

SERMON NOTES: Sunday 23 February 2025
Text: Luke 6:27-38
Epiphany 7C

As Jesus gives his disciples a challenge.
He tells them:

“Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you.”

But, Jesus does not stop there.
He continues:

“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.”

The ultimate call from Jesus is:

“Do to others as you would have them do to you.”

Today Jesus is calling us to examine ourselves and ask:

Do I do unto others as I would like them to do unto me?

I assume we likely have varying responses.

“I try to live this way, however, there are some people who simply drive me crazy.”

Or I might say:

“I can do that with most people but there is one person who deeply wounded me, and I simply am unable to forgive that individual.”

Jesus then says:

“If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ‘Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned.

Jesus then states: “Forgive and you will be forgiven. The measure you give will be the measure you get back.”

These bluntly spoken words are difficult to hear.
They may challenge us at the deepest level of our being.

Most likely, each one of us has been wounded,
betrayed or rejected
at differing times in our lives.

If this person was a friend,
this wounding typically is amplified
since we trusted this individual.

However, each one of us also has wounded
or betrayed individuals in our life.

It is all part of our human condition.

When Jesus teaches us to love our enemies,
he doesn't mean that this person
should become one of my best friends.

Jesus knows that forgiving is first a decision.
As is for that matter, accepting forgiveness.

However, it also is a process.
The path to forgiveness may take a long time,
and rightly so perhaps.

But, we have to choose to take the first step.
No one can force us to take this step;
we are the only ones who can make this decision.

And in reality, it may take a long time
before we are ready
and willing to begin the process of forgiveness.

Jesus doesn't ask for miracles
and does he want "play" forgiveness.

He continually invites us
not only to free the individual who wounded us,
but also to free ourselves from
the pain, anger and hurt that binds us.

Jesus is patient and yet persistent.
He continually invites us and calls us to forgive.

Perhaps today we can take one small step in this direction.

PRAYER...

God of healing,
God of wholeness,
we bring our brokenness,
our sinfulness,
our fears
and despair,
and lay them at your feet.

God of healing,
God of wholeness,
we hold out hearts and hands,
minds and souls
to feel your touch,
and know the peace
that only you can bring.

God of healing,
God of wholeness,
this precious moment
in your presence and power
grant us faith and confidence
that here broken lives
are made whole.