

14 February 2021

Love your enemies

This is the 6th time in the Sermon on the Mount that the Lord Jesus declared: “Ye have heard that it hath been said; but I say unto you”:

In (C5) Jesus taught the His disciples, the multitudes, and He is teaching us the true meaning and spirit of the law, and that obedience to any command MUST begin in the heart. In every one of these reproofs and corrections, Jesus exposed the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees.

They taught the people that keeping God’s commandments meant, as long as you didn’t break the commandment outwardly, you were ok.

Jesus taught them, (and us) that every sin first originated in the intent of the heart. Hebrews 4:12-13

The scribes and Pharisees put on a good show on the outside; they “looked” righteous; but their hearts were full of hatred, lust, arrogance, and irreverence toward God. The scribes and Pharisees were the furthest thing from representing true and genuine righteousness to God’s people.

Matthew 5:20: Jesus taught us (by His life and His perfect obedience) what true righteousness looked like. (Text: V43-48)

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt Love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy”

This is certainly not written anywhere in the scriptures. What the OT scriptures do say: Leviticus 19:18: “Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge (bear/carry anger) against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the LORD”

Think about what this blanket statement of personally hating your enemy would do to the society of God’s believing people; consider the damage that it would do to our personal witness and testimony, most of all the damage to the gospel of Christ!

But now, what do we do with OT portions of the scriptures that are imprecatory; in which the writer is calling for the destruction of God’s enemies?

When we read these portions of the Word of God, we must remember that these words are spoken in a judicial; they speak of God’s judgment against people and nations that had sinned against Him and rejected Him as the One True God.

Examples of God’s enemies, upon whom judicial punishments fell:

God punished/cursed Cain for killing Abel, the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, the Ammonites and Moabites were under judgment of God because they did not meet the children of Israel with bread and water when they came out of Egypt, in addition, the Moabites were under God’s judgment because they hired Balaam to curse God’s people. And there were the Amalekites and the Philistines.

In every one of these cases, these people were under the judgment of God! But the scribes and Pharisees took these portions of the OT scriptures and taught the people that it was right to personally hate your enemy.

But beloved saint of God, YOU and I are not to take these passages as examples of HOW we are to live our everyday lives toward those who hate us and are out enemies personally.

Think of what Christianity would look like if we lived as taught by the scribes and Pharisees? (If we followed their example):

Sadly, there are “Christians” in the world that DO live like this! If we hate our enemies, how are we going to lead them to Christ? How are we going witness to them, show them the love of Christ, and the goodness of God? Jesus was “A Friend of Sinners”!

Every one of us were, once upon a time, enemies of God; but aren’t you so glad that God loves His enemies?

Romans 5:6-10, Ephesians 2:1-5, Colossians 1:20-22

(V44): “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”. Luke 6:27-34

THIS is not natural/normal earthly or human love; it does not and cannot come from within us, it is the love of God; it originates from God. If you and I would love as God loves, and as we see Christ loving, we must have His love in us! 1 John 2:9-11, 3:13-19, 4:9-12, 20-21

Allow me to make a distinction here; we are never to love the sins of our enemies and those that hate us, but we are to love their souls and love them as persons! Psalms 97:10, 101:3, 119:104, 128, Romans 12:9, 19-21

How are we to love our enemies? By BLESSING them when they curse us, DOING GOOD to them when they are hating us, and PRAYING for them, when they are (NOT JUST) using us, but when they are DESPITEFULLY using us, and persecuting us.

You CANNOT just look at this command of Christ, and then head out of the door each day to fulfill and do this in your own strength; if you do, you will fail miserably.

We, as Christians, cannot think to live the Christian life in our own strength and abilities; we are to live it in the strength of God, and from a place of NEED.

I need God to give me the ability to be love my enemies and those that hate me for the sake of Christ! Philippians 4:13, 19, 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

The love of Christ IN YOU will shine most brightly when it is tested.

(V45): Loving your enemies, and those that hate you, and despitefully use you is a powerful witness that you ARE a child of God! How so?

THIS Christ-Like characteristic makes you resemble your Heavenly Father, for He loves His enemies every day! Luke 6:35-36

(V46-47): Anyone can love someone who loves them back; or hate someone who hates them; but THAT ONE who will love someone who is unlovely and unfriendly, and who will love someone who hates him; He is special and unique, and other-worldly! NOT OF THIS WORLD!

Listen, genuine and authentic children of God don’t hate sinners; they love sinners just like their heavenly Father.

Don't ever forget that someone showed you the love of Christ, witnessed the gospel to you; became your friend when you were lost; "went the extra mile with you" to show you that Christ came to save sinners.

Christian, if anyone in this world OUGHT to be doing more than others, it's you and me. Proverbs 12:16

Matthew 5:47: Cp. Luke 6:36

Not sinless perfection, but that you ought to imitate and resemble your heavenly Father in how you behave toward sinners, those who curse you, and those who are your enemies.