

## **Week 3: Reimagining the Church**

### **Participant Sheet**

#### **A Sign of the Kingdom of God – Luke 6:20-36**

**Connecting** Does anyone have a “God sighting,” – a story or testimony of how you saw God at work in the last week that you can share?

**Background** The Gospel according to Luke sets forth the words and works of Jesus as the divine-human Savior, whose compassion and tenderness extended to all who were needy. The universal mission of Jesus is emphasized (a) by tracing his genealogy back to Adam (3.38); rather than Abraham (see Matthew 1.1-2); (b) by including references that commend members of a despised race, the Samaritans (10.30-37; 17.11-19); (c) by indicating that women have a new place of importance among the followers of Jesus (7.36-50; 8.3; 10.38-42); and (d) by promising that Gentiles would have an opportunity to accept the Gospel (2.23; 3.6; 24.27). Luke includes a special section (9.51-18.14) of Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem that includes many of Jesus’ most beloved parables. While Matthew was written for a primarily Jewish audience, Luke, written from southern Greece between the years 80-90, envisions a mostly Gentile audience.

#### **Luke 6:27-36** (NRSV)

27 “But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. 29 If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. 30 Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. 31 Do to others as you would have them do to you.

32 “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. 33 If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 34 If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. 35 But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. 36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

## **Questions**

1. Review Luke 6:27-36 and underline or circle the repeated words or phrases you find. What do you discover in doing so?
2. Of all that Jesus commands us to do in Luke 6:27-36, what do you find the most difficult or challenging? Why?
3. In verses 27 and 35, Jesus tells his disciples to "love your enemies". What does this mean in practical terms? For example, how does that impact how we view those with different political views than our own? What would it look like in terms of our speech, attitude, and behavior?
4. What does it look like to "do good to those who hate you" and "bless those who curse you"?
5. How well do you, "Do to others as you would have them do to you," in your speech, behavior, and attitude?
6. Living as Jesus did and taught requires that we act, rather than react in relationships and situations we face. What steps can you take, or habits can you cultivate if you're to be guided by the teaching of Jesus rather than your emotions or opinions?
7. Jesus invites us to respond to challenges by loving, doing good, blessing, praying, and giving. How can we do this in season and out of season? What is the reward is for doing what Jesus says in Luke 6:27-36?

## **Closing Prayer**

Gracious, merciful, and loving God, we thank you for sending Jesus to teach and show how we're to live as your children. We ask for your help, which we desperately need, to live as Jesus commanded. By your Spirit grant us the faith and courage to help us be disciples who show mercy and grace by loving even our enemies, doing good to all, blessing, praying, and giving so your kingdom may be shown to the world and more lives transformed by the gospel. In Jesus' name, Amen.