

Luke 6: 27-36

**But I say to you that listen,
Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,
bless those who curse you,
pray for those who abuse you.**

**If anyone strikes you on the cheek,
offer the other also;
and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt.
Give to everyone who begs from you;
and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again.**

Do to others as you would have them do to you.

If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?

For even sinners love those who love them.

**If you do good to those who do good to you,
what credit is that to you?**

For even sinners do the same.

**If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive,
what credit is that to you?**

**Even sinners lend to sinners,
to receive as much again.**

**But love your enemies,
do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return.**

**Your reward will be great,
and you will be children of the most high;
for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.**

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

Meditation:

I really believe that this Gospel reading is one of THE most ignored readings in all of Scripture because it just doesn't make common sense.

Do good to those who hate you?

Give to everyone who begs from you? really? everyone??

and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again??

I sometimes have real trouble with some of Jesus' teachings...

Those who know me, know how much I struggle with those begging at street corners and stop lights...how much I rationalize why I should not give 'em a buck or two... maybe they will use it on drugs or alcohol or something I don't want to enable them to do.

But as I researched, prayed and reflected upon our Scripture this week, it finally dawned me, this Gospel...well, quite frankly, all of Scripture.. isn't really about 'them'...

it is about me.

it is about us,

each of us: personally and individually...

**A story from the Sufi Tradition that simplifies,
what Jesus is trying to teach us today:**

Jesus was walking down the road with his disciples.

Some people threw stones at him and cursed him.

Jesus blessed them.

The disciples asked him:

“Master, why do you bless those who curse you?”

Jesus replied, “I can only give what I have in my purse.”

This short story clarifies the core vision of the Gospels which is:

The journey that Jesus invites us to travel

is one which continues to hone our responses in every situation to a response of

kindness,

compassion,

mercy

generosity

and love.

I don't know about you,

but sometimes...perhaps even often times...

I have a hard time doing that: simplifying my responses...

I spend so much of my time and energy trying to figure out the ‘right’ thing to do...

it is exhausting!

I certainly know what I ‘should’ be doing and thinking...

but then life happens...

and I hear this ‘committee in my head’...

do you have one?

The committee is all those many voices that most of us carry with us:

voices of our parents

voices of our teachers,

former spouses...

our current spouses

our friends, co workers,

news anchors...spiritual writers..

teachers and preachers

All those voices telling us who we should be,

what we should believe

and what we ought to do...

and everybody has an opinion!

and everyone is quite sure about what they believe...

blah, blah, blah.

What often results is a confusing cacophony spinning our heads

and confusing our hearts...

but then, every so often...

when we can be still...

we hear that still small voice deep inside

whispering to us...

Love one another.

Give, and it will be given to you.

Rejoice in the gift of this day...

Give thanks...

Share...

Forgive..

Love

It really is beautifully simple.

**The only thing Jesus can do, in any situation is to bless...
because that is the only thing he knows...that is all he has in his possession.**

**Yes...it is true...Our story today really does not make common sense....
it is not as the world or the committee in our head would have us believe..**

**But much of what the world would have us believe is NOT healthy or life giving
or life affirming.**

That is why Jesus calls it out...

If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?

For even sinners love those who love them.

**But love your enemies,
do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return.**

**Your reward will be great,
and you will be children of the most high;**

**and then Jesus goes much farther and offers us a radical image of God
that most Christians pay absolutely no attention to:**

for GOD is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.

That is so not what I was taught.

I was taught that God would punish those who are ungrateful and wicked ...

eventually...in due time...in God's time

but they would get there do...

That is same ole', same ole... quid pro quo religion

and Jesus wasn't into that kind of religion...

and That is why his Gospel is truly, radically

not common sense Good News

life changing, life transforming, life enhancing Good News...

Jesus lived his life to help us become more Loving than we thought we could be

because he knew we could be...all of us...

no matter who we are and what we have already done or not done for that matter.

He knew Forgiveness and Mercy and Love were always being offered

so that we could begin again and again and again...

So that each of us could move further along the road of enlightenment and

higher consciousness by carrying only love in our 'purse'

by loving those who hate us and blessing those who curse us...

So when we find ourselves wondering what to do any situation

Let us not think too much, let us not listen to the committee in our head...

but let us listen to the still small voice within,

Let us simply reach into our 'purse' and offer the one thing

we have chosen to carry with us...

Let us love one another

and then all that love will be pressed down, shaken together,

and poured right back into our lap...

and then we can whisper thank you! amen.

