

SEQUOIA NOTES

Today's Sequoia Message...

Love Your Enemies

With Ryan Dawson - Lead Pastor
July 7, 2024



Matthew 5:43-48 (NLT) “You have heard the law that says, ‘Love your neighbour’ and hate your enemy. ⁴⁴ But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! ⁴⁵ In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike. ⁴⁶ If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. ⁴⁷ If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that. ⁴⁸ But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.”

Leviticus 19:18 (NLT) “Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against a fellow Israelite, but love your neighbour as yourself. I am the Lord.”

Psalms 31:6 (NLT) “I hate those who worship worthless idols. I trust in the Lord.”

Psalms 139:21 (NLT) “O Lord, shouldn't I hate those who hate you? Shouldn't I despise those who oppose you?”

- **Jesus is highlighting the centrality of love for ALL people – even our enemies.**

“Jesus commands his followers to commit themselves to be with their enemies, which involves proximity and attentiveness, and to be the sort of person who longs for and works for the good of the enemy.” Scot McKnight

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- **To love your enemies breaks through the self-barrier into a divine space.**

⁴⁸ “But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.”

Matthew 5:43-48 (MSG) “You’re familiar with the old written law, ‘Love your friend,’ and its unwritten companion, ‘Hate your enemy.’ I’m challenging that. I’m telling you to love your enemies. Let them bring out the best in you, not the worst. When someone gives you a hard time, respond with the supple moves of prayer, for then you are working out of your true selves, your God-created selves. This is what God does. He gives his best—the sun to warm and the rain to nourish—to everyone, regardless: the good and bad, the nice and nasty. If all you do is love the lovable, do you expect a bonus? Anybody can do that. If you simply say hello to those who greet you, do you expect a medal? Any run-of-the-mill sinner does that. “In a word, what I’m saying is, Grow up. You’re kingdom subjects. Now live like it. Live out your God-created identity. Live generously and graciously toward others, the way God lives toward you.”

Big Idea: Live generously & graciously toward ALL, the way God lives toward you.

- **The only way to live this out is to embrace the transforming power of Gospel.**

Ephesians 2:1-10 (NLT) “Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. ² You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. ³ All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God’s anger, just like everyone else. ⁴ But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, ⁵ that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God’s grace that you have been saved!) ⁶ For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. ⁷ So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus. ⁸ God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. ¹⁰ For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.”

- **Before love & forgiveness is something you do, it's Someone you meet.**

Translation of the Bible Scriptures used in today's service are from the New Living Translation (NLT) & The Message Bible (MSG).



Sequoia Impact Communities are where we
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Family of Servants on Mission.

To get plugged in email:

impactcommunities@sequoiachurch.org

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#13 of 26 - July 7, 2024

- 1) What has God revealed to you through the **Gospel Reading Challenge** this week? What have you learned or been able to apply?
- 2) Read Matthew 5:43-48. What is the **Context** for these passages? Who is the writer and the recipients? Where does this fit in the book as a whole?
- 3) **Observation:** What “jumps out” in these passages? What interesting details do you observe? What questions does it raise for you?
- 4) **Meaning:** What was the meaning for the original recipients? What meaning is inferred in this for us?
- 5) What makes loving our enemies so challenging? Share an example from your own experience.
- 6) Read Matthew 5:43-48 in The Message Bible. How does loving our enemies reflect God’s love for us? Why is this central to the Kingdom ethic?
- 7) Read Ephesians 2:1-10. What does this passage reveal about God’s love for us? How does the Gospel empower us to “love our enemies”? How did Jesus model this for us?
- 8) **Application:** What resonates with you from this message? In what ways can you apply the teachings of Jesus today?
- 9) How is God specifically asking you to “love your enemies” today? Pray for one another as you share your next steps.



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