

Order of Worship for February 20, 2022

P: The Lord be with you,

C: and also with you.

Opening Hymn: *“Jesus Has Come and Brings Pleasure”* - Hymn #533

Confession and Forgiveness p. 203

Service of the Word

Entrance Psalm

P: Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for Him;

C: fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way.

P: Fret not yourself because of evildoers;

C: be not envious of wrongdoers!

P: For they will soon fade like the grass

C: and wither like the green herb.

P: Trust in the LORD, and do good;

C: dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness.

P: Delight yourself in the LORD,

C: and He will give you the desires of your heart.

P: Commit your way to the LORD;

C: trust in Him, and He will act.

**All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

P: Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for Him;

C: fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way.

The Kyrie (*Lord, Have Mercy*) **and Gloria in Excelsis:** *Glory to God in the Highest*” p. 204

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

P: O God, the strength of all who put their trust in You, mercifully grant that by Your power we may be defended against all adversity; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Old Testament Lesson: Genesis 45:3-15

R: And Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?” But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence. So Joseph said to his brothers, “Come near to me, please.” And they came near. And he said, “I am your brother, Joseph, whom

you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; do not tarry. You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, and your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. There I will provide for you, for there are yet five years of famine to come, so that you and your household, and all that you have, do not come to poverty.’ And now your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see, that it is my mouth that speaks to you. You must tell my father of all my honor in Egypt, and of all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here.” Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept upon his neck. And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them. After that his brothers talked with him.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Epistle Lesson: 1 Corinthians 15:21-26, 30-42

R: For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at His coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For He must reign until the Father has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. ... Why are we in danger every hour? I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day! What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” Do not be deceived: “Bad company ruins good morals.” Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame. But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?” You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as He has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Alleluia and Verse: p. 205

Holy Gospel: Luke 6:27-38

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 6th chapter.

C: Glory to You, O Lord.

P: [Jesus] said, “But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.

“If you love those who love you, what benefit 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 benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for He is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

“Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”

P: This is the Gospel of our Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ.

Nicene Creed

Sermon Hymn: “*Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive*” - **Hymn #843**

Sermon: “*Love Your Enemies*” – **Luke 6:27-38**

We live in a world that seems to be getting more and more polarized. People are more and more likely to assume extreme thoughts and behaviors from those who disagree with them, and refuse to cross any sort of divide. We see people not as potential allies, but instead as opponents who must be defeated. School board meetings, anti-government protests all are getting more and more divisive.

Yet there are stories of people reaching out to those they might consider enemies, and changes coming from that. In 2017, Hawk Newsome and a group of Black Lives Matter protestors from New York went to Washington DC to confront a group of Trump supporters. At first, the two sides shouted and traded insults at each other, and the situation looked like it would get out of control. But then Tommy Hodges, the organizer of the Trump rally, offered to give Hawk Newsome two minutes to address the crowds. He said a prayer, and talked about how they were anti bad-cop, and wanted to fix what was broken, and just wanted their God-given rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. After the crowd applauded and he got off the stage, some of the Trump supporters came up and thanked him for coming. The experience changed all involved. Activists on both sides who wanted to keep up the anger, who wanted to build walls instead of bridges, were disappointed. But for some, taking a chance to love an enemy led to

something greater. As Philip Yancey writes in his book *“What’s So Amazing About Grace?”* we should have one distinguishing mark as followers of Jesus. Not political correctness or moral superiority, but love.

G.K. Chesterton writes that we are commanded to love our neighbors and our enemies because often they are the same people. It’s only those who we get close to who can really hurt us. Conflicts in our families, whether with parents, spouses, or children, are where we’re most vulnerable. Conflicts with our coworkers, bosses or employees, those we see every day, also hurt the most. Our neighbors sometimes make it hard to love them, too, when they don’t shovel their sidewalk or throw loud parties. And then there are the people we encounter in our everyday lives. Sometimes it comes from minor things like that guy who just cut you off as you were driving through town. Other times, maybe it’s something that makes us instantly stereotype someone, based on how they’re dressed or how they look. As wearing masks, for example, has become politicized, we can make instant judgments about someone we encounter just by seeing if they’re covering their nose and mouth. Am I supposed to love them too?

Jesus tells his disciples that yes; they are to love their enemies. In one of the most countercultural commands he gives, Jesus tells his disciples to love those who don’t love them, their enemies. It’s the culmination of the world turned upside down message he preaches. It’s what defines the followers of Jesus. Those words are followed by seven statements of what loving your enemies might look like. Doing good to those who hate you. Praying for those who mistreat you. Offering someone who strikes you on one cheek the other. Giving your shirt to the person who steals your coat. Giving to everyone who asks. Do to others, especially your enemies, what you would want done to you.

In saying “love your enemies,” Jesus is removing every limitation from love; love is no longer inspired by its object, no longer dependent on the other’s response to it. Love is instead based on what Jesus has done for us.

It’s also important to remember that this is not just about feelings. It’s about actions. “Love” in this passage is less a noun, a characteristic, an emotional state, than it is a verb. While it may be impossible to feel love for the enemy, it is not impossible to act in certain ways, even for those whom experience has shown to be the most entrenched of opponents. What Jesus means by the love of enemies becomes clear in the three verbal demands that follow and clarify the initial demand: “Do good,” “bless,” “pray.”

Even those commands are impossible for us to keep. We have trouble enough loving those around us, those we choose to be around, those we actually like. How could we love those who hate us, those who persecute us, those who wish us harm? We can’t. But God can. And God did.

As Paul wrote to the Romans, “For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” When we were sinners, when we were the enemies of God, Jesus loved us so much that he laid his life down for us, died for us on the

cross. He loved us so much that he died for us, of his own free choice as the ultimate act of love. Even though we're often unlovable, even though we often reject his love, God loves us anyway. God loves us so much that God chose to love us, to send Jesus to die for us.

Jesus loved even those who persecuted him, even praying from the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." He overcame evil with good. Because of what Jesus has done for us, we're forgiven even when we conform to the world and hate our enemies. But Jesus calls us to follow him in living a different way.

All of this is demanded by virtue of God's own graciousness and mercy. Christians behave lovingly to their enemies not as a ploy to outmaneuver them, not even because they anticipate a reward (although we hope and pray for some sort of positive change or outcome), but finally because God is a God of mercy. God is kind even to the undeserving, and that kindness must be found also in the lives of God's children. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., once said, "Love is the only force capable of turning an enemy into a friend."

Loving our enemies isn't something that comes naturally. In fact, it's against our nature. Yet because of God's supernatural love for us, we can look with love on those who we would hate.

One of the most horrific tragedies of the last few years was the racially motivated shooting of nine African Americans in a church in Charleston, South Carolina. During the sentencing of the shooter, family members of the victim were understandably filled with anger and hate. Yet some offered him love and forgiveness. The niece of one of the victims said "I have many choice words I would love to say to you, but God is working on me so I will not." The son of another victim said "I forgive you. I know that you don't understand that, but God requires me to forgive you. I forgive you."

In 2006 a school shooter murdered some Amish children in a bloody massacre. The parents of the slain children had every right to be angry and bitter. They had every right to hate the shooter and his parents. But instead they loved their enemies. *The very next day* they went to the shooter's house and forgave his family.

The loving power of the almighty God is given to you through Jesus. When sin made you an enemy of God, Jesus loved you enough to die for you. You have been chosen in love to love. It is God's own love that seeks its way through you to your neighbor. Through you God reaches out in love. Through you God reveals his loving heart and through you the power of holy love flows. Thank God for choosing you to be in the loving fellowship of those who have heard the commandment to love. Thank God for giving you the power to love.

Prayer based on Jesus' words in the Gospel Lesson:

P: "Love your enemies." You give us this command, O Lord Jesus.

C: **"If you love those who love you, what benefit 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 benefit is that to**

you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount.”

P: “My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in.

C: If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, ‘Here’s a good seat for you,’ but say to the poor man, ‘You stand there’ or ‘Sit on the floor by my feet,’ have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?”
(James 2:1-4)

P: You wants us to love even the neighbor whose weeds grow into our lawn, the boss who favors other employees, the friend who betrays us, the bully who frightens us, and the spouse who abandons us.

C: “But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.”

P: How can we love our enemies when we fail to love those we love?

P: Direct our thoughts to You.

C: “You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, (His enemies), Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:5-8)

P: Send us Your Holy Spirit so that as forgiven people we can live like this:

C: “Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: ‘It is Mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord. On the contrary: ‘If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” (Romans 12:17-20)

P: “But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for He is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.”

C: “That you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.” (Matthew 5:45)

P: "Forgive, and you will be forgiven."

C: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they are doing." (Luke 23:34)

All: "You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Galatians 5:13-14)

(other concerns):

P: All this we pray in Your name, O Jesus.

C: **Amen.**

Service of the Sacrament

Preface: p. 208

P: It is truly good, right, and proper that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, almighty God, everlasting Father, for You sent Your Son Christ Jesus to show Your great love to even us who made ourselves Your enemies by allying with the devil to sin against You. By His death and resurrection You have freed us from that sin and given us the ability to love even our enemies. Therefore with angels and all the army of heaven we praise and make great Your holy name, evermore praising You and singing . . .

Sanctus (*Holy, Holy Holy*) p. 208

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

P: Blessed are You, O Lord God, for You have broken into our world of suffering with Your great love given to us in Your Son Christ Jesus who loved us even to the point of dying for us on the cross. We ask that You send us Your Holy Spirit so that we come to Jesus' altar in true faith, trusting that He gives us His true body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins and moves us to love even our enemies. All this we pray in His name.

C: **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer, The Words of Our Lord and Pax Domini (*Peace of the Lord*) p. 209

Agnus Dei (*Lamb of God*) p. 210

Distribution of Holy Communion

Communion Hymns:

"O God of Mercy, God of Might" – **Hymn #852**

"Lord of All Nations, Grant Me Grace" – **Hymn #844**

Song After Communion: "Nunc Dimittis" (*Song of Simeon*) p. 211

Prayer After Communion:

P: God of compassion, keep before us the love You have revealed in Your Son, who prayed even for His enemies; in our words and deeds help us to be like Him through Whom we pray, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

Benedicamus and Benediction p. 212

Closing Hymn: *“The People That in Darkness Sat”*- **Hymn #412**

Postlude