

Handful on purpose
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Subj: BE MERCIFUL AS YOUR FATHER.

Text: Luke 6: 27-38

Int.- True charity is the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. Love is of God. God is love.

"He that loveth not knoweth not God." These words of our Lord, "Love your enemies," "Bless them that curse you," come with great force. This Great Teacher come from God rightly divides the word of Truth.

I. The Precepts. - These Heaven-made laws laid down here for us by Jesus Christ are mirrors that reflect the merciful character of our Father in Heaven, and their purpose is to help us into his likeness. These precepts touch us in a fourfold manner.

1. Concerning Loving. "Love your enemies." Of course this does not imply that we should not love our friends, but that our love should be God-like, who, while we were yet sinners, gave his Son to save us.

2. Concerning Blessing. - "Bless them that curse you." You will bless the reviler by reviling not again. The apostle Paul obeyed this command to the letter. (1 Cor. 4:12 "And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:")

3. Concerning Prayer. - "Pray for them that despitefully use you." To be able to pray for your enemies in the Spirit of Christ is a notable victory for the grace of God. Christ gained such a victory when he prayed, "Father forgive them they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34)

This grace abounded also in Stephen.

(Acts 7:60) "And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep."

4. Concerning Giving.- "Give to every man that asketh of thee"

This does not teach that we are to give all that every man may ask of us, but to every person in need, we are to give to his needs. This is the ensample of our Father. A drunkard may ask you for a dollar, but instead of that you give him a word of warning. If giving to the poor is not an evidence of the love of God dwelling in us, then withholding is a certain proof that it does not have the love of God.

1 John 3:17 "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

II. The Examples. - The mercifulness of our Father in Heaven is here contrasted with the natural kindness of ungodly men. The world loves its own. But our mercifulness is not to be like the sinner's but like the Father's.

1. Let not your Love be like the Love of Sinners. "If you love them that love you, what merit is there in that? For even godless people love those that love them." The love of the unregenerated heart only goes out to those who love in return. The love of God embraces even those who hate him without a cause.

2. Let not your works be like the works of sinners. "If you do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. The ungodly will show kindness to those who are kind to them. But our Father is kind even to the unthankful. "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful."

3. Let not your GRACE be like the grace of sinners. "If ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners to receive as much again." But our Father gives even to the evil. Your righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, because it is not ye that act, but the Spirit of the Father which is in you. (Matt. 10:20)

III. THE PROMISES. - If the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, so that we can love our enemies and do good to them, hoping for nothing from them, then your Father which seeth in secret will reward you openly.

1. Your Reward shall be Great.

2. Ye Shall Be The Children of the Highest.

"Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father ~~is~~ also is merciful."