

## **A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED UPON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE**

### **LOVE THE UNLOVEABLE**

Luke 6:34,36 “But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for He is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.” (Read Luke 6:32-36)

Loving a new born is natural. To have a baby nestled fast asleep against your chest provides a wonderful, warm feeling. To see their first smile, hear their first word, experience their first step brings much joy and delight.

There are, on the other hand, those human beings who are very difficult, if even possible to love. When a person cheats you, takes advantage of you, verbally or physically abuses you it is virtually impossible to love them. You do not want them in your life. You want nothing to do with them.

Then, you read Jesus’ words in Luke 6:32-36 where He acknowledges that it is not difficult to love someone who loves you, do good to a person who does good to you or lend to someone who will return to you what you have loaned them. But then comes the next phrase, “But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return . . .” How could Jesus expect you to do this? It goes against every natural emotion and feeling in your heart and mind.

Think, however, of the love of Jesus. It had no limit. It was and is what motivates Jesus in His relationships with those who love Him AND those who hate Him, attack Him and yes, those who put Him to death on the cross. “Father,” Jesus prayed, “forgive them for they know not what they do.” (Luke 23:34)

Jesus fed the crowds because they were hungry. He healed the sick because they were sick. He restored the injured, crippled, blind, deaf and dumb. There is never mention in the Bible that first Jesus “checked” these people out to be sure they loved Him, worshipped Him and supported His ministry. It is highly likely that among those who were recipients of the compassionate ministry of Jesus there were at least some who turned against Him and demanded Pilate to execute Him.

Jesus says to you in regard to your relationships, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35) Jesus says, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me." (Matthew 25:40)

Prayer: Dear Jesus, help me to love in order that all people will know that I am Your disciple. In Your holy name. Amen.

Love in Christ is strong and living, Binding faithful hearts in one;  
Love in Christ is true and giving May His will in us be done.

Love is patient and forbearing, Clothed in Christ's humility,  
Gentle, selfless, kind, and caring, Reaching out in charity.

Love in Christ abides forever, Failing not when ills attend;  
Love, forgiving and forgiven, Shall endure until life's end.  
(LSB 706)