

How to Live as God's People

Key Verse: *"I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you."*
—**Luke 6:27**

Selected Scripture:
Luke 6:17-31

WHEN LOOKING AT THE law given to Israel, one of the important requirements that they were to live up to is given in the commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (Lev. 19:18) Jesus had declared of himself, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." (John 8:12; 9:5) Jesus knew, however, that he would not personally remain in the world, and that the work of God entrusted to him would be continued by his representatives—his ambassadors. With this in mind, he added the aspect of love shown in our Key Verse—love for our enemies—as another important element of being pleasing to the Heavenly Father.

If we are striving to fulfill this ultimate aspect of love in our character, it will require that we be pleasing to God to the greatest extent possible with our whole heart, mind, and being. Only thus can we make significant progress against the resistance of our flesh to sacrifice and to love those who may be considered our enemies. (Rom. 12:1,2) This language describes the giving up in sacrifice of our life, personal preferences, and our own likes and dislikes, in the service of Jesus and our Heavenly Father. During the Gospel Age, such faithfulness leads to sacrificial death, and we are encouraged by the

promise, “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”—Rev. 2:10

In the beginning of the Gospel Age, miracles were employed which demonstrated the glory of God and his authority given to the apostles. After the apostles fell asleep in death, the Lord’s people throughout the age since have been called upon to walk entirely by faith. They have been witnesses of Jesus, in that they have been faithful in proclaiming the “gospel of Christ,” which, as Paul asserts, is “the power of God unto salvation.” (Rom. 1:16) These dear ones who are called of God are to “walk as children of light.” (Eph. 5:8) What better way to do this than to show love and mercy for others, as exemplified by their Master.

The commission given to these by Jesus was that they should be his witnesses in the entire world by preaching the Gospel. (Matt. 24:14; 28:19; Acts 1:8) In proclaiming this Gospel, they tell not only of the mighty miracle of Jesus’ resurrection (Eph. 1:18-23), but also of the resurrection of those who will live and reign with him. The full Gospel message additionally calls for a declaration of the great awakening of all the dead and the restoration of the willing and obedient to full perfection of life as human beings on the earth.

To be a “witness of Jesus, and for the word of God,” we must go forth with a song of praise upon our lips—praise to God for his love in sending Jesus to be the Redeemer and Savior of the world, praise for the divine wisdom which designed such a loving plan, and praise for divine justice which made provision to wash away Adamic sin by the blood of Christ. Thus we can rejoice that the Spirit of God has authorized us to be witnesses of Jesus, and privileged to explain the plan of God, both as to the spiritual phase of his kingdom, as well as to proclaim the glorious hope of “restitution” for all mankind during the thousand years of Christ’s reign.—Acts 3:19-21 ■