



74th Year

October 4, 2026

Pamphlet #40 (3827)

THE SUNDAY GOSPEL (Luke 6:31-36)

“Become ye therefore merciful”

The Lord said, "As you wish that men would do to you, do so to them. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And 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. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful."

CHRIST, THE MODEL FOR HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

Today's Gospel passage is a characteristic excerpt from the Lord's "Sermon on the Plain," as preserved by the Evangelist Luke. An analogous teaching is also delivered by the Evangelist Matthew in Christ's "Sermon on the Mount."

The passage begins with the Lord's exhortation: "As you wish people to treat you, so treat them likewise." This phrase reveals to us the essence and summit of Christian ethics, whose center is love, a love that flows forth from God Himself. It is a love that overturns human expectations, for it is interwoven with freedom, utter humility, sacrifice, forgiveness, understanding, selflessness, and truth. Thus, this exhortation of Christ has no

connection with reciprocity, with the rendering of equal measure as a principle of justice, nor with any social convention. Rather, it is the life giving radiance of God's infinite love toward man. Indeed, the Lord's admonition is already found in pre-Christian times, though expressed negatively, namely, as the avoidance of injustice or harmful behavior among people.

A positive disposition toward one's neighbor

In contrast to all earlier formulations, the Lord employs in His teaching a positive disposition of a person toward his fellow man. It is a continual expression of love and concern for one's neighbor. That is, a person must not be satisfied merely with avoiding evil, error, or sin toward his fellow man, but he is obliged to love him and to do what is good and beneficial, what he himself would desire the other to do for him.

If you desire your fellow man to offer you kindness and love, then you must first give him genuine love. Do not be troubled that some around you do not love you, treat you unjustly, or scorn you. Love them, pray for them, do good to them, and then there is every likelihood that they will reconsider their attitude. Offer goodness first, without expecting a recompense.

Love as a way of life

Love toward one's neighbor must become a permanent way of life and must characterize every true Christian. The disciple of Christ does not determine his stance toward another based on the other's stance toward him. Rather, he offers love to his neighbor in the manner of the Lord, Who "makes His sun rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust" (Matthew 5:45).

Thus, the believer who is conscious that he is a living member of the Body of Christ, and that he has been granted the gift of divine adoption, strives – so far as it is possible – to think, act, and walk as Christ Himself. He lifts the life-giving Cross and follows the Lord to Golgotha and the Resurrection, harmonizing

his life with the will of God and acquiring a character akin to God, a “God likeness,” to recall Saint Ignatius the God bearer.

A spirit of unity and reconciliation

The Gospel leaves no room for any form of discrimination, rejection, lack of forgiveness, or division among people. In the well-known Gospel parable of the “tares,” which the enemy sowed in order to harm the growth of the wheat, the Lord teaches us that the separation and judgment of people will not take place in this life, but at the time of the harvest, at the Second Coming. And furthermore, that He, like the farmer, will distinguish the wheat from the tares, for only the Lord knows the depths of the human heart. In addition, every person, no matter how sinful he may be, has the possibility, through repentance, to draw near to God. For this reason, Christ tells us that if we love only those who love us, what “grace,” that is, what favor, recognition, or reward do we expect from God? (Luke 6:32–34).

The Lord desires that our love be offered even to those who are hostile toward us. Certainly, His command surpasses human standards, since it is neither self-evident nor easily put into practice. Yet when we find it difficult to behave toward our neighbor as we would wish him to behave toward us, when we struggle to love and to forgive, let us gaze prayerfully upon the Crucified One... and then everything will change.

Archimandrite N. K.

October 4, 2026: 2ND SUNDAY OF LUKE

Hierotheos the Areopagite, first Bishop of Athens (1st century).

1st Tone – Eothinon: 7 – Epistle: 2 Corinthians 9:6-11
– Gospel: Luke 6:31-36

NEXT SUNDAY: October 11, 4th Sunday of Luke
Epistle: Titus 3:8-15 – Gospel: Luke 8:5-15

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