

Daily Reading & Meditation

Sunday (February 24): "Do good to those who hate you"

Scripture: *Luke 6:27-38*

27 "But I say to you that 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 him who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from him who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. 30 Give to every one who begs from you; and of him who takes away your goods do not ask them again. 31 And as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them. 32 "If you love those who love you, what credit 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 credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 34 And 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. 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 selfish. 36 Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful. 37 "Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; 38 give, and it will be given to you; 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: What makes Christians different and what makes Christianity distinct from any other religion? It is *grace* - treating others, not as they deserve, but as God wishes them to be treated - with loving-kindness and mercy. God is good to the unjust as well as the just. His love embraces saint and sinner alike. God seeks our highest good and teaches us to seek the greatest good of others, even those who hate and abuse us. Our love for others, even those who are ungrateful and selfish towards us, must be marked by the same kindness and mercy which God has shown to us. It is easier to show kindness and mercy when we can expect to benefit from doing so. How much harder when we can expect nothing in return.

Give and forgive - the two wings of prayer

Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD) describes Jesus double precept to *give and forgive* as two essential wings of prayer:

"Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given you. These are the two wings of prayer on which it flies to God. Pardon the offender what has been committed, and give to the person in need" (Sermon 205.3). *"Let us graciously and fervently perform these two types of almsgiving, that is, giving and forgiving, for we in turn pray the Lord to give us things and not to repay our evil deeds"* (Sermon 206.2).

Bless and do not curse

Our prayer for those who do us ill both breaks the power of revenge and releases the power of love to do good in the face of evil. How can we possibly love those who cause us harm or ill-will? With God all things are possible. He gives power and grace to those who believe in and accept the gift of the Holy Spirit. His love conquers all, even our hurts, fears, prejudices and griefs. Only the cross of Jesus Christ can free us from the tyranny of malice, hatred, revenge, and resentment and gives us the courage to return evil with good. Such love and grace has power to heal and to save from destruction. That is why Paul the Apostle tells those who know

the love and mercy of Jesus Christ to "bless and not curse.. nor take revenge.. and to overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:14,17,21). Do you know the power of God's love, mercy, and righteousness (moral goodness) for overcoming evil with good?

Psalm 103:1-4,8-9,11-12

1 Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name!
2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits,
3 who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases,
4 who redeems your life from the Pit, who crowns you with mercy and compassion,
8 The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in mercy.
9 He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger for ever.
11 For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward those who fear him;
12 as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

Daily Quote from the early church fathers: *The virtue of charity*, by Ambrose of Milan, 339-397 A.D.

"Love is commanded when it is said, 'Love your enemies'" so that the saying which was uttered already before the church may be fulfilled: 'Set in order love in me' (Song of Solomon 2:4). For love is set in order when the precepts of love are formed. See how it began from the heights and cast the law underneath the backs of the Gospel's blessing. The law commands the revenge of punishment (see Exodus 21:23-36). The gospel bestows love for hostility, benevolence for hatred, prayer for curses, help for the persecuted, patience for the hungry and grace of reward. How much more perfect the athlete who does not feel injury!" (excerpt from *EXPOSITION OF THE GOSPEL OF LUKE 5.73*)

Meditations may be freely reprinted for non-commercial use, please cite credits: copyright (c) 2019 Servants of the Word, source: www.dailyscripture.net, author [Don Schwager](#)

OPENING PRAYER:-

"Lord Jesus, your love brings freedom and pardon. Fill me with your Holy Spirit and set my heart free with your merciful love that nothing may make me lose my temper, ruffle my peace, take away my joy, nor make me bitter towards anyone." **Amen.**

CLOSING PRAYER:- "Accident , Flood or Deliberate."

We pray for all whose lives that have been touched by tragedy, whether by accident, flood or a deliberate act. For those who mourn, immerse them in your love and lead them through this darkness into your arms, and light. For those who comfort, be in both the words they use and all that's left unspoken; fill each heart with love. We ask this through Jesus Christ, whose own suffering brought us life, here and for eternity. **Amen.**