

Luke 6:31 - 38

31 “And just as you want people to treat you, treat them in the same way. 32 “And 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 expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, in order to receive back the same amount. 35 “But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. 36 “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. 37 “And do not judge and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned. 38 “Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will pour into your lap. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.”

This is now our third week together in Luke's version of the sermon on the mount. And we have looked at what Jesus tells His perspective disciples to expect in this world if they follow Him.

And frankly, from this worlds perspective, it isn't a very pretty picture. It turns out, if you follow Jesus, you are embarking on a life in this present world where you can expect some push back.

We have the benefit of a completed canon of scripture and if someone will apply some diligence to see the entire big picture of God's dealings with men from the fall in the garden of Eden, all the way to the present day, and also in the prophecy of the future there is a long pageantry of cause and effect viewable.

Last week we said there is a long term spiritual war being played out by forces we cannot see. Satan who has rebelled against God and said, *I*

will be like the most High, and with him he took 1/3 of the angels.

We have no idea what that number might be. The one number we do have is that God's armies outnumber Satan's two to one. God cast that rebellion out of His heaven down to earth, and Satan and his armies are referred to often in scripture, and even by the Son of God, as *the ruler of this world*.

From our Holy Book we learn that many many of the fallen angels are locked up in chains in pits of darkness. Fearful places. We know they are fearful places because the wicked angels here that come in contact with Jesus beg Him not to send them there.

We also know from our ancient book what the future in this spiritual war between Satan and his forces and God and His forces looks like. How Jesus in the fullness of time will charge out of heaven with all of His saints and return to this world, which is His, and depose Satan and crush all wickedness. He will reign here in righteousness. Evil will be vanquished.

It's quite a story. In fact when christians pray the so-called Lord's prayer, that event is what you're asking for. *Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. They will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. . . for thine IS the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.*

You're stating that His name is to be hallowed foremost before any other name. Then you're asking Him to bring His authority to reign as opposed to Satans to this world so that His will would be done on earth, like it is in heaven.

You're asking Him to come and crush the rebellion in this world that is ruled by Satan. You're asking Him to set up His throne, His authority to reign as opposed to Satan, in this earth, this world, like it is in all of

heaven. And then at the end you are acknowledging that He has all authority, all power, and all glory to do what you've asked.

We're praying for a cataclysmic event. God, come and crush this rebellion, judge and remove evil from this place, and set up your kingdom, here, on earth, for your glory.

When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, that's what He told them to pray. Lord, come and crush the evil rebellion and set up your rule here on this earth. Everything about that is cataclysmic.

But before that ultimate event there is a limited answer to this prayer each time God redeems some sinner and calls them out of Satan's kingdom in order to belong to Him.

Some day the kingdom will come when Jesus returns. But until that day we are kingdom residents. We come out from under Satan's authority to reign and we are baptized into Christ's authority to reign in our hearts and our lives. Christ's kingdom dwelling in the midst of Satan's kingdom.

In our verses this morning, we're going to zoom in from this giant overall view to a space in God's long program for this world, a point in time, and we're going to see how in God's plan of redemption and judgement, He has had a limiting presence to the evil that Satan can unleash in this world.

Satan and his armies may be cast down to this world, but they are limited, by God, to how much evil they can unleash here. God controls that right down to the hairs on your head. Jesus tells his followers, *not a hair of your head will perish . . . unless God allows it.* (Lk. 21:18)

Everything is under His sovereign control. Not one hair can perish from my head, but if it pleases Him to glorify Himself by my martyrdom,

another verse is just as true. *All day long we were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.* Romans 8:36

It all belongs to Him. He is Sovereign ruler even during this time when Satan is the Ruler of this world. If we look down through 60 centuries of terror since Satan usurped the rule of this world by sin we see that tension of good and evil always present.

It's interesting that earlier this week Pam rang me up in the morning while I was enjoying a cup of coffee at work and was telling me that it was on Fox news that the Pope had changed the Lord's prayer. Actually changed the very intent of the original words. From a catholic source;

"Pope Francis has approved a revision third edition of the Italian Missal, including changes to the Lord's Prayer and Gloria.

On May 22nd during the General Assembly of the Episcopal Conference of Italy, President Cardinal Gualtiero Bassetti announced the approval of a third edition of the Messale Romano. The revised translation will include changes to the Lord's Prayer and Gloria.

The Lord's Prayer will change from "and lead us not into temptation" to "do not let us fall into temptation."

Pope Francis used his authority to edit divine revelation because he said it's confusing people. God doesn't lead us into temptation, Satan does. But if you read the original greek and study the word, the correct translation of *lead us*, is actually to deliver something. To carry something, to bring something.

The same word was used when the 4 friends delivered the man on the pallet through the roof to Jesus. They brought him to Jesus. The prayer in the greek is asking our Heavenly Father that we not be brought into temptation. Not delivered into temptation.

Perhaps if we're living in a day and age where we're literally running for our lives from one town to the next as this world closes in on Christians, that prayer prayed the way Jesus said to pray it makes perfect sense. It's good to pray to the Sovereign Lord to not be delivered to our enemies.

It's one thing to change a translation to try to get the meaning closer to the original idea the words meant, but in this case, the Pope is saying, Jesus got it wrong, and we're going to help Him out with a slight corrective. What else did Jesus get wrong that we need to fix?

Our Father has Sovereign charge over us to deliver us to safety and to deliver us to death in this world if that is His will for His glory. He tells us it's OK to pray for the safety.

The church at Smyrna was told; Rev. 2:10 *'Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.'*

God has always had His people and His presence in this world, limiting the evil that Satan can unleash, and you can follow that flow, that tension of restraint against evil through all the dispensations of the old testament before Jesus came physically and after the new testament, the age that we now live in.

God restrains evil partly, by having His people in the world, living according to His standard. Those who belong to God, who have come out of this world and are under the ownership of Jesus, we belong to Him and live under His authority to reign, we are to be salt in this world.

Salt has two qualities. It is distinct in whatever you join it to. Put salt on a tomato, and you can taste the salt and the tomato distinct from each other but the synergy makes the tomato better. Salt is also a

preservative. It restrains decay.

That's a picture of the tension in this world between evil rebellers who are dupes of the ruler of this world, and of those who belong to God and who are a restraining agent in this world. Like the salt we are distinct from the world, and like the salt we limit the decay of this place.

In this sermon, where Jesus gazes at one group, the disciples, the learners, those who have committed themselves to follow Him and learn from Him, Jesus lays out in clear terms what they can expect from this world as good engages evil.

In this long warfare of evil rebellion by sinners who dwell here Jesus is telling His followers what it will be like to be the restraining agents of good against the evil that is at war with God. And there's a twist.

The jews, who God chose from all the peoples of the world, to be His people, whom He also gave revelation to, who wrote down the very words of God, revelation unobtainable except that God chose them and gave it to them, they were to be the set-apart ones who would be the restraint against evil in the world.

But Satan has corrupted their religion until what we see in Jerusalem during Jesus day is unrecognizable from the book that God gave them. They have become an apostate false religion, and when the Son of God visits this world, you could say, all hell breaks loose.

All the chosen people, the jews want to do is kill the Son of God. What a conundrum. Such is the corrupting power of Satan that he can turn a group of people who were supposed to be a restraining agent for good, into the ones who will murder the Son of God. Hold onto that thought.

Jesus tells His disciples what to expect from this world. Trouble. That word temptation in the Lord's prayer just means trouble. Peter got it.

Later he writes to the saints; 1 Peter 4:

12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; 13 but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. 14 If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

Ever since Satan usurped authority in this world, this war, this tension has been present, and often, it comes from the very people who were supposed to belong to God, who in some form claim to be His people.

Religious people murdered Jesus. They claimed to be God's chosen people. Satan loves to have it that way. And the reason I'm spending time on this aspect is because I'm looking in my crystal ball, actually I don't have a crystal ball, I'm looking at the long history of warfare of this world against the people of God, and I'm seeing that there is a pattern.

God chooses a people out of this world. They begin fine, but over time, Satan gets them so corrupted that right becomes wrong and wrong becomes right, and the very people who claim to be representing God in the world are the ones Satan is using to persecute those who have come out of this world and do belong to God. It's a pattern. Expect it.

So, then, back to my crystal ball for a moment and then we'll dive into our verses and you'll be surprised how quickly we will cover the ground this morning. Here's a scenario that could happen very rapidly and very soon in our land.

Someone who claims to be a christian, but who is christian in name only but they claim to be a christian, perhaps even though they are married to a same sex partner, a man with a husband, becomes president, and then goes after the real christians who are endeavoring to use our freedom of

religion as a so called phony covering to discriminate against sexual freedoms and reproductive controls like abortion because of so-called conscience.

That person would destroy freedom of religion in the name of religion by mandating that religion no longer be allowed to operate under the authority of the clear words of this book. Those rights would be stripped in the name of religion. Christians against christians. Christians in name only, against God's redeemed people.

Sort of looks the same as the jews killing Jesus. That's how Satan has rolled in the past and we should not be surprised if that's what brings open persecution against real christians in the very near future.

Someone who claims to be a christian punishing real christians who are crazy enough to believe that sex is only allowed to be enjoyed between one man and one woman who are married before God for life.

That's what the book says. In my crystal ball I see this culture rising up to wage war against anyone who believes this book has that authority. And how fun for Satan to cause that clash driven by someone who claims to be a christian. That just adds to the fun.

That way the culture can say, we're not punishing christians, we ARE christians. We're just punishing the fringe wacko christians who refuse to get on board with us and abandon the things in the book that can no longer be tolerated. That's all.

OK, *my* crystal ball and prognostications plus \$2.45 will get you a venti cup of coffee at Starbucks in Bishop. But there *is* a pattern.

Let's dive into what Jesus told those who would claim to be His followers, His learners, His disciples. This is radical teaching. Radical stuff. We're in week three.

And just to re-cap, in week one we covered vss. 20 - 26 where Jesus tells them how blessed they are when they are no longer citizens of this world but they are citizens of heaven, and this world, because of His name, hates them.

Then last week we looked at the rules of engagement with this world that hates you because you belong to Jesus in vss. 27 - 30. We saw that our enemies are beloved by God, and they are the mission field. So then, for the sake of His name we respond to their punishment by loving them.

We give up our dignity first, and then we give up anything else they want to take away from us. That's pretty radical stuff to ask people to do. And in our verses this morning, Jesus will build a case where doing that makes sense.

The worlds going to hate me because of Jesus, they're going to slap me in the face and take my dignity away, and then they're going to take everything else I have in this world away, and Jesus says, when that happens, because of His name, I am to be happy, happy, happy.

Why would I do that? Why would anyone do that? That's the craziest thing anyone has ever said. And Jesus is telling this to perspective disciple candidates?? The craziness just gets crazier. What could the benefit possibly be to cause someone to do that.

Eternal life. Forgiveness of sins. Citizenship transferred out of this perishing condemned world, to heaven and glory forever with Him. And here in this world while we remain, the comfort and joy of the Holy Spirit, dwelling in me, and fellowshiping with me.

God moves into my heart, forgives my sins, and is a constant daily friend, a friend who can bring peace and joy and comfort to my being from the inside, no matter what the world is doing to me on the outside.

That's why the guy who discovers the treasure in the field sells everything he has so he can buy that field with the treasure. That's why the guy who discovers the pearl of great price sells everything in order to have that pearl.

The value of having Jesus is beyond anything this world has to offer. Those of us who have seen that, have come out of this world and we belong to Him, and whatever this world throws at us is nothing in comparison to having Him, inside our hearts.

Beyond that, there is another argument that Jesus gives his disciples in training. Why will we endure the cacophony of rebellious punishment this world can throw at us, costing in some cases, everything in this world, even unto our very lives?

Jesus second argument is; When we do that, when we live that way, we're sons of God, because that's how the world has treated Him, and He keeps right on blessing and blessing and blessing this world.

Matthew spells it out for us in his version of the same dialogue when he writes 5:44 *But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.*

The love of God brings universal blessings to the wicked and the good alike. When we treat the wicked like God treats the wicked, we are acting like His sons. That's the second argument of why we'll put up with crazy injustice in this world. God does.

We are never more like God than when, in His name, and for His glory we endure the wrath of this world against Him, and return good to it instead. That's what God does for this rebellious world every day.

31 *“And just as you want people to treat you, treat them in the same way.*

This is the golden rule. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

When we're little kids we see this a little differently. We're born fallen sinners, and the natural thing to fallen children, and sadly, most adults, is *do unto others as they did unto you*. But pour on a little extra so they'll learn to not mess with you next time.

An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but we're like, I'm gonna get me an eye and some teeth and a handful of hair while I'm doing it. That's the world's way. That's how wars escalate.

Jesus tells His disciples, that isn't how we roll. We're receiving evil and repaying good. That's the equation in the kingdom of God. Get evil, return good. Who does that? This is a radical radical concept. But christians are called to be radically good in a punishing world.

32 *“And 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 expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, in order to receive back the same amount.*

If all we're doing is what the world is willing to do . . . there is no distinguishing difference. The world loves those who love back. The world does good to those who return equal amounts of good back. The world lends to people who are capable of repaying. With interest. We're capitalists.

If all we're doing is what the world is also willing to do, where is the salt? How are we any different than the world.

The world is un-impressed with christians who look identical to the world. Unimpressed. Why would they be drawn to people who don't do anything that the world is already willing to do. Donald Trump is nice to people who are nice to him. He says that all the time. Big deal.

Jesus says the same thing. Big deal. That's worthless. That's what the world is already doing. No eternal value in living at the same standards the world is willing to live by. Sinners do that.

35 “But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men.

When the church, under duress, gets to this standard, because of the Name, that's when the world is impressed. We have to live at a higher standard than the ordinary sinners in this world before it starts meaning anything of value.

These days, the church is going the wrong direction. We lean and bend into the world. We compromise our values and our book so we can lean into getting along with the world. We are unsalty salt, and if you go read what Jesus said about that, it's not good.

The normative pattern Jesus is laying out for His disciples is conduct above and beyond the world's conduct which when it is met with evil, returns good. Conflict with the world because holiness is a judgement to them is normative in what Jesus is laying out. He says expect it, and then return blessing.

36 “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. 37 “And do not judge and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be

condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned.

How do these verses fit within the scenario we've been talking about?

These four things illustrate what God did for us. Mercy. Judgement. Condemnation. Pardon.

God was merciful to us. God did not judge us according to what we deserved. God did not condemn us for our rebellion and sin. Instead, it cost Him His own Son, dying on a cross so that He could pardon us.

He says, is it too much for Me to ask that you do the same thing for this vile world that hates you and wants to take everything away from you, for my Name's sake, as I already did for you?

If we're going to carry treating this world like God has treated us to it's logical conclusion; we need to respond to the worlds hatred with mercy. We need to respond to the worlds false judgements by not judging them. We need to respond to the worlds condemnation of us by not condemning them. And we need to pardon them for all the persecution and punishment they inflict.

That's what God did for us when we were His enemies. Beloved enemies. And He tells us, that's how we should treat this world who has made us their enemies because of the name of Jesus.

The difference between Christianity and Islam is that our God, who is NOT Allah, says *Vengeance is mine sayeth the Lord. I will repay.*

The world is running up a tremendous debt punishing and murdering christians, mis-treating christians. How do we react. Two positives and two negatives. We respond to their vicious sinful mis-treatment with mercy and pardon. And we do not judge or condemn them for the injustice of punishing christians.

That's God's business. He will repay. Some He will repay with mercy and pardon. Others He will repay with judgement and condemnation. He is sovereign over all of those choices. We are under orders to not judge, not condemn, but give mercy instead, and pardon.

We should note here the most often quoted verse in the entire bible. Ever wonder what the most quoted verse is? It comes directly from Matthew's version of these very words. Judge not lest ye be judged.

The world takes it out of context and makes it say what it doesn't say. How dare you judge me. Jesus says judge not. Don't judge me.

They're partially right. I'm not the judge. But God has also told me I have a duty to identify what is and isn't sinful and that I have a responsibility, once the log is out of my own eye, to come alongside the sinners and try to help them with the toothpick that's in their eye.

I don't pronounce judgement on this world, I'm not the judge, but I am ordered to warn them of the judgement already pronounced. The world stands condemned.

I'm ordered to warn them. It's not my job to judge then, only to warn them that they are already judged and need to flee from the condemnation already prescribed.

If christians are living holy lives, our example would judge this world. That's where the conflict comes from. We are supposed to be a mirror of God's book reflecting back on the lives of those who are in the world. Preserving salt in an open wound is a fantastic irritation, but it preserves and saves.

Jesus says, that's how His disciples are to live in this world, and when the world rages against the irritation, we return love and mercy and

pardon.

It's a costly formula. Jesus says it may cost you your loved ones, it may cost you your stuff, it may cost you your freedom, and it may even cost you your life. What's our incentive to give up everything in this world, if necessary, in order to have Him?

Does He repay what this world takes away?

38 "Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will pour into your lap. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return."

Finally, what is the reward for losing everything to have the treasure? The reward is the treasure. I've lost everything in this world. What do I get when I give up my dignity and justice and for some, all my worldly goods, and others perhaps, even my life, in order to have Jesus.

You get Jesus! But God is so magnanimous. When we give up stuff in this world, because of Jesus, He showers us with more than we ever had to begin with. Both in this age, and the age to come.

Giving up everything, to have Jesus, is a jackpot that never stops paying. In this life and the next. You can't outgive God. Whatever this world takes away from you, treasure that far outweighs what you lost for His sake, is stored up for you.

One of my heroes is David Platt. He has spoken at some of the conferences I've been to and God uses him powerfully. Well, he had a surprise this week. Talk about thinking fast on your feet.

He's the pastor of a large church, a mega church, not all mega churches are bad. And they were finishing up their service when without any warning, he knew nothing about it, the president stopped in on his way

from a golf game. He wanted David Platt to pray for him.

And the passage David went to immediately was what Paul wrote to Timothy in 1 Timothy 2;

1 First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. 3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,

The reason I ended with those words to Timothy is because of the balance it gives to what Jesus told His disciples. Our first choice, and the reason we pray for our leaders, is to live tranquil, dignified, quiet, godly lives.

We don't go looking for the trouble. But if living godly lives brings trouble, we are to be ready to embrace it just as Jesus told His disciples.