

## Luke 6: 27-36.

V27-31. We can look at this passage on three levels. 1.) Jesus describing or predicting His demeanour leading up to the cross, 2.) Our response to persecution as per verses 22-23, or 3.) Advice for every day living. Which one do you think was behind Jesus's sermon?

A good rule of thumb; when a passage is a bit ambiguous, having two possible meanings, you'll find that often both meanings are appropriate; or in this case, all three.

When you read this passage, did you not think to yourself: Jesus, what planet are you on? This is not practical in the real world, is it? Overall, I read this passage as well as the sermon on the mount, in the context of, this is Jesus's advice on how you as a Christian should conduct yourself if you want to lead a perfect and sinless life that's pleasing to God. I read it as life goals, what you strive towards, as opposed to a series of commandments. Let's look at -

V27-28. Pray for that guy that's been bullying you at work or the bloke that has conned you out of your pension or burgled your house. Not a natural human instinct is it? But see Jesus's example to us all, Luke 23:34-38.

Treatment of enemies. In summary, be gracious to those who hate you. The context of this is a continuation of verses 22-23, but Jesus seems to be widening the scope to everyone who's a real pig to you, not just those who hate what you stand for and want to persecute you. This includes the violent and thieves.

So when you're woken in the middle of the night by unexpected noises downstairs, do you -

- a.) Grab a cricket bat, tiptoe downstairs and slap him across the head, or
- b.) Call the police, or
- c.) Go downstairs and show him where all the valuable stuff is?

Let's read Leviticus 19:8 & 18 and Proverbs 25:21-22. So Jesus is not giving us anything new here, what He's doing is just giving you some practical examples of God's law in action.

- a.) Can get you into a lot of trouble, he's probably better than you at violence and if you were to chase him down the street, catch up with him and slap him like they do in the films, you'll be charged with assault.
- c.) Jesus is not telling you to put yourself in danger.

So, probably b.) is the best option in this situation. But once the guy is put in prison, do you smugly smile to yourself, or shake your head in disbelief at how short his sentence is, or do you pray for him and maybe write to him in prison and try to befriend him and offer to help him when he gets out? There is a scheme similar called restorative justice, I wonder where they got that idea from?

Paul has a take on this in, Romans 12:17-21. When you die, we're told that there are two possible outcomes, you'll either go up into Heaven if you've believed in Jesus and accepted Him as Lord and Saviour, or you go down into Hell if you haven't. So where do these hot coals come in? Revelation 20:11-15. This tells you that the unbeliever is one day going to stand before a righteous but indignant Lord Jesus and explain why they did what they did. Remember, that will not happen if the perpetrator becomes a Christian, in which case Jesus takes his punishment, Isaiah 53:5-6, Romans 8:31-34.

So we know now, how to treat really bad and horrid people. But what about the obnoxious?

V30. The neighbour who borrowed your lawnmower last summer. Do you -

- a.) ask politely for it back, or
- b.) sneak out in the middle of the night and pour diesel on his lawn, or

C.) say nothing, and just replace it?

Note that Jesus's advice here does not prevent you from asking for it back, really nicely. But that lawnmower isn't worth making your neighbour into an enemy.

V34. But what are you going to say when he asks, can he borrow your strimmer? Imagine if Jesus ran a bank, your loan application would probably get turned down because you're too likely to repay it. Whilst that's a bit cynical, what Jesus is telling you is to put people before possessions.

So if a friend comes to you and wants to borrow money to pay his dealer, or bad things are going to happen to him, don't make your decision based upon the likelihood of repayment. But then if he comes back asking to borrow more to buy more drugs, then you'll know you're doing him no favours. Refusal is not based upon repayment but out of concern for his welfare. Rather, talk to him about rehab, pray with him, tell him of Jesus's release from slavery.

V32-33. Jesus is telling you that there's a reward for good deeds, or a credit, but only if the deeds are done with the right attitude. Matthew 6:19-21. So, what is the right and wrong attitude in this context? Remember, Matthew 18:29-35.

V35-36. This is a repetition of v 32-33, so underlining it's importance. Do good to the needy and there's a reward. Any idea what that reward might be? Can you imagine being in the audience, watching these rewards being dished out, but none are for you. Whatever the rewards might be, it's in addition to your title, son (or daughter) of God.

If we do do good works to the 'difficult' and obnoxious, we're mimicking God Himself.

Can you see how our Saviour is just so radical, and for some, just a bit too radical? And to answer the original question, yes, Jesus is on our planet, and though counter intuitive, maybe He's right.