

TOTB -1

(Thinking Outside The Box)

Luke 6.27

Love Your Enemies

Intro.

Recently been talking to 2 sets of Christians in India.

- One describes his country's religious culture as being decided by birth
 - If born into Hindu family, then you were always to be Hindu
 - If born Muslim, then you would always be Muslim
 - And each of these, although radically different, are very dominate politically or socially.
 - Resisting either culture was VERY difficult.
 - No real chance for good work, or government help, or working for the government.
 - They are shamed into submission, and told to “go with the flow” (or else)!
- The other sent pictures. The caption was “Ministry at Muslims.”
 - About 12 people, maybe 4-6 families.
 - They are being nonconformists.
 - They are learning from Ananda about Christianity.



But this should not be surprising to us.

The man we call Lord was also a non-conformist.

- Jesus did not keep all the traditions of the Jewish leadership.
 - He would heal on the sabbath
 - He would run merchants out of the temple.
 - He would not rebuke his disciples for not ceremonially washing their hands before eating.
- As Americans, there is a part of our hearts that says to itself, “ At-a Boy Jesus. Don't let them push you around.”

But that same Jesus presented some novel ideas during his time of teaching.

- They were teachings that went against EVERYONE'S ideas.

Let's examine 1 of those teachings.

Let's start where everyone is, then and now.

- The Taliban, after what they did 20 years ago, are considered enemies of Americans
- We watch North Korea carefully, because they are our enemies.
- In either case, we hate what they are doing and what they stand for.
 - We react with hostility
 - They are our adversary
 - And if we don't kill them, they will kill us.
- And, If I speak against abortion, or homosexuality, I become their enemy.
 - I could be treated with hostility, as an adversary that must be overcome.
- The concept of having enemies, and being enemies, has been engrained into us from birth.
 - Especially those of us raised during the cold-war era.
 - Russians and Chinese can't be trusted.
 - If it comes out of their mouth, it is a lie.
- These engrained ideas are what we conform to.
 - It is the conventional thinking.

But our unconventional Jesus gave us a novel concept.

Luke 6.27 says, "But I say to you who hear, **Love your enemies**, do good to those who hate you,

What??? Love your enemies??? They are e-n-e-m-i-e-s. They are supposed to be hated, not loved.

Out of all the kinds of "love" found in the New Testament, this is the kind that chooses to do what is best for the other person, even if they are enemies.

But then, we need to remember some vital ideas about God and His Son.

- Before the world was created they made the decision to do what was best for mankind, that is, to love us.
- Man chose to go against God's instructions, from Eden on.
- Man chose to follow his own thinking, always deciding what HE thought was best, and stopped listening to God.
 - Deuteronomy 12:8 "You shall not do according to all that we are doing here today, **everyone doing whatever is right in his own eyes**,
 - Judges 21:25 In those days there was no king in Israel. **Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.**

- Proverbs 21:2 **Every way of a man is right in his own eyes**, but the LORD weighs the heart.
- Our decisions about what was right made us enemies of God.
 - James 4:4 You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? **Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.**
 - God should hate us, be hostile to us, should unload his wrath of us.
 - Because we are enemies.
- So, according to God's plan, Jesus gave up heaven
 - Philippians 2:6-7 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, (7) but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.
- Jesus became the ultimate sacrifice for your bad decisions.
 - Philippians 2:8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
- God the Father and Jesus the Son was demonstrating to us what it is to Love Your Enemies.
 - Romans 5:8 "but God shows his love for us in that **while we were still sinners**, Christ died for us.
 - While we were still sinners -- that is -- God's enemies
 - But they gave us what was best for us.
 - Forgiveness.
 - Hope
 - A second chance

So, how are you going to treat your enemies?

- How will you treat the people you have been hating?
 - How do you remove the hostility?
 - How do you remove the threat?
- Romans 12:19-21 Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." (20) To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." (21) Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

And finally, understand this.

- If you are a real follow of Jesus, you will get this done!
 - You will make any sacrifice necessary for this to be accomplished

- If you are a “fake” follower, you will continue being conventional
 - You will continue to have hatred for your enemies.
- So, who are you?