

# LORD OF LOVE

CORE PASSAGE: LUKE 6:20-23,27-36

## CONTEXT

Jesus did amazing things. He healed the sick, made lame men walk, cleansed lepers, and cast out demons. He called ordinary, untrained, unlikely men to be His closest followers and told them He would use them to change the world. He confronted the religious leaders of the day, exposing their hypocrisy. When Jesus taught, He revealed things about the meaning of life, the hearts of men, and the nature of God that have echoed through history. Luke 6 contains the Beatitudes, some of Jesus's most wonderful, influential, and challenging teachings.

## KEY CONCEPT

**The way of Jesus is humble, sacrificial love that is countercultural.**

As you examine Luke 6:20-23,27-36:

- Meditate on Jesus's message that those who are persecuted are blessed.
- Recognize that Jesus calls us to love sacrificially, even to love our enemies.



## TIMELINE

Jesus Heals a Leprous Man  
(Luke 5:12-16)

Jesus Teaches About and Heals  
on the Sabbath (Luke 6:1-11)

John the Baptist Seeks  
Confirmation That Jesus Is the  
Messiah (Luke 7:18-35)

Jesus Forgives and Heals a  
Paralyzed Man (Luke 5:17-26)

**SESSION STUDY: Jesus Delivers His  
Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6:17-49)**

### Daily Readings

- Day 1:** Luke 6:1-16
- Day 2:** Luke 6:17-49
- Day 3:** Matthew 5:1-48
- Day 4:** Matthew 6:1-34
- Day 5:** Matthew 7:1-29
- Day 6:** Psalm 147



Scan this QR code  
to access this session's  
Scripture passages.

## PERSONAL PREPARATION

LUKE 6:20-23

### THE HUMBLE AND MEEK REJOICE IN THEIR HEAVENLY INHERITANCE.

*Underline the attributes of blessed people, and circle the rewards of blessed people.*

**20** Then looking up at his disciples, he said: Blessed are you who are poor, because the kingdom of God is yours. **21** Blessed are you who are hungry now, because you will be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, because you will laugh. **22** Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you, insult you, and slander your name as evil because of the Son of Man. **23** Rejoice in that day and leap for joy. Take note—your reward is great in heaven, for this is the way their ancestors used to treat the prophets.

#### VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

“While the world imagines progress, strength, and a grand future, the disciples know about the end, judgment, and the arrival of the kingdom of heaven, for which the world is not at all ready . . . That is why the disciples are rejected as strangers in the world, bothersome guests, disturbers of the peace.”<sup>1</sup>

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906–1945)

**Key Concept:** The way of Jesus is humble, sacrificial love that is countercultural.



Jesus's words in this passage likely are familiar to many. They are called "the Beatitudes," and they appear here in Luke and in Jesus's famous Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5–7. Many who study the Bible think these teachings were not something Jesus said once or twice but a compilation of challenging teachings that Jesus proclaimed many times. These words are at the center of the paradoxical message that Jesus shared with His disciples: In the kingdom of God, the things the world values do not matter and the things that seem like foolishness to the world bring about the blessed life.

**How are Jesus's teachings about what it means to be blessed different from what the world says?**

Jesus encouraged His disciples by saying that in the midst of hardship and persecution, they are still blessed: 1) because the kingdom of God is theirs, and 2) because their reward is great in heaven (Luke 6:20,23). Those who follow Jesus live in the hope of eternal life in His kingdom and endless blessing in the presence of God. That is the promise that Jesus came to make a reality. Once you understand and put your faith in that promise, navigating the difficulties of this life becomes possible.

Christians can walk through life without stress about possessions, sustenance, or survival because our eternity is already secure. We can weather trials of persecution in Jesus's name, knowing that unending joy is on the horizon. We can endure living as outcasts and being the world's laughingstock because we know our Father is pleased with us and will vindicate us in the end. We are called and commanded to "rejoice" because we know how the story ends (v. 23).

**Which blessing in this passage brings you the most comfort or joy?**

#### GOSPEL CONNECTION

Jesus ushered in a countercultural, upside-down kingdom that put love as the highest value. This love is shown ultimately in how He died for us that those who trust in Him might have life and not perish.

## PERSONAL PREPARATION

LUKE 6:27-36

### LOVING OTHERS, INCLUDING ENEMIES, IS THE WAY OF JESUS.

*Highlight each imperative (command) in the passage.*

**27** “But I say to you who listen: Love your enemies, do what is good to those who hate you, **28** bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. **29** If anyone hits you on the cheek, offer the other also. And if anyone takes away your coat, don’t hold back your shirt either. **30** Give to everyone who asks you, and from someone who takes your things, don’t ask for them back. **31** Just as you want others to do for you, do the same for them. **32** If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. **33** If you do what is good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. **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 be repaid in full. **35** But love your enemies, do what is good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High. For he is gracious to the ungrateful and evil. **36** Be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.”

#### THEOLOGY CONNECTION

**GOD IS LOVE:** To say that God is love is to say that God is the essence of love, or that perfect love both resides and resonates within God Himself—one God in three Persons. The imperfect love that human beings share between one another is a dim reflection, a sign that points to the perfect love that resides within God. The greatest act of love by God toward humans isn’t the giving of earthly goods but the giving of Himself in Christ so that we might become reconciled to Him.

**Key Concept:** The way of Jesus is humble, sacrificial love that is countercultural.

If you thought the passage before this was challenging, there's much more where that came from. Everyone loves the idea of love, but few people are ready to commit to the radical definition of love that Jesus taught. Jesus escalated His countercultural call when He taught His people how they are to show love. Everyone loves the people who love them, but the way of Jesus calls people to go further—Jesus called His disciples to love their enemies. They were to respond to hate with goodness. When struck, they were not to retaliate. When robbed, they were to give even more. They were to treat even the lowest of the low with the same dignity they wanted to experience. They were to give radically with no regard for gain or return. In short, they were to stand out for their radical love in a world that loves sparingly and conditionally.

**When have you seen a Christian stand out because of his or her radical love?**

How are Christians to live with such radical love, even for their enemies? The answer is rooted in our previous passage: because we know our reward in heaven is already secure (v. 23). Christians need not avenge themselves nor live with a survival mentality because Christ has already conquered every enemy, all evil,

and even death itself! There is nothing that an enemy can do to Christians that can threaten them in any meaningful way. Therefore, we are free to love even our enemies, praying that one day even they become our brothers and sisters in Christ by faith. Why are Christians to love this way? It proves that we are children of the Most High. This is the way our Father loves, and when we love like Him, it brings Him glory.

**Whom in your life do you find hard to love? How might Christ be calling you to radical love in that situation?**

#### VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

“We who hated and destroyed one another, . . . now, since the coming of Christ, live familiarly with them, and pray for our enemies and endeavour to persuade those who hate us unjustly . . . that they may become partakers with us of the same joyful hope of a reward from God the ruler of all.”<sup>2</sup>

—Justin Martyr (c. 100–165)

## HUMBLE LIVING AND LOVING OTHERS

Read Luke 6:20-23,27-36. Write down how the first set of verses can be connected to the second set.  
Then write down the blessings mentioned.

	HOW IT'S RELATED TO LOVING OTHERS	BLESSINGS
POOR		
HUNGRY		
WEEPING		
INSULTED		

How can the church be a place of sacrificial love for those in its community?

Where in your life do you need to show more love to your “enemies” or those who have offended you?

**Key Concept:** The way of Jesus is humble, sacrificial love that is countercultural.



## HEAD

What is a worldly standard or definition of love that you are tempted to believe?

### PRAYING SCRIPTURE

Read Psalm 147 and thank God for the things about Him you find “pleasant and lovely” (v. 1). Praise God knowing He restores His people, providing for them as we put our “hope in his faithful love” (v. 11).

### PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



## HEART

What spiritual disciplines could you focus on to grow your awareness of Christ’s love for you?



## HANDS

What is one specific step toward radical love that you can take this week?

