

## On the Mount, Part 4: Love Your Enemies – Children of Your Heavenly Father"

Matthew 5:38-48

### **I. Introduction: Living by Grace, Not Entitlement (Matt 5:38-42)**

- In Matthew 5:38-42, Jesus challenges us to transform our lives by reevaluating our response to life's conflicts. He addresses our inclination toward retribution and entitlement.
- In verses 40 and 41, He encourages going beyond what is demanded of us, freely giving more.
- In verse 42, Jesus emphasizes the importance of unmerited generosity as a way to live in and by grace.

### **I. Lessons from Last Week's Sermon (Matthew 5:21-42)**

- Jesus uncovers the hidden desires for retribution and self-justification.
- Living by the law causes requires that we receive what we deserve—ultimately leading to our demise because no one deserves the life they were given.
- These teachings reveal the call to choose grace over personal entitlement.
- Grace fulfills the law because those who live by grace receive grace.

### **II. Love Your Enemies (Matthew 5:43-48)**

- In Matthew 5:43, Jesus challenges the prevailing belief of His time, urging us to love our enemies.
- Jesus distinguishes between mere irritating, frustrating, or mean people and true enemies.
- True enemies are those who actively seek to harm us or obstruct our worship of God.
- The challenge is not to merely tolerate our enemies but to love them—"our battle is not with flesh and blood" (Eph. 6:12).
- Our aim should be perfection, reflecting the love and mercy we've received by God.

### **III. Embracing Grace, Aiming for Perfection**

- Embrace grace and strive for perfection, not because we can achieve it in our own strength, but because grace fulfills the law.
- Grace empowers us to love even our enemies.
- Through Christ and the grace of God, you have the capacity to love even your enemies (Galatians 2:20).
- Jesus was tempted in every way that we are, yet He remained sinless (Hebrews 4:15)
- Self-justifications are excuses for our actions; walk away from what you deserve for that of walk in grace.
- The path to perfection is through grace, and it begins with embracing grace.

### **V. Challenging Conclusion:**

- Embrace Jesus' call to love enemies and pray for persecutors, aligning with divine grace.
- Let go of excuses that hinder your capacity to love enemies and embrace grace through Christ.
- Strive for perfection in love as desired by your heavenly Father, who blesses even the wicked through grace.

### **Reflective Challenges:**

- Challenge 1: Dive deep into your past responses to conflicts and challenges. When did you respond with grace instead of entitlement? What was the result?
- Challenge 2: Think about your interactions with individuals who challenge or irritate you. Can you identify times you approached these relationships with grace? What did you learn from those experiences?
- Challenge 3: Reflect on those you've labeled as enemies. How have you extended love and grace to them in the past? What more can you do to embody Christ's teachings?
- Challenge 4: Analyze your excuses for not loving your enemies. What specific reasons have held you back, and how can you release them to walk in grace?