

## Interactive lesson



background picture from  
<https://www.pexels.com/photo/boy-wearing-black-hat-sitting-on-case-near-flowers-1049950/>  
(credit Victoria Borodina)

Do/did you like having to get up every day to go to work? Why do it? <Let them respond>

Do/did you like having to do housecleaning? Why do it? <Let them respond>

Do/did you like having to spend money on gas other utilities? Why do it? <Let them respond>

Do/did you like having to pay taxes? Why do it? <Let them respond>

We all have things we do not like doing, that we do for the hope of a better life. Some of them benefit us directly, while others benefit society and thus affect us indirectly.

What are some of the things we have to do as Christians, that we do not really like to do? <Let them respond>

What is it about them that we do not like? <Let them respond>

Why do them? <Let them respond>

Jesus gave His life on the cross that we might have eternal life. Like Joseph's brothers invited to come closer to him, we are invited closer to Christ. Let us always trust in the grace of God to bless our lives in drawing closer to Him.

## Gospel lesson

We continue Jesus's sermon on the plain this week:



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/Lumo-birds-flowers/>

**Luke 6:27-38**

(NRSV)

<sup>27</sup> "But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,

<sup>28</sup> bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.

<sup>29</sup> 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.

<sup>30</sup> Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again.

<sup>31</sup> Do to others as you would have them do to you.

<sup>32</sup> "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.

<sup>33</sup> If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.

<sup>34</sup> If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners

lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

<sup>35</sup> But 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 is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.

<sup>36</sup> Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

<sup>37</sup> "Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven;

<sup>38</sup> give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back."

*The word of God for the people of God*

<Hymn "Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive" UMH #390>

## Message: Raised in Glory



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/come-home-for-christmas/second-sunday-after-christmas-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/second-sunday-after-christmas-year-c-graphics>

Please pray with me?

Lord of grace, as we take time now to further consider today's scriptures, please  
- speak Your words through my mouth,

- open our ears to hear Your message, and  
- abide in our hearts,  
That we may celebrate our wondrous life in You. Amen.



picture from  
<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/love-never-ends-being-the-body-of-christ/seventh-sunday-after-the-epiphany-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/seventh-sunday-after-the-epiphany-year-c-graphics>

Focusing on “Raised in Glory,” our sermon series has us look toward heaven today:

“Our discipleship path and our journey to heaven are the same journey. That is the glory that we are aiming toward; that is the promise that Paul reminds us of when he tells us that we will be raised in glory. Thanks be to God.”



picture screencaptured from  
<https://youtu.be/GxyCGqt5uWU>  
(divas can cook)

There is a story that has been circulating on the internet (since at least 2014):

One Sunday morning at a small southern church, the new pastor called on one of his older deacons to lead in the opening prayer.

The deacon stood up, bowed his head and said, “Lord, I hate buttermilk.” The pastor opened one eye and wondered where this was going.

The deacon continued, “Lord, I hate lard.” Now the pastor was totally perplexed.

The deacon continued, “Lord, I ain't too crazy about plain flour. But after you mix 'em all together and bake 'em in a hot oven, I just love biscuits.

“Lord help us to realize when life gets hard, when things come up that we don't like, whenever we don't understand what You are doing, that we need to wait and see what You are making. After you get through mixing and baking, it'll probably be something even better than biscuits. Amen.”

Life is hard at various times for everyone.

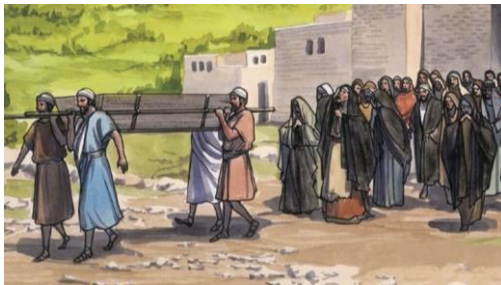


picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/joseph-slave/>

Back in Canaan, life got hard for Joseph when his brothers threw him in a pit and then sold him into slavery. It got harder when Potiphar had him thrown in prison. Yet without those things happening, Joseph never would have become Pharaoh's right-hand man.

Life got hard for Joseph's brothers when the famine came. It got scary when they realized the man with power over them was the brother they had betrayed. But without those things happening, the family would not have reconciled.

The psalmist reminds us not to fret about the wicked, not to turn to their ways, but to trust in the Lord. However, it is not always easy to do that, especially when it seems to go against things which we thought to be basic truths.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/gnpi-040-widow-nain/>

The Corinthians struggled with the idea of resurrection of the dead. After all, they saw people die all the time, even fellow Christians, and none of those were walking around among them. Last week we read Paul's writing that reminded them our whole faith is based upon Jesus's resurrection.

This week's reading takes it a step further, explaining that they did not see the dead walking around like living people because the new form we take on after death is so different from our current bodies. Just as a seed breaks open for a new plant to sprout forth, our physical bodies must die for our spirits to grow into our new existence, to be raised

in glory. What we will become is so far beyond what we currently know that we cannot really imagine it.

Jesus reminds us that in the meantime, we simply need to live as God would have us live. To become healthy children of God, we need to love as fully as we can.

Much of this flew in the face of common societal wisdom. In the age of an-eye-for-an-eye, payback was expected. Even today, if someone wrongs you, you can take them to court to recover what was lost - or at least for some money in compensation. Why would anyone want to show mercy instead, especially to someone unrepentent?

Jesus gives several reasons: God wants you to; God did (and does) so for you; you are acting like God's child if you do; and God will reward you abundantly.

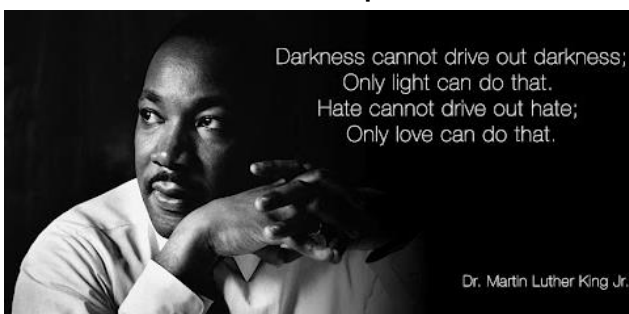
In the Course of Study class that I just finished, someone made the point that people who sin are really just trying to meet a need that they have, but that they are just doing it in a clumsy way that hurts others. If we can restrain ourselves from lashing out, if we can meet the need of the other person instead and show them a better way to meet their need that works for everyone involved, then they will stop hurting others.



<https://www.agnusday.org/comics/854/luke-06-27-38-2019>

Keep in mind from last week that Jesus had just reminded people that life is not about material gains or comforts. We need to live in loving covenant with God. The best way we can do that is to show unconditional love to **all** people - all of God's children, not just the folks we like.

Why? Because to stop the cycle of sin begetting sin, we need to interrupt it with love.



picture from  
<https://i.imgur.com/KeYil.jpg>  
 as posted on Reddit by  
 S\_T\_A\_R\_F\_O\_X

As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." God intends so much better for us than this sin-filled world!

Jesus showed us the better way to live. So this week, aim for that. If someone hurts you, think about what your true goal in relationship to that person is. Are



you sure that the person really meant it the way you received it? And even if they did, will lashing out or getting payback help the situation long term?



*picture from*

Instead, take a deep breath. Breathe in the Holy Spirit, breathe out the frustration as you give it to God. Pray! Ask Jesus to guide you. Trust God to show you the way. Then show love and mercy as the Spirit leads you. Live the better way now, raised to glory even in this life.

*<PRAYER OF CONFESSION (UM BOW p.25)>*

Let us confess our sin against God and our neighbors.

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.

For the sake of you Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your name.

Amen.

*<PARDON (from UM BOW #488)>*

Through God's grace we are forgiven,  
by the mercy of our Creator,  
through the love of the Christ,  
and in the power of the Spirit.  
Let us rejoice and be glad!  
**Glory to God! Amen.**

*<Doxology>*

*<Offertory / Pastoral Prayer>*

Let us pray:

God of hope, we give you thanks that you are  
constantly at work in the world remaking us in your  
image.

Help us to find true life in the new life you are  
working in and through us.

Give us the eyes of faith to see where you are  
already working resurrection within us and within  
the world.

- Lord, please help {these members of the body of  
Christ whom we lift up} with Your healing touch and  
comfort:

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- -

- Thanks for
  - -
  - -
- Hold those who cannot be with us in Your loving embrace until we see them again.
  - Family far off
  - Travelers
- Send Your Spirit to address world/social problems
  - end bigotry, dismantle racism, reform systems persist
  - bring world peace
- Guide our Leaders – local, state, federal, international, and especially of Your church.

All these things we pray as You taught us to pray,  
 <Lord's Prayer>

<Hymn "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee" UMH #89>

<Benediction>



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Go now in peace,  
 sharing the gifts with which God has blessed you.  
 Build relationships based on Christ's love,  
 creating community in the Holy Spirit.

Thus make the world better for you and all whom you encounter, for the glory of God.

**Amen.**