

Serving is More than Generosity

Luke 6:27–36

October 18, 2026

Rev Joe Sanders

First Baptist Church Coshocton, Ohio

Jesus is always challenging us. His desire for our lives is that we would be more like Him day each that we are alive. This isn't easy for us. We are so unlike Him. We are so human.

Jesus makes a statement that pushes every person out of their comfort zone. The statement itself makes us ashamed. It causes us to question everything about ourselves and our relationships. Jesus always provides us with the way to fulfill His challenge.

Luke 6:27–28 (NIV) Jesus said, “But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.”

Followers and disciples of Jesus are challenged to serve with the heart of Jesus. The natural condition of your heart is to hate, curse and mistreat people. It is the natural condition of my heart. Thank you Jesus for continually working to transform me.

We live in a world that sends the message that selfishness is good and okay. This form of selfishness throws a temper tantrum like a three year old when it doesn't get it's way. There was a day when people just agreed to disagree. I don't think it's an over estimate for me to say that those who disagree have become enemies of one another. This is not a pretty picture, is it?

More and more people operate out of the natural condition of their heart. When I say this I'm not talking about that muscle which beats in my chest and pumps blood through my body. I'm referring to that part of us that controls our attitudes, our emotions, and influences our actions.

All the things we see and experience day after day contribute to a heart that is selfish. The more selfish the heart becomes, the more likely it is to respond by mistreating others, cursing, and hatred. Feed your heart junk and you will be filled with junk. Junk will come out of you regardless of what happens. Hang around selfish people and you will be more selfish. Live with cursing people and you will end up cursing. When your friends have an enemy that person will be your enemy. We see this happen all the time. A heart that is selfish breeds more selfishness.

Your heart is the home of your motivation, purpose, and enthusiasm. A heart that is motivated by selfishness and hatred will eventually be taken captive by cursing and abusing other people.

As disciples who make disciples of Jesus our motivation, purpose and enthusiasm are service, love, and grace. We are motivated by the love of God. We have a desire to serve one another. We are willing to be gracious. Jesus is our example. As we follow Him we see opportunities to serve others. We extend mercy when others fire off insults. We love others instead of making enemies.

This is the spiritual heart of Jesus. Whether we believe it or not every Christian has the spiritual heart of Jesus. Throughout our lives through the Holy Spirit, Jesus is refining you spiritually to be more like Him. People who are in the Kingdom of God live according to God's Kingdom rules and standards. That is we begin live like Jesus. The things happening in heaven begin to happen in us. We are attached to heaven. We are empowered by God to live as His kingdom people.

We are therefore, seeking to bring God's kingdom to all the world. We are seeking to help all those around us to live by faith in Jesus sharing the mercy of God. We are disciples striving to make more disciples.

Luke 6:29–30 (NIV) 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. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back.

There is only one way to live serving others with generosity, the mercy of God in Jesus Christ. By nature we don't have the grace of God. We don't turn the other cheek. We don't offer our coat. We expect something in return. We've been taught to slap back. We've been told to keep what is ours. We've got to get something in return.

The grace of God is to give and to give generously. God gave us the world to live in. God gives us what we need each day. God gave us His Son. God's Son gave us His life. This kind of generosity is beyond our comprehension. It has been said many times that no one can out give God.

Jesus is speaking the radical language of heaven. When heaven comes to earth and dwells within a person then God's grace becomes dominant. Every disciple of Jesus is dominated by God's grace. His grace comes into your thinking. Your beliefs and attitudes change. Your actions are transformed.

Disciples of Jesus who are making disciples are living and breathing a radical form of life. We are counter to our culture. We are gracious instead of violent. We give generously instead of being stingy. We don't hold onto wealth, but seek to help others. As disciples of Jesus our view of people around us is different. We see them from God's perspective. We see them with the eyes of Jesus.

Most of us don't want to be around people who abuse us. If you've been slapped on the cheek and turned the other cheek only to be slapped again it's hard to be gracious. If you've given your coat and your shirt and then asked to give more, you have a hard time being generous. When you give as a gift, expecting nothing in return, but more is asked again and again, it's hard to continue giving.

Only the grace of God in Jesus Christ can empower us. God in all of His grace gives again and again. God offers blessings that we don't deserve. Even the best disciples of Jesus still struggle to be giving. We don't like others to take advantage of God's grace. We don't think it's fair for people to keep asking and for us to keep giving.

As disciples of Jesus we fight against our nature and against the influences of this culture. We know Jesus is providing us with a better way to live. But our mindset is not always right. We fall back into those selfish ways. Jesus saw this in us. Jesus showed us a better way to live.

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

Can people see that you are living according the standard of love? Jesus is our role model, our example, but also our motivation. This verse has been labeled as the Golden Rule. Lots of people want to be treated this way. But not very many people can live this way. They can't live this way because of Jesus. They either don't know Jesus or they aren't allowing Jesus to transform their lives.

As I read the Bible I see Jesus living this way day after day. In scripture we see Jesus treating others the way He would want to be treated. If they were sick or had a disease, He healed them. If they were afraid He comforted and encouraged them. If they were sinners He forgave them. He lived out the

standard of God's love day in and day out. People noticed. People paid attention. People came looking for Him.

Nothing is new under the sun. Nothing has changed in our world. The clothes we wear, the cars we drive, the technology we use changes. But the love of God, the mercy of God, the grace of God never ends. People are always in need of love, mercy, and grace. I'd rather be known as the person who was generous than the grumpy old man. I'd rather people see me as gracious, merciful, and loving than the stingy grinch. I'd rather reflect Jesus than my old self, my old human nature.

I readily admit that I am not perfect. I know that I'm not always giving, forgiving and loving. By the power of the Holy Spirit and the grace of God I am being renewed each day. God is not treating me the way that I deserve, but the way that He wants me to treat others.

As your daily life reflects God's grace you will be loving and serving people. This could become part of our morning, get out of bed prayers. "Jesus, may my life reflect your grace today." By asking Jesus you will find that you have the opportunities to be gracious, merciful and loving. You will be presented with people who need to be shown grace, mercy and love. They may not be people for whom you think deserve God's gift. They may be obnoxious, bullies, selfish individuals. They may be hurting on the inside but angry on the outside. They be crying out for help but doing that while they're slapping you in the face. They may try to take everything from you, because their soul and their spirit is empty.

Jesus will give you everything you need. If you seek to do to others as you would have them do to you, Jesus will fill you with grace. You will find that you are willing to bless those who have hurt you. He will make you overflow with grace. You will discover that you are able to overlook the shortcomings of others. You will become more loving than you could ever imagine. You will give without ever expecting to receive anything in return.

This sounds amazing when I say, doesn't it? It sounds unbelievable, incomprehensible to think that you could be gracious, merciful and loving. When you trust Jesus with your life, every thought, word, and action you will reflect His grace, mercy, and love.

Luke 6:35–36 (NIV) 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. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

While we live in this world take a step beyond this world and live with faith and mercy. God has not yet judged the world, so we have the opportunity to share His mercy. Someday, the sin in this world will be judged. Those who are sinners will be condemned. But until that day you and I can be loving, merciful, and gracious like Jesus. We can do the unnatural, supernatural, kingdom of God activities.

We can be the people who live out the standards of heaven here on this earth. We can love, and give, and offer mercy and grace. By doing this we will be taking a step beyond what this world offers. We can pray for our enemies, that is any person who doesn't love Jesus. We can offer our time and energy to serve the people at work and our neighbors.

You don't have to be a part of this world and it's sinful actions, but you can step beyond the ideas and the actions of this world. As we live each day being different than the world, we will be pointing people to Jesus. We will be shining the light of Jesus. We will be making disciples for Jesus.

Here we are today, in the house of the Lord. We honor Jesus by giving thanks and praising His name. We glorify Jesus by trusting Him to handle the uncontrollable things in our lives. We bless Jesus and others as we are loving, generous, merciful, and gracious.

Calling on Jesus as your Savior and Lord is the only way to live your life beyond this world. You can go on and on day after day living for the things of this world. Or you can make a choice to call upon Jesus. Call out to Jesus. Speak His name. He will hear your cry and come to you.

Jesus knows all about you. He knows your strengths. He is aware of your weaknesses. He sees your mistakes and your sins. Jesus has been watching since the first people took a breathe. He waited until the perfect moment to do what no one could ever do. He lived His life faithful to God. He is loving. He speaks with grace. His actions are filled with mercy.

Even though there were people who rejected Him, accused Him and killed Him, Jesus loved them. He died to forgive them. He rose from the dead to take away their sin and give them a new life. He is waiting today for you to trust Him. Jesus is waiting for you to confess that you are not loving, merciful, and gracious like Him. He is waiting for you to give your life to Him.

Today, ask Jesus to forgive your sins. Turn your life over to Him. Trust Jesus to make you loving, merciful, and gracious to those around you.