

Catechism Story 7

*The Eighth and Second Commandments; The Fifth Petition
Memory Verse and Catechism Prayers from Congregation at Prayer*

BIBLE STORY: LOVE YOUR ENEMIES AND BLESS THOSE WHO CURSE YOU Matthew 5:43-48

Central Thoughts

- Our faith in Jesus' mercy gives us the strength to be merciful to everyone.
- We bless our enemies with Words of love because Jesus died for them.
- God's grace for all sinners is seen in the gift of the sun and the rain.
- We are all sons of God for Jesus' sake by our Baptism into Christ.
- Jesus did not curse His enemies, but defended them, spoke well of them, and explained everything about them in the kindest way.
- None of us deserves words of kindness, love, and mercy, but that is what Jesus gives us in the Gospel that we might believe it.

Discussion Questions

Using the language of the Catechism, what does the life of love look like under the Eighth Commandment?

We should fear and love God, so that we ...defend our neighbor, speak well of him, and explain everything about him in the kindest way.

Using the language of the Catechism, what does the life of love look like under the Second Commandment?

We should fear and love God, so that we do not curse our neighbor.

Using the language of the Catechism, what do we believe about the mercy of God under the Fifth Petition of the Lord's Prayer that teaches us "to sincerely forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us"?

We pray that God would not look at our sin or deny our prayer because of them. We are neither worthy of the things for which we pray, nor have we deserved them, but we ask that He would give them all to us by grace, for we daily sin much and surely deserve nothing but punishment. Only when we believe this can we sincerely forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us.

How does the language of the Catechism help us understand Jesus' words, "love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you that you may be sons of your Father in heaven."?

We love our enemies, bless those who curse us, do good to those who hate us, and pray for those who persecute us because this is what God in Christ has done for us by grace alone. Christ died for all. His mercy is for all. As baptized sons of God, we are called to live in His love and mercy toward others, even our enemies.

How does the Catechism help us understand what it means to "love" and "bless" our enemies?

To love and bless our enemies is to forgive our enemies, pray for them, and confess the love of Christ for them in all that we do and say.

How does Jesus' illustrate that the grace of God, His undeserved love, is for all people, even those who do not believe in Christ?

"He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."

Who are the just?

The "just" are believers in Jesus who have been declared righteous through faith in Him.

Who are the unjust?

The "unjust" are unbelievers who have rejected Jesus' death upon the cross for them.

According to Jesus' Word, how do the "unjust" show their rejection of Jesus' love?

They only love those who love them.

Who do the tax collectors represent?

The “tax collectors” represent those who love from a works-righteous faith, only loving and blessing whom they like and those from whom they receive a benefit for themselves.

How can we, as sinners, “be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect”?

We receive Jesus’ forgiveness as a gift of God’s grace and live in His love and mercy toward others, especially our enemies.

Talk about examples from the Bible of those who rejected Jesus’ undeserved forgiveness and grace?

Cain who cursed and murdered his brother Abel.

Esau who vowed to take revenge upon and kill his brother Jacob.

The sons of Jacob who were envious of their brother Joseph and sold him into slavery.

Absalom who dishonored his father and led an insurrection against the king.

The Scribes and Pharisees who murmured against Jesus who received sinners and ate with them.

The disciples of Jesus who often found it difficult to understand and practice Christ’s love, saying, “How often shall I forgive my brother who sins against me?”

Talk about examples from the Bible of those who lived by faith in Jesus’ undeserved love and forgiveness?

Abraham who gave Lot the choice of the best land

Joseph who forgave His brothers and provided for them.

David who gave orders to spare the life of his rebellious son Absalom.

Talk about how Jesus loved His enemies, blessed those who cursed Him, and prayed for those who spitefully used Him and persecuted Him?

He died for all. He called all to repentance for the sake of forgiving them and giving them the gift of salvation. He prayed for His enemies, persecutors, and sinners from the cross, “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do!”

Meditation on the Bible Story

We are called by the Gospel of Jesus’ Christ to love and forgive others as Christ loved and forgave us. His love and forgiveness are based upon His grace and not upon our works. We are declared to be “Sons of God” in our Baptism, because we receive Jesus’ righteousness as our very own. We are declared “perfect” for Jesus’ sake and live our lives by faith in Him. His love and mercy shape our interactions and conduct toward others, especially toward our enemies and those who hate us. Our faith in His undeserved love gives us the strength to live according to the calling of love we have from the Catechism. By the grace of God, we do not “curse” our neighbors (2nd Commandment). By the grace of God, “we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him, or hurt his reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything about him in the kindest way” (8th Commandment). And by the grace of God, “we sincerely forgive, and gladly do good to those who sin against us” (5th Petition). To love and bless others who do not deserve God’s love and forgiveness in Jesus is our highest calling as baptized children of God and faithfully bears witness to His love for all.

Prayer on the Bible Story

O Lord Jesus, as you loved your enemies, blessed those who cursed you, and prayed for those who persecuted You, give us Your grace and Spirit so that we to might sincerely forgive and gladly do good to those who have sinned against us. In Your name we pray. Amen.



Bless Those Who Curse You
Matthew 5:33-45