

Matthew 5:38-48 "Loving Your Enemies"

Stand Read Pray

As we continue our study of the Sermon on the Mount entitled "A Message from the King" we get to the last two ways that Jesus fulfills the Law. We have looked at Murder, Adultery, Marriage and Oaths. On the outside a person might be able to say they have kept these. There are those in this room that have never murdered anyone, have never committed the act of adultery, never been divorced and have always been a person of their word. But Jesus has surgically cut us open and showed us that our hearts are wicked and that maybe we have been good to keep it checked to the outside world, but inside we are still guilty. Boy, He knows how to kill a church movement! We need to remember it was God Who told us...

Jeremiah 17:9

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?

Jesus knows it and this is why He is teaching us this way. Remember the one who has found favor with God is the one who has nothing to bring into the equation.

Matthew 5:3

Blessed are the poor in spirit.

If we have not learned enough about ourselves the last few weeks, we will be even more shocked today as Jesus is going to tell us to do the impossible. But we will learn through this what the biggest obstacle in our lives is...ourselves. Let's see what I mean...

Matthew 5:38

You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'

Again, Jesus is referring to the Law and this one has to do with civil justice.

Leviticus 24:17-22

'Whoever kills (Murders) any man shall surely be put to death. 18 Whoever kills an animal shall make it good, animal for animal. 19 'If a man causes disfigurement

of his neighbor, as he has done, so shall it be done to him— 20 fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he has caused disfigurement of a man, so shall it be done to him. 21 And whoever kills an animal shall restore it; but whoever kills a man shall be put to death. 22 You shall have the same law for the stranger and for one from your own country; for I am the Lord your God.’ ”

God was making sure that we use righteous judgment when sentencing people for their crimes. We were not to exact vengeance on that person. When this is repeated in the book of Numbers it is related to the cities of refuge which were put in place to give someone a safe place to escape to when they accidentally kill someone. God wanted the punishment to fit the crime. We always want to one up someone. Our desire when someone has wronged us is to see them pay. We want them to suffer for what they have done and more than what we have. The law was made to put that in check. But notice what Jesus said...

Matthew 5:39-42

But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. 40 If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. 41 And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. 42 Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.

Wait, what? Don't we deserve what is fair? Notice he didn't say not to resist a sinning brother but an evil person? He is saying yes, the law says he deserves to be punished but you are to show mercy. This is why CRT is Anti-God and Anti-Christian. It teaches that Emancipation is not enough. We need reparations. You need to pay for what happened to us. After all an "Eye for an eye" It is a sinful and selfish thing to say, "You owe me!". Jesus is exposing our biggest enemy...ourselves! But why would Jesus ask us to do something for someone that they don't deserve? Because He has given to us that which we do not deserve!

2 Corinthians 5:21

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

We have received God's grace. It is that which we do not deserve. Jesus endured the cross and gave His life for us. In order to represent Him we should do the same. He wants us to be others centered.

Philippians 2:5-8

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Just one more thing. He is not telling us to just be a punching bag or a blank check. We are to use wisdom on those that are using this to their advantage. There are those that will think this scripture gives them the right to treat you as a sucker. If that were true, we would all be broke and beat up. It means that in all situations be others centered. Take self out of the equation and put God in its place. But guess what? He's not done yet!

Matthew 5:43

You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'

Wait a minute, He just mentioned something that is not in the law! What the law says is:

Leviticus 19:18

You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.

Why did Jesus say that they had heard that they were to "Hate your enemy"? This is the one place that Jesus is using what the rabbi's taught. They were a very hateful bunch. They loved their kind but everyone else was cursed by God. We know this because later on in His ministry He would be asked this question. Who is my neighbor?

Luke 10:25-37

And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

26 He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?"

27 So he answered and said, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.' "

28 And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live."

29 But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

30 Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. 33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. 34 So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' 36 So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?"

37 And he said, "He who showed mercy on him."

Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

The Samaritans were hated by the Jews. They were so despised that they would take the long way around to Jerusalem. This is why John 4 is so amazing, but this is supposed to be another shocker for us because the next statement Jesus makes is crazy...

Matthew 5:44

But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.

No way, nada, not going to happen! I could never do this! Guess what? You are right, you can't! That's the point. No one has but Christ. He is the only one that can say He loved His enemies all the way. This is one of those things that require faith and obedience to do. We have to trust Him to be the one that will change our heart to love those that hate us. Let's look at the application that Jesus gives us before we find personal application for us today.

Matthew 5:44-47

But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father 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 have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?

Why does He say this to us? Because you are sons of God now and if you are His son, you are to be like Him. If we only show Agape love and Hospitality to our brothers and sisters how is that representing God? If God so loved the world how come, we don't? Jesus said it like this in Luke's gospel...

Luke 6:27-36

But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you. 29 To him who strikes you on the one cheek, offer the other also. And from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold your tunic either. 30 Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him who takes away your goods do not ask them back. 31 And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise.

32 "But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. 33 And if you do good to those who do good to

you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 34 And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. 35 But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. 36 Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

Jesus has made us see ourselves as we really are. Selfish creatures who do not care about anyone but ourselves. We are lost and undeserving of His grace. We want salvation for ourselves but people that treat us wrong they can burn in hell. This is what the point is with this first part of the Sermon on the Mount. It is a Message from the King that leaves us without any hope. We are helpless and in need of a Savior! If you are unsure look at the last verse for today...

Matthew 5:48

Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

How's that working out for you? See the point? So how to apply this to us today. Do we have enemies?

These people are not our friends but what do we do? How can we love them? First, you need to pray for them. We should not wish hell on any of them. Jesus died for them and if they repent and put their trust in Him, they will be saved. What do we do if they outlaw us? Comply. What! Yes, that's right comply. And guess what? It's promised! This doesn't mean that we do not do the work of the gospel what it means is when they arrest us, we comply.

Luke 21:12-19

But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake. 13 But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. 14 Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; 15 for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. 16 You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. 17 And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. 18 But not a hair of your head shall be lost. 19 By your patience possess your souls.

We can show our love for others by sharing with them the truth of the gospel. This is loving our enemies because you and I were enemies of God!

Ephesians 2:1-10

And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Are you an enemy of God? You can be reconciled today, and the enmity is over. As you receive His favor you will be able to show others the same. You can realize that God so loved the world so can I. God can work through us to reach those that hate us. Let us be His reflection today.

Stand Pray Song