# The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost
## Luke 6:31-36

And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. (KJV)

Today's Gospel tests Christian believers' seriousness. The Lord Jesus Christ asks believers to love their enemies, do good and to lend without hoping for anything in return. Believers are to be grateful to the ungrateful as does God the Father.

The Gospel message at each Divine Liturgy is to be taken to heart and applied to daily life. The Divine Liturgy is a stepping stone on the path to God's Kingdom. The Divine Liturgy is a foretaste of the Kingdom.

The Gospel is proclaimed for believers to seriously consider and incorporate in their own lives. Being a Christian is a commitment to live according to Jesus Christ's teachings and example.

Being a Christian is a great joy. Baptism into Christ unites the believer with Christ. Living in Christ offers fullness. Love, peace and joy are on the path to God's Kingdom set forth in the Church.

The believer is expected to adhere to the teachings and example of Jesus Christ throughout earthly life. The narrow path to God's Kingdom and eternal life is not always smooth. Constant challenges exist along the path.

Believers are not perfect and will fall short of complete adherence to Christ's teachings and example. Believers are to try to do their best. When falling short of following Christ completely, repentance is possible and encouraged.

Jesus Christ welcomes believers choosing to repent. Jesus forgives those who repent of their sins. A new start in life begins with Christ's forgiveness.
The weight of sin is lifted from the believer. Freedom exists to go forward

Hard feelings existing in the heart toward perceived enemies create a barrier preventing reconciliation. Healthy relationships fail to develop when barriers are present in relationships.

Doing good is expected of Jesus Christ's followers. The Church repeats the Gospel message each year on the Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost to verify the value of doing good. Believers benefit when doing their best to do good.

Grudges damage relationships. Doing good helps to repair relationships and to develop them. Lending to help others is encouraged in the Gospel. Strong attachment to material possessions can impede the willingness to lend to others.

Life in the Church fosters growth in Jesus Christ. Growth is measured by the believer moving closer to total conformity with Christ's teachings. Jesus Christ is to grow within the believer's heart, mind and soul throughout life.

The Church offers retreats as opportunities to step back from everyday life. Stepping back is a time to personally assess conformity with Christ's teachings. Retreats nourish and strengthen the soul.

Retreats give the believer the momentum to refine and sharpen the focus on the journey to God's Kingdom. Life's journey is intended to take place on the narrow path to the Kingdom.

Vigilance and alertness are necessary to stay off paths that are harmful to the soul. Life develops fully when believers are faithful to the narrow path. Joy, peace and love characterize the journey on the narrow path.

Personal crosses are part of life's journey. Christ educates by example and in words on the ways to handle personal crosses. Joy, peace and love will arise out of facing personal crosses when unity with Jesus Christ exists.

Being good to those that are good to us and loving those that love us is easy. Lending to those that lend to us is similarly easy. To love our enemies is challenging. To do good and to lend without expecting return requires firm faith.

The present Gospel message addresses the authenticity of Jesus Christ and Christ's teachings. The present Gospel is a lesson in God's mercy. Believers seek mercy throughout life. Believers are expected to be merciful as God is merciful.

Loving someone perceived as an enemy requires the love of Christ firmly rooted in the believer. Jesus set the example to follow. Jesus expressed forgiveness when He was on the Cross and was being put to death. (Lk.23:34)

The Archdeacon Stephen when he was being stoned to death for confessing Christ sought forgiveness for those casting the stones. (Acts 7:80) Archdeacon Stephen was convinced of the value of Jesus' example and teachings.

The Church has preserved Jesus' teachings through the centuries. The Church proclaims Jesus' teachings on forgiveness. Each person identifying as a Christian is expected to honor Jesus' teachings.

If we earnestly desire to live as Christ teaches, we need to love those that we view as our enemies. We need to do good and to lend without expecting anything in return. Conforming to Christ's teachings will bring immeasurable joy.

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The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost. Venerable Chariton the Confessor. .Venerable Martyts of Medna, Seraphim,Avakum and Mardarije. September 28/October 11, 2026.

Father Rodney Torbic