

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

MATTHEW 5:43-48

Text: Matthew 5:44

Matthew 5:44

⁴⁴ But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

Introduction:

For some of us, the title of this message could be “Mission Impossible”.

How can we love our enemies? How can we look at people who have done us wrong and honestly look at them with a heart of love?

In this passage we have read, the Lord tells us exactly how.

Can we really love our enemies, and if so can we learn how?

1. THE REMINDER (VS. 43)

Matthew 5:43

⁴³ Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

The Lord reminds His listeners back to the Old Testament and the law and what the rabbis taught.

He was speaking to a crowd of people (including His disciples), and saying to them very specifically that they have heard – which means they are familiar with the saying.

Think to yourself of someone who just aggravates you to no end – do you love them?

If they were on fire in front of you, would you put them out? How about if it came to saving them from the fires of eternal damnation – would you tell them how they could be saved?

This is the love Jesus is exemplifying here – and he is reminding us to love one another, so that our love for them MIGHT make them into sons of the same God we worship.

2. THE REQUIREMENT (VS. 44A)

Matthew 5:44

⁴⁴ But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

This is another one of those very hard practices, but we see this practiced in the lives of several very important members of the New Testament.

- Stephen

Stephen was a godly man, a man full of the Spirit and willing to testify to the ends of the Earth about the love of God.

In his testifying, He was caught, arrested, and tried before the Sanhedrin in what many would call a show trial.

Acts 7:51-59

⁵¹ Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do* ye. ⁵² Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: ⁵³ Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept *it*. ⁵⁴ When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with *their* teeth. ⁵⁵ But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, ⁵⁶ And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man

standing on the right hand of God. ⁵⁷ Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, ⁵⁸ And cast *him* out of the city, and stoned *him*: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. ⁵⁹ And they stoned Stephen, calling upon *God*, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

- The Lord

Luke 23:34

³⁴ Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

3. THE RESPONSIBILITY (VS. 44B)

Matthew 5:44

⁴⁴ But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

Notice the three things we're instructed to do:

- A. Bless them that curse you

Proverbs 15:1

¹ A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.

- B. Do good to them that hate you

- C. Pray for those that despitefully use you

“These words are difficult for us to comprehend, because such a situation - to love one’s enemies - seems unnatural to us. But it (means to be) precisely in love (with) one’s enemies, in the payment of good in return for malice - that we discover in ourselves the true image of God.”

4. THE REPRESENTATION (VS. 46)

Matthew 5:46

⁴⁶For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

Look at the example in Verse 46 – if you read it too fast you might just miss it.

The tax collectors do not love, and look at what they receive.

The pagans only relate to one another, and look what they have.

Do we wish to be like them, or to live like Christ?

5. THE REASON (VS. 45)

Matthew 5:45

⁴⁵ That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

Our love for someone else makes us like our Father who loves us. When we fail to love, we are not showing other people the Father that we claim to worship; that we claim to love.

Our love ought to be evident in everything we do – regardless of the excuse of the flesh or the unwillingness of the Spirit. If God has love for us (which he does), we need to have love for others.

John 13:34-35

³⁴ A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. ³⁵ By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

John 15:12-17

¹² This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. ¹⁵ Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. ¹⁶ Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall

ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. ¹⁷ These things I command you, that ye love one another.

1 John 4:7

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

1 John 4:11-12

¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

¹² No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

Close:

The Holy Spirit can empower us to live this truth.

It's not natural life -- it's a supernatural life.

It's the life Christ has put in front of us.

Through His strength and by His Grace we can learn to obey.