

Coffee to Go | Seventh Sunday after Epiphany | Year C

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Jesus Christ, love, Gospel of Luke, self-reflection, forgiveness, generosity, true capacity.

SPEAKERS

Blake Smith, Karin Peter

Karin Peter 00:27

Welcome to Coffee to Go where we center ourselves in the scriptures, seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition. I'm Karin Peter here with Blake Smith, and we welcome you on the journey. We are still in the season following Epiphany for this Sunday, and then one more week, and Epiphany is to reveal, and here in this season, we are revealing or learning more about the light and love revealed in Jesus Christ. So where are we with Jesus this week? Well, we are still on that level field that we talked about last week where Jesus, after blessing the people and passing out a few woes, Jesus is still teaching, and his teaching here turns to teaching about love.

Blake Smith 01:20

Alright. Well, we are still in the sixth chapter of the Gospel of Luke, and we'll be reading today from the 27th through the 38th verse. And in case there is any chance you don't know what Love your enemies means, there should be no question after hearing this. And I will just say you may find yourself needing to pause and deal with the feelings that you have about a particular verse and then continue on. But you gotta, gotta listen to the whole thing. It's, it's pretty inclusive.

"But I say to you who are listening, love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you. Pray for those who mistreat you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from anyone who takes away your coat, do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who asks of you, and if anyone takes away what is yours, do not ask for it back again. Do to others as you would have them do to you. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive payment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much again. Instead, love your enemies. Do good and lend expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the 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, running over, will be put in your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back.

So why does this matter? Well, Jesus goes to the laundry list of those we are least likely to love, those we might call our enemies, those who do us harm or ill, those who curse and abuse us. That's pretty, that captures a whole lot of folks, right? But then he says, now that you've got those guys in mind, love them. After all, as he says in the passage, it's easy for us to love the lovable, those who are nice to us, those who are kind, those who admire us, those who treat us well, say good things about us, anyone and everyone can do that, but to love the unlovable, that takes some work. That takes some intentionality. However, that is what followers of Jesus are supposed to try to do, to imitate God's love. And when we think about God's love, it is a love that isn't earned by being good, but it is given to everyone equally.

Karin Peter 04:55

So Blake, I wanted to, I just wanted to insert something here, because it was, when you were sharing that it just came to mind, and that was to love the unlovable takes a bit of work. I would say in this passage, we even have to go to, to love the undeserved. Because in in Western culture, we tend to say that there are those who deserve our love who are unlovable, and there are those who are unlovable and do not deserve our love. And I think this passage, though it doesn't use that word, that's really what it's saying, we need to add those who we consider not deserving of love to our list of people that we have to love.

Blake Smith 05:40

Wow, that's a whole additional category, but, but really, really, that's a good point.

Karin Peter 05:46

Yes, you're welcome!

Blake Smith 05:51

So Jesus is telling us here that we need to treat everyone like we wish to be treated 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you' is the phrase that we often say, and not to judge, to forgive, to be generous. And all of this, as we probably already know, is harder than it sounds, but it is the expectation of Jesus, as he points us to God's pathway. And Karin, as you have said, it's not just for the unlovable, but those we might deem as undeserving, which really opens to additional people when we think about it. So, some questions that I might ask myself are, who is on my least likely to love list.

Karin Peter 06:41

Oh, man, that's a list I don't want to show anybody, because that says more about me than than about others.

Blake Smith 06:51

And if it's, if it is longer than your Christmas card list was... [Uh Oh]. So some other questions I might ask myself are, how quickly do I judge? I don't like that one. I'm going to just never mind forget that one. No, I, that hits close to home. Also, how easily do I forgive? And how generous am I really? How generous am I really? We talk about here in Community Christ about true capacity. So keep that in mind as you answer the question for yourself, how generous are you really? I know for me that when I

add that additional piece of true capacity, I mean, I feel like I'm a pretty generous person, but others might look and say, in terms of my true capacity, I still have some some growing to do.

Karin Peter 07:46

Yes, all of those, when we turn them around on ourself, how quickly do I judge, forgive? How generous am I? It takes on a whole different tone, a whole different perspective, and it's very self reflective, and I hope that that all of us can spend some time living in that self reflection this week. So here's a way to kind of experience this particular passage, because I know, for me, I've heard this all growing up. I have heard about loving your enemies in Sunday school or in Sunday worship, and it kind of goes in one ear and out the other. So we want to make it stall inside there for a little bit. So this week, name your unlovable. Might be a person, might be a group, could even be an institution, but name your unlovable, then each day this week, I pray for them. Or if you're really east coast, doubting of organized religion, send good karma to them, whatever works for you, or meditate the light of love to them, if that's your spiritual area of giftedness, or simply speak kindly to them, if they are in your realm of community. And do this all week long. It's not a one day deal, name your unlovable and we're going to share love with them all week long.

Blake Smith 09:28

A tough task, but a very important and hopefully helpful practice. Might be hard, might cause some discomfort. But I like that. I like that.

Karin Peter 09:43

We can do it and our listening audience, if you can do it too, we can do this.

Blake Smith 09:50

absolutely. So, our blessing today comes from a favorite of ours, Meta Herrick Carlson. And so. here's the blessing...

Set this blessing, slender and sturdy, like a candle in the window, watching and waiting, shining so someone will see and believe that little things can matter a lot, and miracles can look like love that's paying attention.

Well, thanks for joining us here today at Coffee to Go, we invite you to join us next time for the next part of our journey through the liturgical seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition.