

reward have you? Do not even the tax-gatherers do the same?"

In Luke 6:31-33 we read: "And just as you want people to treat you, treat them in the same way. And if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same."

And in Matthew 7:12 Jesus sums it up: "Therefore, however you want people to treat you, so treat them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."

Note that our Lord does not say that we are to love those who love us, and to treat people the way they treat us. Rather, we are to love those who are our enemies (who do not love us), and to treat people the way we would like them to treat us.

This brings us to a second, more subtle interpretation. If Jesus was not saying, "Go, and love those who love you," then what was He saying? Jesus said, "Go and do the same." But what does same or likewise or in like manner refer to?

According to the lawyer's answer, our Lord was saying, "Go, and do the same as the one who showed mercy to the wounded man. Go and love your neighbor." But who was the lawyer's neighbor? And who is ours?

Upon analysis, we discover that the idea of loving one's neighbor can be used in two ways, one passive and the other active.

In the passive sense, one who is in difficulty or need is assisted by another; that one who provides assistance becomes one's neighbor, and one should love him. Even if he is a despised Samaritan, yet if he helps us, we should love him (but of course we need not love those who do not help us, such as the priest and the Levite in the story).

In the active sense, one sees another in difficulty or need and assists him. In so doing one becomes a neighbor. In the act of showing love, one becomes a neighbor to the one in need.

In the passive sense, I wait until someone shows love to me; that is my neighbor, and I should love him.

In the active sense, I show love to someone, and thus become a neighbor to him.