

May 8, 2016 / Matthew 5:38-48

“Love Your Enemies”

Close your eyes...

The Sermon On The Mount (Matthew 5-7) continues to be so radical!! The Kingdom of heaven has come... Thus:

- You have certain attitudes (5:1-12)
- You are salt, light and a city (5:13-16)
- You are called to a “deeper righteousness” (5:20)
- You see murder and adultery in your heart (5:21ff)
- You love your enemies (5:43ff)

Contra the typical principle: “If someone hits you, you...”

“Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth” (verse 38)—this was meant to set restraint and limits on personal vengeance revenge; “evenhanded justice”

“Love your enemies”

1. No one else has said this before or since

2. What Jesus Is Not Saying

- A woman can be hit, hurt, beat up...
- That is it ok to hurt others (I simply watch)...
- That you can hurt children and the vulnerable
- That if you come into my house at night...

3. Assumptions

- Private retaliation, not public order
- An adult disciple
- Love everyone: from the “farthest” to the “nearest”
- We have enemies (1st century hearers had enemies)

4. Basic Principle: against revenge and retaliation.

Desiring reconciliation and relationship.

“If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also” (5:39).

5. Why Should We Love Our Enemies?

- Good for you (get rid of anger and depression)?
- Good for society (stop of escalation of violence)?
- God is like this (the basic story line of the Bible).

“He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous” (5:45).

“Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death...” (Colossians 1:21-22).

6. Our relationship with God is meant to lay the foundation for all of our others relationships.

7. How To Love Our Enemies?

“Pray for those who persecute you” (vs 44).

The more love, the more prayer; the more prayer, the more love. John Stott (Message of the Sermon on the Mount, 119) writes, “Jesus seems to have prayed for his tormentors actually while the iron spikes were being driven through his hands and feet; ... ‘Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do’ (Luke 23:34). If the cruel torture of crucifixion could not silence our Lord’s prayer for his enemies, what pain, pride, prejudice, or sloth could justify the silencing of ours?” (The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew–Mark, p. 192).