

Love Your Enemy... Love Everyone

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Date: 24 October 2021

Preacher: Linda Barczykowski, CLM

[0 : 00] Two people Hangvida I pray and pray In the beginning I happen to us And to speak Let's try of Whitfield Little ■ Truth or The Maybegrgraduate Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Good morning, church. Good morning. Welcome to worship here at Pendleton Center, and welcome to those who are viewing online this morning. For those who don't know me or may not remember me, my name is Linda Barzikowski.

[2 : 44] I am a certified lay minister here at Pendleton Center. A lot of our pastors were busy with other things this weekend. Pastor Cassie is away.

Pastor Scott had some commitments with his Buffalo Church. And Jennifer is at her aunt's funeral in California. So I'm honored to be able to lead you in worship this morning.

I invite you to share with each other the peace of the spirit. Peace be with you. Peace be with you. Peace be with you.

I invite you to hear these words.

Love is an all-or-nothing proposition. Only by loving our enemy as well as our friends do you live as children of the Most High.

[4 : 00] Come and learn the ways of life. Love your enemies and do good to those who hate you.

Bless those who curse you and pray for those who persecute you. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

Come and learn the ways of life. Amen. Good morning.

Good morning. Good morning. The first line of our hymn this morning says, Where charity and love prevail, there God is ever found. So it's a great reminder that in the hard things that we have to go through in life, we are never alone.

I invite you to stand as we sing our first hymn. Where charity and love prevail, there God is ever found.

[5 : 32] God is ever found. But here together by Christ's love, by love are we thus bound. For if we know each other's words as we our faults confess.

God is ever found. And let us love each other well in Christian holiness. God Guide for heaven.

Here in the heart of our lives are we thus ■ His frickin' boys and Dear- You may be seated.

You may be seated.

You may be seated.

[7 : 37] We'll reflect on that as we hear a piece from our bell choir. . . .

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..... Thank you.

[10 : 35] Thank you.

Heavenly Father, you are good. Your goodness to us is overflowing.

We return to you our gifts, our tithes, our offerings, our gifts of finance, our gifts of talents, and our gifts of time.

We pray that you take these gifts, Lord, and multiply them. Use them, Lord, to further your kingdom here on earth.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Please be seated. As we go to the Lord in prayer this morning, does anybody have anything that they'd like to lift up?

[12 : 05] Any special concerns today? I'd like to keep the family of the young man that drowned in the river last week or so in our prayers.

Let's turn to the Lord. Gracious and holy Father, we do thank you for all that you do in our lives, for being our counselor, for being our guide, for extending us mercy and grace.

Lord, there's so many hurting in this world. Whether they're suffering from illness, whether they're suffering for finances, whether they're suffering mentally, relationships, Lord, we just lift them up to you.

We ask that you bring your healing hand on those that need it. We ask that you bring your healing hand on those that need it.

Let's pray for each one of us here, each one of us watching with your Holy Spirit and your Holy Presence. Let us hear today the message you have for us.

[14 : 01] And Lord, we take a moment to lift up in silent prayer the things that haven't been spoken. Lord, we ask that you bring your healing hand on those that need it.

Lord, we ask that you bring your healing hand on those that need it. Lord, we ask that you continue to be with us.

Continue to bless this worship. Help us to remember that this time with you is about you, not about us. Lord, we ask that you bring your healing hand on those that need it. We ask that you bring your healing hand on those that need it.

We ask that you bring your healing hand on those that need it. We ask that you just again fill this place, Lord, and fill each of us as we continue to praise and worship your great name.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. And now we'll hear from the word of the Lord. Good morning.

[15 : 18] Our scripture reading this morning is from the book of Luke, chapter 6, verses 27 through 38. But to you who are listening, I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back.

Do to others as you would have them do to you. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them.

And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. 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. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back.

[16 : 30] Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. God says, just love everybody.

I'll sort them out later. Amen. Only kidding. But the message that Jesus is giving us really is that simple.

[17 : 42] But if I stopped there, it wouldn't be much of a sermon, and I figure I better keep going. While I was preparing this sermon, I read a story about a man who had reached his 100th birthday.

And he was being interviewed. And the person interviewing him asked, what are you most proud of? And he said, well, I don't have an enemy in the world.

The person interviewing him said, that's beautiful. That's so inspirational. He said, yep, I've outlived every last one of them. Isn't that, even as Christians, how we sometimes think of our enemies?

Maybe like this guy, we're hoping to outlive them. We ignore them. We avoid them. Maybe in the deepest, darkest corners of our hearts and our minds, we're hoping they get theirs.

Maybe you talk about them, gossip about them behind their backs. Maybe you let everyone know when they did something wrong and pray that God will punish them. Maybe you laugh or rejoice when they fail at something.

[19 : 01] Maybe when you disagree with that person, you try to get people on your side. It seems like there's a lot of that going on these days, doesn't it? And it seems like as Christians, we're mad and arguing about everything these days.

We're mad about rights movements. We're mad about the crime rates. We're mad about election results. We're mad about mask and vaccine mandates, or in some cases, mad because we feel there aren't enough mandates.

We're mad because political parties can't agree on anything. Mad, mad, mad. Wasn't that a movie years ago? It's a mad, mad, mad, mad world. But how does that reflect on Christ?

When we so-called Christ followers are always mad or hating on our enemies. It's no wonder Christianity is on a decline. People see us as angry and judgmental.

If you look at the scriptures for today, Jesus is attempting to turn our thinking upside down. I love the message version of the Bible sometimes.

[20 : 18] The beginning of the scripture, the message puts it this way. To you who are ready for the truth, I say this. Love your enemies. Let them bring out the best in you, not the worst.

When someone gives you a hard time, respond with prayer for that person. This really is one of the most difficult commands that God gives us.

And it really is a command. Jesus isn't saying, well, you know, I think it would be really cool if... He's not saying, it would be really nice if...

No. He says, just do it. Love everyone. Treat everyone with respect.

And keep in mind that contrary to common belief these days, our enemies are not the people that we disagree with. Our enemies are not the people that disagree with our social media posts or put that little mad face emoji on there.

- [21 : 29] Our enemies are not the people affiliated with a different political party. Someone once had the audacity to tell my parents that my younger sister could not be a Christian because she belonged to the wrong political party.

It's like, really? Our enemies are not the people that we get upset with because we don't like it when they speak God's truth to us.

Just because we disagree with someone doesn't mean that they are our enemies. We're going to disagree with people. With family members. Maybe even people sitting right next to you.

But that doesn't make them our enemy. If you look at the scriptures, an example of this is Paul and Barnabas. They weren't enemies. They just couldn't agree on how to move forward with their ministry and who to take with them.

So they separated their ways. And God still used them both. And they still loved each other. They weren't enemies. They were enemies. Our enemies are the people who set out to hurt you on purpose.

- [22 : 36] Those who are harboring bitterness against you. They're seeking to do evil against you. Looking at the Old Testament, King Saul was David's enemy.

He was trying to kill him. These are the people we need to love and pray for.

When David had the chance to kill King Saul, he didn't do it. Cut off a little bit of his robe to prove to him, vengeance isn't mine. And believe it or not, when you change your attitude, when you turn your attitude towards enemies upside down, you yourself will start to heal.

And your relationship with God will grow. Jesus goes on to say, if someone slaps you in the face, stand there and take it. If someone lashes out at you, don't retaliate.

Though we should turn the other cheek, it doesn't mean we have to go back for more. Don't keep putting yourself in that same situation. Just because we're to love and pray for our enemies doesn't mean we have to hang out with them on a regular basis and continue to take that abuse.

- [24 : 03] That would just be silliness, right? Our scripture goes on to say, if someone grabs your shirt, gift wrap your coat and give that to them too.

If someone takes unfair advantage of you, use the occasion to practice the servant's life. No more payback.

Live generously. Jesus is telling us to always respond kindly and lovingly in all situations.

As it said earlier, to do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Or, do unto others what you would have God do unto you. Puts a little different spin on it, doesn't it?

Again, in the message version, it says, here is a simple rule of thumb for behavior. Ask yourself what you want people to do for you.

- [25 : 02] Then grab that initiative and do it for them. If you only love the lovable, do you expect a pat on the back? Run-of-the-mill sinners do that.

If you only help those who help you, do you expect a medal? Garden-variety sinners do that. If you only give for what you hope to get out of it, do you think that's charity?

The stingiest of pawnbrokers does that. It's easy to love the people we like. It's easy to help those who will someday help you in return.

It's easy to lend to someone who you know has the means to pay you back. But even the wicked do that. Jesus says, I tell you, love your enemies.

Help and give without expecting a return. And I promise you'll never regret it. Live out your God-created identity the way your Father lives towards us, generously and graciously.

[26 : 23] Even when we're at our worst, our Father is kind. So you be kind. Jesus is commanding us to love, to help, to show mercy, to forgive those who have done us wrong.

It doesn't mean necessarily either that you're going to like the person. Think about it this way. We have one word for love. But in Greek, they had many different words for love.

And what Jesus is referring to here isn't the emotion of love, it's the action of love. And Jesus isn't asking us to do anything that he hasn't done himself.

And he tells us that our reward will be great, that we will be children of the Most High because he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Think about that for a minute.

We are all brothers and sisters in Christ, adopted into God's family, right? Jesus is God's son. He is the child of the Most High just as we are when we're adopted into God's family.

[27 : 45] Jesus was kind to the wicked. What's the best example of this? Judas, right?

Jesus knew Judas was going to betray him. But did it change the way he treated Judas? Nope. Jesus never treated Judas any differently than he did any of the other disciples.

Jesus never slighted Judas. He never talked badly about Judas. During our last sermon series, we heard that Jesus even washed the feet of Judas.

Jesus never gossiped about Judas. When Judas wasn't around, Jesus didn't look at the other disciples and say, OMG, if you only knew what Judas was going to do.

No. When Judas wasn't around, Jesus didn't say, you will never guess who's going to turn on me for 30 stinking pieces of silver.

[28 : 53] No. Jesus treated Judas just like he treated all the others, with love, respect, and kindness.

Jesus goes on to say, do not judge and you will not be judged. Do not condemn and you will not be condemned. Quite a few years ago, I was talking to my son, Scotty, and the subject of judging came up.

And he was talking about a kid that he had gone to school with that had been arrested for the third time for the same thing. And of course, social media, everybody's bashing him, bashing this kid.

And Scotty said, you know, Mom, I'm not going to join in on all the slamming of him on social media. We all make stupid decisions and bad choices in our lives.

Don't we, though? I bet every single person sitting in this room or watching online has done something they regret, something that others have used to cast judgment on you.

[30 : 08] Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Some of you remember back in 2012 when the church was robbed of its offerings. Mary, I know you remember.

Who remembers that? Christmas Eve offerings were stolen from the church. I remember hearing that someone made the comment, if I ever find out who did it, I could never forgive them.

And I'm thinking, really? Isn't that what this whole Christ-following thing is about? Isn't that what we, as individuals, as a church, are called to do?

who? It actually prompted me to write my first sermon about forgiveness. But that's a different sermon. Literally, that's a different sermon. Anyway, do you think God says that about us when we sin against Him?

Do you think He sits there and says, I could never forgive Linda for what she just did? I certainly hope not. When I ask forgiveness, I hope it's there.

[31 : 19] And you might be saying, but you have no idea what so-and-so did to me. No, I don't. You're right. But I do know from personal experience how difficult it is to forgive when you have a wound so deep that you don't think it's ever going to heal.

Some of you know I was married before. Scotty's dad, he went away with the Air Force for eight weeks and met another woman. Left me.

Hindsight, best thing that ever happened, but that's beside the point. When he came home, he did some other things to my older son that many people would consider unforgivable.

Suffice it to say, I promised my lawyer I wouldn't hurt him. But it took a long time for me to come to forgiveness. One thing about forgiveness that you have to remember is it doesn't always mean that you're going to be able to look that person in the eye and say, I forgive you.

In my case, he didn't understand why I made such a big deal out of what happened. So he's never going to apologize. And if I were to go up to him and say, you know what, I forgive you, he'd look at me like I had three heads.

[32 : 43] It would mean nothing to him. Sometimes forgiveness means finding peace in God and letting it go.

When you let it go, you might find yourself praying for that person. That's what happened to me. One day I was saying my prayers and I realized that I was praying for my ex and the woman he had left me for.

Praying for them, praying for their souls. When I came to have that forgiveness, when I let it go and gave it to God, when I started praying for them, that's when my relationship with God took off.

And the same can happen for you. One last story that illustrates what it means to love your enemies. Don't know how true this is, but I did read it somewhere.

There was once a man who had a really large dog and he was really tired of this really large dog. So we decided to take the dog out in a boat and throw it in the river, try to drown it.

[33 : 54] We got the dog in the boat, got the dog into the water, but the dog kept trying to get back in the boat. As he was trying to beat the dog back into the water, he himself fell overboard.

That dog grabbed the man by the collar and swam him to shore and saved his life. That is what Jesus is talking about.

When someone tries to do you harm, do them good in return. In Romans 12, Paul says, do not overcome evil with evil, but overcome evil with good.

I want to share a song with you. Nancy found it online this week. And it's to the tune of one of our hymns. So you'll probably recognize the tune. But the lyrics were written by a woman named Carolyn Winfrey Gillette.

And it's recorded by Joanne Nish and the Sparks United Methodist Church. I'm not sure where that is, but they did give permission for other churches to use this video during their worship services.

[35 : 07] But it fits so perfectly with our scripture this week. As you watch this video, I invite you to sing along or just sit and reflect on the words, however the spirit moves you.

Adrienne? Christ, your words of love confound us even as we give you praise for the lessons that you teach us seem so far from this world's ways.

How can we love those who hate us? How can we love enemies? What of people who abuse us?

How can we love even these? Make us mindful love is action, not a feeling that uplives.

love can make us love can make us in the world's lives.

[36 : 30] In each daily situation, love's the greatest of all gifts. love can make us love can make a people great.

Love can make a people great. Faced with those who seek to hurt us, make us confident and free. You don't call us to be helpless, but to stand with dignity.

Lord, when others are demanding, may we know they matter more. In our money or possessions, may we share, not keeping score.

If we love just those who love us, where's the giving? Where's the grace? Even sinners try to do this, they have friends that they embrace.

May we do, Lord, love to others, as we have them also do. You have shown us love is action, may we love and make things new.

[37 : 57] May we love and make things new.

Do you have an enemy? Or even someone you don't care much for? Love on them. How do you develop this love?

Do good for them. Pray for them. As you do good for your enemies, the amazing miracle of divine love will blossom in your heart for them.

It did for me. I realized that even if I don't like someone very much, that doesn't mean I don't want to see them in glory. It doesn't mean I don't want to see that person saved.

I loved my ex at one time. I don't want to see him spend his eternity in hell. Unlike the man at the beginning of this sermon, don't be focused on outliving your enemies but on outloving them.

[39 : 11] This is what Christ has done for us and what he wants us to do for others. be a reflection of Christ.

Let his light shine through you to all, to friend and foe. Love on those who have hurt you. Love on your enemies.

And find that peace that you can only find in Christ Jesus. Amen. As we celebrate communion, a reminder that the Lord's table is open to all.

If this is the first time here, if you've been a member for years, you are all welcome to the Lord's table. and God does ask us to come to his table with a clean heart.

So, I'd like to do a prayer of confession. If you would repeat after me. Lord, we have not always loved our enemies. We have judged, condemned, and withheld forgiveness.

[40 : 38] Help us to do better, Lord. open our eyes to our missteps in life. Forgive us, Lord, and help us forgive as you have forgiven.

We ask this in the name of our Savior, your Son, Jesus. Amen.

hear the good news. Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. That proves God's love towards us.

In the name of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. In the name of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Glory to God. Amen. Join me in the great thanksgiving.

the Lord be with you. Lord, Lord, lift up your hearts. Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

[41 : 46] It is right and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere, to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

you formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. As we turned away and our love failed, your love remained steadfast.

You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God, and spoke to us through your prophets, who looked for that day when justice shall roll down like waters, and a righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

When nations shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall we learn war anymore. And so, with all your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn.

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

[42 : 59] Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. Holy are you, and blessed is your Son, Jesus Christ.

Your Spirit anointed him to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, rest, and to announce that the time had come when you would save your people.

He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and ate with sinners. By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection, you gave birth to your church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

it. At his ascension, you exalted him to sit and reign with you at your right hand. On the night in which he gave himself up, he took the bread, gave thanks to you, and broke the bread.

He gave it to his disciples and said, take and eat. This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. When the supper was over, he took the cup and gave thanks to you.

[44 : 26] He gave it to his disciples and said, drink from this, all of you. This is my blood of a new covenant poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me. And so, in remembrance of these, your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice in union with Christ's offering for us as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again. We thank you, God, that these elements have been consecrated by Pastor Kathy as part of our connection in the body of Christ.

Christ. Make us one in your church, now and forever. Amen. And now, as confident people of Jesus, join me in the prayer that he taught us.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

[45 : 40] Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen. Will those who are serving please come forward? For the the gluten-free cups so there will just be the gluten-free bread for the intinction of communion for detergents and restaurants and shopping for a duration month thats just of the \$ihait ■■■■■ here have about 12 months that can reduce the gluten.

Even if you look at gluten and want to worship on this is there. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[48 : 17] Thank you. Over on this side. The table is set. Come. Join us at the table of the Lord.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. You are right.

Jesus is my son. This is your son. You are right. I am right. Amen.aga Lynn 11 and he has nothing in this place.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[50 : 55] Amen. Amen.

Amen. The last line of the hymn that Linda played during her sermon said, may we love and make things new.

And it reminds me of the scripture in 2 Corinthians chapter 5. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he's a new creation.

The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come. And it's only by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit in us that we can love our enemies.

But in Timothy, it says, God gave us a spirit not of fear, but one of power and love and self-control. So, in Christ, we will never be the same.

[53 : 09] I invite you to stand as we sing our last song, I Will Never Be. I will never be the same again.

I can never return. I've closed the door. I will walk the path. I will run the race.

And I will never be the same again. I will never be the same again.

I will never be the same again.

When the deepness sees what we need to do. When the deepness sees what we need to do. What we need to do. What I do in me. The glory of God fills my life.

[55 : 01] And I will never be the same again. Fall like fire.

So, my name. Though like my waters again and again. Sweep away the darkness.

Burn away the child. I will never be the same again. I will never be the same again. I can never return. I've closed the door.

I will never be the same again. I will never be the same again. I can never return, I close the door I will walk the path, I will run the way And I will never be the same again No, I will never be the same again Earlier this week as I was preparing for this service, I thought about the missionaries that are being held hostage in Haiti.

I wondered if this is one of the scriptures, one of the passages that they're clinging to. Then on Thursday on the radio, I heard part of the letter that was written by the families of these hostages to the Church of Christ around the world, which yes, we are part of that Church of Christ.

[56 : 53] But in the letters, the family said, God has given our loved ones the unique opportunity to live out our Lord's commands to love your enemies, bless them that curse you.

As you go today, may you seek out the unique opportunities that God gives you to live out his commands. Go in the peace of Christ our Savior.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.

[58 : 24] Thank you.

Thank you.