

JESUS ON ENEMIES

Matthew 5:43-48

REVIEW



INTRODUCTION

- Israel has historically lived with enemies, those who were after their demise, with Rome and the Romans being significant in that regard. RELEVANT TEACHING FOR THEM.
- Can you think of someone who would regard you as their enemy, or whom you regard as your enemy?
- That is, someone who has harmed or hurt you or those you love, OR who lives as a threat to you, who opposes you, who slanders you, or who makes their dislike of you known.
- What does Jesus say about how we are to consider and live toward such people?
- What does *kingdom righteousness* look like in this regard?

YOU HAVE HEARD

Matthew 5:43 (NKJV) “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’

- Moses set forth in Leviticus 19:18 to love your neighbor.
- **Leviticus 19:18 (NKJV)** You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.
- He also directed the Israelites not to seek the peace or prosperity of their enemy the Moabites and Ammonites, who were outsiders to Israel in **Deuteronomy 23:3-6**.
- **Deuteronomy 23:6 (NKJV)** “You shall not seek their peace or their prosperity all your days forever.”
- Then, of course, King David is known for his imprecatory prayers.
- Jesus is calling His kingdom to a higher standard.
- Jesus taught this truth throughout His earthly ministry; remember the **Good Samaritan story**?

BUT I SAY**Love Your Enemies**

vs. 44

Matthew 5:44 (NKJV) *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,*

- “Love your neighbor” (5:43) is central to Jesus’ teaching.
- Jesus stated in Matthew 22:40 that the great commandment of loving God and your neighbor is what all the Law is built upon.
- Jesus’ teaching in these verses is a radical concept that goes beyond loving your neighbor; it goes beyond human instinct and societal norms.
- Love (agapeo), 1 Corinthians 13 – kind of love, expressed in actions, not mere sentiment.
- Also, it is a command.

Love in Action

- Jesus then delineates what this love will look like.
 1. **Bless** those who curse you
 2. **Do Good** to those who hate you
 3. **Pray** for those who spitefully use and persecute you
- **REMEMBER – LOVE IS NOT A VICTIM OF MY EMOTIONS BUT THE SERVANT OF MY WILL!!**
 - These three actions evidence that you love your enemy; also, they are good indicators as to whether you have forgiven one who has harmed you.
- It is not easy to love those who act against us and have or do harm to us.
 - But God did; He loves all, while all are sinners – Romans 5:8.

Romans 5:8 (NKJV) *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

God’s Kingdom Standard

vs. 45

Matthew 5:45 (NKJV) *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.*

- When we love in this manner, it demonstrates that we are a child of God.
- It reflects that His life is in us and animates us.
- It is seen in God’s character that His love is not conditioned by the character of the recipients of His love.
 - He causes HIS sun to rise on the evil ones as well as the good ones.

- He does not condition providing His sun based on their conduct; therefore, being children of God, with the life of God in us, we should love as God loves.

Shining Your Light

vss. 46-47

Matthew 5:46–47 (NKJV) *For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?*

1. How the World Loves

- Tax Collectors: The tax collectors' love is conditional; the tax collectors' love is characterized by loving in return to how they are loved.
- Gentiles: The Gentiles' love is restricted to their tribe.
- If you love only those who treat you respectfully or are of your tribe, how are you different than the tax collectors or Gentiles? That's the question!!

2. The Kingdom Contrast

- It is to be as God loves.
- As Jesus said earlier, God provides sun and rain for those who are God-haters, like He does for the good and righteous.
- Those in God's kingdom emulate God.

THE CHALLENGE

Matthew 5:48 (NKJV) *Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.*

Be Perfect

- "Perfect" translates the Gk. Wd. *teleios*, which can be translated *complete, mature, without defect or blemish, of full age*.
- The antonym would be childishness or immaturity in contrast.
- Loving like God is the spiritually mature life, a life without defect or blemish, a life of God-quality love!
- Loving enemies is really hard.
 - When we're wronged, it can make us angry.
 - It can cause us fear and distress.
 - It can deeply wound us.
 - It can make us want to strike back.
- We must entrust God with our wounds, fear, pain, and repent of our unforgiveness and anger.

- As we forgive, only then can we love like God loved and loves us.
- When we look at the overall context of Matthew 5:17-48, it's all about "Who will live a kingdom righteousness that is greater than the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees; a righteousness that will inherit the Kingdom?"
 - In Matthew 5:20 Jesus says, "*Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven.*"
- Then Jesus gives six examples of the greater righteousness necessary to enter the Kingdom, up to this point.
 1. Live without forbidden animus or anger toward others.
 2. Live without lustful covetousness.
 3. Live with high regard for marriage; divorce will be a great exception.
 4. Live with speech and a life that is simple in integrity; yes, is yes, and no, is no.
 5. Live with grace and mercy when harmed or exploited; turn the cheek, go the extra mile.
 6. Love enemies by *blessing, doing good, and praying* for the spiteful persecutor.

Like Your Father in Heaven

- Jesus is saying that this is the perfect life, the mature life, the life without defect or blemish, which is the life of God. He is a God of righteousness, love, mercy, and grace.
 - This is the life characteristic of those who are of God's kingdom; this is kingdom righteousness.
- **1) those who love their enemies, in God's life and power, imitate the Father.**
 - And by imitating the Father,
- **2) they show that they are true offspring of the Father** – like Father, like children.
 - And since they're true sons or children, they show that
- **3) they will inherit the Father's blessing; that is, kingdom inheritance.**

APPLICATION

1. **Identify the person(s)** who, to you, would fit the category of "enemy."
2. **Identify "why and what?"**
3. **Grant forgiveness and ask God's forgiveness** for yourself where necessary.
4. **Then bless, be willing to do good, pray for him/her.**
5. **Finish the 4-Rs** by **rebuking** any specific demonic influence, **replacing** by backfilling with blessing, doing good if needed, and praying for them, and **receiving** Holy Spirit filling and empowerment.



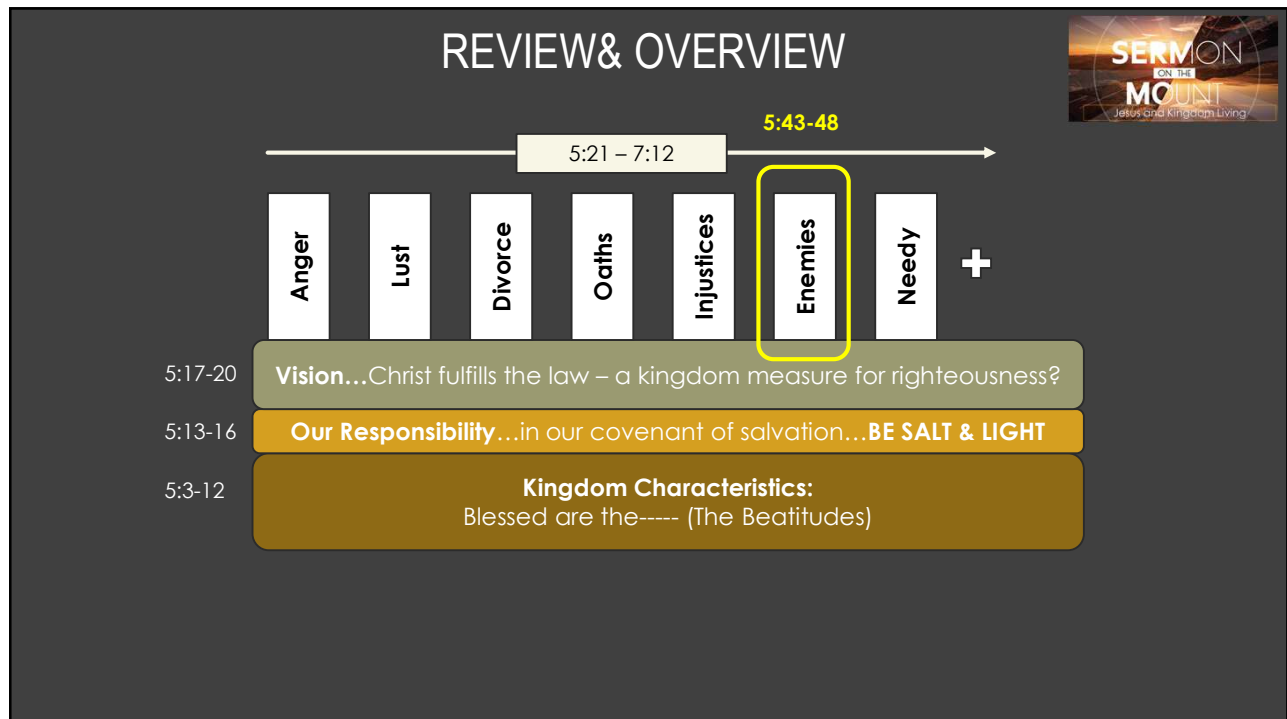
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Love in Action vs.44

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vs. 48



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