

Becoming Disciples of Divine Love, Part 2

Luke 6:27-49

Notice how Jesus in that main body teaches us about the practice of discipleship. And then he teaches us about the goal of discipleship. That's verses 27-34, the practice of discipleship, then verses 35-38 the goal of discipleship. If we are to live and practice the love of God, it means that we truly and practically live according to the great commandment to love your neighbor as yourself. You may remember that Jesus once drew that very truth out of a very intelligent and ambitious lawyer in Luke 10:25.

The lawyer that came up to Jesus that day said, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said, "What's written in the Law? How do you read it?" And that lawyer, he was able to summarize the teaching and ethic of the entire Old Testament in just two commandments. When Jesus asked the lawyer how he read the Law, the lawyer responded with this brilliant summary, you may remember, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with

all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus affirmed him. He had answered correctly.

The practice of discipleship extends to all people, even enemy people because all human beings, people of every kind and color and political interest, they all fall under the biblical definition of neighbor. Just notice how the practicing of the love of God as a genuine disciple of Christ, it involves the cooperation here of our thoughts and our wills. It makes demands on our actions and our words. And our love continues in the private place of our prayer life as we pray for our enemies.

Look again at verses 27-28, “Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.” We are to extend love in practical ways, ways that take up our time, ways that take up our schedule, ways that spend our resources. We’re to do that to all, even to enemies, to those who hate us and curse us and abuse us because our enemies don’t always respond in righteous ways when we love them like that. When we extend the love of God for them, we learn from Jesus we’re to endure all for love. Look at verses 29 and 30, “To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also.” That is, you’re coming in to show love and what do they do? They

strike you. That's not to say we get into a fist fight, it's just, it's an insult.

So don't let that throw you back. Don't let that dissuade you. You keep pressing forward. "Offer them the other also." Keep enduring insults. "From the one who takes away your cloak, don't withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who begs from you, to one who takes away your goods, don't demand them back." I know what you're thinking, What? Don't protect myself from a beating, don't protect property, give money to able-bodied drunks on the freeway offramps?

Well, to mitigate those concerns, Jesus provides, really, a reliable guide to any genuine disciple that they can use to express love toward enemies. That's come to be known as the Golden Rule, verse 31, "As you wish that others would do to you, do so to them." That is to say, to a genuine disciple, a disciple who's regenerated by the Holy Spirit, who has a new nature with eyes to see, ears to hear, one who is pursuing holiness in the fear of God. Yeah, what that guy wishes for himself becomes a reliable guide for loving others.

What is it that true disciples wish others would do to them? I'll just answer for myself as a true disciple by God's grace. I can answer that I wish in whatever condition I'm in, I

wish others would demonstrate genuine love for me always for my ultimate good, for my growth in righteousness, to the praise of Jesus Christ and to the glory of God. Isn't that what all true disciples wish for? Absolutely, you better believe it.

So if I insult somebody, strike them on the cheek, what do I want, as a true disciple, what do I want people to do to me? Confront me, correct me. Pretty decent guide for expressing love toward others, isn't it? As we grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ, as we mature in understanding of the truth, the more we, more we practice biblical wisdom, that guide is gonna become clearer and more reliable, isn't it? We need to be aware, though, of subtle temptations to self-interest, don't we? Verses 32-34, "If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. Even sinners do good to one another. They lend to each other knowing they're going to get back what they owe," and if they don't get it, they'll sue. Right!

There's nothing other-worldly about those attitudes. There's nothing remarkable about verses 32-34, that's what Jesus is saying. He's saying, you, though, are to be remarkable like God is remarkable. Look at verse 35. This is something that mankind does not see as natural or normal among mankind. The

practice of discipleship. Verses 27-34, guides off of the divine standard set by God himself and how God reveals himself in graciousness and kindness and benevolence and mercy; for the true disciple, God himself is the goal of discipleship. Jesus reiterates what he said in verses 27 and 28, "But love you enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return." That is, don't go to law. Don't try to sue the socks off of whoever does you wrong.

The practice of discipleship is to practice the love of God, demonstrating that other-worldly love to all of neighbors, even the ones who are at enmity with us and in so doing, we're striving toward the goal of discipleship, which is to portray the heart of God, to receive the reward of God. We portray in our lives the heart of God, putting his benevolence on display. God himself is kind to the ungrateful and the merciful. And if we do the same, we demonstrate that we are sons of the Most High.

So as those who have not been judged and condemned, we are also meek to our fellow man, refusing to condemn them. We refuse to withhold forgiveness toward our fellow man. Rather, since we've been forgiven everything, we forgive everything. And we do so eagerly and quickly and summarily. We're meek people. That's

what Christians are, meek people. Meekness isn't weakness. It's strength under control. It's power, it's reigned in and rightly harnessed and directed toward good. Meekness is one of the paramount virtues of our Lord, such that when he called attention to his own virtue, which he rarely did, he didn't say, hey, look how loving I am. Hey, look how giving I am. Look how whatever I am, he, he said this, "Notice my meekness."

Matthew 11:29, "Take my yoke upon you, learn from me, for I am gentle," that is meek, "and I am lowly in heart, you'll find rest for your souls." We're generous people because we can afford to be so. We're meek people because God has been so kind to us. Our financial backing, you could say, comes from the Most High God. So don't worry about spending his resources. He's going to repay us one day far beyond what we ever gave. As they say, you can't outgive God.

Our reward from God is not just profound, it's also so abundant, eternally abundant, infinitely abundant. Verse 38, "Give and it will be given to you. Good measure," that is it's measured well, "it's pressed down," that is in the cup of grain. They measure it right; they press it down and they get more in there. They shake it together to get all the air out and get more in there. It's running and overflowing all over the cup.

"Then poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you." That's how God rewards. So you want to be skimpy on how you show love to other people, it's up to you.

The practice of love is the practice of discipleship. Our goal is to please God and to imitate him. That's what Jesus is conveying to his true disciples. So if you're a disciple of Jesus Christ, this is what you live for. If you're a disciple of Jesus Christ, this is what you're created to be and to do. You love to the fullest extent, even loving your enemies, and you do so in the face of insult and injury and opposition and loss. You love with a view of pleasing God and mimicking him to glorify God during your time on earth because it's so short. That's the essence of Christian discipleship in a nutshell. It's what Paul summarized succinctly in Ephesians 5:1-2. "Therefore be imitators of God as beloved children and walk in love." Walk in love. That's discipleship.

What do we need to do so that we benefit from Jesus' sermon? To benefit from Jesus' sermon, to put this into practice, it's absolutely vital, that listen, we follow the right teacher, that we listen to the right voice and follow the right authority. Jesus states the principle very clearly in

verse 40. "A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher." Keep that in mind. That is a principle of life. If you immerse yourself in entertainment, that's your teacher. You'll become like your teacher. If you give yourself to the pursuit of money, you're going to listen to those who teach you how to pursue and get money. You'll be like them. If you pursue self-interest, you're going to gather around those teachers, those voices who tell you how to pursue and gain that and you'll be just as self-centered and ugly as they are.

But watch who you listen to, be careful what voice you hear, be wary of following the wrong counsel. You are responsible, after all, to follow the right authority. Every single one of us is responsible. That means, first of all, we don't follow blind teachers, do we? Second of all, we don't rely on, on fellow sinners, whose spiritual vision is just as impaired as ours is and we watch our own counsel to other people, too. Take a look at verse 39. Jesus says, "Can a blind man lead a blind man? Won't they both fall into a pit?" Plenty of blind guides out there, teachers, leaders who are unregenerate, unable to see where they themselves are going. Plenty of preachers like that out there. They're going to lead you nowhere, except into a pit.



They're plenty of sinners out there whose eyes are filled with wood. Some of them have got a whole forest growing out of their eye sockets. They've got so many logs. Some have larger pieces than others. Verse 41, "Why do you see the speck that's in your brother eye, but you don't notice the log that's in your own eye. How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,' when you yourselves don't see the log that's in your own eye?" You can see the speck there, but you can't see the log there. That is called blindness. "You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, then you can see clearly to take out the speck that's in your brother's eye." That is, don't run around trying to help each other until your impaired vision has been cleared up.

How are you going to know that? How are you going to do that? Where are you going to find reliable teaching trustworthy counsel, sound spiritual help as you pursue discipleship. Next section. Follow the fruit. Look at the outcome of someone's life. "For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, each tree is known by its fruit. Figs are not gathered from thornbushes; grapes aren't picked from bramble bushes. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure

produces evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.”

Listen, you find the right authority to listen to by looking for fruit, good fruit. Good fruit, good man, listen to him. Bad fruit, bad man, don't listen to him. It's pretty simple. Where do we find the very best of men? In Jesus Christ. In Jesus Christ. So those teachers whose voice lines up with Jesus Christ, listen. If they don't line up with Jesus Christ, don't listen, turn away.

It's not enough to follow him, merely listen to his voice. It's not enough to admire him, to appreciate his teaching. You've got to do what he says. Verse 46, “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and you do not do what I tell you?” That there is the Lord challenging to any would-be disciple, any professing Christian who claims to follow Christ. Do you do what I tell you? Do you obey me? Look, there are consequences for following Christ and obeying him. Or, on the other hand, there are consequences for following Christ and not obeying him.

“Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I'll show you what he's like: he is like a man building his house who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. When a flood arose, the stream broke against that house, it could not

shake it because it had been well built.” Listen, obedience to Christ, listening to, doing what he’s commanded about expressing love to our enemies, that sets a sturdy, reliable foundation for our lives that will withstand all storms, all floods. You find yourself overcome? Check your foundation. See if you’re obeying the dictates of love. See if you’re obeying what Christ actually commanded you to do. The destructive power of water there, that’s a metaphor for judgment, even ultimate judgment. Those who hear and obey Jesus Christ, only they will survive that judgment.

There are others who build also. They follow, but they built differently. They build hastily. You could say they built lazily. And predictably, the outcome is gravely different. “The one who hears and does not do what I say is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. And when the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.” That, by the way, is not a non-religious person, that’s someone who listens to Jesus’ words. That right there, those are church people.

But get this, if you don’t obey the voice of Christ, if you don’t do what he tells you to do, is he your Lord? When judgment comes, the ruin of that is going to be cataclysmic. Why? Because

that poor person, he thought he was building a safe, reliable house just by coming to church and listening to good words, sound words. Woe to those who do not join hearing with faith and faith with works?

I just want to make a brief and, and really a convicting point and here's the reason. I want to burden your conscience with the weight of Jesus' message. Your like, thanks a lot. Listen, you need to have your conscience burdened with this, okay. It's for your good. Stand by. As we went through the overview of the sermon, I hope you sensed the gravity of what Jesus has commanded us, not just to learn it, that's actually the easy part, but actually to do it. That's the hard part. Easy to state, hard to practice.

Just go back to verse 27. Reflect on what he said there for just a moment, "Love our enemies." Love our enemies, really? I don't know about you, but I don't even love my friends very well, do you? What about the next one, Christ commands us to do good to those who hate us? That is, we're to actively and practically do good things, we're to pursue that with them, we're to bless those who curse us, as in speaking words of blessing upon those who slander and mock and scoff and curse? We're to pray for those who abuse us. Many of us find it

difficult to pray faithfully, consistently for the dearest sweetest of saints, people dedicating their lives on foreign mission fields, people devoted to the service and here people, people are suffering injury and illness. To call those people to mind and pray faithfully and consistently, that's good. And we need to continue doing that, but Christ is commanding us to devote private prayer time to loving our enemies by entreating the Lord for their sake. It's really hard to hate and be bitter against those you pray for, isn't it?

Look, I have no interest in making everyone feel bad. But I do hope your conscience feels some degree of strain from the text. I hope you see how often and how far short we all fall of consistent obedience in loving our enemies. Honestly, we have a hard time loving fellow believers. And at that, even loving them a fraction of the extent that Jesus has described for us here. We think about our marriages, how husbands treat their wives, how wives treat their husbands, how parents and children interact, how the siblings interact with each other. Bringing this text on loving and doing good and blessing and praying for others is really convicting stuff.

Then, when we extend this and we go outside the home, we realize we're rather unlike the good Samaritan. We're often

times more like busy priests and Levites, couldn't be bothered to stop and help the injured or needy human being. If we're honest with ourselves, I think we all too often get into the routines of our lives. We fail to think about our time, plan, schedules, resources, the means God wants to use to demonstrate his love and his benevolence and his mercy and his compassion to a lost and dying world. But as disciples of Christ, that's exactly what he's called and commanded us to be. That's our joy. That's our birthright.

What's so convicting is that we're often so much more interested in ourselves, especially when it comes to something so minor, something so petty, like feeling personal offenses, right, feeling slighted, feeling not respected, not preferred, not honored, not paid attention to. Personal offenses we simply will not abide in our hearts. Wicked attitude grows within like a cancer. It spreads tentacles of bitterness throughout our souls. We become so blinded to our own sin and our departure from the principle of love that we become like that guy with the log in his eye. We're running around trying to pull splinters out of everybody who's offended us, out of their eyes, while we have this log of bitterness and anger in our own.

We desperately need to hear Jesus' teaching and act on it because this is what we're called and commanded to do. And yet, the more we learn from this, the more our conscience is informed, the worse, it seems, we feel. While there may be many of us who need to stop, examine ourselves, repent, go seek forgiveness of others, I don't want to end there. Our conscience needs to feel this. We do need to feel the weight and gravity, pause, and reflect on this because if we don't do that, we're not really going to be serious about obedience and repentance.

A word of Gospel for our consolation. Gospel just means good news. So a word of good news for our consolation, our comfort, our encouragement. This is very brief, but very, very powerful. And it comes straight from the pen of the Apostle Paul. First, Romans, 5:8 tell us that "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." So all of that failure to do this consistently, obediently, all that failure, if we're in Christ, forgiven. Christ died for us. Isn't that good news? I'm so grateful. I'm so grateful that all my violations of the love of God, forgiven, paid for. I'm so thankful that all my violations of love toward other human beings, paid for. "God showed his love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." He didn't die for perfect people. There are none, except him. He died for sinful ones.

And by faith in that message we rejoice in Romans 8:1-4.

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For what God has done with the law, weakened by the flesh could not do. He sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh." All those violations of the love for God and love for our neighbor, all paid for. He condemned sin in the flesh. Why? "So that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."

Look, what we fail to do, Christ has already accomplished, having perfectly fulfilled the law of God, having perfectly loved his neighbors, both enemies and friends. What did he pray on the cross? "Father forgive them for they do not know what they're doing." Now, we're set free to follow him in faith. In fact, that is the secret of discipleship, isn't it, the secret of the Christian life. It's an open secret. It's not hidden, but it's revealed, one that we can read about in passages like Galatians 2:20 where Paul says, "I have been crucified with Christ." It means I'm dead. I'm dead to self. "It's no longer I who live, it's Christ who lives in me. The life I now live in



the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, gave himself up for me.”

Becoming disciples of divine love, following our Lord Jesus Christ, walking in love, doing what he’s commanded us to do, we will never do that in our own power. We’ll only grow as we strive in the power of the Spirit and Christ lives out that live in us. That’s how this is done. As Augustine famously said, he was praying to God, he was praying in earnest that God would help him to overcome when he had no strength, no resources in himself, to overcome sin, he said, “My whole hope is only in thy exceeding mercy. Give what thou commandest and command what thou wilt. O charity, my God, kindle me, give what thou commandest and command what thou wilt.”

That’s our prayer, too, isn’t it? We have reason to hope that God is going to grant what we ask in the name of Jesus. Why? Because he sent Jesus to do this, to demonstrate this love. He intends to glorify his Son. We know that what Jesus commands, he’s already accomplished. Where he commands us to go, he has already been. He doesn’t push us from behind. Instead, he leads us from the front, and he says, “Follow me.”

The Sermon on the Mount, as we’ve pointed out before, this is Jesus’ worldview. This is how he lived. This is, it’s not as

if we in our own strength are able to pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps and put out a greater love than we actually possess. No. We find it in him. We look to God by the Spirit to cause the perfect life of Jesus Christ, his perfect love, to live in and through in us and abide in us. That is the secret of becoming disciples of divine love. That's the secret of the Christian life. It's going to be pure joy to learn, understand and pursue obedience to this together. Amen.