

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS

Jesus Through the Eyes of Luke

Matthew 5.39— If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also

Walter Wink, *Jesus and Nonviolence A Third Way*

Barbara Deming, *Revolution and Equilibrium*:
“With one hand we say to one who is angry, or to an oppressor, or to an unjust system, ‘Stop what you are doing. I refuse to honor the role you are choosing to play. I refuse to obey you. I refuse to cooperate with your demands. I refuse to build the walls and the bombs. I refuse to pay for the guns. With this hand I will even interfere with the wrong you are doing. I want to disrupt the easy pattern of your life.’ But then the advocate of nonviolence raises the other hand. It is raised out-stretched—maybe with love and sympathy, maybe not—but always outstretched. With this hand we say, ‘I won’t let go of you or cast you out of the human race. I have faith that you can make a better choice than you are making now, and I’ll be here when you are ready. Like it or not, we are part of one another.’ Active nonviolence is a process that holds these two realities—of noncooperation with violence but open to the humanity of the violator—in tension. It is like saying to our opponent: On the one hand (symbolized by a hand firmly stretched out and signaling, ‘Stop!’) ‘I will not cooperate with your violence or injustice; I will resist it with every fiber of my being’. And, on the other hand (symbolized by the hand with its palm turned open and stretched toward the other) ‘I am open to you as a human being.’” (p.16)

Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*: “In order for this struggle to have meaning, the oppressed must not, in seeking to regain their humanity (which is a way to create it), become oppressors of the oppressors, but rather restorers of the humanity of both.” (p. 44)

Luke 6.20-31—Looking at his disciples, he said:

Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.
Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.

Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their ancestors treated the prophets.

But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort.

Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry.

Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep.

Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you, for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets.

When the gospel says, “The last will be first, and the first will be last,” despite the fact it is counterintuitive to our cultural presuppositions, it is invariably good news to those who are last, and at least problematic news to those who see themselves as first.”— Peter Gomes, *The Scandalous Gospel of Jesus: What’s So Good about the Good News?*

“Good news to some will almost inevitably be bad news to others. In order that the gospel in the New Testament might be made as palatable as possible to as many people as possible, its rough edges have been shorn off and the radical edge of Jesus’ preaching as been replaced by a respectable middle, of which “niceness” is now God. When Jesus came preaching, it was to proclaim the ends of things as they are and the breaking in of things that are to be: the status quo is not to be criticized; it is to be destroyed.” - Ibid.

But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them.

“To set the oppressed free.” Luke 4:18

All Texts Quoted from the NIV Unless Otherwise Noted

Pyramids, Circles and Shared Tables

Survival, Resistance, Liberation, Restoration, and Transformation

Luke 4.18,19—“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to

proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,

to set the oppressed free,

to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

[Jesus’] basic issue, still basic today, is that most people have solved the human dilemma for themselves at the expense of everyone else, putting them down so as to stay afloat themselves. This vicious, antisocial way of coping with the necessities of life only escalates the dilemma for the rest of society . . . I am hungry because you hoard food. You are cold because I hoard clothing. Our dilemma is that we all hoard supplies in our backpacks and put our trust in our wallets! Such “security” should be replaced by God reigning, which means both what I trust God to do (to activate you to share food with me) and what I hear God telling me to do (to share clothes with you). We should not carry money while bypassing the poor or wear a backpack with extra clothes and food while ignoring the cold and hungry lying in the gutter. This is why the beggars, the hungry, the depressed are fortunate: God, that is, those in whom God rules, those who hearken to God, will care for them. The needy are called upon to trust that God’s reigning is there for them (“Theirs is the kingdom of God”) . . . Jesus’ message was simple, for he wanted to cut straight through to the point: trust God to look out for you by providing people who will care for you, and listen to him when he calls on you to provide for them.—James M. Robinson, *The Gospel of Jesus*

Acts 4.33-34—God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were **no needy persons among them**. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales.

