

H.E. Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden's Homily on the Second Sunday of Luke



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St. George Cathedral of Stockholm
Sunday, October 5, 2025

Dearly Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Today, on the Second Sunday of Luke, the Lord places before us one of the hardest commandments of the Gospel, and yet one of the most glorious: "Love your enemies, do good, lend hoping for nothing in return; and your reward shall be great, and you shall be children of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and the evil. Be therefore merciful, just as your Father is merciful."

The words are simple, but their fulfillment is not. Who among us finds it easy to love those who slander us and treat us unjustly? Our natural instinct is to repay "eye for an eye."

Yet our Lord makes it clear: if we only love those who love us, if we only do good to those who repay us, we are no different from unbelievers, for even sinners act that way.

The true mark of the Christian is to imitate God Himself, to show mercy even when mercy is undeserved.

Saint Gregory Palamas reminds us that every person was created in the image of God, fashioned for love and mercy. Sin has distorted this image, making us demand justice for ourselves while withholding mercy from others.

Saint John Chrysostom is equally direct: this command is not a lofty dream, but a duty. To forgive and to bless is not beyond our reach. He says, “Nothing makes us so like God as to be ready to forgive the wicked and to love all people.”

But why should we endure insult and show mercy? Because in doing so, we participate in Christ’s own life. On the Cross He prayed, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” When we forgive, we stand with Him and we reveal the face of the Father to the world.

Let us, then, begin with small steps. If you hold resentment against anyone, pray for them daily. If someone has wronged you, resist the urge to repay evil with evil; instead, offer a word of kindness or a prayer for their good.

May Christ grant us His own heart, that we may become true children of His, shining with the light of His mercy. Amen!

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