man was a Marine Veteran who served as a paramedic. Neither of these two will ever be the same again.

B. Some friends decided to pull a Craigslist prank on one of their friends. They made a posting for free Thanksgiving turkeys and listed their friend's phone number. He started receiving lots of calls. But hearing the desperation in many of their voices, he was deeply touched and couldn't say no. So he summoned some friends and they ended up giving out 80 full Thanksgiving meals to all the needy folks who had called. They now plan to make it an annual event.

C. Our text, Luke 6:27-36, comes from Jesus' *Sermon on the Plain*. There are similarities here to the *Sermon on the Mount*. While often misapplied, Jesus' words are powerful. Some run these sermons through theological strainers so as to filter out what can be hard to drink down. Let's listen closely to Jesus' unfiltered red letters today and see what the Holy Spirit might say to our hearts.

### D. Luke 6:27-36 (ESV) Jesus' words from the Sermon on the Plain.

1) V27-29: 27 *But I say to you who hear, (You who listen close and let My words go down deep...) Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. 29 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. (Don't start thinking of hypotheticals-just listen without filters...)*

2) V30-31: 30 *Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. 31 And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them. (The Golden Rule as recorded in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7:12 says: "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.")*

3) V32-34: 32 *If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. 33 And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 34 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. (Jesus calls us to a higher place! If we act like everybody else, are we really any different than everybody else?! What, if anything, sets us apart from the world?! Matthew 5:20 (ESV) says: "For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.")*

4) V35-36: 35 *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. 36 Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.*

E. So what does all this mean? How do we process this? How do we embody this? Without dismissing these words as hyperbole or running them through any strainers or telling you how to apply them in various hypothetical situations, let me say a few things that will either help you or provoke you all the more:

1) Jesus means the words He says. His sermons were not suggestions to live by. Jesus, who was *The Truth*, He spoke the very truth of God. His were not mere platitudes or tidbits of conventional wisdom. He spoke the words of God because He was God! Let us respond as Jeremiah who said: *"Thy words were found and we did eat them, and Thy word was unto us, the joy and rejoicing of our lives."* (See Jeremiah 15:16)

2) When it comes to people: family, friends, strangers, and enemies, God wants us to look to Him first. Heeding His word requires TRUST. Do we trust God or ourselves in our relational matters? Are we going to trust God and treat people the way He treats people, the way He instructs us to treat people, or are we going to treat people however we so choose--to God's advantage or our own?

3) When it comes to your stuff, the matter is also one of TRUST. Your stuff is not necessarily a big deal to God. He's ultimately the One who gave you all your stuff. Doesn't it say somewhere, *"God owns the stuff in a thousand warehouses?!"* He can give you more stuff or He can wait and give you better stuff in *The Place* where your stuff here can't be shipped.

4) As for the matter of justice, God again requires our TRUST. Do we trust Him with justice or do we think we are more just than He, more capable of making wrongs, right than He? Do we trust Him with vengeance or are we unsatisfied until we've gotten our own revenge? We dare not confuse God's common grace (*letting the sun shine upon the righteous and the unrighteous*) as Him letting people escape punishment. Nobody's getting away with anything! Either Jesus has already suffered your *just* punishment on the cross or you'll suffer it in hell!

F. And for that very reason, we must make our way to the cross right now. While we may find Jesus' commands next to impossible to keep, even like the Law itself, know this: He has kept them all perfectly. He alone is legitimately called *The Righteous One*. And it is *The Righteous One* who bore all our sins and disgrace on the cross. He is the same *Righteous One* who after He died for us, rose again. He ascended! He rules! He prays for us! He has sent His Holy Spirit to dwell in us to make us like Himself. In so doing, His ways, that seem impossible to obey, become possible because He writes them on the tablets of hearts and empowers us to obey them.

G. What might He be doing in your heart right now? Maybe ask Him! If this word is simply "old hat" for you, maybe it's for someone you love. Maybe it's for a stranger. Or perhaps it's for an enemy who if they don't hear it, will suffer eternally. Do you love your enemy enough to share the Gospel with them? If you've found these words to be from God, devour them until your plate is clean! Better to eat Jesus' words than your own!

\* Close with Prayer...

### Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

#### Luke 6:27-36 (ESV)

27 But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. 29 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. 30 Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. 31 And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them. 32 "If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. 33 And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 34 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. 35 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. 36 Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

#### Jeremiah 15:16 (KJV)

16 Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by Thy name, O Lord God of hosts.

### Film Clips & Other Links

Homeless Man Spends His Last \$20 to Keep a Stranded Woman Safe

<http://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/national/article186044173.html#fmp>

Craigslist Prank Helps Feed Needy Families

<https://www.10tv.com/article/craigslist-prank-helps-feed-families>

Love Your Enemies - John Piper (Superb!)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fMRjbQL1eHE>

Millersport Covenant Church Sermon Podcasts (MP3s on iTunes)

<http://millersportcc.com/feed/podcast>

### Bonus Stuff

#### Matthew 5:38-48 (ESV)

38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' 39 But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. 41 And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. 42 Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you. 43 You have heard that

it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' **44** But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, **45** so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. **46** For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? **47** And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? **48** You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

#### **Romans 12:9-21 (ESV)**

**9** Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. **10** Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. **11** Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. **12** Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. **13** Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. **14** Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. **15** Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. **16** Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. **17** Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. **18** If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. **19** Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." **20** To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." **21** Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

#### **Proverbs 25:21-22 (ESV)**

**21** If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat, and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink, **22** for you will heap burning coals on his head, and the Lord will reward you.

#### **Romans 5:9-11 (ESV)**

**9** Since, therefore, we have now been justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God. **10** For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life. **11** More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

#### **Colossians 1:21-23 (NLT)**

**21** This includes you who were once far away from God. You were His enemies, separated from Him by your evil thoughts and actions. **22** Yet now He has reconciled you to Himself through the death of Christ in His physical body. As a result, He has brought you into His own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before Him without a single fault. **23** But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it. Don't drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News. The Good News has been preached all over the world, and I, Paul, have been appointed as God's servant to proclaim it.

#### **Quote by Charles H. Spurgeon**

"Earnest intercession will be sure to bring love with it. I do not believe you can hate a man for whom you habitually pray. If you dislike any brother Christian, pray for him doubly, not only for his sake, but for your own, that you may be cured of prejudice and saved from all unkind feeling."

#### **Ordinary vs Extraordinary**

Sermon Excerpt, Pastor Steven A. Bush, May 27, 2014

We know Jesus' love was sacrificial and action oriented--not so much mushy, gushy, warm, and fuzzy... While most of us may not be called to make the ultimate sacrifice in laying down our lives for others (though many of our brothers and sisters around the world are doing just that!) we will be called to love sacrificially--laying down our preferences, yielding those things we possess that will help someone else, putting towels around our waists and washing one another's feet. Jesus' love was extraordinary and we've been called to be like Him with the promise of extraordinary joy as the outcome...

1) It's ordinary to get mad, become resentful, hold a grudge, and lash out. It's extraordinary to forgive, apologize, and bury hatchets... Fighting may draw a crowd but forgiveness changes hearts. Mercy still triumphs over judgment...

2) If you have a restaurant and someone opens a restaurant next door, it's ordinary to put the bad mouth on your competitor; it's extraordinary to send your new competition flowers and bid them well...

3) It's ordinary to give a stranger directions to a good restaurant; it's extraordinary to meet them at one of your favorites and buy them supper...

4) It's ordinary for some Christians to verbally persecute people who hold to other religions--say a Buddhist; it's extraordinary to show them Christ's love and sail with them for a month in the midst of God's creative beauty...

5) It's ordinary to hang out with people just like you; it's extraordinary when people with tattoos, piercings, and quite different lifestyles are drawn to you for reasons unbeknownst to you and you show them Christ's love and acceptance...

6) It's ordinary to serve your church family every now and then; it's extraordinary to volunteer almost anytime a need arises and not think twice about it...

7) It's ordinary to love and care for your own children; it's extraordinary to love and care for the children of others... Be a Big Brother or Big Sister... Become foster parents... Carried to the extreme--adoptions may even occur!

8) It's ordinary to want to spend your Christmas and spring breaks and summers off to go on vacations and recreate; it's extraordinary to go to a poor country to build homes, serve the people there, and share the Good News about Jesus...

9) It's ordinary to use your retirement years to kick back and relax; it's extraordinary to use your retirement years in service and minister in and around your community... Or even beyond your community...

10) It's ordinary to give a little; it's extraordinary to give a lot or until it hurts...

11) It's ordinary to loan out your coat; it's extraordinary to give someone your coat and the shirt off your back as well...

12) It's ordinary to be a consumer of fruit; it's extraordinary to be a producer of fruit--fruit that others just can't get enough of...

Jesus said that extraordinary love will lead to extraordinary joy. I've never known Him to be wrong... If demonstrating extraordinary love is what obeying His commands looks like, I say we embrace obedience with all of our hearts... And then, together, we will likewise get to bask in His joy forever and ever--Amen!