

# The Gospel According to Luke

## ***“The D-Attitudes”***

Part One  
(Chapter 6:20-36)

### Introduction

Many of our young people have just begun high school or college. They probably attended some sort of **orientation** – either a class or several sessions to introduce them to their new environment, letting them know what to expect and what is expected of them.

Jesus had just chosen His twelve apostles out of a larger group of disciples. The twelve, and the rest of the disciples, were about to embark on a new phase of ministry. Jesus gave them an orientation – a sermon to introduce them to their new environment, letting them know what to expect and what would be expected of them.

The sermon begins in verse twenty and it runs through the end of Chapter Six. Jesus first told them what a disciple could expect: A disciple could expect many **negative encounters**. But Jesus didn't stop there; He also told them a disciple could experience much **positive encouragement**.

Are you a disciple of Jesus Christ? Then this sermon is for you just as much as it was for the twelve and the rest who originally received it. It is **your** orientation to discipleship; or, if you've been walking with the Lord for some time, it's a refresher course.

It is one sermon, but we must break it in half due to our time constraints. In the first half, in session one, you're told to expect many negative encounters. Specifically, you will encounter *enmity* and *enemies*:

1. Enmity is *hostility* and *antagonism* directed against you for the sake of being a Christian. In verses twenty through twenty-six

Jesus described the enmity you can expect “for the Son of Man’s sake.”

2. You will also encounter enemies – those who would “curse” you, “spitefully use” you, “strike” you, and “take” from you. These are described in verses twenty-seven through thirty-six.

That is what you can expect. What is expected of you? What is expected of you is what we commonly refer to as “The Beatitudes” – the blessings listed in verses twenty through twenty-three. I’m calling them the “**D-Attitudes**,” with ‘D’ standing for ‘Disciple.’ These, and the other things Jesus said, are the attitudes a disciple must develop.

We’ll organize our thoughts around two points: #1 The Enmity You Encounter Can Be Met With The D-Attitudes, and #2 The Enemies You Encounter Can Be Met With The D-Attitudes.

## #1 The Enmity You Encounter Can Be Met With The D-Attitudes (v20-26)

Jesus had been performing miracles that only the Messiah could perform. The Jews were expecting their Messiah to come and establish the kingdom of God on earth. Jesus had just chosen twelve apostles. It seemed He was establishing the kingdom, with new leadership. As you read on in the Gospels and in the Book of Acts, His disciples expected the kingdom, and to be ruling on thrones in the kingdom. They were ready to take cabinet positions in the new kingdom.

Jesus knew He’d be rejected by the Jews. He knew He’d be crucified. He knew He’d be resurrected and ascend into heaven. He knew the kingdom on earth would be delayed until His Second Coming. He was preparing His disciples for the enmity they would, and will, encounter while we wait for His return in a world that is hostile towards the love of God for lost mankind.

Bear in mind that Jesus was describing the enmity you would encounter **as His disciple**, for His sake and the sake of sharing the Gospel. He was discussing your attitudes and responses towards religious persecution. Jesus was *not* recommending we be tolerant

of criminals, or that nations remain passive if attacked. As we commemorate the anniversary of 9.11, there should be no confusion among Christians that there is a war against terrorism and that it is morally right and biblical for us to wage war.

One more quick comment about the context: There is a disagreement among scholars as to whether or not this sermon is the same as the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's Gospel. It is similar, but not the same. It was given in a different place, and at a different time.

Luke 6:20 Then He lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, and said: "Blessed are you poor, For yours is the kingdom of God.

Luke 6:21 Blessed are you who hunger now, For you shall be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, For you shall laugh.

Luke 6:22 Blessed are you when men hate you, And when they exclude you, And revile you, and cast out your name as evil, For the Son of Man's sake.

Jesus directed His comments "toward His disciples." Knowing the future, knowing what they would encounter, Jesus gave them an orientation to discipleship. "For the Son of Man's sake," they would encounter the following things:

1. They would and will be "poor." Jesus was describing material poverty; I know that because, in verse twenty-four, He contrasts "poor" disciples with those who are "rich" with this world's goods.
2. Disciples would and will encounter "hunger."
3. They would and will encounter "weep[ing]." This doesn't mean you will be somber, or crying all the time; but you will avoid many of the world's sources of mirth and live a more focused, meaningful life.
4. They would and will encounter "men [who] hate you." Their hate would and will be expressed as "exclud[ing] you," and "revil[ing] you," and "cast[ing] out your name as evil."

Jesus was not saying it was more spiritual to be poor; or hungry; or weeping; or hated. He was not saying that everywhere and all the time that this is how disciples would be treated. But He was preparing His disciples for the kinds of encounters they have indeed experienced throughout the centuries, and continue to experience in many places today to a greater or lesser degree.

Read the Book of Acts; read *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*; read about today's persecuted Church; and you will understand what Jesus was describing.

The key here is that, though the world may be hostile, the disciple is looking beyond this world to the future “kingdom of God.” Whatever light afflictions you may encounter and be called upon to endure as a Christian, you're already a citizen of the future kingdom, and “you shall be filled... and laugh” when it is established at Jesus' return to earth.

**Luke 6:23** Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward *is* great in heaven, For in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.

You are to look forward, to your spiritual future. You can “rejoice” today in “that [future] day.” In the future, “your reward is great in heaven.”

For the present, *you find yourself in good company!* Just as people persecuted God's “prophets” of old, so you will be persecuted.

Now you can understand why Jesus said you were “blessed” even though you might be poor, hungry, weeping, or hated. You see everything backwards, from heaven's eternal perspective. Thus it is not a blessing to be poor in and of itself; but you are blessed if and when you find yourself poor for the sake of the Gospel because you have security in the future kingdom of God. The same holds for each of the others “blessed's” Jesus spoke to you.

Contrast the persecuted disciple with the unbelieving citizens of this world:

**Luke 6:24** “But woe to you who are rich, For you have received your consolation.

**Luke 6:25** Woe to you who are full, For you shall hunger. Woe to you who laugh now, For you shall mourn and weep.

**Luke 6:26** Woe to you when all men speak well of you, For so did their fathers to the false prophets.

These are unbelievers. Their hope is in this world; they value being “rich” and “full” with the things of earth rather than eternity. They “laugh now,” meaning they enjoy the superficial entertainments of the

world. “All men speak well” of them means they fear men rather than God. They are like the “false prophets” who led others astray on their way to Hell.

Jesus shattered the expectations of His first apostles. They wouldn’t hold high offices on earth – not yet. They would be hounded, hunted, persecuted, martyred. But they were “blessed” because their treatment, for His sake, was storing up riches in heaven for them.

You will also encounter enemies.

## #2 The Enemies You Encounter Can Be Met With The D-Attitudes (v27-36)

If there is a key to understanding the next few verses, it is simply this: As Jesus’ disciple, you can respond to your enemies with God’s supernatural love.

We are specifically talking about the way you are treated by unbelievers for the sake of your Christianity. We are not excusing Christians who bring upon themselves persecution for their lack of Christianity! And we’re not talking about relations between believers; there are other passages, in the New Testament letters especially, that discuss how we are to treat one other and resolve our difficulties. These verses are how you are to respond to unbelievers in order to win them to Jesus.

Jesus presented the principle you can live by; then He provided a few examples of putting the principle into practice.

The principle is in verses twenty-seven and twenty-eight:

**Luke 6:27** “But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,

**Luke 6:28** bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you.

When you find yourself hated... Being avoided... Being rejected... Insulted... Even physically abused... You can experience God’s

supernatural “love” and you can express it by “doing good,” “bless[ing],” and “pray[ing]” for your enemies.

Here are a few practical examples:

**Luke 6:29** To him who strikes you on the *one* cheek, offer the other also. And from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold *your* tunic either.

**Luke 6:30** Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him who takes away your goods do not ask *them* back.

To fully appreciate these examples, you need to think like a first century Jew. Before the Law of Moses, the Jews had a sort of vendetta society. If you did something to me, I would retaliate, but do something much worse to you. The Law of Moses came and established the principle of “an eye for an eye.” It limited retaliation and revenge. I could no longer go beyond the damages you had caused me and seek revenge, but had the right to demand restitution.

Jesus was refining that law even further. Instead of retaliation or even demanding my right of restitution, **I should return blessing for your wrongdoing!**

Why? **To be evangelistic.** To show the depth of the love of God. Jesus didn’t die for my rights; He died for my wrongs. If I am wronged by unbelievers, for the sake of the Gospel, I can choose to forgo my rights and return blessing instead.

Rather than give case after case, every possible example, Jesus gave the following rule of thumb:

**Luke 6:31** And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise.

Look past yourself, and the wrong that is being done to you. Put yourself in the unbeliever’s position. They are Hell-doomed, dead in their trespasses and sins, condemned, without the ability to act any differently. When you were just such a prisoner of sin, you needed a Christian to example for you the supernatural love of Jesus Christ. *Now you are that example!* Every enemy provides you with your opportunity to be an example of the love of God for lost mankind.

Jesus contrasted your D-Attitudes with that of unbelievers:

Luke 6:32 “But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.

Luke 6:33 And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.

Luke 6:34 And if you lend *to those* from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back.

Notice the repetition of the phrase, “**even sinners...**” It is to remind you of what I just said: You are not one of them anymore. If you act just like them, only reciprocating good for good and evil for evil, always demanding your ‘rights,’ how will they ever know that Jesus died for their wrongs?

Luke 6:35 But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil.

“**Sons of the Most High**” means you have the qualities of God in your life. You are the example of Christianity. When we return God’s love for their enmity, they can see Jesus. They can know that you are treating them the way Jesus would treat them. It can open their eyes and heart to the Good News that they, too, can receive the forgiveness of their sins and be saved for eternity. It’s like they are at the foot of the Cross, reviling Jesus, but hearing Him say, “**Father, forgive them.**”

Luke 6:36 Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

You know that the definition of “**mercy**” is *not getting what you deserve*. The definition of “**merciful**” would be *not giving the other person what they deserve*. The unbeliever wrongs you; they deserve retaliation, and you deserve restitution. But you don’t give them what they deserve; you give them what they don’t deserve; you give them love and grace.

Amy Carmichael wrote, “You can give without loving, But you cannot love without giving.”

God gave you His Son, Jesus Christ, to be your Savior, because He “so loved the world.”

You and I are now like Him. We are to give of ourselves because we want others to know “God so loved the world.”

## Conclusion

We’re half-way through Jesus’ orientation to discipleship. If this were a modern orientation, we’d take a break.

I’ve been to some orientations where, after the break, many of the people from the first session didn’t return. They determined that the material was not what they wanted to hear; or that it was too demanding.

*Discipleship certainly is demanding!* But alongside the enmity and enemies you can expect to encounter, there are encouragements to experience.

Jesus has already told you about the encouragement of eternity. You are looking ahead to heaven, and living backward on the earth on your way home to Jesus. There are three other encouragements in the remaining words of His sermon.

**Come back after the break!**