

Series: Special Study
Text: Luke 6:27-35
June 28, 2015: Gospel Community Study Guide

This Study Guide is based on a sermon by Dr. Joshua Mack. You will find the link to the sermon here.

<http://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=771568451>

Getting Started:

What is your favorite promise that God makes in the Bible?

Into the Bible:

One promise that most of us don't like all that much is found in 2 Timothy 3:12. In order to get the context for this promise, I would you to read 2 Timothy 3:1-13 and answer the following questions.

What does Paul say he wants us to understand?

What does he say people will be like in these days?

Paul tells Timothy that he has followed what about Paul?

What particular word does Paul use three times in verse 11 to describe what happened to him?

What does this word mean? Do you have a word for this in your home language?

Does Paul think this will only happen to him? What promise does he make in verse 12 to everyone who wants to live a godly life?

What reason does he give that this will happen to them according to verse 13?

The Big Idea:

It's normal for Christians to be mistreated by others as a result of their faith. In Luke 6:20-26, we saw that Jesus anticipates this by saying that many who are part of His kingdom will be poor, hungry, sad, and hated on account of their relationship with Him.

Because this is a reality, Jesus' followers need to know how he wants them to respond to the people who hate them and who are hurting them. In verses 27-35, Jesus begins to lay out the radical way in which He wants His disciples to live. He says, "But I say to you who hear, 'Love your enemies...'"

Digging Deeper:

Now obviously, lots of people talk about the importance of love. It's not really something shocking to say that we are supposed to love other people. But the way Jesus defines love and who Jesus tells us we are supposed to love is the thing that makes His command so shocking.

First of all, Jesus says love your enemies. It may seem obvious but let's answer this anyway. What is an enemy?

After sharing some of your answers look at the kinds of things that Jesus say this enemy would do to Christians in verse 27-30. I'll give you the first and then you list the rest. This enemy will hate you. Now your turn. What will this enemy do?

What is our normal response to people who do these things to us? Honestly? How do people typically respond to people who are attacking them? How do you feel about what Jesus is telling us to do towards our enemies?

Ok, let's get specific. Look at the three commands Jesus gives after telling us to love our enemies. These three commands explain how we are to love our enemies.

What does he tells us it looks like to love those who are persecuting you? State the command in your own words and then try to explain each command specifically. In other words, how would someone put these commands in to practice? Give an illustration or two of how you might put these commands into practice in your own life.

If you couldn't come up with an illustration of what it looks like to love your enemies this way, that's fine, because Jesus gives us several illustrations in verses 29 and 30. What are the four different illustrations he gives?

Can you remember how we explained the first illustration that is found in verse 29 this past Sunday? (Hint: we talked about being kicked out of the synagogue? Now can you remember?) What stands out to you from the other illustrations Jesus gives? What do you think they mean? What questions do you have about what he is saying? Is there anything you think that is difficult to understand about these illustrations? What might be some other biblical principles that we have to hold in balance with these particular exhortations?

The basic principle Jesus wants us to follow when responding to people who hate us is summarized in verse 31. What is this principle? What do you think this means? Can you state what it would look like to apply this principle when dealing with people who are opposed to you?

Pause to Consider:

Obviously, Jesus' commands are pretty radical. What a powerful testimony the church would become if we obeyed his instructions in our everyday lives. But, instead of doing what God says, we often come up with some excuses instead.

What are some of the different excuses we might give for not loving our enemies?

Take what Jesus has said so far and respond to those excuses.

Now, have someone read verses 32-35. What reasons does Jesus give here for loving our enemies?

One of the words I want you to notice and underline in your minds is found in verse 35. It is the word reward. Jesus says if you love your enemies, your reward will be great. Look now at the end of verse 23. What is a reward? What reward is he talking about?

So, let's think about this. Loving our enemies results in heavenly rewards. Actually, we can add to that, it results in *great* heavenly rewards! What is the motivation then Jesus is giving? He is saying love your enemies for great heavenly rewards!

What are some of the things that make heavenly rewards so much better than even earthly rewards?

There are many people who might look at the way Jesus says we should respond to our enemies and think it is too difficult, but how might remembering the fact that we will receive heavenly rewards change the way we think about persecution?

Summing Up:

As believers, we are called to be unique and one of the ways we are to be unique is our love for those who hate us. Fortunately, Jesus doesn't only call us to love our enemies. He also shows us how. We follow someone who died for His enemies. What are some specific encouragements you can receive from Jesus' life and death that will help you love your enemies even this week?

To Think About:

What are some of the main encouragements or challenges you have taken from what we have studied together today? Is there any specific word of praise you would like to give to God for what you have learned about Jesus today? How about questions? Do you have any thing you are still wondering from what we have talked about? What are some of the practical differences what you studied makes on your life? What would you like to share with someone else? Is there any specific issue that this study has brought up that you want the members of your gospel community to be praying for you about?

