

WEEK 14 (November 15-21) Sermon on the Mount— “True Love of Others”
(Matthew 5:38-6:4)

Starting the Conversation

The way of Jesus can be called the way of love. In fact, Jesus taught that all of the law and prophets could be summed up with the commandments to love God and love one’s neighbor. The only problem is that we are often confused about what love looks like, or we are simply unwilling to live out the true law of love. The foundation of this kind of love is the willingness to let go of self-preservation and self-centered thinking. This kind of self-abandon is only possible when we realize and receive the amazing love of God that cares for us in every way. We can trust God and lift others because God cares for us in every way.

Let’s Read Matthew 5:38-48

Leader: Jesus identifies several situations in this passage where our default often is to deny, defend, and retaliate, but His invitation is to love those who have done us wrong – this seems quite radical! Not to mention, often difficult to discern and apply – but the power behind this is a deep trust in God’s love, care and provision that He will fill in every need you have.

- What ask seems the most radical of Jesus from this passage? Which is the hardest to live out and why?
 - Think beyond the practical needs – what does going the second mile, and all of these asks, accomplish on earth? How could they impact God’s Kingdom coming down to earth? Why do you think Jesus would ask this of us?
 - Jesus is not wanting to create “doormats”, nor is he diminishing the importance of defending good and opposing evil – so how do you think this practically applies in our world today? What are some modern-day examples?
 - Is there anyone in your life that isn’t your “favorite”, but you could still be intentional in loving and praying for them? How do you think this practice of loving your enemies could grow your own relationship with God?
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Let’s Read Matthew 6:1-4

Leader: Jesus offers a warning of doing good works in order to be seen by others, and even being aware of your own good works, creating a pride and ego. Jesus is inviting His followers into a path of true love – a self-forgetfulness and humility that sees only God and our neighbor – surrendering ourselves and our needs to the care and love of the Father completely.

- What is the danger of good works and righteousness being showy and in the spotlight?
 - Why do we often seek out an audience for our good works? How could you begin to shift your focus to God as your audience of One?
 - Jesus had very public good works, but He gave all credit to the Father for what He did. How can this serve as a model for you as you live out the good works God has created for you to walk in?
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Closing—

- We discussed several different situations, but all of them come back to trusting that God truly does love and care for you and will provide everything you need, so you don’t have to seek it out yourself. Think about your own life, is there a specific area where you still feel like you are having to seek out a need you have? How can you begin or continue to trust God with that need instead? Consider sharing and praying together for God to provide that need.
 - It can be easy to feel discouraged, as the asks of Jesus continue to stack up – reflect on how Jesus alone is our righteousness and His grace covers every shortcoming. What do these passages teach us about Jesus and who He is?
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PRAYER

Lord, thank You for how You are our righteousness. Your grace covers every sin – past, present, future – and it’s our faith, trust, and surrender to You that invites us into that forgiveness and into developing a holiness like Yours. Continue to work in our hearts to have a true self-abandon, because we know we are in Your safe hands. In Jesus’ name. Amen.