

## Love Your Enemies

Scripture: Luke 6:27-36 — April 21, 2024

Welcome from wherever you are joining us...

11 AM— Pray for Kids Church.

### INTRODUCTION:

Super convicting this week. I hate, I hate, I hate Madison... Coaches vs referees  
Israel v Iran, Hamas. Just War. What causes hate? Where does it come from?

### TRANSITION:

**This must be greater than that... Love must be greater than hate...**

### CONTEXT:

When **Alexander the Great** dies, his kingdom is divided into 4 smaller kingdoms.

**Antiochus Epiphanies** is the Hasmonean ruler over Judea. He's a **godless oppressor**. He sacrifices a pig in the holy of holies.

**Judas Maccabeus** rises up like William Wallace from **Braveheart**, fights a guerilla war against all odds, and defeats the Hasmoneans.

He's called **Judas "the Hammer."**Mighty in word and deed.

But then **Rome** comes in, and they conquer and oppress Judea and the Jews again.

As time goes by the people of Judea long for a new savior, a new Hammer— mighty in word and deed.

Then **Jesus** shows up on the scene, and they see his miraculous signs and wonders, and they hear him speak as one with authority. **He's mighty in word and deed and speaks about the kingdom of God.**

OT prophecies point to a coming king who will sit on the throne of David. **It's no wonder they have the idea of a conquering king.**

**Then, one day, Jesus gets up and delivers his Kingdom Manifesto:** Blessed are the poor, the hungry, the weeping, and the hated. **Blessed are you... when they exclude you, insult you, and slander your name as evil because of the Son of Man.** <sup>23</sup> Rejoice in that day and leap for joy— your reward is great in heaven...

### WAIT... WHAT?!

**NOT** what they were expecting; maybe it'll get better... **maybe he's just warming up.**

### LET'S STAND TO READ—Luke 6:27-36

#### <sup>27</sup> "But I say to you who listen:

Jesus just dropped a bomb. Can you imagine how many people probably heard that and walked away? Some people couldn't listen or hear what he had to say because hate was so deep in their hearts.

Love your enemies, do what is good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup> **ble**ss those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

*Do not take revenge or bear a grudge against members of your community, but love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord. Lev 19:18.*

Rabbis would declare that neighbors refer to people in their community, not Gentiles, but Jesus just corrected their wrong understanding and said, nope, your enemy is included in your community.

### Who is my enemy? Who is my neighbor?

**G.K. Chesterton**— The Bible tells us to love our neighbors and also to love our enemies, probably because they are generally the same people.

**Ex.** the Good Samaritan story.

We should conduct ourselves toward our enemy as if he were one day to be our friend.

**John Henry Newman**

### Cultural Response to Enemies

#### Aggressive retaliation

Zealots - sabotage the Romans (shank soldiers). Barabbas

#### Passive Victimization

God is sovereign & this is happening, so it must be God's will. Eeore. Stoic philosophy

### Jesus gives a transformative vision of Love

<sup>27</sup> "But I say to you who listen: Love your enemies, do what is good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup> **ble**ss those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

**How?** That is impossible!

### What is the Motivation of Enemy Love, and how do the motives of my heart change?

#### Redefine Love

First, we must detach our definition from the world that seems to hold this word hostage to its relativistic and self-centered thinking. Then, we must look at how our king defines it. The Bible is our source for this definition. **Kelvin Teamer**

**1 Cor 13:4-6**— *Love is patient, love is kind. Love does not envy, is not boastful, is not arrogant, <sup>5</sup> is not rude, is not self-seeking, is not irritable, and does not keep a record of wrongs. <sup>6</sup> Love finds no joy in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth.*

**This is God's supernatural love, and His love is for his enemies.**

**Love is an action that benefits another even when it might cause us pain.**

### Here's the deal: we were enemies of God, and yet he chose to love us.

**Rom 5:8-10**— *But God proves his own love for us in that **while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.** <sup>9</sup> How much more then, since we have now been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from wrath. <sup>10</sup> For if, **while we were enemies,** we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, then how much more, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life.*

**Col 1:21-22: 21— Once you were alienated and hostile** in your minds as expressed in your evil actions. **22 But now he has reconciled you** by his physical body through his death, to present you holy, faultless, and blameless before him...

### **This is the Doctrine of Adoption**

**By default, we ARE NOT children of God (Eph 2:3, children of wrath).** Yes, made in his image, but until we accept the love of God offered to us in JC, we are enemies.

**Paul says it like this:** <sup>4</sup> When the time came to completion, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup> to redeem those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. **Gal 4:4-5**

### **Now, we leave it to God to avenge.**

<sup>14</sup> Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. <sup>15</sup> Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep. <sup>16</sup> Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud; instead, associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own estimation. <sup>17</sup> Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Give careful thought to do what is honorable in everyone's eyes. <sup>18</sup> If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. <sup>19</sup> Friends, **do not avenge yourselves; instead, leave room for God's wrath, because it is written, Vengeance belongs to me; I will repay, says the Lord.** <sup>20</sup> But

*If your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him something to drink. For in so doing you will be heaping fiery coals on his head.*

<sup>21</sup> Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good. **Ro 12:14–21.**

**Why leave it to God?** Because our hearts and minds have been so twisted and distorted by sin that we can't trust ourselves (Jer 17:9 deceitful hearts). **Culture has sunk so deep in our lives that even when we think we get it right we can be wrong.**

### **Let God be the judge because:**

The point of all this is to show how the line that the Bible draws between the “bad guys” and the “good guys” is not as sharp as we think it is. Jesus makes a great many statements about what will happen to the unrighteous, but he almost always makes these statements to those who think they are the righteous, especially when he perceives that they were congratulating themselves on being better than others. Fleming Rutledge, <https://virtueonline.org/true-inclusiveness-according-word-god-part-i-fleming-rutledge>

**Q:** Have you ever been so angry with someone only to reflect later and realize that you were the problem?

**Q:** Ever notice how easy it is to project the worst about someone else while thinking the best about yourself?

**When we define people as enemies, it's easy to dismiss them and make them wrong all the time.**

## THE GOSPEL:

**You can't do this. There will always be times when you strike back and fail, but there is one who did... Jesus.**

**When they** excluded, insulted, and slandered him as evil, He wept for the city (**Lk 19:41**).

When they mocked him and struck him on the cheek. When they ripped the clothing off his back and cast lots for it. When they cursed him by hanging him on a cross, **he loved them and he prayed:** *Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing.* (**Lk 23:34**)

## So, what do we do with this?

It was this action of sacrifice that Jesus called his disciples to as he commanded them to love their enemies and pray for those who persecuted them... **Kelvin Teamer.**

If God treats his enemies this way and we were enemies of God, then we need to have a conviction that— **Love must resist Hate.** (be stronger than)

## What does it look like to love my enemies?

Enemy **Love is Proactive, not passive.**

The ultimate weakness of violence is that it is a descending spiral, begetting the very thing it seeks to destroy. Instead of diminishing evil, it multiplies it. Through violence you may murder the liar, but cannot murder the lie, nor establish the truth. Through violence you may murder the hater, but you do not murder hate. In fact, violence merely increases hate. So it goes. Returning violence for violence multiplies violence, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. Nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time: the need for man to overcome oppression and violence. Man must evolve for all human conflict a method that rejects revenge, aggression, and retaliation. The foundation for such a method is love. **MLK Jr.**

## Rightly order our responses to our enemies.

<sup>27</sup> "But **I say to you who listen:** **Love** your enemies, **do** what is **good** to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup> **bless** those who curse you, **pray** for those who mistreat you.

## Jesus' order: Love, do good, bless, and pray.

But, we do it in this order: **Pray, bless, do good, and love.**

**Jesus— I want you** to sacrificially love and care for the other person, then proactively do good to them, then **I want you** to bless them, and then pray for them.

## How do most people leave hate? **From people being kind to them.**

*A gentle answer turns away anger, but a harsh word stirs up wrath.* **Pr 15:1.**

**When we love our enemies Biblically, glimpses of the kingdom begin to leak into the world, and it's contagious.**

## What if enemy love is found by beholding the face of God in Jesus Christ and following in His way of life?

### Practice Transformative Love:

<sup>29</sup> If anyone hits you on the cheek, **offer the other** also. And if anyone takes away your coat, **don't hold back your shirt** either. <sup>30</sup> **Give** to everyone who asks you, and from someone who takes your things, don't ask for them back.

<sup>31</sup> **Just as you want others to do for you, do the same for them. Golden Rule.**

<sup>32</sup> If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? **Even sinners love** those who love them. <sup>33</sup> If you do what is good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? **Even sinners do that.** <sup>34</sup> And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? **Even sinners lend** to sinners to be repaid in full.

<sup>35</sup> But **love** your enemies, **do** what is **good**, and **lend, expecting nothing** in return. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High. For he is gracious to the ungrateful and evil. <sup>36</sup> **Be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.**

**Offer the other cheek**— not passivity. The first hit is a dismissal, but when you get up and present yourself again. You're saying I see you, I'm your equal, and if you want to hit me again, I can take it. That takes the power out of the confrontation. Not a keep beating me in Jesus name, but a non-violent posture that confronts the person with their own wickedness. It offers them the opportunity to stop giving in to hate.

**Don't hold back your shirt**— the shame was in seeing someone naked in that culture. So, by offering your shirt, too, then you are showing them that they are literally reducing you to nothing.

**Give your money**—

**Do for others what you would have them do for you.**

**As we do these things, we break down the “us vs. them” barriers, minimize power dynamics, and create opportunities to restore humanity.**

**St Francis of Assisi Story. 800 years later, we still say that he got that right.**

Is there anyone in this madness with the spirit of Jesus Christ willing to risk everything to shut this craziness down?

It's a proactive wading into the madness of our culture with the love of Jesus to convert our enemies into our friends

## PRAYER

### OFFERING

### BENEDICTION

*16 I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. 17 Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. 18 And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. 19 May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. Eph 3:16–19.*

**I pray that you and I, that together, our roots will grow down into God's love and keep us strong. And that we together will have the power to understand how wide, how long, how high, and how deep God's love is.**