

## Shine the Light of Christ's Love

✦ for your enemies (vv.27-31)

✦ for your Father (vv.32-36)

✦ for yourself (vv.37-38)

In the name of Jesus, the Light of the world, dear lights of God's love:

Over the years one comment by a couple brothers in Christ has baffled me. As I was privately admonishing them to take to heart God's word, they answered, "But I'm not like Jesus!" Have you ever felt that way? God tells us what to think or do, and you answer, "Well, I'm not like Jesus!" – as if that should end the conversation? Many people walk away when they don't like what God says. That's why Jesus starts our first verse literally, "***But I say to you who are listening....***" (Luke 6:27 TPA) Seriously, if someone said you had a flat tire, would you keep driving until sparks are flying from the wheel rim? If a rock flies through your window, do you ignore it until your face is wet with rain? Our God of love wants to soften our stubborn hearts in order to bless us. So He shows us His smiling face in the radiance of Jesus Christ. Then we can smile on those around us with the loving kindness and tender mercy of God. "***Let us live up to what we have already attained.***" (Philippians 3:16) **Shine the Light of Christ's Love...**

✦ for your enemies (vv.27-31)

A man named Morgan Jackson is the International Director for Faith Comes by Hearing. He was describing the use of solar powered *Proclaimers* in African villages:

*When people hear God's word in their heart language, the results are amazing....When I went to [African] villages...the questions come: "When Jesus says that if somebody slaps you on the cheek, you're supposed to turn the other cheek. Is that a parable?"*

*Then they all go, "No, that's not a parable; He really means it."*

*Somebody says, "Well, does Jesus know what it means to take a slap in Africa?" Everybody's like, "Yeh, He does."*

*Who here if someone slaps you on the cheek will say, "Heh, heh, you missed a side"? Who here can do that?....The teachings of Christ are just unbelievably powerful."*<sup>1</sup>

Isn't that the point? In any culture taking a slap and offering the other cheek is totally against our nature. You would not let someone tie you up without a struggle. If you had the power to protect yourself and your friends, you would use deadly force to drive away an armed mob. Especially if you knew they would torture and kill you, you would avoid every possibility of getting caught. So would I.

But not our Lord Jesus. He offered "***his cheek to one who would strike him and [was] filled with disgrace***" (Lamentations 3:30 NIV84) for us. "***He sacrificed for [the sins of the people] once for all when he offered himself.***" (Hebrews 7:26-27 NIV84) Jesus is the only Man who ever lived who could keep the Golden Rule and "***do to others as you would have them do to you.***" But here's how the heavenly Father smiles on you. He put the righteousness of His own dear Son in the baptism bank of heaven in an account with your name on it. Now He wants you to live up to that as His own dear child. One of our members did that years ago when a coworker kept trash-talking him. He was so angry he says, "I wanted to kill him!" Instead he prayed for the man, and they became friends. Don't think this Word of God is unreal. It works. But there are even better examples when you **Shine the Light of Christ's Love...**

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.myspace.com/auidobible> . Morgan Jackson, May, 2008 – <http://www.faithcomesbyhearing.com/> .

### ✠ for your Father (vv.32-36)

Godly parents want their kids to be different in a good way. Many a teenager has argued, “But all the other kids are doing it!” And many a Mom has answered, “If they all walked off a cliff, would you follow them?” **Your Father** in heaven wants you to be holy like Him. He commands us through His Son our Savior, *“Love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”*

To this day I don’t know whether it was a man or an angel from our merciful **Father**. My sister and I borrowed Mom’s car to take our fiancés to Crater Lake. Not far down the highway the engine light went on, so I pulled off on a side road. Steam was boiling out from under the hood. While I checked for what might be wrong, my future brother-in-law started hitchhiking for help. In just a few minutes he drove back with a man in a white panel truck. Minutes later the man held up our thermostat and said, “Here’s your problem. When you get back to town, a couple bucks and you can put a new one right back here.” While doubting me was wondering, “Yeh, but how do we get back to town?” he took a sheet of gasket material, pounded out the shape on the thermostat housing, punched a hole and put everything back together. He said he had a fleet of log trucks which he serviced with his shop on wheels. Why was he there at that very moment? He wouldn’t take anything. “Just help the next guy,” he said as he drove off.

### ✠ for yourself (vv.37-38)

Our heavenly Father wants to bless us. If you ever doubt that, just take a blank sheet of paper and draw one vertical line and one horizontal in the shape of a cross. Look at what Jesus was willing to suffer to take away our sins of selfishness, all our failures to love our neighbor as our self. God did not condemn us! He sent His Son to forgive us fully and completely. All the world’s religions keep shouting, “Do...!” and “Do...!” But in the smiling face of His Son our Savior, God says, “Done!”

Since God did not condemn us, since He was merciful and kind instead, He wants our hearts to fill up and overflow with pure gratitude. If we are unthankful, complaining, always thinking about ourselves, how can God bless us? God also needs to exhort us by command and promise: *“Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”* Nowhere is this more difficult than at home, especially if you’re married to a non-believer.

Monica was the devout mother of Church Father Augustine whom God turned to faith after his wild, sinful teens. But God used Augustine’s mother Monica to reach his father. Women asked why Monica’s unbelieving husband treated her better than their Christian husbands treated them?

*Kindhearted Monica answered them: I fear you give your husbands cause for [being harsh]. If you were subject to them and would not argue back, or especially when they begin to be strangely cruel, if you would not answer back, but be patient, submit and obey them, and with friendly words appease them, you would, of course, not be beaten. For thus I am accustomed to treat my husband; when my lord scolds, I pray; is he angry, I avoid him, or return kind words; in this way I have not only put down his anger, but I have also brought him so far, that he is converted and has become a Christian....Monica was merciful toward her husband, and did not condemn and judge him....Thus, says Christ here [Luke 6:36-42]...because you are children of grace and peace, not of anger and discord, and are also called to inherit the blessing.<sup>2</sup>*

**Shine the Light of Christ’s Love. “Go and do likewise....”** (Luke 10:37) Amen.

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<sup>2</sup> *Sermons of Martin Luther*, a.k.a. “Luther’s Postil.” J. N. Lenker, ed. Baker, re-printed 1988, Vol. IV, pp.114f.

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