



**February 20, 2022**

Sermon Series

**Shining Forth: Seeing Jesus in a New Light**

This Week's Big Idea

**XXX?**

**Introduction:** *As Jesus continues addressing the crowds during his sermon, his words get more direct – and potentially more alarming. Last week we heard the list of “blessings and woes” that highlight God’s care for the most vulnerable and his warnings for those who think they have earned the comfortable lives they have. This week, Jesus challenges his disciples – and us – to actively participate in dispensing the healing, restoration, and hope that he offers.*

**Luke 6:27-38 NRSV**

[Jesus said:] <sup>27</sup>“But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup>bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. <sup>29</sup>If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. <sup>30</sup>Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. <sup>31</sup>Do to others as you would have them do to you. <sup>32</sup>“If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. <sup>33</sup>If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. <sup>34</sup>If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. <sup>35</sup>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. <sup>36</sup>Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. <sup>37</sup>“Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; <sup>38</sup>give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”

**Bible Conversation**

What do you think might have sounded the most radical to Jesus’ audience? What about to our modern ears?

V. 31 is often known as the “Golden Rule.” How do the verses that immediately follow it (v. 32-35) seem to take that rule to the next level?

When have you experienced the kind of generous return Jesus describes in v. 38 – where what you get back feels like way more than what you have given?

**Zumbro Lutheran Church**

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## Reflection by Pastor Shelley Cunningham

During Wednesday worship, we read Jesus' words (starting with v. 20, the beginning of the "Sermon on the Plain" in Luke's Gospel) as an interactive exercise. When people heard something they liked, or that made them feel good, they were supposed to touch their nose; when they heard something that didn't sit so well, or made them feel confused, guilty, angry, or uncomfortable, they were supposed to cross their wrists in an X.

It started off well - hearing Jesus' discussion of blessings for people who were hungry, hurting, or grieving is encouraging. We like that Jesus cares about people the world often overlooks. But the longer the reading went on, the more "X"s started to appear. These words were hard! *Give to anyone who asks, whether we think they deserve it or not. Don't defend yourself. Show love to people who make your skin crawl.* Talk about aspirational values! I imagine Jesus' hearers shifting uncomfortably and looking away as the reality of what he says God is calling them to do settles in.

And then, in the middle, is a verse that just might be the hardest of them all: "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful." We talk a lot about grace in church, as an undeserved gift that we receive from God. It's a nose-touching moment all the way. But mercy is different. We're the ones expected to dispense it freely - not just with words, but with actions. And the only way other people will experience it is through *our* extravagant generosity, genuine forgiveness, and vulnerable humility.

So, what do we do with verses like these? Selectively choose which ones we like? Or take the ones that are hardest for us to hear, ask God to help us live into them, and see how it changes us? Maybe that's how we experience God's mercy ourselves.

## Reflection Conversation

What do you do with passages of scripture that make you uncomfortable?

When have you witnessed (or experienced) an act of mercy?

### The 1 Question:

What gets in the way of your offering mercy to others? And what compels you to do so?

## Closing Prayer

Lord of unfathomable love, you call us to love our enemies, but some days it is hard enough just loving our friends! Yet when we let go of our need to be right or self-righteous, you show us a still more excellent way: your way of mercy and peace. Help us to humbly follow in that way of Jesus. Amen.

## Next Week's Bible Theme and Text:

Sermon Series: Shining Forth: Seeing Jesus in a New Light

Sermon: Transfiguration Sunday

Text: Luke 9:28-36

1 week.  
1 story.  
1 message.

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