

LOVE YOUR ENEMY

Scripture: Luke 6:27-31

January 5, 2021

Message:

**Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you;
Treat people in the same way that you want them to treat you.**

Luke 6:27, 31

My favorite Christmas decorations are the lights. At my house, we do not remove our decorations until after Epiphany. It gives a time to contemplate what it meant for Christ to come into the darkness of our world.

The subtitle for today's scripture in the Common English Version of the Bible is "Behaving as God's Children." When 2020 began last year, who knew that it would be a year like none other in my lifetime? It brought out the best of us and the worst of us (sometimes on the same day within the same person!) As I have struggled through the past year, I have searched for what God really wants of me. Over and over, I have arrived at: to love God and to love my neighbor. But in today's verses, Jesus adds "love your enemy." With a deadly virus, a divisive election year, and a year when we argued whether all children of God matter, being required to love our enemies sometimes feels like God is asking too much.

Jesus told us to "Do to others as you would have them do to you." All major religions have a version of this "Golden Rule," either positively: "do to others," or negatively: "don't do to others what you would not want done to you." In Luke, Jesus gives the blessings and woes and then tells us to love our enemies and do good to those who hate us. Pray for those who mistreat us. Turn the other cheek. The easiest words, that I learned in childhood (Do to others as you would have them do to you) and the hardest that I'm still learning (Love your enemies and pray for those who hate you) are all part of living as God's children.

I have no idea what this coming year will hold for me, my family, the church, or the country. I do know that the light has come into the world and there is no darkness that can hide it. I commit again to living as a child of God. Although not easy for me, when I am loving my enemies and doing good to those who hate me, I am being a child of God and a bearer of light.

Prayer: Dear Lord, you surround us with all that is good. We welcome your light into our dark lives. May you give us the power to love our neighbors and love our enemies, so that we may see you as you dwell among us in the light. Amen.

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