

Focus reading: Luke 6:27–38 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=415779705>)

Other lectionary readings: Genesis 45:3–11, 15; Psalm 37:1–11, 39-40; 1 Corinthians 15:35–38, 42–50

Theme: Be Holy

Throughout history people have seen the Bible as a rule book for living, but to do so is to miss the point. Jesus' listeners were familiar with the rules and with the wisdom of that day, which taught people how to live respectable, honorable, God-fearing lives. Jesus was familiar with the same laws and wisdom. He was a master teacher who attracted crowds. Here we find Jesus interpreting what was found in God's law and contemporary wisdom and applying those teachings to the time and circumstances of his listeners. He doesn't mince words or sugar-coat the commands. In fact, Jesus' words sound even more demanding than what had been heard and taught as God's law. But Jesus isn't focused on ethical behavior. He is focused on the presence and character of God. We must do more than love. We must love as God loves. We must love those who are unworthy of our love. We must give to those who are unable to give in return. We must show mercy because God is merciful. (vs. 36) We must treat others as God treats us. Jesus calls us to more than ethical living. Jesus calls us to be in relationship with God and to allow that relationship to transform our relationships with others.

NOTE TO PARENTS: Elementary aged children have a strong sense of "fairness" at this stage in their moral development. Jesus' words are asking us to do what is not fair. Fairness requires that we give to the one who gives to us, love those who love us, treat well those well treat us well. God does not act according to what is fair, but according to what is unconditionally loving and merciful. This is something worth exploring with your child.

WHO DO YOU LOVE?

Cut out paper hearts and draw pictures of those you love on the hearts. Do the people you have drawn love you? How much easier is it to love those who love us? Think of someone who is hard to love. What can you do to show love to that person without expecting anything in return?

PRAYER

Loving God,
Forgive us when we love only those who are easy to love.
Help us to love as you love us,
to give as you give to us,
to forgive as you forgive us,
without expecting anything in return.
Amen.