

Love Your Enemies

Matthew 5:43-48

Studying the Text.

- **Matthew 5:43 - "You have heard that it was said, You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy."**
 - Jesus begins by addressing a common teaching in His time: love your neighbor, hate your enemies.
 - This hate-your-enemy teaching was apparently something Jewish leaders and teachers had been teaching.
 - **Lesson:** Don't let tradition or culture change what God has commanded.
 - Leviticus 19:18
 - Deuteronomy 23:3-6
 - Romans 13:9
- **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,"**
 - Jesus introduces a radical new command to what these people had learned:
 - Love your enemies
 - Bless those who curse you
 - Do good to those who hate you
 - Pray for those who persecute you
 - It's important to note the difference between tolerance and love.
 - **Lesson:** We must control the human instinct to react negatively to those who are negative to us.
 - Luke 6:27-28
 - Romans 12:14
 - 1 Peter 3:9
- **Matthew 5:45 - "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."**
 - Jesus connects this behavior to being children of God.
 - By loving our enemies, we reflect God's own character.
 - God's grace and provision are impartial, extended to all people.
 - Our love should mirror this divine generosity.
 - **Lesson:** God's love is impartial; our love should be the same.
 - Luke 6:35
 - Acts 14:17
 - Romans 2:4

- **Matthew 5:46 - “For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?”**
 - Jesus challenges the idea of loving only those who love us.
 - If we limit our love to those who show us love in return, we are no different from sinners.
 - Tax collectors, who were despised for their corruption, also only love those who love them.
 - There is no reward in loving *only* those who love us—this is basic, self-serving behavior.
 - **Lesson:** Self-serving love or partial love is no better than what evil people do.
 - Luke 6:32-33
 - 1 John 4:7-8
 - Matthew 9:10-13
 - **Matthew 5:47 - “And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?”**
 - Greeting only our own group—whether family, friends, or fellow believers— isn’t remarkable.
 - ◆ Even those considered morally corrupt or sinful do this.
 - ◆ Jesus calls us to go beyond this limited expression of love.
 - Our love should extend beyond our inner circle to all people, including those who are different or even hostile.
 - **Lesson:** We ought to reach out to everyone we can, not only those we already know.
 - ◆ Hebrews 13:2
 - ◆ James 2:1-4
 - ◆ 3 John 1:5-6
 - **Matthew 5:48 - “Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.”**
 - Jesus sets a high standard: to be “perfect” as God is perfect.
 - The term “perfect” here refers to completeness or lacking nothing.
 - As disciples, we are called to grow toward this complete love.
 - **Lesson:** We should strive for a perfect love, like Christ’s.
 - ◆ Colossians 3:14
 - ◆ Ephesians 4:13
 - ◆ 1 John 4:17-18

Conclusion:

1. Although loving our enemies might seem extremely difficult, it’s something we must do.
2. Those “enemies” have precious souls which need saving just like ours.