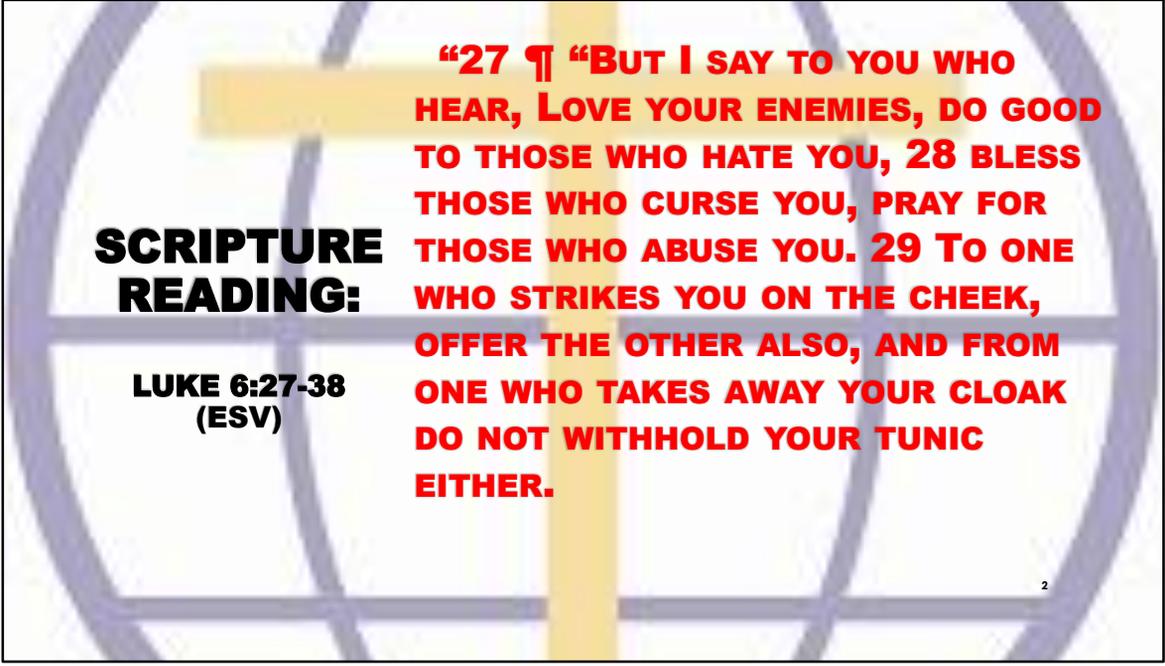




BEING MERCIFUL LIKE OUR HEAVENLY FATHER

**Grace Communion International
Minister: Eric Vautour
Date: February 24, 2019**

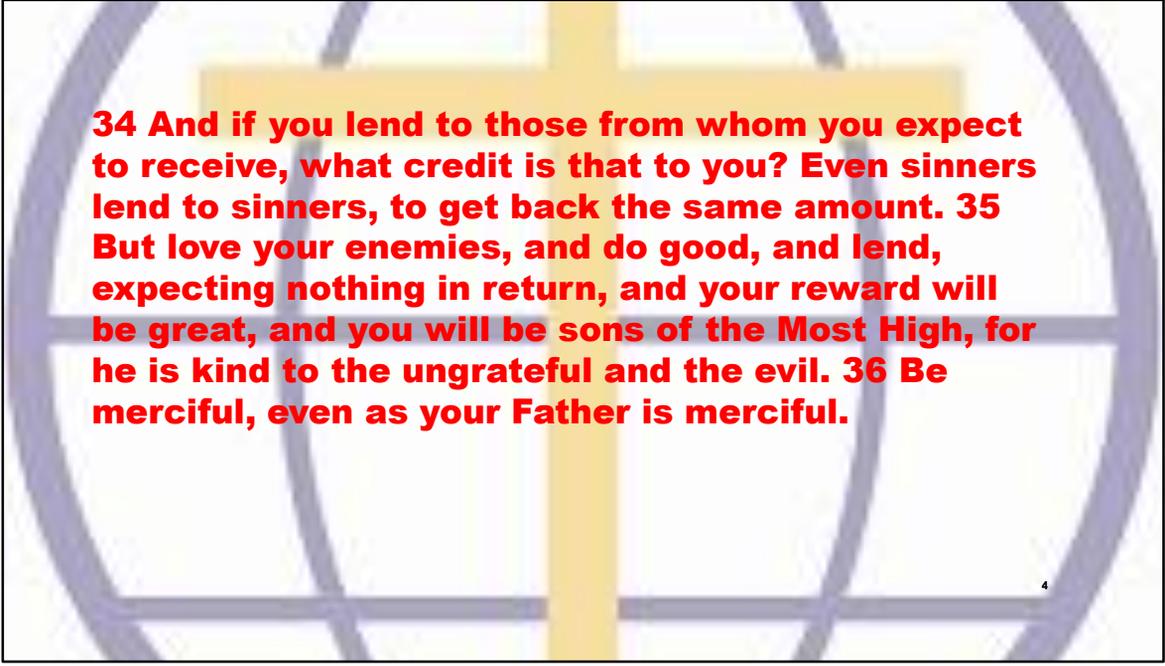


**SCRIPTURE
READING:**

**LUKE 6:27-38
(ESV)**

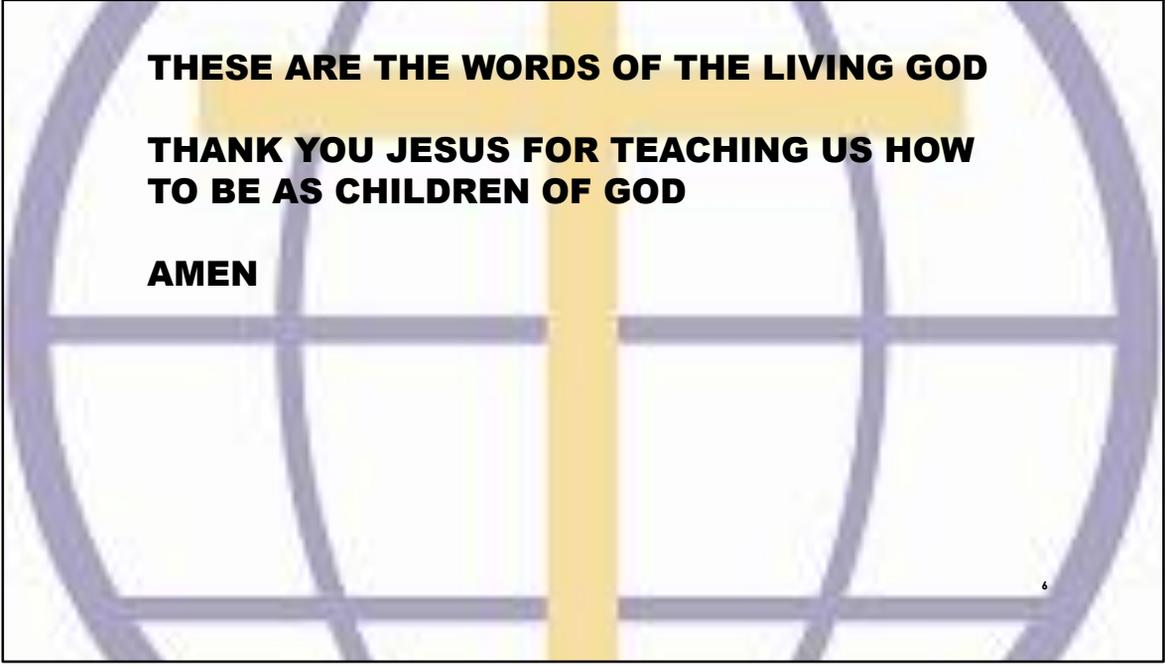
“27 ¶ “BUT I SAY TO YOU WHO HEAR, LOVE YOUR ENEMIES, DO GOOD TO THOSE WHO HATE YOU, 28 BLESS THOSE WHO CURSE YOU, PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ABUSE YOU. 29 To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either.

30 Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. 31 And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them. 32 “If you love those who love you, what benefit 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 benefit 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, to get 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 is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. 36 Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

37 ¶ “Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; 38 give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.” (Lu 6:27-38 ESV)



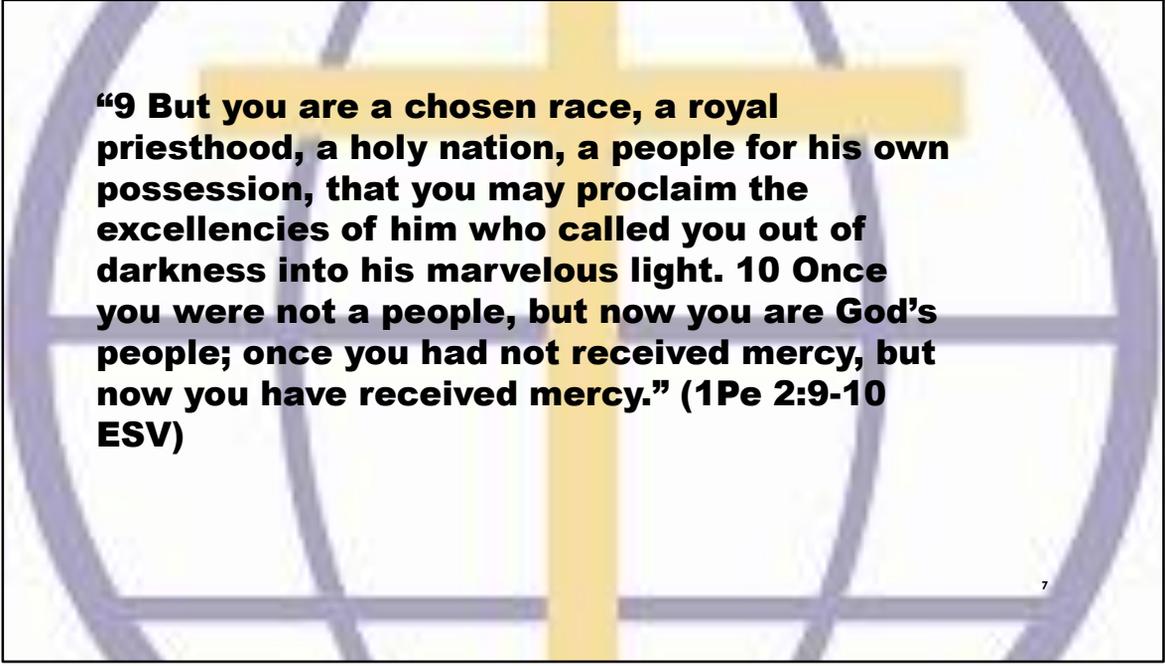
THESE ARE THE WORDS OF THE LIVING GOD

**THANK YOU JESUS FOR TEACHING US HOW
TO BE AS CHILDREN OF GOD**

AMEN

As we consider these verses, we have to consider who we are as God's people.

There are many places in the Bible which confirmed our identity one of which is 1 Peter 2:9-10. (NEXT SLIDE)



“9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” (1Pe 2:9-10 ESV)

It is very important to understand how we received mercy. There is a major difference between the old and the New Testament as the New Testament is based on better promises. The Old Testament is linked to the New Testament because it pointed to it. It pointed to the coming of Christ who would accomplish something completely new. Jesus is victorious for us. (next slide).

- **OT - JUDGMENT—ONE SIN = CONDEMNATION**
 - **NT - GIFT—MANY SINS—JUSTIFICATION (ROM. 5:16)**
 - **OT—ADAM’S TRESPASS—DEATH REIGNED**
 - **NT—CHRIST’S GRACE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS—REIGN IN LIFE (5:17)**
 - **OT—ONE TRESPASS—CONDEMNATION FOR ALL**
 - **NT—ONE ACT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS—JUSTIFICATION AND LIFE FOR ALL (5:18)**
 - **OT - DISOBEDIENCE OF ONE (ADAM)—MANY WERE MADE SINNERS**
 - **NT—OBEDIENCE OF ONE (CHRIST) - WILL MAKE MANY RIGHTEOUS (5:19)**
 - **OT—SIN—DOMINION—DEATH**
 - **NT—GRACE—DOMINION—RIGHTEOUSNESS (DIKAIOSYNE) - ETERNAL LIFE (5:21)**
- (FROM: THE CRUCIFIXION, UNDERSTANDING THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST BY FLEMING RUTLEDGE PAGE 365)**

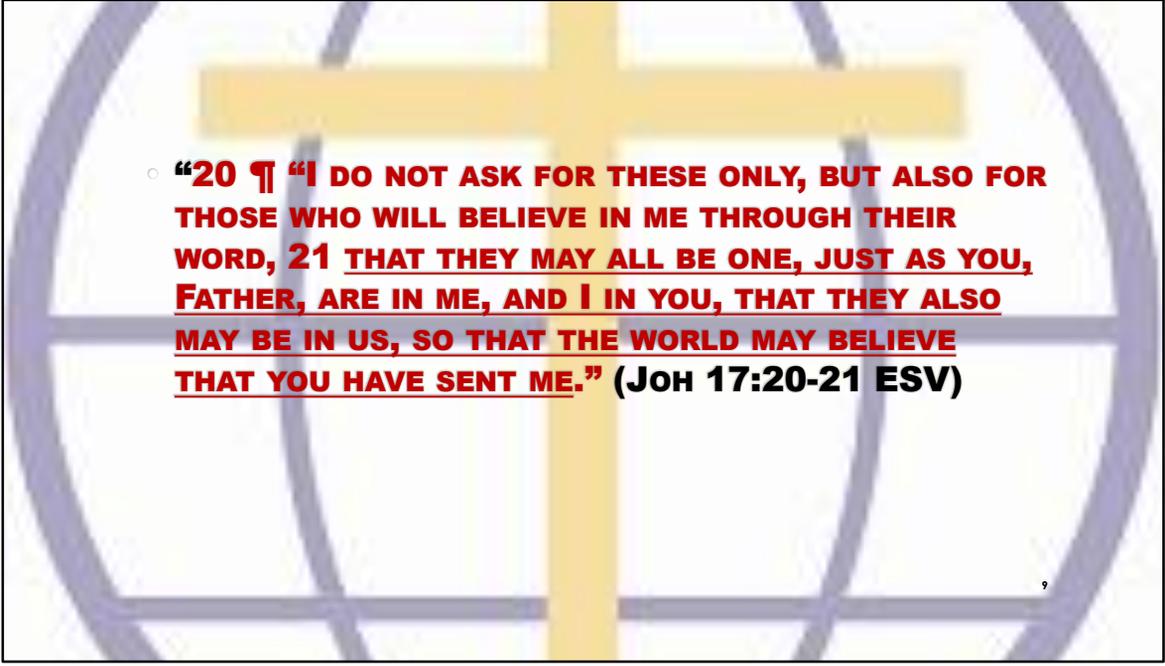
It’s important to understand that until the coming of Christ, sin, death and the devil were the powers that ruled.

When Christ came the powers of sin and death and the devil were completely defeated.

When God calls us to himself and we accept the calling, we become liberated from these oppressive powers. We become slaves of righteousness as we grow in the obedience of faith which is the source of true freedom. Christ through the Holy Spirit leads us to eternal life.

When Jesus pronounced the Beatitudes in Luke 6, he was talking to his disciples. **“And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said: ‘Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.’ (Lu 6:20 ESV).**

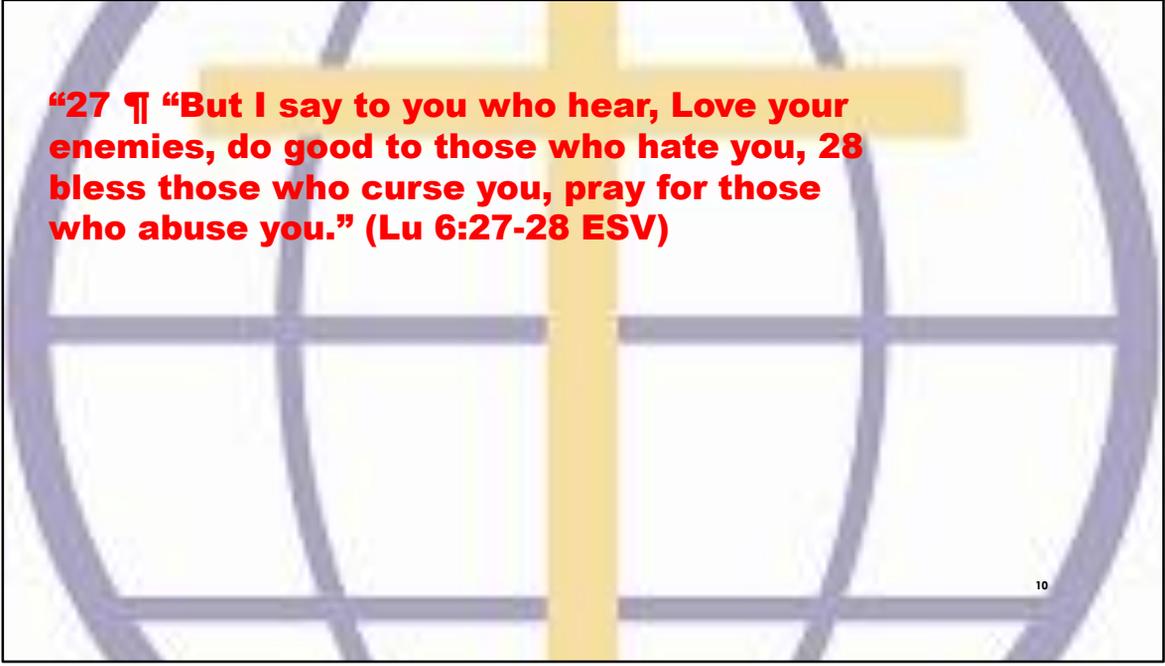
As the children of God, we are to live with a brand-new ethic empowered by the Holy Spirit. We are to live as our Father’s children. Now we are not left alone because the Bible tells us that we live in the Father and in Christ.

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- **“20 ¶ “I DO NOT ASK FOR THESE ONLY, BUT ALSO FOR THOSE WHO WILL BELIEVE IN ME THROUGH THEIR WORD, 21 THAT THEY MAY ALL BE ONE, JUST AS YOU, FATHER, ARE IN ME, AND I IN YOU, THAT THEY ALSO MAY BE IN US, SO THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE THAT YOU HAVE SENT ME.” (Joh 17:20-21 ESV)**

At Gethsemane, before his death, Jesus was praying for us those who would believe in him in the future.

We express our belief in Jesus by verbalizing our belief in words and as we see in Luke 6 by our actions towards other people. Just as the Father was in Jesus and Jesus in the Father, Jesus prayed that we would be one in God united to Christ! United to the man Jesus, it means that we will remain humans for all eternity. In the fullness of the kingdom of God, at Christ's return, our human nature will be perfect - completely sinless and not touched by evil anymore.

This should be very encouraging to all of us because we are not left alone to live by the high ideals Jesus wrote about in Luke.



“27 ¶ “But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.” (Lu 6:27-28 ESV)

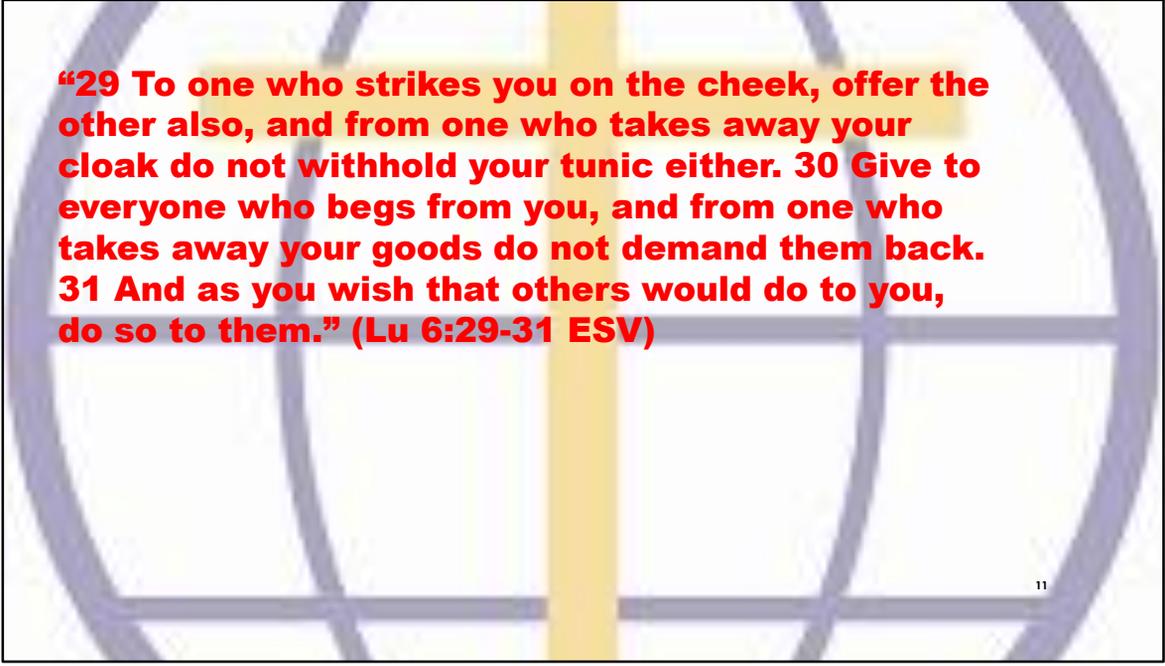
10

Jesus is not asking of us anything that he has not done himself. In fact, he has lived a perfect life for us all. He is our representative in the heavenlies in his one person, as both the Son of God and the Son of Man.

Jesus loved his enemies – he died for each and every one of us before we ever knew who he was. When we were hostile and in opposition to him in our hearts and minds as well as in our actions, he loved us so much that he sacrificed his life.

He did good to those who hated him and he blessed those who cursed him. He prayed for them. On the cross, he prayed to God the Father that he would forgive his murderers as they did not know what they were doing. They were in darkness as we were in darkness before God transported us in the kingdom of his Son. (**“He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,” (Col 1:13 ESV).**)

As we were loved before we ever knew it and as Jesus loved us when we were his enemies (Rom 5:10), we are also to love our enemies and pray for them. It doesn't mean that we have to be body-body with them but it means that we express our love towards them by our actions, as Jesus describes in the following verses.



“29 To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. 30 Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. 31 And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.” (Lu 6:29-31 ESV)

11

What does it mean to turn the other cheek?

Turning the cheek pictures a person slapped on the cheek in rejection. The action involves an insult that may well be associated with removal from the synagogue.10 Numerous examples of this kind of use of violence appear in Acts (18:17; 21:32; 23:2). Yet the early church consistently turned the other cheek by continuing to share the gospel with those who rejected them. They have never fought back in kind, but attempted to overcome evil with good. Bock, Darrell L.. Luke: The NIV Application Commentary from Biblical Text to Contemporary Life (p. 190). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

This applies figuratively. We may not be literally slapped on the cheek but we may be insulted for various reasons. In other words, we do not stop from loving and serving others because we have been insulted or excluded from something. For example, the early Christians were expelled from the synagogues yet they continued living in Christ and sharing the gospel as God opened doors.

There are still places in the world where being a Christian is a threat to one's life in areas such as the Middle East, Asia, North Korea and Africa.

In North America, persecution is more subtle. For example, some Christian universities have lost their funding because of their ethical stand regarding sexual sins.

Christians reflecting integrity may lose promotions and other benefits because they do not go along with unethical practices in the workplace.

In our personal lives, it may be that family members reject us and insult us because we choose to be united with Christ and follow him as our Lord.

What Jesus is saying is that we are to continue doing good to them, as opportunities and circumstances present themselves in spite of their insulting and contemptuous attitudes towards us.

With the help of the Holy Spirit, empowered by him, we are not to be driven by our emotions or revengeful thinking but we are to be obedient to the word of God, as taught by Jesus while on earth.

In verse 29 and 30, Jesus goes on to say, "**and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either**", (*the long garment worn under the cloak next to the skin.*)

Does this mean that Jesus expected those people to go naked?

This is a figure of speech called hyperbole.

A hyperbole is defined in the following manner: **Hyperbole, from a Greek word meaning "excess," is a figure of speech that uses extreme exaggeration to make a point or show emphasis. ... Hyperboles are not comparisons, like similes and metaphors, but extravagant and even ridiculous overstatements, not meant to be taken literally.**

Examples of hyperbole: "He is running faster than the wind".

This bag weighs a ton.

My dad will kill me when he comes home.

She is as skinny as a toothpick. (from google.com/search)

Jesus is explaining generosity to those who are exaggerating in their demands.

Does it mean that we are to park our brains at the door. Sometimes people addicted to various substances asks or beg for money to buy food. When they are offered food, the refuse it because what they really want is money to satisfy their addiction.

God does not want for us to set aside wisdom.

The apostle Paul, in his writing clarifies generosity in difficult circumstances, **“17 Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. 19 Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” 20 To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” (Ro 12:17-21 ESV)**

“32 “If you love those who love you, what benefit 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 benefit 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, to get 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 is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. 36 Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.”
(Lu 6:32-36 ESV)

12

God has poured his love into our hearts. (“and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.” [Ro 5:5 ESV])

Our love, united to Jesus and as his followers must exceed the love of the world. In the world, people are willing to give to their own or people perceived not to be antagonistic or opposed to them.

As God’s people, we are expected to love these people from the heart as evidenced in our actions.

When we give to those who are opposed to us, our attitude as God’s people has to be very different than that of the world. It means giving sacrificially. When we give in such circumstances, we are not to expect anything in return. As we say in our modern world, our giving in such circumstances is without any strings attached.

As we give in those circumstances when people are hostile and unfriendly to us, we trust God to reward us not necessarily in this life but in the life to come.

This is a very high calling which is rooted in God because our human nature, centred in the self, does not want to act in the way Jesus instructs.

Acting as per Jesus instructions means that we see others, even those who bear some kind of hostility towards us, as valuable human beings created in God's image.

Sometimes, these situations may touch a whole church congregation and sometimes they touch us in our individual, private life.

As God's people, does that mean that we are never to turn to human governments for justice?

Romans 13 explains that God has appointed human authorities that are not to be resisted. Human governments are there to maintain some order through laws enacted by men. If we are robbed in our home, it is okay to call the police. We have the example of Paul who called on the human governments at the time to come to his help because he was a Roman citizen. Because he was a Roman citizen, the authorities at the time offered him protection.

Again, in all these situations, we need the wisdom of God.

The important thing is that we are not to harbour grudges, revengeful attitudes towards the perpetrators. If we have an occasion to offer help to those people, we will. However, it does not mean that if they have committed criminal actions that they will not face the consequences of the courts.

How we act toward our enemies and those hostile to us is different than how human authorities may act.

I would like to read to you a true story which occurred in the Soviet Union under the reign of Joseph Stalin when a Christian man was imprisoned in a gulag which was a forced labor camp (read from *The INSANITY OF GOD* by Nik Ripken pp. 189 and 193.

“I will call my next story Stoyan...

He began by talking about his parents. After the end of World War II, the communist began consolidating their power throughout his country. Eventually, they took control of the government. For decades, the authorities oppress believers. When Stoyan was 12, they imprisoned his Protestant pastor father. His father remained in custody for 10 years.

‘At first,’ he said, ‘they held him in a secret police place in our city.’ Every morning one of the guards would take some of his own human waste and spread it on the piece of toast that he brought to my father for breakfast.” [Page 189].

[Page 193] One Sunday, a few months later, an elderly woman asked the pastor for help. He did not know her. She told the pastor that she had a diabetic son—the son who had recently gone blind and was now close to death. He needed medication to manage his agonizing pain. Unfortunately, as a believer, there was no way for her to get that medication for her son. Stoyan’s father promised to try to help acquire the medication. And eventually he was able to do that.

When he took the medicine to the old woman’s apartment, she led him into the bedroom to introduce the pastor to her son. She was grateful for the medicine, and she wanted the pastor to pray for her son.

When Stoyan’s father entered the room, he got the shock of his life. The blind, invalid, middle-age man lying helpless in the bed before him was the prison guard who had spread human waste on the pastor’s breakfast almost every morning for the first nine months of his imprisonment.

“Oh, Lord! Do not let me fail you now!” Stoyan’s father prayed beneath his breath. Without identifying himself or saying anything that might give away the connection, the pastor granted his former tormentor forgiveness in his own heart, helped the old

woman administer the medicine to relieve the man's pain, prayed for her son, and then returned home awed by a new and deeper understanding of God's grace. In fact, he was so overwhelmed by God's grace that the experience change his life and the lives of his family members."

This is an example of the disposition we are to have towards our enemies as we are united to Christ being his temple through the Holy Spirit.

We are sons of the Most High, who is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. We are to be merciful even as our Father is merciful! We cannot do this on our own strength.

Let us pray for the faith and the love to express this love in action including to those who are not nice to us to the glory of God who enables us to express such love.