

The True Discipleship Broadcast-1983-07 True Discipleship

by William MacDonald

William MacDonald teaches that true discipleship is marked by a supernatural love that extends even to enemies, emphasizing the importance of giving and mercy in the Christian life.

Duration: 23:06

Scripture: Luke 6:27-33, Luke 6:35

Topics: "True Discipleship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of love as a secret weapon in the arsenal of God. He explains that the disciples of Jesus were being taught the principles of the kingdom in order to be sent out for world evangelization. The speaker distinguishes the New Testament sense of love from the love portrayed in Hollywood, which is often lust. He highlights the need for believers to go beyond human affection and demonstrate love even to their enemies, as this is how they manifest themselves as sons of God.

Transcript

Luke, chapter 6, and we're going to begin reading today in verse 27, and I'll read to the end of the chapter. But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you. To him who strikes you on the one cheek, offer the other also, and from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold your tunic either.

Give to everyone who asks of you, and from him who takes away your goods, do not ask them back. And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise. But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.

And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return.

And your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the highest. For he is kind to the unthankful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your father also is merciful.

Judge not, you shall not be judged. Condemn not, you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

Given it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be put into your bosom. But with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.

And he spoke a parable to them. Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into the ditch? A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, brother, let me remove the speck that's in your eye, when you yourself do not see the plank that's in your own eye? Hypocrite.

First remove the plank from your own eye, then you will see clearly to remove the speck that's in your brother's eye. For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit.

The men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good, and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

But why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Whoever comes to me and hears my sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like. He's like a man building a house who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock, and when the flood came, the stream beat vehemently against that house and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.

Now, we mentioned yesterday that in this passage of Scripture, the Lord Jesus unveils a secret weapon in the arsenal of God, and you probably have all guessed by now that that weapon is love. This was the thing that was to characterize his disciples. Don't forget, he's teaching the disciples.

He's pouring into them the principles of the kingdom here, and he's going to send them forth in world evangelization, and the thing that he wants them to demonstrate more than anything else is love. However, when we think of love in the New Testament sense, we mustn't confuse it with the love of Hollywood, which is better known as lust. Lust cannot wait to get.

Love cannot wait to give. Lust has never built lasting relationships. True love always does.

The love that the Lord Jesus is speaking about here is a supernatural love. It's not something that an unsaved person can do at all, and it's not something that a Christian can do in his own strength. It's something that requires supernatural life.

In that respect, I say again, if my life is no different from my neighbor's, then what good is Christianity? Unless I'm demonstrating this otherworldly love, I'm no different from the unsaved about me. One of the things that distinguishes this love from all other loves is that it goes out to enemies as well as to friends, because that's what Jesus said here, love your enemies. Now, that's not easy, is it? In fact, it's quite unnatural to love your enemies, but it makes a tremendous impression upon the world, a tremendous impact upon the world.

I've often used an illustration of this love that we're reading about here. One night when I was at Emmaus, and Dr. T. E. McCulley was the chairman of the board. He used to come and talk to me a lot.

One night he was in my apartment, and we talked about the school and about problems and triumphs, and then we got down on our knees to pray. Dr. McCulley was the father of Ed McCulley, one of the fellows who gave his life in Ecuador, reaching the Auca Indians. And we got down on our knees and prayed, and as we prayed, Dr. McCulley, his mind went to Ecuador, where his son, who had never caused him an anxious moment, had been slain by Auca spears.

And he began to pray, and he said, Lord, help me live long enough to see those fellows saved who killed our boys, that I may throw my arms around them and tell them I love them, because they love my Christ. Let me say that again. Lord, let me live long enough to see those fellows saved who killed our boys, that I may throw my arms around them and tell them I love them, because they love my Christ.

And I'll never forget, when he got up on his knees, there were rivulets of tears going zigzag down his face. And I thought that night I had seen a practical illustration of what the Lord Jesus is speaking about here in Luke chapter 6. And God did let him live long enough. As you know, the gospel went into those.

And some of those men, who were the guilty murderers of his son, professed faith in Christ, and he went down there and threw his arms around them and told them he loved them. It's wonderful, isn't it? Really wonderful. And that really happened.

Love for enemies. Jesus said, Bless those who mistreat you. Makes you think of the Lord Jesus on the cross, doesn't it? Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

And not very long after that, a man named Stephen, being stoned to death, that he said, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. What a wonderful demonstration to the world to see Christians dying for the cause of Christ and praying for their murderers. A wonderful thing.

The world can never forget. Jesus said, in effect, Turn the other cheek to him who strikes you, and the one cheek offer the other also. That's a marvelous thing.

He hits you on the cheek. You turn the other cheek, and you smite him on the heart. He doesn't know how to react to that.

He says, if he wants your suit coat, give him your overcoat. One of the reasons that makes it so hard for us to obey the New Testament is we have so much. In fact, a missionary came to me once after I was teaching some of this on discipleship, and he said, you know, if we really followed the teachings of the Lord Jesus, it would save us from being liars on the mission field.

And I said, what do you mean? Well, he said, you know, the people there are so poor, and they see you go down to the local post office or the bank, and they can see you writing out a check and getting money for it. And then they come to you and say, you know, would you give me so much? And you say, well, I'm sorry, I don't have it to give to you. He said, if we really followed the teachings of the Lord Jesus, it would save us from being liars on the mission field.

I never forgot that. But it's wonderful to hold a very light touch, to have a very light touch on material things. If he wants your suit coat, give him your overcoat.

How many of us would really do that? But that's what the Lord Jesus said. Love manifests itself in giving. The poet said, Love ever gives, forgives, outlives, and ever stands with open hands, and while it lives, it gives.

For while it gives, it lives. This is love's prerogative, to give and give and give. It's very clear from this part of the Word of God that the ministry of the disciples of the Lord Jesus is to be a giving ministry.

It's very easy in the work of the Lord and among the assemblies to develop an attitude, What's in it for me? What will I get out of this? The world owes me a living. The assemblies owe me a living. It's very easy to think of things coming to you all the time.

But it's the very opposite of what Jesus taught. And of course, it's much worse than the evangelical world, where in the seminaries you're given courses on pastoral theology and you're taught how to draw up a contract with the church when you go there, and how to protect your financial rights, and how to be sure that any income you get from funerals and weddings is not included as part of your compensation for the work, and how to have the health benefits and all the rest. Give me.

Give me. Give me. Jesus said, Give to everyone who asks of you.

And from him who takes away your goods, do not ask them back. Now, I would say this, that there are restrictions on this. Give to everyone that asks of you.

There are people who ask of me that I wouldn't give to. You say, well, then you're not obeying the word. Yes, I think I am.

If a man comes to me, and he's got a terrible smell of alcohol on his breath, and he asks me for money, I'm not going to give him money. Because I don't think the Lord would ever have me do anything that would harm a person. Or if he comes to me smoking a cigarette, and he wants a handout, I won't give him a handout to buy cancer, buy the carton.

If he says he's hungry and wants food, I'll take him into a restaurant and order the food for him. I would do that. Sometimes they get very angry for some reason when you offer to do that.

Because it isn't really food they want. It's more drink, more cigarettes, more something like that. I would never give to anybody if I thought in giving it would harm him.

There are some cases where you can't be sure. In such a case, give. Err on the side of grace.

But by all means, carry on a giving ministry. It says, Just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise. This is probably one of the most revolutionary verses in the Bible.

It's marvelous how we can read it and be comfortable, isn't it? It's marvelous how it has become so much a part of our mind. We know the verse. We know it by heart and we can lie down and sleep peacefully beside it.

But it's tremendously revolutionary. Just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise. But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them.

And that's true. It doesn't take divine life to love those who love you. And it doesn't distinguish you from the ungodly.

I mean, that gangster, that member of the mafia in River Forest, Illinois, comes home at night and he opens his front door and his little black-haired girl runs up to him and he sweeps her up in his arms and he hugs and kisses her. He loves her. Sure, of course he loves her.

It doesn't take divine life to do that. That's just human affection. And that's what the Lord Jesus is saying here.

If we're going to make a mark for him in the world, we have to go beyond that. Even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same.

It doesn't take divine life to do good to those. This reciprocity is common in the world. It's the way much of business is carried on.

I mean, you do a favor for me, I'll do a favor for you. You send business my way, I'll send business your way. This is life today in the secular world.

But it isn't Christianity. He said if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? And the thought is even household finance. Any of these lending companies, any bank will do that.

They'll lend to you hoping to receive back again. That is not distinctively Christian. We have to go beyond that.

Even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. What it's saying is hold a very light touch. Jim Elliott said, Lord, loose the tension of the grasping hand.

It's an amazing thing, isn't it? We're born into the world, that little baby, her fist is just like that, isn't it? Born into the world. Grasping, grasping, grasping. When we leave the world, it's quite relaxed.

The tension is gone and we go out empty-handed. That's what Job said. Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither again.

To make an impact for Christ, we have to love our enemies, do good to them, and lend without any thought of repayment. If we do that, there will be two results. One, your reward will be great.

Two, it says you will be sons of the highest. Verse 35. Your reward will be great and you will be sons of the highest.

Now, I think we should pause here to say that this isn't how you become sons of the highest, but this is how you manifest yourself as sons of the highest. Very important to see that. It sounds from Luke 6 that that's the way you become a son of God, but that's not true.

It's how you manifest yourself as sons of God. You become a son of God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, but the people of the world can't see your faith. They're saying, I'm from Missouri.

Show me. Or, that's what James says, in effect, too. James says, I can't see your faith.

I can see your works. Show me your faith by your works, then I'll believe. And the verse says, for he's kind to the unthankful and the evil.

And God is. Isn't that wonderful? He's good to the ungrateful and to the wicked. He causes his sun to shine on all indiscriminately and the rain to fall on the farms of all kinds of men.

And the point is, we should be like that in our dealings with people and with our fellow men. Therefore, being merciful, just as your Father is merciful, that means indiscriminately. You know, even in Christian work, it's easy to spend your time with people from whom you think you can get something, even in the way of applause or acclaim or popularity or publicity.

It's wonderful to be able to spend your time in ways that nobody will ever know but God. The unknown and the unappreciated of the world. Sometimes they're the very best.

Then in verses 37 to 42, the Lord Jesus tells the disciples, Now, I don't want you to go out with a critical, censorious spirit. That gives a very bad representation of Christianity. And you know there are people like that.

There are people like that. They have the gift of criticism. It's not a gift of the Holy Spirit, but they got it anyway.

And they can criticize anything and usually do. Well, it's a bad business for one who's in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ to be always critical. It reminds me of the old man that went and slept under a tree outside the village.

And while he was there, some of the young pranksters in the village came and they spread green cheese all over his beard. And when he woke up, everybody smells of green cheese. Not himself.

Everybody else smells of green cheese. That's the way some people are. Everybody else smells of green cheese.

You know, I'm okay. You're so-so. And so the Lord Jesus says, Judge not, you shall not be judged.

Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Now, judge not that you be not judged.

A lot of people who don't know very much about the Bible know that verse. And no matter what you say, they say, well, judge not that you be not judged. You know, there's a man that just killed his wife in cold blood and they say, well, judge not that you be not judged.

Actually, there are certain things in the Bible we have to judge. And there are certain things we mustn't judge. And the Bible itself explains this.

So, we're not really contradicting the word, we're just amplifying it. For instance, we must judge teachers and their teaching by the word of God. You have to do that.

It says that. It says let the prophets speak two or three and let the others judge. Doesn't it? There's a situation we have to judge.

You listen to the radio. Sometimes I think that's fun to listen to the radio. And you hear a voice for the first time.

And how long do you have to listen before you know it's the voice of God speaking through a man or it's a false voice? Kind of fun, you know. You judge. You have to judge.

You're supposed to judge in a case like that. You have to judge whether other people are true believers or not. Oh, don't judge, you know.

Who are you to judge? Then how could you obey the scripture that says be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers? If you don't judge, how could you ever obey that verse? Say, well, I mustn't judge. I'll marry her anyway. Well, you'd better.

You'd better judge. Find out whether she knows the Lord or not. We have to judge disputes between believers.

Paul got after the Christians in Corinth for not doing that. We have to judge sin in our own lives, don't we? There's another case where we have to judge. If we judged ourselves, we'd not be judged of the Lord.

It says in 1 Corinthians 11. And the local church certainly has to judge extreme forms of sin. It says, wherefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

I can hear somebody go, oh, judge not that you be not judged. Well, the Bible tells you to judge there. And then I think we have to judge whether men are qualified to be elders and deacons, don't we? In other words, the Bible sets forth the qualifications of elders and deacons, and the people of God are responsible to judge whether men have these qualifications or not.

But there are some areas where we must not judge. Where? Well, for instance, we should never judge a person's motive. Why? Because we can't read motives.

Only God knows motives. Why a person is doing a certain thing. You say, ah, the only reason he does that is so that men will see him.

Well, you don't know. You really don't know that that's the only reason he's doing it. Actually, his motives might be quite pure, and yet they might have that appearance, you know.

As far as that's concerned, I think that we have to realize that everything we do is stained by sin. It says, required and steward that a man be found faithful, judge nothing before the time. It's all going to be brought out before the Lord.

And who art thou that judges another person's service? And then it says in Romans 14 we shouldn't judge a brother with a weak conscience. We shouldn't look down our theological noses superciliously at him just because he thinks it's wrong to eat pork or something like that. Matters of moral indifference.

And we mustn't judge by outward appearance. We mustn't judge people by outward appearance or show respect to persons. I think when I get to heaven that'll be one of the greatest regrets of my life.

Judging according to appearances instead of judging righteous judgment. Terrible thing. So, there are areas where we should judge and there are areas where we shouldn't judge.

And the scriptures make them plain. Well, what did Jesus mean when he said judge not? Well, I think he meant don't go around with that critical spirit. Finding fault with everything.

Go out with a positive spirit. Present a positive Christ to the world. Don't go around condemning everything.

There are segments of the evangelical church and they're in the government. You say it's black, they'll say it's white and vice versa. And I would warn you against building your ministry on that basis.

You know why? Because if you do you'll attract people just like that. I don't like it. If you build your ministry on a censorious, critical basis attacking Billy Graham, attacking everybody else that comes on.

There are people that just have that kind of a personality. They're not the most pleasant people in the world to live with. And that's the kind you attract.

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