

FEBRUARY 19, 2025
Shaped by God's Word: Expanded by Love

Introduction

Mercy. Mercy. Mercy. Joseph lives it in Egypt. Jesus preaches it in the gospel. The Spirit guides us into merciful lives with the power of forgiveness to reconcile what is fractured and divided. Such merciful living is the baptismal blessing of having put on Christ. It is the gift of the life-giving Spirit. It is a reflection of God's glory revealed in Christ.

Luke 6:27-38

[Jesus said:] ²⁷ "But I say to you who are listening: Love your enemies; do good to those who hate you; ²⁸ bless those who curse you; pray for those who mistreat you. ²⁹ 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. ³⁰ Give to everyone who asks of you, and if anyone takes away what is yours, do not ask for it back again. ³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you.

³² "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³ If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴ If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive payment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. ³⁵ Instead, 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 himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. ³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

³⁷ "Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; ³⁸ 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."

Luke 6:27-38 - The Message

27-30 "To you who are ready for the truth, I say this: Love your enemies. Let them bring out the best in you, not the worst. When someone gives you a hard time, respond with the supple moves of prayer for that person. If someone slaps you in the face, stand there and take it. If someone grabs your shirt, giftwrap your best coat and make a present of it. If someone takes unfair advantage of you, use the occasion to practice the servant life. No more payback. Live generously.

31-34 "Here is a simple rule of thumb for behavior: Ask yourself what you want people to do for you; then grab the initiative and do it for *them*! If you only love the lovable, do you expect a pat on the back? Run-of-the-mill sinners do that. If you only help those who help you, do you expect a medal? Garden-variety sinners do that. If you only give for what you hope to get out of it, do you think that's charity? The stingiest of pawnbrokers does that.

35-36 "I tell you, love your enemies. Help and give without expecting a return. You'll never—promise—regret it. Live out this God-created identity the way our Father lives toward us, generously and graciously, even when we're at our worst. Our Father is kind; you be kind.

37-38 "Don't pick on people, jump on their failures, criticize their faults—unless, of course, you want the same treatment. Don't condemn those who are down; that hardness can boomerang. Be easy on people; you'll find life a lot easier. Give away your life; you'll find life given back, but not merely given back—given back with bonus and blessing. Giving, not getting, is the way. Generosity begets generosity."

Luke 6:27-38 – First Nations Version - "THE WAY TO TREAT YOUR ENEMIES

27" Hear me, you who are listening now, I am telling you to love your enemies, do good to the ones who look down on you, 28return blessing for cursing, and send up good prayers for the ones who give you trouble and pain. 29" If someone slaps you on the side of your face, show the strength of your heart and offer the other side. In the same way, if a thief takes your coat, offer your shirt also. 30" When someone in need asks, do not hold back. Do what you can to help. If someone takes what is yours, let them keep it." "Here is another way to see what I am saying: 31Help others in the same way you would want them to help you. 32-34" Where is the honor in only showing love to the ones who do the same for you? Why should you be given respect for doing good to the ones who do you good, or for lending only to the ones who can repay you? Even tribal tax collectors and outcasts do these things. 35" Instead, show love and respect to your enemies, help them when they are in need without asking them to repay you. This will show that you are children of your Father from above, for he is kind and takes pity on the ones with bad hearts, even when they do not thank him for it. 36So then, show kindness to others in the same way as your Father the Great Spirit.

BLIND GUIDES 37" Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. When you release others from their wrongdoings, you will be released from yours. 38The amount you measure out to others is the amount that comes back, like a basket that has been filled to the top, shaken down, and packed together, until it overflows. What you give out will come back to you—full circle.""