

Love Your Enemies (7th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year C)

1 Samuel 26:2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23—David Has Mercy on King Saul

1. Mercy: David refuses to kill King Saul with the spear (26:2, 7-9)
2. Messiah: David refuses to strike “the LORD’s anointed” (Hebrew *mashiach*) (26:23)

Psalm 103—The Lord is Kind and Merciful

1. Doxology: “Bless the LORD, O my soul!” (v. 1)
2. God: “the LORD is merciful and gracious” (v. 8)
3. Mercy: “h does not deal with us according to our sins...” (v. 10)

1 Corinthians 15:45-49—The First Adam and the Second Adam

1. First Adam: “a living being” (Greek *psychē*) (15:45)
2. Last Adam: a “life-giving spirit” (Greek *pneuma*) (15:45)

Luke 6:27-38—The Conclusion of the Sermon on the “Level Place”

1. Love Your Enemies: “Love” (Greek *agapaō*)
 - a. Good Actions: “do good to those who hate you”
 - b. Blessing: “bless those who curse you”
 - c. Prayer: “pray for those who abuse you”
 - d. Non-Resistance: to him who “strikes you” or “takes away” your cloak
 - e. Alms: “give to *everyone* who begs from you” (6:40)
 - f. Golden Rule: “as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them” (6:31)
2. Heavenly “Reward”:
 - a. Natural Love: sinners “love” those who “love them”
 - b. Natural Good Actions: sinners “do good” to those who “do good to them”
 - c. Natural Alms: sinners “lend” to “sinners,” and get paid back
 - d. Sons of the Most High: love/do good/lend to *enemies*...
 - e. Imitatio Dei: “Father” in heaven is “kind to the ungrateful and the selfish”
3. Be Merciful: “Be merciful, as your Father is merciful” (6:36; cf. Lev 19:2)
 - a. Mercy: “Merciful/compassionate” (Greek *oiktirmōn*) (cf. Exodus 34:6-7)
 - b. Judgment: “judge not, and you will not be judged”
 - c. Condemnation: “condemn not, and you will not be condemned”
 - d. Forgiveness: “forgive, and you will be forgiven.”
 - e. Good Measure: “measure” (Greek *metron* = measuring bowl for grain)

Pope Francis on “Be Merciful”

“Judge not, and you will not be judged...” (*Lk* 6:37-38). The Lord asks us above all *not to judge* and *not to condemn*. *If anyone wishes to avoid God’s judgement, he should not make himself the judge of his brother or sister*. Human beings, whenever they judge, look no farther than the surface, whereas the Father looks into the very depths of the soul.

The Mass Readings Explained

How much harm words do when they are motivated by feelings of jealousy and envy! To speak ill of others puts them in a bad light, undermines their reputation and leaves them prey to the whims of gossip. To refrain from judgement and condemnation means, in a positive sense, to know how to accept the good in every person and to spare him any suffering that might be caused by our partial judgment, our presumption to know everything about him. But this is still not sufficient to express mercy. Jesus asks us also to *forgive* and to *give*. To be instruments of mercy because it was we who first received mercy from God. To be generous with others, knowing that God showers his goodness upon us with immense generosity. *Merciful like the Father*, therefore, is the “motto” of this Holy Year. (Pope Francis, *The Face of Mercy*, no. 14)

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (7th Sunday Ordinary Time, Year C)

1. Why does David show mercy to King Saul, his enemy who has sworn not to rest until he is dead?

2. What does Jesus mean when he commands us to “love” our enemies? Is this really possible?

3. What exactly does Jesus mean when he commands us to be “merciful” as our Father in heaven is “merciful”? What does “mercy” look like?

For Further Study

1. Pablo Gadenz. *The Gospel of Luke*. Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 132-34.
2. Arthur A. Just, Jr. *Luke*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament III. Downers Grove: IVP, 2003. Pp. 106-111.