

Love Your Enemies

Series on Prayer & Holiness

- Sermon On the Mount

Matthew 5:43-48 *"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."*

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In Order to Embrace This

1. Those In The Kingdom are able to....

- not about earning relationship with God – but living it

- Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven

- Mk 10:15 ***“I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”***

- Mk 2:17 ***“On hearing this, Jesus said to them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”***

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2. Evidence Transformation – Not Earn Transformed Life

- vs.44 – *‘that you may be sons of your father in heaven’*
- Father is the assumed role
- His values seen in our lives and actions

*Light Shine Before Men vs.16 ***“In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”***

- empowered to live differently
- seen by others around us
- recognized as something only God could do – credited to him

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* Good trees Good Fruit 7:16-17 ***“By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.”***

- cannot produce love as a fruit if you are not grafted into God

- Children of God – New Trees! New Trees – New Fruit

* Cannot embrace this teaching apart from relationship with God that brings the transformed heart and life!

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3. Mandate Beyond Ourselves 28:18-20

- "Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

- have the right to ask this of you
- go everywhere to everyone
- present gospel and disciple them
- don't stop, I am with you

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In Light of This Truth and Mandate.....

1. Neighbors & Enemies

- common understanding – love those close, hate those who oppose

- Jesus defines everyone as neighbors

- Luke 10:27-29 ***"He answered: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"***

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- Parable of Good Samaritan
- Jesus saying, love your neighbor even if he is your enemy! Everyone is in the position to receive your love as someone who matters to God

2. Three Descriptions of Enemies

a) those who persecute you

- pursue with harmful intentions, set on destruction
- reflects the hostility Jesus himself faced
- visible enemy – open attack

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b) Evil and Unrighteous

- those who resist God's will and ways
- not accepting God's authority
- People going against our values and desires
 - contrary, rebellious, antagonistic, uncaring, rude, non-listening, subversive, sneaky

c) Anyone Who Does Not Treat You Well 46-47

- ignore you, offend you, dishonor you
- not act properly towards you
- disappoint you, frustrate you

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3. Loving Them Spelled Out

a) Greet Them

- friendly, open, non-condemning, embracing
- do not avoid, pass by, cross away from
- includes those you don't know, are at odds with

b) Practically Meet Needs vs.45

- God causes rain & sunshine – just and unjust
- sunshine & rain essential to food & health

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- Paul quoting Proverbs 25:2 Rom. 12:20 ***“On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head “***
- Reflecting God’s heart means I do not withhold...
 - in doing business with them
 - in helping them with a project, working together
 - in exhibiting love in the face of their rejection

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c) Praying for Them

- means desiring God's grace for them
- wishing them redemption, forgiveness, relationship
- interceding for them before God

*Jesus example on Cross Luke 23:34 – Father forgive them they don't know what they are doing

*Stephen in Acts 7:59-60 ***“While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep “***

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- Rom. 10:1-3 ***“Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.”***

- praying for them can only come from hearts without malice, bitterness, seeking punishment

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So What

1. Need to Have Perspective on Our Salvation

- come as poor in spirit, accept gift, not earned right
- we were once the enemies of God
- we are mandated to work in God's empowering as people in relationship with God

2. Need to Understand All Matter to God

- parable of good Samaritan clear – all our neighbors
- we are to be God's object lesson in this area

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3. Clear in Scripture about enemies

- we have them, some openly, some by virtue of our choices and their selfishness, some from harboring hurts and offense
- we are called to respond in God's heart to them

4. Clear ways we are to evidence our love

- Greet them
- Provide for them
- Pray for them