

# This Is Love

Love is reckless.

## Series Overview

We love love. There might not be anything that has inspired more songs, stories, works of art, acts of bravery (and stupidity) as love. And yet, for all our songs about love, there doesn't seem very much love in the world. Suspicion, fear, and hatred seem more the flavor of today, even in the church. In this series, we'll look at the power of love to remake an unloving world.

## Sermon Introduction

“Love your enemies.” Sounds like a terrible idea, doesn't it? Sounds crazy, even stupid. The only reasonable move is to love the people on your team, not the opposition. But love—at least the way God loves us—isn't reasonable or calculated. To love people God's way is to love people who are against you as though they're on your team, even when they aren't. It's a reckless kind of love.

**Passage: Luke 6:27–36 (NIV)**

Luke 6:27 “But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,

Luke 6:28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

Luke 6:29 If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic.

Luke 6:30 Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back.

Luke 6:31 Do to others as you would have them do to you.

Luke 6:32 “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ love those who love them.

Luke 6:33 And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ do that.

Luke 6:34 And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ lend to ‘sinners,’ expecting to be repaid in full.

Luke 6:35 But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.

Luke 6:36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

## **Personal Reflection and Group Discussion Questions**

1. Read the passage. Was there anything that surprised you? Was there anything you found confusing?
2. Do you think Jesus' teaching to love your enemies is a good idea? Do you think it's even possible?
3. Have you ever tried to love someone who was against you? How did it go?
4. Verses 29–30 sound like a good way to allow others to take advantage of you. According to v. 31, however, how does Jesus' advice (vv. 29–30) differ from simply being a pushover?
5. Revenge and vengeance are popular themes in many modern movies. Why do you think we tend to worship payback? Do you think that tendency is always and completely wrong? Why or why not?
6. In v. 35, Jesus promises that loving others brings great reward. What reward would be enough motivation for you to seek the good of someone who's hurt you? What do you think is the reward Jesus promises?

7. An early church leader wrote that, although unbelievers marvel at Jesus' command to love one's enemies, they mock and scoff at believers who love like everyone else. As a result, he says, Jesus' reputation is ridiculed (2 Clement 13:4). What do you think people would think if we were to love people the way Jesus says here?
  
8. Is there someone in your life who you're struggling to love because of how they've hurt or treated you? Do you think you could pray for their good today?

## **Prayer**

*Often a position of submission helps us physically connect with the spiritual reality that occurs. A posture of kneeling with open hands can demonstrate our willingness to submit to God's power.*

- Share with God any wounds you carry from people who've hurt you.
- Confess any bitterness or hatred you harbor toward them.
- Thank God that he loved you while you were still an enemy of God, Jesus died for you (cf. Rom. 5:8).
- Ask God to give you the strength to pray for the person who's against you and then pray for them.