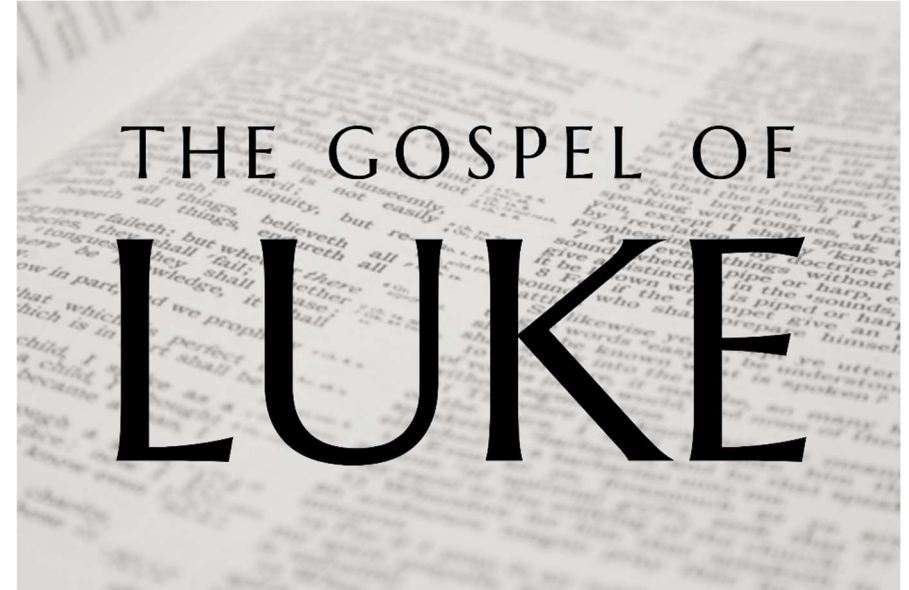


exposes us to looking; naive, weak, ridiculous, open to being taken advantage of. All those things are true in the eyes of the world, but not as Christ sees things with his eternal eye. And that is the only perspective that matters.

There is also the issue of real personal blessing should we choose to walk this road, and it has to be a considered choice; it won't just happen. Walking as Christ commands will address the inner frustration that comes from wanting to, if even gently so, get our own back on someone who is hurting or stealing from either our loved ones or us. It will also save us from investing precious hours chasing after what will often be a 'lost cause'.

Some of the best decisions in life you make will be to turn the other jaw and to give the shirt off your back, both for the other party and yourself. Believe Jesus; it is neither weak nor naive; it is being 'manly'-godly.



God tells us that Ezra read from the book of the Law,  
day after day and that the people of God  
were filled with joy!

**Friday - Luke 6:29-31 - Love requires radical action.**

V29. Jesus gives three examples of how his command to "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you," should work out in life. The first is when someone literally punches you on the jaw, slaps you on the face; it doesn't convey a sense you strongly enjoy. The command of Jesus is not to back off, but to stay engaged with the person. Stay toe to toe, not so that you are in a good position to strike back, but rather that you are within striking distance for the person to hit you again. It sounds like sheer and utter madness. What about the right to defend oneself, either by taking evasive action, i.e., walking away, or meeting like with like, 'An eye for an eye'? The issue with the 'An eye for an eye' (Exodus 21:23-25, Leviticus:19-21) approach is that it relates to the considered ruling of civil authority, and not the potential enraged act of an individual. So, since Jesus is addressing the believer's response to the violence experienced in a non-war, everyday, personal situation, 'an eye for an eye' doesn't apply.

Jesus' point is simple; show that you love your enemy by responding in a way that will call them to question their behaviour. Note, though, the motivation for doing so is entirely different from the world's 'forgive your enemies because nothing will infuriate them more'. Doing as Jesus commands is not to infuriate the person; it is to confront them with the futility and hopelessness of their life before God. This is not an expression of a love that is aimless, nor naive. The love Jesus is talking about is intelligent; it understands life and what is essential to it. It is a purposeful love, a love motivated and directed towards seeing real change in the lives of others. Our Christianity is frequently too weak, too insipid. It lacks the grace-given grit of being different, due to a lack of clarity in our thinking about the eternalness of life.

V29. The second example Jesus gives is about giving the person who takes your cloak, your tunic as well. What was the tunic? The cloak was the outer full-length body robe; the tunic was the inner garment. The point is, if they take your jacket or sweater, give them the shirt off your back. The reason for doing so is again to call the person to consider their life without God.

What is the probability of it being effective? Apart from the grace of God immediately laying hold of their lives, probably 0%. But that's not the point; the point is our obedience to Christ. Our response is a clear indicator of how much we are trusting God, and living by faith and not by sight. Yes, this

#### Thursday - Luke 6:27-28 - Jesus gives a beautiful command.

V27. "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you." Probably one of the best-known statements and most often quoted statements of Jesus. But what does it mean? Well, it is helpful to consider the word 'Love' used here. Jesus was not asking for '*storge*', that of natural affection, nor for '*eros*', romantic love, nor for '*philia*', the love of friendship. He is speaking of '*agape*', love that is marked by intelligent comprehension, and corresponding purpose towards those who do nothing to merit or elicit it.

Jesus accepts that there is a willingness among his hearers to love their neighbours. That's not the issue; what Jesus is concerned about is loving one's enemies. He goes on to speak of blessing those who curse us and praying for those who abuse us. This is truly radical, it is incredible, it is shocking. It is an approach that can only be considered by those who are new creatures in Christ. Note, and this is important, the verbs used demand a lifelong response. This is not about a one-time response to a particular situation. Hating, cursing, and abuse are lifelong experiences, and this love must meet them daily wherever they are. There are no caveats. So, what is the purpose, the goal? The perpetrator's salvation, freedom from their bondage to sin. The command is given so that the perpetrator might be drawn by love to consider their anger and bitterness. The command of Jesus is simple and clear - we are to love those who would seek to do us harm out of a desire to see them changed by His grace.

Where can we find motivation for taking such an incredible approach? Verse 36 of this chapter gives us the answer. "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful." In other words, do to others what God has already done for you, that is loving you when you hated Him, loving you when you cursed Him, loving you when you abused Him and His gifts to you. As John writes in 1 John 3:1, "See what kind of love (literally what manner of love, love from another place) the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so, we are." And what did that love produce? "In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." 1 John 4:9-11. Now there is radical action born of love.

#### Monday - Read Luke 6:24-26 – Jesus brings bad news.

No one likes to hear bad news. You don't wake up in the morning thinking; 'I hope the phone rings and it'll be someone wanting to share something terrible with me.' Yet, bad news is a real part of life and it is because of the consequences of sin upon creation, including our lives. What's remarkable is that the bad news which Jesus shares here is about things which the majority of people would consider as being the best things in life.

The word 'woe' is not simply a statement that something bad might possibly happen. It is a statement of the Lord's judgement, and it is a present, not future, judgement; Jesus is declaring a judgement that is being rendered now. And it is a judgement that has terrible ramifications.

V24. The first woe is declared upon whom? The rich. But who are the rich that Jesus is speaking to? They are people who think they have everything they need in life, and therefore don't need God. It does relate to financial wealth, but it includes more than that. It's addressed to anyone who thinks that they can live their life without God. No matter what they experience, their lives are ultimately about themselves, and any mention of God is met with either silent or vocal hostility. Consequently, they have absolutely no awareness of their sin. Yes, they may be genuinely miserable at times because of the impact of their sinful thoughts and activities on them, but their pride will not allow them to cry out to God for His mercy and grace. The riches of these 'rich' is anything in which their soul trusts, and a big part of their satisfaction in life is derived from thinking and living as though they can do life without God.

Jesus refers to the consolation that such people have received. What is this consolation? It is that they have received from God all they are going to get in this life and in the next. God has made the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, He has sent the rain on the just and on the unjust, Matthew 5:45. Life as they know it, now under God's common grace to all men, is a wonderful gift, and is all they will ever have to enjoy. The Kingdom of Heaven will not be theirs to experience, not for even an hour, let alone eternity.

## Tuesday - Luke 6:24-26 – Jesus brings more bad news.

V25 In the next 'woe', Jesus addresses it to those whom he says are 'full'. But who are these 'full' people? Well, they are the same people as the 'rich', but here there is an emphasis on how they view what they have. As far as they are concerned, they have all they need, they are full and have absolutely no need of God in their lives, and certainly no craving for His righteousness in their lives. These are the ordinary gentle, kind, decent people, who live all around us, some in our families. Regardless of how 'full' their lives are, they are so dissatisfied with their constant search for more wealth, experiences, purpose, ease, etc., that they will not seek Christ. They just will not have Him to be their Saviour and Lord.

Who are those who laugh? They are the people who seek to meet God's desire in their lives with the pleasures of this life. They are advocates of the approach that says, 'eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die'. They think it is funny to laugh at the truth that the Lord Jesus Christ rules over all, and even funnier that a day of judgement awaits everyone. But, we must remember that while the air waves and social media platforms may be filled with their frivolity, mockery and general disdain for God and His Glory, there is coming a day when their laughing will come to an unannounced and shatteringly abrupt end. And it will not only end, it will be replaced with incredible mourning and uncontrollable weeping, and not just for a season or a lifetime, but for eternity. It is almost too devastating to contemplate.

V26. Why would all men speak well of a person? What would give them cause to do so? For if all men speak well of someone, then that person needs to be something of a chameleon. The type of person who, without a thought, can change 'colour', i.e., their attitude, principles, or decisions, to either accommodate or fit in with others. The false prophets in the Old Testament were highly gifted in this deceitful art. 'Give the people what they want and keep your job' was the adage. It is too cheap a shot to say that politicians are the modern equivalent, although it is true for many of them, but the reality is that all who stand apart from Christ are marked by this tendency. They are united by the soul's longing to be well spoken of by others. It is integral to the pride of the human heart. What is their end? It is like the rest, 'Woe', literally, 'how terrible'.

## Wednesday - Luke 6:27-28 – The importance of listening.

V27. There were a lot of people listening to what Jesus is saying, remember v17b, "a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people". But Jesus knows that many of them aren't engaging mentally and in their hearts with what is being said. It is remarkable, given the authority of Jesus' teaching, that these people could have stood and listened to him, but not engaged. And this wasn't a one-off occurrence, it was a regular feature as we shall see in our study of this gospel. So, it shouldn't surprise us that the same is true today when God's Word is preached. Godly men and women can sit and listen to the preaching of God's Word, week in and week out, and then a few months later, when a crisis hits their lives, it is as though they have never been in the House of Mercy. It seems as though they treat the hearing of God's Word preached as a transitory, fleeting experience, rather than the grace-filled, faith-building reality that it is meant to be.

It is something we probably all need to give some thought and attention to. I think we need to be much more proactive in training ourselves to consciously listen to what we are hearing. Many elements go into the conscientious hearing of God's Word. For example: preparation by getting a good night's sleep on a Saturday night. The active humbling of one's heart on a Lord's Day morning. The active participation in all the elements of worship, including the singing of praise, and the engagements in praying. If you find that you are easily distracted, or drifting in and out of worship prior to the sermon, then you will find it difficult to settle and hear that Word when it is preached. And when it comes to the sermon, you have to speak to yourself and school your mind to pay active attention to what is being declared.

These are all necessary and beneficial steps that, if followed, will undoubtedly bear fruit, but beyond these you must, consciously ask the Holy Spirit for His help to listen. David asks God to open his eyes that he may behold wondrous things out of his law, Psalm 119:18. Finally, listening to sermons again is also beneficial and can be done via [sermonaudio.com](http://sermonaudio.com).

Ultimately, it is sobering to think that "Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more." Luke 12:48.