

# Inheriting the kingdom (pt.2)

## a. Love your enemies – that ‘extra mile’ of mercy (6:27-36)

**6:27,28** In view of vv.22,23,26, how are these hard sayings for those who cherish ‘religious freedom’?

[1] [6:27] This is the first time Luke uses the word *agapan* which sums up the whole spirit of the Gospel ... **A. Plummer** Luke p. 184

[2] Jesus’ words on the love of one’s enemies in this sermon have to be understood against the background of an ancient view of enmity. One finds forms of it as early as Hesiod in the Greek world [*Works and Days*, 8<sup>th</sup> cent. BC?], Pindar (*Pythian Odes* 2.83-84), and its best formulation in Lysias: “I considered it established that one should do harm to one’s enemies and be of service to one’s friends” (*Pro milite* 20). Yet even in the Greek world a different view gradually emerged, when Pericles urged overcoming enemies by generosity and virtue (Thucydides 4.19,1-4). Especially among the Stoics and Pythagoreans was such conduct advocated: “so to behave ... as not to make friends into enemies, but to turn enemies into friends” (Diogenes Laertius 8.1,23). Jewish writers, influenced by such Greek philosophy, express similar ideas (see *T. Benjamin* 4.3; *T. Joseph* 18.2). The difference in Jesus’ words, which are usually admitted to be authentic, is that they are cast in the form of a command. He tells his followers that they are to manifest the ultimate form of openness and concern toward those who are their enemies. **Joseph A. Fitzmyer** *The Gospel According to Luke* Vol.1 p.637

**6:29,30** How can the believer find ‘peace & security’ in these sayings? (Jer.6:10-16; 1 Thess.5:1-3)

[3] [6:29] The *cheek* is *siagon*, which is rather the jaw. Jesus is speaking of a punch to the side of the jaw rather than a light slap in the face. The natural reaction to such a blow is to strike back hard. Jesus enjoins His follower to

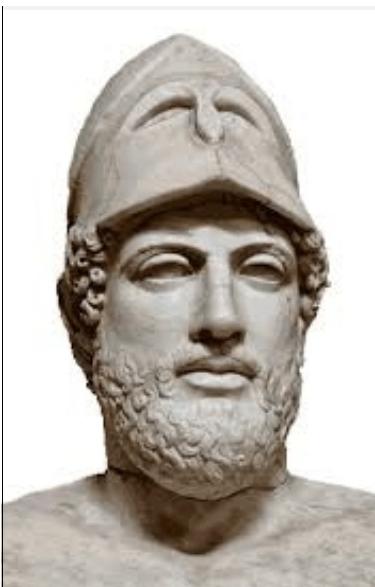
offer the other side of the jaw. He is speaking about an attitude. When we receive an injury we must not seek revenge, but be ready if need be to accept another such injury. **Leon Morris** Luke p. 129

[4] [6:29,30] ... resistance of evil and refusal to part with our property must never be a *personal* matter: so far as we are concerned we must be willing to suffer still more and to surrender still more. It is right to withstand and even to punish those who injure us: but in order to correct them and protect society; not because of any personal *animus*. It is right also to withhold our possessions from those who without good reason ask for them; but in order to check idleness and effrontery; not because we are too fond of our possessions to part with them. **Alfred Plummer** Luke p. 185

[5] [6:29,30] The natural heart thinks it does a great deal when it respects a neighbor’s rights; it does not rise to the higher idea of sacrificing its own. Jesus here describes a charity which seems to ignore its own rights, and knows no bounds to its self-sacrifice. **Frederic Godet** Luke p. 206

[6] [6:29,30] He would have us concede much, submit to much, and put up with much, rather than cause strife. He would have us endure much inconvenience and loss, and even sacrifice some of our just rights, rather than have any contention. It is the same lesson that St. Paul enforces in other words: “If it be possible, as much as it lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.” “Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord” “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” Rom. 12:18-21. **J.C. Ryle** Luke p. 187

[7] [6:27-38] Never was there a greater mistake than to suppose that vital Christianity interferes with human happiness. It is not having too much religion, but too little, that makes people gloomy, wretched, and miserable. Wherever Christ is best known and obeyed, there will always be found most real joy



**Pericles**

(495-429 bc)

Great Greek general and greatest political visionary – even Pericles could see that the best way to overcome enemies is by virtue and generosity!

## Legalism vs. Love – ‘the supreme law of the new society’

[10] [6:27-45] *The New Law*. ... Jesus proclaims the supreme law of the new society ... “Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.” The law, in the greater number of its statutes, seemed at first sight only to require outward observance. But it is evident to every true heart, that by these commandments the God of holiness desired to lead His worshippers, not to hypocritical formalism, but to spiritual obedience. The tenth commandment made this very clear, as far

as respected the decalogue. Israelitish teaching should have labored to explain the law in this truly moral sense, and to have carried the people up from the letter to the spirit, as the prophets had endeavored to do. Instead of that, Pharisaism had taken pleasure in multiplying indefinitely legal observances, and in regulating them with the minutest exactness, urging the letter of the precept to such a degree as sometimes even to make it contradict its spirit. It had stifled morality under legalism. **Frederic Godet** Luke p. 203

and peace. **J.C. Ryle** *Luke* p. 186

### **6:31-36 Contrast the 'love' of the world and the agape of Scripture (2 Cor.5:14,15; 1 John 3:16-24)**

**[8]** [6:31] This principle covers all of life. If a man lives by it he needs little else as his guide. In its negative form the rule is pre-Christian. The great Hillel, for example, said to an inquirer, 'What is hateful to you, do not to your neighbour: that is the whole Torah, while the rest is the commentary thereof' (*Shabbath* 31a). The negative form is found also in the *Epistle of Aristeas* 207 and similar teaching is given by a variety of sages in many cultures. But significantly Jesus gives the rule in the positive form, which nobody else seems to have done. It is not enough for Him that His followers refrain from acts they would not like done to them. They must be active in well-doing. **Leon Morris** *Luke* p. 130

**[9]** The heart of this sermon is the need for love. Jesus stresses that His followers must love the unloved as well as those that appeal to them. There were several words for love in Greek. Jesus

was not asking for *storge*, natural affection, nor for *eros*, romantic love, nor for *philia*, the love of friendship. He was speaking of *agape*, which means love even of the unworthy, love which is not drawn out by merit in the beloved but which proceeds from the fact that the lover chooses to be a loving person. **L. Morris** *Luke* p. 128

**[11]** I observe in conclusion that [eros and its cognates] never occur in the N.T. ... Their absence is significant. It is in part no doubt to be explained from the fact that, by the corrupt use of the world, they had become so steeped in sensual passion, carried such an atmosphere of unholiness about them ... that the truth of God abstained from the defiling contact with them; yea, devised a new word rather than betake itself to one of these. For it should not be forgotten that [agapé] is a word born within the bosom of revealed religion: it occurs in the Septuagint (2 Sam. 13:15; Cant. 2:4; Jer. 2:2), and in the Apocrypha (Wisd. 3:9); but there is no trace of it in any heathen writer whatever, and as little in Philo or Josephus ... **Richard C. Trench** *Synonyms of the New Testament* p. 43

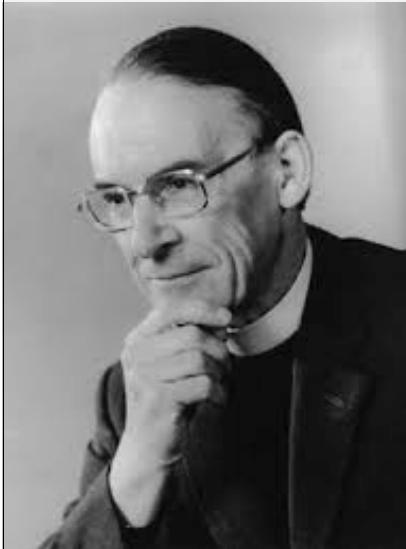
## **b. The Lord's humour: splinters, planks & blind 'seers'!! (6:37-42)**

### **6:37,38 Find the connection between judging & condemning, giving & forgiving**

**[12]** [6:37] it is the man with the forgiving attitude who is forgiven. This is not salvation by merit: rather the thought is that the true disciple is not judgmental. When God accepts a man God's grace changes him. A forgiving spirit is evidence that the man has been forgiven. **Leon Morris** *Luke* p. 132

**[13]** [6:27-38] The general meaning of these words appears to be, that no man shall ever be a loser, in the long run, by deeds of self-denying charity, and patient long-suffering love. At times he may seem to get nothing by his conduct. He may appear to reap nothing but ridicule, contempt, and injury. His kindness may sometimes tempt men to impose on him. His patience and forbearance may be abused. But at the last he will always be found a gainer, often very often, a gainer in this life: certainly, most certainly, a gainer in the life to come. **J. C. Ryle** *Luke* p. 185

**[14]** [6:27-38] To those who believe in standing up for their individual or national rights this teaching has always seemed idealistic, if not actually immoral. But those who are concerned with the victory of the kingdom of God over the kingdom of Satan can see that it is the only realism. He who retaliates thinks that he is manfully resisting aggression; in fact, he is making an unconditional surrender to evil. Where before there was one under the control of evil, now there are two. Evil propagates by



**G. B. Caird**

(1917-1984)

"He who retaliates thinks that he is manfully resisting aggression; in fact, he is making an unconditional surrender to evil. Where before there was one under the control of evil, now there are two. Evil propagates by contagion."

contagion. It can be contained and defeated only when hatred, insult, and injury are absorbed and neutralized by love. **G. B. Caird** *Saint Luke* p.104

### **6:39-42 When is a believer blind? When he fails to see that the first purpose of 'spiritual eyes', indeed the very purpose of light itself – after the 'vision of God' – is that we should see OURSELVES as we really are!**

**[15]** [6:41] "Fix thy mind upon." It expresses prolonged attention and observation. Careful consideration of one's own faults must precede attention to those of others. **A. Plummer** *Luke* p. 191

**[16]** [6:41,42] ... Jesus is quite ready to make His point in humorous vein. We are so often impressed with the solemnity of the issues involved in much of His teaching that we forget that Jesus had a sense of humour. Here He chooses to use the method of burlesque, He pictures the hypocrite with a great log sticking out of his eye while he solicitously tries to remove a speck from his brother's eye. But the humorous illustration should not blind us to the seriousness of the lesson it teaches. The slight imperfection in other people is often more apparent to us than the large one in ourselves. Jesus is exhorting to rigid self-examination before we engage in judgment. **L. Morris** *Luke* p. 133

## **c. Trees & houses, roots, fruits & foundations (6:43-49)**

### **6:43-45 Where will the 'good man' keep & guard his treasure? Of what will that treasure consist?**

(Matt.7:15-20)

**[17]** My son, give attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; keep them in the

midst of your heart; for they are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh. Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life. - Prov.4:20-23

**6:46-49 Which does the Lord rate higher –  
orthodoxy or orthopraxy? (Matt.7:24-27; James 1:21-  
27, 2:14-26)**

**[18]** [6:46-49] Open sin, and avowed unbelief, no doubt slay their thousands. But profession without practice slays its tens of thousands. **J.C. Ryle** *Luke* p. 195

## Edersheim, Morgan on ‘parallels’ to the sermon on the mount

**[19]** The infinite contrast, just set forth, between the Kingdom as presented by the Christ and Jewish contemporary teaching is the more striking, that it was expressed in a form, and clothed in words with which all His hearers were familiar; indeed, in modes of expression current at the time. It is this which has misled so many in their quotations of Rabbinic parallels to the ‘Sermon on the Mount.’ They perceive outward similarity, and they straightway set it down to identity of spirit, not understanding that often those things are most unlike in the spirit of them, which are most like in their form. No part of the New Testament has had a larger array of Rabbinic parallels adduced than the ‘Sermon on the Mount;’ and this, as we might expect, because, in teaching

addressed to His contemporaries, Jesus would naturally use the forms with which they were familiar. **Alfred Edersheim** *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* Vol. 1 p.531

**[20]** He loved His enemies. He did good to them that hated Him. He blessed them that cursed Him. He prayed for those that spitefully used Him. When they smote Him on the cheek, He turned the other. When they tore away His coat and gambled for it, He made no protest. The Master is the Revelation and the Interpretation of His own law. I cannot live there, save in the measure in which my life is His life, interpreted to me, realized within me, manifested through me, by the ministry of the Holy Spirit. **G. Campbell Morgan** *Luke* p. 92