

Hidden Kingdom Part 12 - "Peacemakers" (5-2-21)

Introduction: Today talking about **Enemies** (my first enemy "Big Bryan" - like Goliath but no slingshot story)

Matthew 5:9-12 (ESV)

(9) "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. (10) "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (11) "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. (12) Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

1) Love your enemies

Matthew 5:38-42 (ESV)

(38) "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' (39) But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. (40) And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. (41) And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. (42) Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

Note: As soon as this topic arises, the question becomes where do I draw the line?

Matthew 18:21-22 (ESV)

(21) Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" (22) Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.

Note: Jesus - I'm not letting you off the hook that easy!

*There is some secret to loving our enemies that God really wants us to unlock!

Matthew 5:43-48 (ESV)

(43) "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' (44) But I say to you, **Love your enemies** and **pray for those who persecute you**, (45) **so that you may be sons of your Father** who is 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. (46) For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? (47) And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? (48) You therefore must be **perfect**, as your heavenly Father is **perfect**.

Note: What's the secret God wants us to discover about loving our enemies?

- **Sons of your Father** - remember a few verses back (Matt 5:9)? peacemakers: love your enemies!
- **Perfect like our Father** - Perfect means: complete, come of age

Perfect like our Father . . .

a) Steadfast

James 1:2-4 (ESV)

(2) Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, (3) for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. (4) And let **steadfastness** have its full effect, **that you may be perfect and complete**, lacking in nothing.

Note: Steadfastness - a patient endurance

b) Love

1 John 4:17-20 (ESV)

(17) By this is love **perfected** with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. (18) There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been **perfected in love**. (19) We love because he first loved us. (20) If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.

Note: Loving our enemies is rooted in God's character and His love towards us - while we were still enemies!

God's "steadfast love" - a huge theme in the scripture: 123 verses in the Psalms alone . . .

Psalms 136:1 (ESV)

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.

Note: 26 times in this psalm alone - steadfast love endures forever!

Psalms 145:8 (ESV)

The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

Application: Our growth and maturity (perfect) is rooted in becoming like our Father - and he is a God of steadfast love!

2) Forgiveness - the secret power of love

How can I walk this out - learning to deal with the inevitable pain endured from my enemies?

Back to Peter's question . . .

Matthew 18:21-22 (ESV)

(21) Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" (22) Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.

Luke 17:3-6 (ESV)

(3) Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, (4) and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him." (5) The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" (6) And the Lord said, "If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, '**Be uprooted and planted in the sea,**' and it would obey you.

Note: Seed of un-forgiveness grows into tree of bitterness, but thank God the seed of faith uproots it!

Micah 7:18-19 (ESV)

(18) Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in **steadfast love**. (19) He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the **depths of the sea**.

Isaiah 43:25 (ESV)

"I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins."

Note: God forgives & forgets our sins!

My example: keeping records early years of my marriage

- **Remember** - love keeps no record of wrong!
- **How can I possibly do this?**
- **Prayer and forgiveness go hand-in-hand!**

Matthew 5:44 (ESV)

But I say to you, **Love your enemies** and **pray for those who persecute you,**

Luke 23:33-34a (ESV)

(33) And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. (34) And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Note: Jesus first words from the cross - to pray for his murderers!

3) Faith that moves mountains

Less than a week before Jesus died - he cursed an unfruitful fig tree. The next day . . .

Mark 11:20-25 (ESV)

(20) As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. (21) And Peter remembered and said to him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered." (22) And Jesus answered them, "Have faith in God. (23) Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. (24) Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. (25) And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."

Note: You want to experience real kingdom power? You want faith that moves mountains? When you stand praying - forgive!

- Many of us are stuck, bitterness has taken hold, and we are unfruitful.
- Praying a prayer of faith - forgiveness for our enemies!
- That is kingdom power!

Conclusion: Read Paul's words from Romans 12 . . .

Romans 12:17-21 (ESV)

(17) Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. (18) If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. (19) Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." (20) To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." (21) Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.