



04

DAY 04

GOD PROMISES TO REWARD YOU WHEN LOVING YOUR ENEMIES

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KEY SCRIPTURE

LUKE 6:35

Today we are looking at the Gospel of Luke. Let's begin with a little context. Of the four gospels, Luke is the third, immediately after Mark and before John. The study of the Book of Luke is extensive and ongoing. Luke identifies that this book is written so that Theophilus, "may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed" (Luke 1:4). What is great about reading Luke is his ability as a story-teller to tell us the events of Jesus' life, but present them not as a biography, and instead as a story that relates "a faithful account of the most important aspects of Jesus' life and teaching."

In Luke chapter six, we find today's verse: *"But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked."*

This verse is situated near the end of a section marked "Love for Enemies" in the NRSV translation. It forms the part of the book of Luke scholars label "Luke's Sermon on the Plain" (found in Luke 6:17-49), parallel to Matthew's "Sermon on the Mount" (found in Matthew chapters 5-7). This sermon that Jesus gives in Luke is shorter than the one found in Matthew,

but begins and ends in the same way with the Beatitudes and the lesson of the builders. The one we will explore here is the Love for Enemies and what Jesus tells the listeners that should look like practically.

How many of us love our enemies? How many of us even have enemies? I think every person has encountered (or will encounter) someone who is actively opposed to us, but on the day-to-day in Canada, we don't encounter enemies in the broad sense of the word like Jesus' followers did in the Biblical accounts. Someone disagreeing with you online isn't the same as fearing for your life. What about lending something to someone without expecting it to be returned? For the most part, in our Canadian culture, we will lend things to people, but it will only be to people we know, or to people whom we trust will give the item back (usually in the same condition it was lent).

Our verse today challenges this notion. As Jesus says in Luke 6:34 "And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full." So what is Jesus trying to convey here? The key rests in the later part of Luke 6:35 "Your reward will be great and you will be children of the Most High." By loving and lending to enemies, and

expecting nothing in return, we are able to show others that we are children of God. By doing what Jesus instructs, we show God's love to all: because God loves "the ungrateful and the wicked." If we behave like everyone else in the world, where we lend and expect things in return, we may have a good reputation, we may even be considered generous. But that

is an earthly reward. God wants us to love and act in a way that benefits those who are less fortunate-even opposed to us-as well. As believers, we must follow God's example: "the pattern for our kindness to others is God's kindness to us." Our reward is being children of the Most High.

REFLECTIONS

And so here is the challenge: what can we do today, or this coming week, that puts this verse into practice? Take a moment and think about what God is saying to you through today's reading. Because reading this verse isn't just to reaffirm you feeling great about your donations. Or about making a casserole for that family and not expecting to get your dish back. This is about heart transformation: love your enemies. Do good things. Lend to people. Expect nothing. Be an example to others that leads them to Jesus. This is our reward.

PRAYER

God as I freely receive your love, help me to extend it daily to those around me, even when it is challenging. Continue to change to be more like Jesus in my words and actions, so that others would be drawn to you, and find true life.
