

Seedling Group Questions for the week of February 24 – Epiphany 7C

The sermon for February 24 can be found at www.saidanotherway.org

Questions for opening up

What is a piece of advice you've received that has proven really helpful?

Have you ever played a prank on a sibling or family member? What happened?

Read Genesis 45:3-11, 15

Joseph initially waits a while before he reveals his identity to his brothers. (This scene is the culmination of that waiting). What could be some reasons for his hesitation? Is it possible for reconciliation between wounded parties to be rushed? Explain.

Three times Joseph says, "God sent me before you." What prepares a person to be able to see God working through negative life events?

Read Luke 6:27-36

How often do you see examples of what Jesus is describing in this passage?

Is it possible that Jesus' words might end up reinforcing someone's bad behavior? How could that be avoided?

How do these commands work to undermine and overturn the honor-shame culture of Jesus' time? *Honor-shame culture effectively created a social system of intense tribal (and family) loyalties where people were constantly trying to move up in society (gain honor). They accomplished this by finding ways to exert their dominance over other people through shame, by placing people in their debt, and with the use of aggression.* Do these commands have the exact same effect in human culture today? Why or why not?

Putting things together

How do Jesus' commands create new beginnings?

Pastor Phillip says, *"Jesus wants his followers to understand that the ways of violence and humiliation in the world are part of the perishable things that won't last. There is a new world we're living into. It's going to tax our imagination, but he believes we can do it."* What kinds of things help you envision and "live into" this new world and release the perishable things?

Making it personal

Has God ever brought about unexpected new life out of a dark time in your life? What happened?

Which of these commands in Luke 6 speak most to you right now in your life? Why?

Genesis 45:3-11, 15

³Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

⁴Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come closer to me." And they came closer. He said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. ⁵And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. ⁶For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. ⁷God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. ⁸So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. ⁹Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. ¹⁰You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. ¹¹I will provide for you there—since there are five more years of famine to come—so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty.'" ¹⁵And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

Luke 6:27-36

[Jesus said:] ²⁷"But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. ²⁹If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. ³⁰Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. ³¹Do 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. ³³If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴If 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. ³⁵But 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. ³⁶Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

³⁷"Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; ³⁸give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back."