

The gospel of Luke is written with a Gentile or Greek-speaking cultured people in mind. In writing the gospel account Luke focuses upon the role and importance of women and the poor, more than the other three gospels, and relates the most parable teachings of Jesus in his story of who Jesus is, how he was and is in the world, and how that changes even us.

Today's larger reading contains an ensemble of teachings, including those we call the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount (6:1-26) which are also related in Matthew 5:1-7:29 -12 are considered to be the foundation of the teachings of Jesus.

Blessed:: μακάριος [makários] (from mak-, "become long, large") – properly, when God extends His benefits (the advantages He confers); blessed. Describes a believer in enviable ("fortunate") position from receiving God's provisions (favor) – which (literally) extend ("make long, large") His grace (benefits). This happens with receiving (obeying) the Lord's inbirthings of faith. Hence, faith (4102 /pístis) and 3107 (makários) are closely associated (Ro 4:5-7,14:22,23; Rev 14:12,13).

The idea embodied within this word is satisfaction from experiencing the fullness of something. Aristotle contrasted μακάριος with ἐνδεής [endeis] which means "to be in want, to be needy, to be destitute." In the New Testament, μακάριος is translated by the English words "blessed," "fortunate," and "happy." However, the meaning "happy" (as we understand it in English) is not actually found in the New Testament. This is because the word happy comes from "hap" which means luck or a favorable circumstance. The actual concept of "happy" would be expressed by Greek words other than μακάριος, such as εὐτυχής meaning "happy, lucky," "fortunate," or eu'daimoni/a meaning "prosperity". Once we remove the English concept of "happy" from μακάριος, its Greek meaning becomes clear showing us that μακάριος refers to the believer in Christ who is satisfied and secure in the midst of life's hardships because of the indwelling fullness of the Spirit.

offer the other also :: The Biblical scholar Walter Wink, in his book *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination*, interprets the passage as ways to subvert the power structures of the time.[2] He says that at the time of Jesus, striking someone deemed to be of a lower class with the back of the hand was used to assert authority and dominance. If the persecuted person "turned the other cheek," the discipliner was faced with a dilemma. The left hand was used for unclean purposes, so a back-hand strike on the opposite cheek would not be performed. An alternative would be a slap with the open hand as a challenge or to punch the person, but this was seen as a statement of equality. Thus, by turning the other cheek the persecuted was demanding equality.

ANYONE WHO TAKES AWAY YOUR COAT DO NOT WITHHOLD EVEN YOUR SHIRT:: Wink continues with an interpretation of handing over one's cloak in addition to one's tunic. The debtor has given the shirt off his back, a situation forbidden by Hebrew law as stated in Deuteronomy (24:10–13). By giving the lender the cloak as well the debtor was reduced to nakedness. He notes that public nudity was viewed as bringing shame on the viewer, not just the naked, as seen in Noah's case (Genesis 9:20–23).

SCRIPTURES FOR SUNDAY 2.05.2017

Luke 7:1-17 in the context of Luke 6:17-7:17

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

6 ¹⁷ [Jesus] came down with [the 12 apostles] and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon. ¹⁸ They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. ¹⁹ And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them.

²⁰ Then [Jesus] looked up at his disciples and said:

"**Blessed** are you who are poor,
for yours is the kingdom of God.

²¹ "**Blessed** are you who are hungry now,
for you will be filled.

"**Blessed** are you who weep now,
for you will laugh.

²² "**Blessed** are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. ²³ Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets.

²⁴ "But woe to you who are rich,
for you have received your consolation.

²⁵ "Woe to you who are full now,
for you will be hungry.

"Woe to you who are laughing now,
for you will mourn and weep.

²⁶ "Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.

²⁷ "But I say to you that listen, 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; and from ANYONE WHO TAKES AWAY YOUR COAT DO NOT WITHHOLD EVEN YOUR SHIRT. ³⁰ Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. ³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you.

³² "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³ If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴ 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.³⁵ 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.³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

³⁷ “Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; ³⁸ 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.”

³⁹ He also told them a parable: “Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit? ⁴⁰ A disciple is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully qualified will be like the teacher. ⁴¹ Why do you see the speck in your **neighbor’s eye**, but do not notice the log in your own eye? ⁴² Or how can you say to your neighbor, ‘**Friend**, let me take out the speck in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor’s eye.

⁴³ “No good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit; ⁴⁴ for each tree is known by its own fruit. Figs are not gathered from thorns, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. ⁴⁵ The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good, and the evil person out of evil treasure produces evil; for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks.

⁴⁶ “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I tell you? ⁴⁷ I will show you what someone is like who comes to me, hears my words, and acts on them. ⁴⁸ That one is like a man building a house, who dug deeply and laid the foundation on rock; when a flood arose, the river burst against that house but could not shake it, because it had been well built. ⁴⁹ But the one who hears and does not act is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the river burst against it, immediately it fell, and great was the ruin of that house.”

7¹ After Jesus had finished all his sayings in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum. ² A **centurion** there had a slave whom he valued highly, and who was ill and close to death. ³ When he heard about Jesus, he sent some JEWISH ELDER.S to him, asking him to come and

The new reality, or 3rd way, which Jesus proclaimed as the way to live faithfully in the Roman Occupied Israel was an active nonviolent resistance. This is seen in the the Sermon on the Mount, and in his the entirety of his life and teaching. His was not merely a tactical or pragmatic nonviolence seized upon because nothing else would have worked against the Roman empire's near monopoly on violence. Rather, he saw nonviolence as a direct corollary of the nature of God and of the new reality emerging in the world from God. In a verse quoted more than any other from the New Testament during the church's first four centuries, Jesus taught that God loves everyone, and values all, even those who make themselves God's enemies. We are therefore to do likewise (Matt. 5:45; cf. Luke 6:35). The Reign of God, the peaceable Kingdom, is (despite the monarchical terms) an order in which the inequity, violence, and male supremacy characteristic of dominator societies are superseded. Thus nonviolence is not just a means to the Kingdom of God; it is a quality of the Kingdom itself. Those who live nonviolently are already manifesting the transformed reality of the divine order now, even under the conditions of what I call the Domination System.

The idea of nonviolent resistance was not new. The Hebrew midwives, the Greek tragedians, and Jainism. Buddhism, Hinduism, Lao-Tzu, and Judaism were all to various degrees conversant with nonviolence as a way of life and, in some cases, even as a tactic of social change. What was new was the early church's inference from Jesus' teaching that nonviolence is the only way, that war itself must be renounced. The idea of peace and the more general rejection of violence can be found before Christianity and in other cultures, says Peter Brock, but nowhere else do we find practical anti-militarism leading to the refusal of military service.

Jesus' alternative to both fight and flight can be presented in modern language as prioritizing change through active nonviolent resistance by doing the following: presented by a chart:

- Find a creative alternative to violence
- Assert your own humanity and dignity as a person
- Meet force with ridicule or humor
- Break the cycle of humiliation
- Refuse to submit or to accept the inferior position
- Expose the injustice of the system
- Take control of the power dynamic
- Shame the oppressor into repentance
- Stand your ground
- Make the Powers make decisions for which they are not prepared
- Recognize your own power
- Be willing to suffer rather than retaliate
- Force the oppressor to see you in a new light
- Deprive the oppressor of a situation where a show of force is effective
- Be willing to undergo the penalty of breaking unjust laws
- Die to fear of the old order and its rules
- Seek the oppressor's transformation

Adapted from an article at: http://www.cres.org/star/_wink.htm Read more at <http://www.WalterWink.com>

measure:: The way in which wheat, and dried good were measured and dispensed in the market. They were probably folded into a large fold, make in the outer garment with the help of a belt, which would thus make a sort of pocket. Those who cheated might make a less than honest sized measuring cup with which to sell their goods. Jesus hints at a karmic idea, that how you act will come back to you.

neighbor’s eye & Friend :: Here the Greek word is adelphoi, meaning brother (and by extension sister). The original word has more of a connotation of family, emphasizing our interconnectedness and unity.

heal his slave. ⁴ When they came to Jesus, they appealed to him earnestly, saying, "He is worthy of having you do this for him, ⁵ for he loves our people, and it is he who built our synagogue for us." ⁶ And Jesus went with them, but when he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to say to him, "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; ⁷ therefore I did not presume to come to you. But only speak the word, and let my servant be healed. ⁸ For I also am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this,' and the slave does it." ⁹ When Jesus heard this he was **amazed** at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, he said, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith." ¹⁰ When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.

¹¹ Soon afterwards [Jesus] went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went with him. ¹² As he approached the gate of the town, a man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow; and with her was a large crowd from the town. ¹³ When the Lord saw her, *he had compassion for her* and said to her, "Do not weep." ¹⁴ Then he came forward and **touched the bier**, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, rise!" ¹⁵ **The dead man sat up** and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. ¹⁶ **Fear** seized all of them; and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen among us!" and "God has looked favorably on his people!" ¹⁷ This word about him spread throughout Judea and all the surrounding country.

Questions for the practice of Examen & Contemplation

***What strikes you in this passage – both the smaller sermon-focused one, and the larger context? How does it interact with your life?**

***Jesus demonstrates a radical solidarity with the suffering through his listening to the centurion, and active sense of compassion with the dead man's mother. How do you feel Jesus in solidarity with us, walk with you in your times of suffering, brokenness, doubt or confusion?**

***Repeatedly the actions of Jesus are focused on loving, respecting and extending life. He is willing and ready to pay a price to express his loving solidarity and graceful authority. What prices does he encounter in this reading? Why is he willing to pay them without hesitation? What price(s) do you have to pay for following in the Way of Jesus, living, loving and acting as he did? How do you find the strength to risk such active love? How do you, as a person, and maybe we, as a community of faith, need to be encouraged, empowered and equipped to love actively? Talk with God about your, our, spiritual and emotional needs.**

***How do these examples of active love reflect the teachings of the wider context in Luke 6:17-7:17 around active nonviolent resistance through deliberate love? How does that speak to you in our societal season of resistance, fear and great change?**

centurion :: a professional officer of the Roman army who usually commanded groups of centuries of around 80 men. It was a position of honor, often paid at a much higher rate than the average legionary soldier.

amazed :: ἐθαύμασεν : thaumázō (from the word thaúma, "a wonder, marvel") – properly, wonder at, be amazed (marvel), i.e. astonished out of one's senses; awestruck, "wondering very greatly" (Souter); to cause "wonder; . . . to regard with amazement, and with a suggestion of beginning to speculate on the matter"

he had compassion for her: from σπλαγχνίζομαι [splanchnizomai] from splanxna, 'the inward parts,' especially the nobler entrails – the heart, lungs, liver, and kidneys. These gradually came to denote the seat of the affections" It thus means to be moved as to one's bowels, hence, to be moved with compassion, have compassion (for the bowels were thought to be the seat of love and pity).

touched the bier :: In this physical contact Jesus associates himself with the dead and suffering mother, but also takes on the ritual unclean-ness, or unrighteousness of the dead and broken. Jesus shows a radical solidarity with the suffering, those labeled by the law as unclean and "cut off."

¹⁰ "This shall be a perpetual statute for the Israelites and for the alien residing among them. ¹¹ Those who touch the dead body of any human being shall be unclean seven days. ¹² They shall purify themselves...¹³ All who touch a corpse, the body of a human being who has died, and do not purify themselves, defile the tabernacle of the Lord; such persons shall be cut off from Israel. Since water for cleansing was not dashed on them, they remain unclean; their uncleanness is still on them." -Numbers 19:10-22

¹¹ "[A priest] shall not go where there is a dead body; he shall not defile himself even for his father or mother." -Leviticus 21:10-15

The dead man sat up :: The man was probably carried in an open coffin, suggested by Jewish custom and the description of his sitting up here. This is the first of three instances of Jesus raising a person from the dead. The others are the daughter of Jairus (Luke 8:40-56) and Lazarus (John 11:38-44).

Fear :: We often forget that fear (*phobos* in Greek) means both fear of, as in fright, and also "awe" as in great respect and amazement.