



## OPENING PRAYER

### INTRODUCTION – Friend or Foe?

How does the world typically evaluate whether someone is friend or foe?

What should be the more important qualities that a believer looks for in a friend?

### AN ANCIENT ENMITY

**Genesis 3:15** “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”

**1 John 3:12-13** Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother’s were righteous. Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you.

1.) Why did Cain kill Abel?

**Hebrews 11:4** By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings.

2.) Why will the world hate us?

**John 15:18-20** “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember the words I spoke to you: ‘No servant is greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also.”

**1 Peter 4:12-16** Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of

Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. ...If you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.

3.) Faith in Christ, which has divided the world, still divides families and turns unbeliever against believers.

**Matthew 10:34-36** “Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn ‘a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.’”

### **FIGHTING BACK: The Examples of King David and Jesus**

**1 Samuel 24:8-10, 14-19** Then David went out of the cave and called out to Saul, “My lord the king!” When Saul looked behind him, David bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground. He said to Saul, “Why do you listen when men say, ‘David is bent on harming you’? This day you have seen with your own eyes how the LORD delivered you into my hands in the cave. Some urged me to kill you, but I spared you; I said, ‘I will not lift my hand against my master, because he is the LORD’s anointed.’ ...Against whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom are you pursuing? A dead dog? A flea? May the LORD be our judge and decide between us...” When David finished saying this, Saul asked, “Is that your voice, David my son?” And he wept aloud. “You are more righteous than I,” he said. “You have treated me well, but I have treated you badly. You have just now told me of the good you did to me; the LORD delivered me into your hands, but you did not kill me. When a man finds his enemy, does he let him get away unharmed? May the LORD reward you well for the way you treated me today.”

1.) What do you find incredible about how David treated his sworn enemy, Saul?

2.) How did Saul respond? Did his new attitude last? (cf. 1 Samuel 26)

3.) How did Jesus, the Son of David, demonstrate this same clemency towards his enemies?

**Matthew 23:33-34,37** “You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? Therefore I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town. ...O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.”

**Matthew 26:49-50** Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him. Jesus replied, "Friend, do what you came for."

**1 Peter 2:21-23** To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

4.) Accordingly our attitude towards our enemies should be one of love made evident in prayer and action.

**Matthew 5:44-45** "I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."

## OUR DEFENDER

**Psalm 18:2-3** The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies.

1.) Give some examples from Scripture of God intervening to rescue his people from their enemies.

2.) Of what do these accounts assure us?

**Daniel 3:17-18** If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

3.) What if it is his will not to rescue us from bodily danger?

**2 Timothy 4:18** The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

**Romans 8:35-37** Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

4.) How can a good and righteous God allow his own children to be persecuted and killed and their oppressors to escape with impunity?

**Romans 12:19-21** Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

**Revelation 6:10** [The souls of the martyrs under the altar in heaven] called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?"

**Revelation 19:2-3** "He has condemned the great prostitute who corrupted the earth by her adulteries. He has avenged on her the blood of his servants." And again they shouted: "Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever."

## OUR HOPE FOR OUR ENEMIES

1.) Paul had been arrested, falsely accused, survived an assassination attempt, gone through two mistrials, and been left to languish in custody for three years. What was his hope for the very people whose injustice and spinelessness kept him there?

**Acts 26:28-29** Then Agrippa said to Paul, "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?" Paul replied, "Short time or long—I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains."

2.) How could Paul have such hope and love for them? How can we have the same?

**1 Timothy 1:13-16** Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life.

**Colossians 1:21-22** Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation.

**NEXT TIME: Resilient While Waiting**