

The Sermon on the Mount - Love Your Enemies

Matthew 5:38-48

May 16, 2021

But I say to you, 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; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. Matthew 5:44-45

First, some terms to be understood before we can make applications:

What is an enemy?

Greek Word – *Echthros*- hated, hateful, hostile and opposing another.

English definition- a person who is actively opposed or hostile to someone or something, or ideology. (Opponent, adversary, foe, combatant). This can be an individual, group of people or people who do or think a certain way.

Who is my enemy?

Any person or group of people that we hate or that hates us that we are hostile to or are hostile to us or we despise or they despise us! Examples are another person, political party, people on the opposite side of our belief spectrum, etc.

Based on these definitions all of us here this morning could say that we have “enemies.” Can you think of some right now?

What is “love?”

In verse 44 the word *love* is the word “*agapao*” and where we get our word “*agape*” from. Agape love is the active love of God for His Son and His people, and the active love His people are to have for God, each other, and even their enemies.

What is “bless”?

“*Eulogeite*” - Speak well of/praise.

What is “do good?”

Kalos can refer to physical or personal qualities, such as fine, well, beautiful, handsome or noble. ... It can also refer to the qualities of objects (*kalos xiphos*, etc.) *Agathos* often refers to moral goodness, or the concept of 'goodness' itself. It can also be used in reference to the natures of people... Good (*agathos*) means intrinsically good, inherently good in quality but with the idea of good which is also profitable, useful, benefiting others, benevolent (marked by or disposed to doing good). The meaning of *kalos* is also discussed in this topic. The basic meaning of *kalos* describes that which is inherently excellent or intrinsically good, providing some special or superior benefit. *Kalos* is good with emphasis (as discussed below) on that which is beautiful, handsome, excellent, surpassing, precious, commendable, admirable. *Kalos* describes that which is inherently excellent or intrinsically good and/or that which provides some special or superior benefit. In classical Greek *kalos* was originally used to describe that which outwardly beautiful.¹

What is “pray?”

Lift them up before the Lord! Sometimes this is the only thing we can do.

God tells us we are to love our enemies, bless them, do good to them and pray for them!

Why are we to love, do good, bless and pray for our enemies? Verse 45 tells so “that you (we) may be sons of the Father.” It’s an expression to say we will be like our Father as well as show we are His child. Remember Jesus’ prayer as they hung on the cross? “Then Jesus said, ‘*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*’”

Immediately when you and I hear we are supposed to respond like this to our enemies we may quickly tune out or dismiss it.

Did God mean what He said when He told us to love our enemies? Was it true? Was He giving us instruction that He desires for us to keep?

When we hear God’s words to love our enemies we often rather avoid this command, but we can’t, it comes from God and we are told to. Often times though instead of loving our enemy we fill it with:

¹ <https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?view=article&aid=34161>

- Jealousy
- Envy
- Anger
- Giving reasons for our “hate” because what has been done to us.
- Manipulation when we can’t get someone to do what we want them to.
- Hoping our enemy gets “what they deserve.”
- Saying, “I will never get over this” and intending to live there.
- Hate
- Bitterness
- I will fix them.

For some, instead of “loving our enemies” we have picked up one or some of the above and have made it our identity. We have made it our identity as we have made it known to others or we have made it our identity to ourselves.

We have already decided we can’t and we won’t love our enemies:

- A parent who wounded us.
- A family member who did us wrong.
- A friend who turned their back on us.
- One who did something to our spouse or our kids.
- Someone who treated us wrongly and now is “living large”.
- Someone who won’t give us the time of day, and we don’t know why.
- Someone who we tried to make things right, but they won’t hear us out.
- Someone who desires our downfall, demise and even death.

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

2 Peter 3:9

“Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways,” says the Lord GOD. “Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies,” says the Lord GOD. “Therefore turn and live!”

Ezekiel 18:30-32

You and I can’t do this! We can’t love our enemies by our self, we can’t love them on our own, it’s impossible.

Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!”

Mark 9:24

Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”

Matthew 16:24

In Jesus Christ, we can’t say, “this is just who I am” or “this is just the way it is.” We have been made free in Jesus. He is all we need. We can do this thru Him. So often when we don’t forgive and choose not to do as verse 44 tells us. We are the one really who is held bondage. So how do we “love our enemies?”

- **Pray**
- **Ask God to check our heart.**
- **Be in tune with the Holy Spirit.**
- **Ask God is there any specific steps you need to take?**

Prayer Focus:

- We will confess our need for God to cleanse our heart.
- We will lay down all bitterness, anger, hate, malice, what has been done to us, envy, anger, hate etc. and ask God to fill it with His heart.
- We would realize we need Jesus time all of the time.
- If we want God to have our heart, we must love our enemies.