

Weekly Sermon Discussion Guide

January 20, 2019

LUKE

Well-Intentioned Nonsense

Luke 6:27-36

EXPLORING THE SERMON

- What did you hear?
- What did you think or feel about what you heard?
- What is one thing you can take away from the sermon this week?

VERSES FOR MEDITATION AND REFLECTION

“Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. ²⁹ If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also. ³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”

Luke 6:27b-29, 36

DISCUSSION

As Christians, attempting to live a life in Christ’s image with scripture as our guide, can be costly and difficult in dealing with how the real world operates. As Jesus describes in this text, it is easy to be good to those who are good to us, but what credit will that be to us?

The way the world primarily deals with conflict is to either fight or flight: “counterpunch” or “avoid” our enemies or the places where we’re uncomfortable.

- **How have you seen this play out in your life or the life of your family?**

As followers of Jesus, we are called to a third way to respond: with kindness, prayer, mercy; offering the other cheek. Even when we know logically that this is how we are called to respond, this approach can feel hopeless, just some “well-intentioned nonsense” that spiritual people are supposed to think about.

- **Why would Jesus tell us to act this way, and how do we know when and if it works?**

Jesus showed us that actions are more powerful than words. The cross was the action that changed the world, when it would have been easy for Jesus to fight back, to remove himself from the situation. He rose after the third day to show us that we can be people who can live this out in the real world, and it works.

- **How can we expect this approach to work in Austin, in 2019?**

There is no better time to remember and be encouraged to live out this way of responding. The civil rights movement and the celebration of it, as Thomas says, was a gross reduction of what it really was. It was a movement bathed in the gospel, inspired by MLK who took scripture seriously. The moral character of our nation was changed by the actions of those inspired by the divine, by those who turned the other cheek and acted on behalf of justice.

- **Despite the great danger and turmoil of this time, we saw followers of Christ put the principles that they believed in action, trusting that the character of people could actually be changed. Where are you confronted with pain, difficulty, or enemies? What is the call of God to us on how you should respond?**

A Prayer of Martin Luther King, Jr.

God, we thank you for the inspiration of Jesus. Grant that we will love you with all our hearts, souls, and minds, and love our neighbors as we love ourselves, even our enemy neighbors. And we ask you, God, in these days of emotional tension, when the problems of the world are gigantic in extent and chaotic in detail, to be with us in our going out and our coming in, in our rising up and in our lying down, in our moments of joy and in our moments of sorrow, until the day when there shall be no sunset and no dawn. Amen.