

Luke 6:27-38

Yes, Even Them!

Love Your Enemies

(Matt 5:38-48)

Good morning and Happy New Year!

It is wonderful to be here with you all this morning.

Before we get into it, I want to remind you this Wednesday our Elder John Toomey will be giving a State of the Ministry message...

There are some exciting things that God is doing here, and we want you all to be informed about them.

There is a new Elder, and a new Spanish Pastor, and we are supporting a couple new missionaries, God has provided for a couple projects, all of that will be discussed.

So if you are a member here, or your visiting and want to get to know and understand the happenings, please plan on coming out this Wednesday.

So this morning, we are going to finish the year in a very important part of God's Word.

We will be in Luke chapter 6 verses 27-38 this morning.

Let's pray...

I want to start off, by asking you a question this morning.

Who do you hate?

“What do you mean Pastor, I am a Christian, I hate no one!”

No, be honest with yourself this morning...

Who in your life is the worst possible person to be around?

Who do you despise the most, who has hurt you the deepest?

Who has betrayed you or stabbed you in the back...

Maybe your mother abandoned you as a child, and still to this day lives recklessly, and you just have so much pain and animosity in your heart toward her.

Maybe your father was abusive and mean, and when you left that tyrants house you never looked back.

Maybe an ex-husband who has moved on, or an ex-wife who you believe only exist to make your life a living hell.

Maybe your best friend cheated you out of a lot of money, and you are still paying for their offense.

Maybe you have an unrelenting boss, who threatens you daily, and constantly bullies you, and asserts his power over your life.

Maybe in your school there is a person who treats you like trash, and has lied and gossiped about you.

Maybe when I asked you, “Who do you hate?”

You think of terrorists in a distant land, who worship another god.

Maybe you hate Russians, because obviously, as the media tells us every day they are trying to take over the entire world?

Maybe you hate illegal immigrants, maybe you hate police officers?

Maybe you have a prejudice toward another race, or you hate people with a certain skin color?

Maybe you don't like people who receive welfare, maybe you despise the rich!

Maybe as your life on social media is played out, you have developed a hatred toward those of a different political party or who champion causes you despise?

And you just dislike everything about them.

In all of us there is someone or someones, who hold the chief place of our animosity and bitterness.

Now this morning, allow your heart to be real, open and honest, and search your inner self, and when you find that person or persons, please understand our title this morning, in the context of them.

Our title this morning is "Yes, Even Them!"

This morning Jesus will give a teaching that this world has never heard of prior to His coming.

And when you hold that enemy of yours up to the light of all that Jesus is saying this morning, you, like me, will see the instruction is too much, this teaching is in fact, I am willing to say it is impossible in ourselves.

What Jesus will ask of us, this morning will be abrasive and if you are an unbeliever this morning, it will be unimaginable and even out of reach.

But to those who call themselves Christians, if anyone is willing this morning to be penetrated by the truth of what Jesus says here, it will be life changing and if you can accept what Jesus says, you will unlock one of this life's greatest secrets to living the blessed and abundant life.

So let's remember the setting, Jesus is on a plain, He has just chosen the Twelve Apostles, and He has gathered His many disciples to Himself for a special instruction.

Jesus will now lay out the principles that will set His followers apart from the rest of the world.

Last time we were together in Luke, Jesus rocked this crowd of disciples by telling them, though they will be poor, hungry, weeping, and rejected, they will be blessed.

Jesus began His teaching by pointing their hearts toward heaven, and living their lives for the reward there and not for the instant pleasures of this world.

He flipped this world's philosophies, and the prevailing understandings upside down.

And in His Kingdom, according to this world's standard, it might seem like at times we are losing, but in fact we are gaining blessing.

Now, this morning in Luke 6, now in verses 27-31 He shakes them up even more...

And His teaching intensifies greatly...

To those who call themselves followers of Christ, He says...

6:27 "But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you. 29 To him who strikes you on the one cheek, offer the other also. And from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold your tunic either. 30 Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him who takes away your goods do not ask them back. 31 And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise.

Jesus' piercing eyes here looking directly at His followers, Jesus gives them a New Ethic to live by.

So often, we look at this world, and shake our heads in disgust and disapproval.

Christians sometimes forget that we are called to the highest standard in this world.

We need to be careful in thinking that we are standing well, we need to take heed lest we fall.

When we read the standard for those awakened to God's Truth, it is a Great Calling, and impossible, and even an unnatural calling in ourselves.

Now, Jesus shocks His immediately listeners here, and all who would read these words in the centuries to come.

Let us first consider His first disciples those immediate ears taking in this New Ethic.

They were in their own country occupied by a ruthless enemy.

They were raised in a culture with a strong nationalistic upbringing.

If they had a pledge of allegiance, they probably would recite it every morning before school.

Patriotism ran through their veins, and was bred into them since a young age.

They were taught that these invaders should be rejected and even heroically defied at all costs if need be.

The Jews were so defiant to Rome, that in their years of struggle they at least were given some freedom to keep their national identity and their Jewish religion.

There were many heroes in their history who were celebrated and inspiring, who have gone before them,

from King David, to Queen Esther, even some from years just prior Jesus' day, the Maccabees whose efforts gave the current Jews the special freedoms they enjoyed.

These heroes had given so much to Jewish history, many even gave their own lives in battle to maintain this national identity.

They had holidays and festivals to remember these times.

These loyal people loved their country and way of life.

They **hated** their oppressors, the more powerful Romans; they hated them with a deep hatred, because Rome was a constant threat to their way of life as Jews.

As long as the Roman legions were in their land, they would never be completely free.

I don't think the disciples and crowds that day rejoiced at the words of Jesus, many of these people were hoping within, that Jesus was the Deliverer promised to them in their scriptures.

They were hoping for a King to lead troops into battle, and to fight for independence and do away with these Gentile invaders.

The hatred between Jew and Gentile went deep, and understand these followers of Jesus would be cut through with these words.

Jesus says, “Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you.”

There is no doubt those Roman Oppressors were first to come to mind in those listener’s minds that day.

Jesus instead of starting an energetic rebellion, and using that hatred marinating in the hearts of His countrymen, He stops it in its tracks, by even declaring, those Roman soldiers who strike you on the cheek for no good reason, do not retaliate in anger, instead put anger away, and offer the other cheek.

To those Roman abusers, who have no just cause to take your cloak, offer them your tunic as well.

This would have been so difficult for these people to hear.

Jesus might be considered disloyal, a traitor, or even an outright coward for saying these things.

Jesus, raises the bar so high, and says... “Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him who takes your away your goods do not ask them back.”

I can feel the hopelessness in the crowd of disciples that day.

How was there any justice in what Jesus is saying here?

How is this fair? How is this right?

Are Jesus’ followers to take this teaching completely literally?

Well, I agree with Lean Morris when he says... “If Christians took this absolutely literally there would soon be a class of saintly *beggars*, owning nothing, and another set of prosperous idlers and thieves.”

We must understand the spirit of what Jesus is declaring here.

You see, what Jesus is asking of His followers is not cowardly at all, but would require courage like never seen before in the world.

Understand He is dealing with the Christian’s heart, He is dealing with our motives, we are not to live our lives on earth for our own selfish gain, to gain justice for ourselves.

We are to love abundantly, when we read Jesus’ words, to love our enemies, we can first consider the crowd He was teaching, but then we must look to our own hearts.

Now once again our English Language betrays us here in regards to this word love.

Understand in God’s Word, and the Greek Language the New Testament was written in, there are many different types of love.

For us today, I can say, “I love steak!” and I do. But it is not the same as when I say, “I love my wife and kids.”

No, no those are two different loves.

When Jesus uses the word love here, the love for our enemies, He is using the word *Agape*, a love not motivated by the merit of the object of my love.

This is not the Greek *Storge*, or natural affection, or *Eros*, erotic or romantic love, this is not *Philia*, the love for our friends.

This Love Jesus is describing here, is the deepest type of love, it supersedes our emotions, it is intentional, and it is hard work.

It is a love that we choose to bestow upon others, and our feelings have little to do with it.

Jesus is teaching something so radical here, His listeners would be astonished.

It is easier to love our neighbor, friend, our families, but to love those who are hurting you, now that is something no other philosopher before Jesus even touched.

The Jewish Law, taught an eye for an eye, *lex talionis*, the law of retribution, and when it was introduced to humanity, it was radical, because man's nature is when you take my eye, I want to take both your eyes.

But the Hebrew Law, put limits on retaliation, and it was just and fair.

It would bring some sanity and stability to our society if our Justice System would go back to this idea of *lex*

talionis, a law of fair retribution, it would restore fairness to our sue happy culture.

But as radical as the Mosaic Law was, Jesus has just went far beyond it in His command.

He is demanding the loving, Agape attitude that is not vengeful but is instead generous and giving.

Now, in regards to our possessions it is a matter of our attitude that is of utmost importance.

Love for our possessions should never be our motivation in life, we should not live to protect our stuff at all costs, that is no life at all.

Love must be ready to lay down one's life for the sake of others.

Love must decide when to give and when to withhold our possessions.

Love must be the motivating factor.

And our love is to be poured out on those who might not even acknowledge that love.

The love Jesus is describing is an action, it is deliberate, it is purposeful.

Now look at verse 31 again... This is what we call the Golden Rule...

31 And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise.

Now many philosophers and even great Jewish rabbi's expressed similar principles.

I read this to our youth group not too long ago, and they accredited Muhammad with the saying, because that is what they were taught in their school.

But the difference from Jesus' command here and from the other philosopher's in this world is great, the others always put it in the negative form.

The popular Jewish Rabbi Hillel explained it this way, "What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor."

The great Chinese teacher Confucius said, "Do nothing to your neighbor which afterward you would not have your neighbor do to you."

Muhammad had some similar sayings, but Jesus' teaching puts it in the positive.

We are to **DO** to others, as we want others to **DO** to us.

This is not withholding, but living our lives with open hands for them.

We are to do, to show Charity or Agape Love toward our fellow man.

Of course the Old Testament Law, prepared humanity for this New Law, when it said in **Lev 19:18 You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.**

Again, an intentional Love, an action, and Jesus goes beyond our neighbor here, and describes that this love is to be given to our enemy.

Now, let us remember that person or persons you brought to mind in our introduction, yes, Jesus even means them.

Church this is the separating factor from all other beliefs and philosophies in this world.

We are to be a people that is motivated by our love for our fellow man.

The Golden Rule is a principle that governs every area of our lives.

A Christian committed to living out this in their life, does not need much else to guide his or her heart and mind.

We must be active in our charity and love toward others, as much as we would like done to ourselves.

Now this Rule of life can even be difficult to live out for those who we love and love us back.

But Jesus is going to push His shocked crowd even further now, and he says in verses 32-34...

32 "But 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 back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back.

Understand Jesus is saying there is no credit for natural reciprocal love.

Even the sinners, the unbeliever, the anti-Christian can do that.

You know when I was brought into my wife's family's world, her father being an 1%, in a biker club.

One of the things I used to marvel about, and still today it stands out to me.

The loyalty their gang had to the brotherhood far surpassed even what pseudo-unity I saw in my own upbringing in the church.

In fact, one of the reasons I left the church as a young man, was the viciousness I witnessed between church members, and the attacks that came upon on our family.

The church today can divide over who set up decorations, or carpet color, or worship style, over such little issues that metastasized into something greater than the love and unity, we are called to have one for another.

Yet these outlaws were willing to lay down their lives for each other without any second thought.

They were loyal to the other brothers wearing their same black colors.

They would embrace when they saw each other, they would tell each other “I love you brother.”

They had such a deep reciprocal love for each other.

And you know, this belonging is the draw for many of these men.

My father-in-law came back from Vietnam and was spit on, he was rejected by a country that he sacrificed so much for, and this brotherhood of bikers took him in with many others who were rejected by their countrymen.

But you see as attractive as their love and loyalty seemed to be toward each other, there was a limit to their love.

Understand, if someone crossed them wearing a color of a different gang, their fierce loyalty turned into a dangerous rage toward their enemy.

There was a line, a limit to their love and loyalty.

And in this world, this reciprocal love is only limited to those who love us back, and share our same ideology.

Jesus says there is no reward in this kind of love, even the sinners know how to do good to those who love them back.

A sinner can even lend money with the understanding they can get something back.

These safe loans are practiced even among the heathen.

It is not as difficult to do good to those who will return the good to you.

Jesus is challenging His captivated audience here, that they must rise above the self-centered ethics of this world, this is a New Level, a Higher Plain that Jesus is bringing His followers too.

True Followers of Jesus are called to a sacrificial love, a love that gives out, especially when nothing is expected back.

Jesus, must see the confusion or the shocked expressions, and the whispers starting to go back and forth in the crowd.

Because He strengthens this teaching, and He makes sure it there is no misunderstandings of what He is saying, by reinforcing His Words with repetition...

Verse 35...

35 But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. 36 Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

As Jesus reinforces His New Ethic, the people would understand the severity of it all.

It is not natural to love our enemy, and if you consider the crowd Jesus is teaching here, many of them were poor.

So it would even be more offensive to hear do good, lend hoping for nothing in return.

But Jesus shows them the reason for it all, and even gives them the motivating factor, their reward will be great, and they will be Sons of the Most High.

Notice, it was not their father Abraham that made them sons and daughters of God, but their Agape Love lived out.

Jesus made His own Sonship known by this statement... **John 8:29 And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him."**

Jesus explained the evidence of His relationship with God the Father is His obedience to God the Father.

It was His likeness to His Father that He used as evidence to this eternal relationship...

John 5:19 "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.

And here in Jesus' Sermon on the Plain, He explains that the evidence of a true disciple, a true son, will be the resemblance that he has in his life toward the Father as well.

1 John 2:6 He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

Jesus was the full manifestation of God in the Flesh, He set forth the example of Love we are to live, and we are to walk in His example.

And in this we know the Love of God.

Jesus said of this wonderful relationship, **John 14:21**
21 He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

Now, it is the not loving of our enemies that gains us our salvation, but this love Jesus is describing here is the by-product of a genuine relationship with God.

Jesus tells this crowd of poor peasants to be so detached from their little possessions here on earth, to hold the human soul higher than their stuff, and too look to their reward in heaven.

Church this is radical, how much of our life and worth is bound up in our possessions.

Some of us frantically store up, save up, and hold up all for ourselves as if we are taking it with us into the next life.

Jesus says to live generous, to live to give.

This is the secret to a happy life, how many miserable nights have you stayed up, just worrying about how you are going to get more money to pay for more things in your life.

You are stressed, bogged down, maybe even medicated because of this unnecessary pressure to gain more.

Jesus says the secret to happiness is to give.

Sofia, my 6 year old this Christmas had a huge awakening in her spirit.

She was blessed by the Grandmas, we asked that they each get something little, and only one thing, and both Grandmas arrogantly defied our requests, and just blessed the kids with tons of presents.

Jess and I stuck to our guns, and we got one thing they needed, one thing they wanted, and a something to learn with.

Well Jess stuck to her guns, but dad ended up breaking the rules a little and got them some extra stuff.

But after the Christmas morning mayhem was all done, our kids were up at 4:30 that morning ready to open their blessings, but when was all done, the kids they had way too much, and there were presents all over the place.

And they didn't even know where to begin to play.

But this year, at Sofia's school, they had a little gift shop, where the kids could just go and shop for their family members.

Sofia had \$20 to get something for each of her sisters, her brother, and Jess and I, and even her grandparents.

I remember explaining to Sofia, that her money was only for buying for other people, she was not shopping for herself.

And she looked a little bummed, because there was stuff in that store she wanted for herself.

But she came home with only presents for her family, she got nothing for herself, which to me was a great test for a six year old.

So after the fluster of Christmas morning, Sofia remembered she had gifts to give us.

She excitedly ran to get them, and the school even wrapped them for her.

And Sofia gave her gifts to us, and it was so touching, as I saw her little heart swell up with joy as she watched us open them.

Jess and I were moved to almost tears.

She got me this neckless, you might think it's dorky, but I am never taking it off.

But the greatest part of it all, Sofia comes over after a little bit, she has been thinking and pondering our morning, and all of her gifts.

She taps me on the shoulder, and she looks at me bewildered a little, as if she does not understand

exactly why she feels the way she does, and she says, "Daddy, I think I like giving presents more than I liked opening them."

I was floored, and I just walked through that open door of opportunity, and got to explain to her that is the secret to a happy Christian life, that is what Jesus taught us over and over again,

The Apostle Paul quotes Jesus in **Acts 20:35**

'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

This is the secret to an abundantly blessed Christian experience here on earth.

And Jesus here in Luke tells us believers to lend, to give and expect nothing in return.

You know this lending money business has ruined so many relationships.

I will be open with you, when ever I lend money, I notice my heart becomes so ugly and selfish.

I turn into Ebenezer Scrooge, and I become a shrewd scoundrel when it comes to my money.

And because of this ugliness, every time it creeps up in my heart, without fail this is the verse Jesus pops into my heart.

I don't know about you, but the Word of God is sometimes so confrontational to the way I want to live.

But I am so grateful in the end.

I will lend money, and my selfishness creeps up, and I want to justify my selfishness with scripture.

And then the Spirit brings these words to mind, “lend, hoping for nothing in return.”

Oh, I fight it at first, but Jess and I have learned.

And can say in the last decade of me and Jessica’s marriage we have lent money many times, with the intentions of getting that money back.

And every single time, we end up just letting it be a gift.

You know what happens to our hearts immediately, we are relieved.

The stress and worry goes away, we are no longer wondering if we are ever going to be paid back, we know without a doubt our friendship will not be ruined now.

There will be no awkwardness between us and the person, just love.

I say it a lot, but doing business with Christians is a sketchy thing, sometimes it works, and sometimes it does not, and the unity and love can be forever tainted by selfish feelings.

Now, we are to model our Father’s generosity and this is even beyond monetary means.

Rom 13:8 Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.

We should endeavor to do our transactions in love, not mammon.

In verse 36, we see we are to be merciful, just as our Father is merciful.

Now remember, Jesus is not using our brother in the Lord as an example, that is difficult enough, but Jesus is saying all of this in the context of our enemy.

So the standard is up here, and so picture that person, from our introduction, that person who has hurt you so deep, that person that you carry so much grief over, that people group you have a hard time with, and Jesus says they are to be the object of your love, and everyone else below them as well.

If you are willing to love your enemy, then your neighbor should be no problem, if you can purposely love your enemy, how much more those in the household of the Lord.

Maybe you are thinking, “I just cannot love them, I mean look at their life, they just live so wretchedly, they are so filthy and wrong.”

“They are in that place because of their choices; they deserve the horrible things that they are going through.”

Well, next Jesus immediately counters that thought...

Do Not Judge

(Matt 7:1-5)

37 "Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

This scripture by far is the world's favorite piece of scripture to quote back to the Christian.

And we most definitely need to consider the whole council of God before we blanket this over our whole Christian experience.

Next week, Jesus will tell us to judge by inspecting the fruit of other people's lives.

So the context here is summed up in the final part of the verse, to forgive, because the amount of forgiveness you are able to give others, even those offenders in your life, that will be the measure that will be given to you.

I wonder how many churchgoers are strolling along today thinking they are covered by a prayer they prayed at one point in their life, and they have no idea that they are going straight to hell in the end, not by unbelief, but because of unforgiveness.

Next week, Jesus will illuminate this thought even more by giving a picture of a person going after a speck in their brother's eye; all the while, they have a log in their own.

Oh, how our own struggles and shortcomings look so ugly on other people, and our tendency is to just bring accusation and ridicule.

We put sin on a human scale, and we believe if we are not living in adultery like that person, that our gossip of that person is any less of an offense toward God.

The Lord Jesus is speaking against this self-righteous judgement of others.

This condemning spirit that is judging without love, without mercy, without compassion, this is what is condemned.

Jesus has a vehement disdain for the hypocrite, He confronted no sin more than hypocrisy and pride.

And it is the habitual faultfinder that seems to be the one who forgets that they too will one day stand before a Holy God, and Jesus gives the severity of this kind of thinking.

How frightening it is to stand before the God of Mercy, being unmerciful yourself, if we live judging others, condemning others, and stopping short of granting any Grace ourselves, well the measure we use will be used toward us.

That verse alone should make your person, that you have at the highest place of disregard in your life, that offender you despise so much, it should bring you to a place of reconciliation and healing.

It is not worth it.

Unforgiveness if not dealt with leads to bitterness, and bitterness creeps into our hearts, and over time creates a hell on earth for us.

Bitterness and anger destroys a person, it effects our health, our well-being, our sanity.

There are many people walking these streets, who have completely lost all reason in their minds, because they have bitterness and unforgiveness that is not dealt with, and the darkness of it all has destroyed their lives.

It is not worth it, and if it is not dealt with in your life, you will spend an eternity tormented by it.

You see forgiveness is not always for the other person, it might have little effect on your enemy, and yet it might impact them greatly, but when we can forgive, when we let God take the pain of it all from us.

We are released of the power that hatred has over us.

This is something supernatural that takes place in us, it is only when we allow Jesus to be Lord of our life can we experience this freedom.

Our self-righteous judgements hinder so much ministry to others.

We have to endeavor to see our fellow man with love, or we will miss great opportunities.

You know, the other day, I got an email from Ford, saying I had a free oil change.

It was time for my truck to be serviced, and I like free, but I just hate waiting on the dealer, but I bit the bullet, and headed over to Ford for my long wait.

As I waited for my truck, I started walking around the dealership, working on trying not to covet.

But I was doing laps, and praying as I circled the dealership.

And I really had a nice time with the Lord.

I asked Him to help us reach our community better, I prayed for more opportunity to share His Great love with others.

Now praying for these things was nice, and I left the dealership as I felt, full of the Spirit, and I was not even that frustrated it took an hour longer than they said it would.

Now I was driving, now you will think it is weird, but I have this strange tick in my brain, and if I get an oil change, and I have a full tank of gas, for which I did, than my truck also has to be clean.

Or I feel the oil change is invalid.

So I drove over to the 100% hand car wash down Hesperia Rd.

Now, remember I prayed for God to give me opportunity to be used by Him.

Now I pull in to the car wash, and immediately there is a couple there getting out of their car.

And I am bothered, because, I feel the prompting of the Holy Spirit to go sit with them, and share God's Love with them.

And I was bothered, because I like to watch my truck go through the tunnel and get washed, then because I am an introvert I like to pop my headphones in and sit somewhere I can watch the workers polish up my truck.

They do such a fine job.

So of course, I want to serve the Lord, but when it is convenient for me.

And I immediately judged the people that God was pointing out to me, I am sure they want nothing to do with the Lord, they are not the type of people, and I am just trying to shrug of the Spirit's leading.

And I must have looked ridiculous, because I am pacing back and forth, trying to fight with the Lord, trying to do something else besides go near these people, that I was sure I was supposed to share with.

They were outside where I wanted to sit and watch my truck get polished so I sat inside.

And I cannot even tell you the uncomfortable feeling I had in my disobedience and my trying to reason with the Lord.

So finally, I surrender, but with the attitude my 6 year old gives me when she finally goes and cleans her room.

“Fine Lord, I will go out there, but you will see, they want nothing to with me or you, I know people, and they are not the type who want to hear anything religious.”

I go out there, and sat in the corner, with my headphones.

And I overhear the gentlemen and his wife talking to another woman, and as soon as I heard him talking I knew my judgment of them was way off.

They were so friendly, they were from Louisiana, of course, and they are just talking away.

Well, I overheard the man say his son just passed away, and I knew in that moment, how foolish I was in my arguing with the Lord.

The lady he was talking to left, her car was done, and I knew I had to talk with him.

So, in my heart I was telling the Lord, “If you want me to talk with him, have him start the conversation.”

And that friendly man and his wife starting talking with me.

And of course I want to bring the conversation to Jesus as quickly as possible.

So I share a little about myself, and what God has done in my life.

And the man got emotional right there.

He told me, he works for a company that he travels with all over the country, and he said “every place I go, in every city I travel, God sends someone to share with me. I cannot escape God.”

He told me, when I saw you sitting over there, I knew you were the one He sent this time.

His heart was wide open to hear about our God, as he had experienced some trying and difficult times, losing loved ones.

He had just came from his own son’s memorial, and was broken.

And tears began falling from his face as he talked about the things going on in his heart.

Ministry took place, and I almost missed it.

You know how foolish I felt after all that, that my stupid, foolish, prideful, preoccupied judgements almost caused me to miss this great opportunity that I was just asking God for an hour earlier.

How foolish it is to pray, “God use me,” and then go about our life as if the prayer was something noble in itself.

It is in our doing for others that God cares about.

He wants us to give ourselves out, to freely love others, to represent Him and His ministry here on earth.

Judge not, and you will not be judged, condemn not, and you will not be condemned, forgive and you will be forgiven.

“Yeah, but to what extent, how much?” you might be asking, Jesus answers that next...

38 Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

Jesus explains that a Christian's disposition should be that of an abundant giver.

Kent Hughes explains here, “God will be no man's debtor – no matter how much we give *God*, He gives us more!”

Jesus uses grain as His illustration here; it is a good measure, pressed down so tightly into what we have to hold it, shaken together, to make sure every little crevice is filled to absolute capacity.

Then Jesus just humorously here illustrates this by after all that work of packing it in, and filling the container completely, God pours it over, and abundant.

So much blessing that we cannot even hold it all.

The picture here of a beggar, as we all are, holding out our shirt or something in his bosom to receive from God, and He just dumps it into our bosom to overflowing.

This is the overflowing abundance of God's Love.

Church, understand this morning, the more you give out, the more will be poured out into your bosom.

Let's go into this new year with this understanding, the same measure we use will be measured out to us.

This is the climax of what Jesus is saying in this section.

May we be the most forgiving, compassionate, generous, Agape Loving people around, we are assured here by Jesus that we will not be able to keep up with the Lord's blessing in our own lives.

This is in every area of our life, even in our financial giving.

The Christian businessman H.P. Crowell, who founded Quaker Oats once said, "For over forty years I have given sixty to seventy percent of my income to God. But I have never gotten ahead of Him! He has always been ahead of me." Hughes p.241

In all areas of our lives, may we be givers, and not takers, this is a sign of a true disciple of Christ.

They give, and then give out more, then give again.

And it is because like my little Sofia found it this Christmas is the only true way to live.

It is more blessed to give than to receive.

So this morning, we have been abruptly reminded about many things in our Christian lives, we are to give out love to our enemies, and for that person in your life, maybe you are still struggling to know how it is even possible to do this?

Know without Jesus, it is impossible, this morning, please get prayer for strength and believe Jesus will empower you to live out what He calls you to do.

He is faithful to help when we ask Him.

We were also instructed to give of our resources, to lend and expect nothing in return.

Maybe someone owes you some money this morning, and that has created a huge hindrance in your ability to pour out love to that person.

Please consider, when you get before Jesus on that Day when the Books are open, He will not congratulate your shrewd business skills or acknowledge your rights.

All that will be assessed is if you are merciful as your Father in heaven is merciful.

You understand that person's soul is more valuable than your bank account being restored.

Your forgiveness, might be the very act that leads them to Jesus, and their soul being saved.

But even if they don't, you know that God too is kind to the unthankful and evil as well.

We are His sons and daughters here on earth, we are children of the Most High God, and our lives should look like Him.

Church, the measure of Love and Charity we use in this world will be measured back to us.

What a great reminder to go into the new year with.

Let us pray...