

Luke 6:35–36 (NIV): But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. 36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

We've all got that restaurant. It's not your favorite, but it's one that is relatively easy on the wallet, and when pained with a quick decision for what to eat, it's where you go. The waiter who you recognize but can never quite remember his name asks where you would like to sit. The usual polo and jeans have been replaced with black slacks and a white shirt. The cushy seats have been stripped off, revealing brand new stained oak chairs. The menu in that plastic-covered trifold where you knew where everything was, is now a sleek single-sided sheet of seasonal options. Your usual order is gone, but the food is striking, and so is the bill. What happened? What are all these crazy changes about?

Well, There's a new head of the department. It's under new management. When you get somebody who comes into a new department, many times are seeing us every who comes of shakes things up who does everything to entirely different. And why is that? The reason is that that person comes into the administration, and they come in with an altogether different value system. The old administration is built around a system of values things that are seen as important and not important. And those values are what dictate how the organization is run. On the way is that things work all those lead back to those values that the organization is established on as dictated by the administrator. All of a sudden, when you get someone new can seem so vastly different because it's not just actions it's an entirely different value system. It seems so radical because the value system is a radically different.

The new uniforms, the menu, the chairs. None of that was Willy nilly. The new owner values having a nice place that is a destination spot. Someplace he seeks out to go to, rather than a casual one. What is seen as valuable is a good presentation, not comfortability. What is seen as useful is high-quality food, not affordable prices.

This is sort of what is being described in our text. We have got some radical changes being preached in the sermon by Jesus on the plain. This is a continuation of the sermon we heard about last week, where we looked into the upside-down and opposite that Jesus proclaims. And what Jesus is preaching in his sermon is for us as Christians. To just run down the list: Love your enemies; if someone hurts you, let them do it again; if someone takes something from you, give them more. Don't give money and expect anyone to pay you back; don't only love people who care about you, love those who hate you too.

Jesus is preaching is not a radical shift of actions; he's proposing a new value system. The sinful world looks at certain things, and it says that these things have value; money has value. Power has value. Comfort has value. In the world, you give, and you expect to be paid back in full. Because what is valuable is the money. In the world, you love

people who love you and not those who hate you because what is valuable is respect. In the world, you help those only who support you because fairness is what is valuable.

But Jesus' world has an entirely different value system. Money really doesn't have any value. Power really doesn't have that much weight in Jesus' community. What really has significance with the importance of the Christian kingdom is how do you treat those around you. And not just those people who are like you and who think the same as you; what matters to Jesus is how you treat people who are not like you. What matters, Jesus, is how you treat people who steal from you. What matters to Jesus is how you treat those people who purposely stomp on you, which goes utterly different from how the world wants things to work.

And with these statements that Jesus makes, he shows something so vital for us to see: Non-Christians don't have the market cornered on sin. We are all sinful. We not only don't do things, but we also don't love our enemies, we don't give away our things willingly, we don't turn our cheeks to those who hurt us, rather than do to others what we want them to do to us, we do things that we would be upset if they did to us. We also have the much larger problem of a rotten value system. By nature, all of us value those things that sinners want: By nature, we like a gorging rather than a slim budget, we love being able to get back at those who make our life stink, we love to wish bad on those who want bad on us.

How in the world are we supposed to change our actions when our values are so backward from what God wants. Where do we get the power to do as God says and feel as God feels. We do this by looking to our new manager: the very one who speaks these words to us.

Jesus saved us through the radical reversal of values. Jesus put himself where we deserve to be. He put himself in human shoes but valued not the things of this world. Jesus loved those who sinned against him and bore their sins. Jesus blessed those who cursed him. Jesus gave food & healing, knowing they could never pay it back. Jesus paid for the sins of the whole world, knowing there is no way for us to repay him. Jesus uttered "Father forgive them" to those who murdered him. That's the power. That's the power of God's mercy which shows to sinners. God is kind to the ungrateful. Blesses the wicked. And forgives those who have no right to be forgiven.

The power to change our actions and our will comes from the Gospel, where God works in our hearts and demolishes our worldly value system. The power comes only when we are shown how Jesus pulverized the values of this world with his absolute mercy and love. Jesus absolutely turns the world upside down and shows what is valuable.

Jesus is your new manager, so to speak. Jesus and not the world dictate our values. What is valued by us are all things that Christ values, perfectly demonstrated by him. Jesus chose this attitude as the base currency of Christianity, so to speak. Where you don't see somebody else as somebody you can get something from, but somebody that

you can do something for, where you see everyone and everything not as something that can serve you or that you can derive some benefit from, but as something that you can use either as tools or people that you can serve.

Dear Christians, you are under new management. Under the management of Jesus Christ, who gave himself up for us. Go into the world and show who your new manager is, to love as Christ loved Us.