

Matthew 5:43-48

Introduction

I. Matthew 5:43

- A. Leviticus 19:17-18 – “You shall not hate your **brother** in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your **neighbor**, lest you incur sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the **sons of your own people**, but you shall love your **neighbor** as yourself: I am the LORD.
- B. What about the Amalekites, Philistines, etc.?
1. Deuteronomy 23:3-6 – No Ammonite or Moabite may enter the assembly of the LORD. Even to the tenth generation, none of them may enter the assembly of the LORD forever, because they did not meet you with bread and with water on the way, when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you. But the LORD your God would not listen to Balaam; instead the LORD your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God loved you. You shall not seek their peace or their prosperity all your days forever.
 2. Psalm 137:7-9 – Remember, O LORD, against the Edomites the day of Jerusalem, how they said, “Lay it bare, lay it bare, down to its foundations!” O daughter of Babylon, doomed to be destroyed, blessed shall he be who repays you with what you have done to us! Blessed shall he be who takes your little ones and dashes them against the rock!
- C. The LORD _____ the wicked
1. Psalm 5:5 – The boastful shall not stand before your eyes; you hate all evildoers.
 2. Psalm 11:5 – The LORD tests the righteous, but his soul hates the wicked and the one who loves violence.
- D. The _____ hate the wicked
1. Psalm 26:4-5 – I do not sit with men of falsehood, nor do I consort with hypocrites. I hate the assembly of evildoers, and I will not sit with the wicked.
 2. Psalm 139:21-22 – Do I not hate those who hate you, O LORD? And do I not loathe those who rise up against you? I hate them with complete hatred; I count them my enemies.
- E. In all of these verses it is the _____ who are hated *because* they are _____ declared enemies.
1. This hatred of God’s enemies flows from a burning zeal for the _____ of God.

2. When God's people are oppressed by their enemies (because of their own wickedness), the glory of God is compromised and His name is blasphemed.
 - a. Isaiah 52:5 – Now therefore what have I here,” declares the LORD, “seeing that my people are taken away for nothing? Their rulers wail,” declares the LORD, “and continually all the day my name is despised.
 - b. Ezekiel 36:20 – But when they came to the nations, wherever they came, they profaned my holy name, in that people said of them, “These are the people of the LORD, and yet they had to go out of his land.”
- F. By the time of Jesus, the Jews were being taught that this hatred of one's enemies could be applied even to _____ vendettas (*contrast* Exodus 23:4-5; Proverbs 24:17; 25:21).

II. Matthew 5:44a

- A. “To ‘love’ in the NT is not only a matter of emotion but also of an *attitude* which *determines* our *behavior*, acting for the good of the other.” (France)
- B. We have not yet obeyed Jesus when we go the extra mile. We have obeyed Jesus only when we go the extra mile _____ we _____ our enemy.

III. Matthew 5:44b

- A. In these six words, Jesus shows us _____ to love our enemies.
 1. When you pray for someone, this assumes that they _____ prayer.
 - a. Luke 23:34 – And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”
 - b. Acts 7:60 – And falling to his knees [Stephen] cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.”
 2. Stephen (like Jesus) *loved* because he felt _____.
- B. Illustration (Loving the “bad guy” in the movie/book)
 1. There is always a sense of _____ when justice is done, but that shouldn't keep us from *loving* and feeling _____ for our enemies.
 2. The key to feeling compassion is to always see the bad guys as _____ to sin (Rom. 6).

3. If we are to love our enemies, we *must* first learn to see them with eyes of compassion – to be able to _____ for them (Revelation 3:17).
4. Compassionate love is the key to the spiritual _____ of Christians with enemies.

IV. Matthew 5:46-47

- A. The life of the disciple is meant to be _____ ordinary.

- B. The only instructive value of the best and most moral societies in the world is to show us the levels that we must not _____ to.

V. Matthew 5:45, 48

- A. It is _____ God makes His sun rise on the evil and sends His rain on the unjust that we can know it is our responsibility to love our enemies.

- B. The rules and standards of the kingdom are not arbitrary, they are always rooted in the _____ and _____ of God Himself.

- C. The problem:
 - ✓ Isaiah 55:8-9 – For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

- D. Jesus shows us that the ultimate point is never just woodenly and literalistically obeying a set of rules, but rather reflecting in our daily lives the perfections of the ways and thoughts of God.

- E. “You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Conclusion

Teaching our Children

- Q. Fill in the blank: “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and _____ your enemy.
- A. “You shall love your neighbor and *hate* your enemy.”
- Q. But what did Jesus say was the *real* teaching of God’s law?
- A. You shall *love* your *enemies*.
- Q. How hard do you think it would be to really *love* your enemy?
- A. Bring your children to see that it seems literally *impossible*.
- Q. What did Jesus say that we should do for our enemies?
- A. Jesus said that we should *pray* for our enemies (those who persecute us).
- Q. What kinds of things do you think we could pray for our enemies?
- A. ~ Pray that our enemies would be released from their slavery to sin (the miserable bondage of bitterness, anger, and self-worship.
~ See the prayers of Jesus and Stephen (III. A. 1.)
~ **READ and reflect on Revelation 3:17**
~ *Help your children to see that when we can “feel sorry” for our enemies (compassion), we will be much more able to love them.*
- Q. When Jesus said that even sinful people (tax collectors / Gentiles) love the people who love them and always greet their brothers, what was He telling us about how our lives should look?
- A. ~ Our lives should always look *different* from the world.
~ The law for the Christian is *always higher* than any law of this world.
- Q. *How high* is the law for the Christian? What is the standard that we have to measure up to?
- A. “You therefore must be perfect, *as your heavenly Father* is perfect.”
- Q. So why should we love our enemies? (How does God show us that *He* loves even evil people?)
- A. Because God makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.
- ✓ **Talk with your children about how easy it is for us to measure ourselves by the world’s rules rather than by the ways and thoughts of God (see Isaiah 55:8-9; V. C.)**
 - ✓ **Help your children to see their sinful failure to live up to the impossibly high standards of the kingdom of heaven.**
 - ✓ **Lead your children to the cross and the wonderful, glorious good news of forgiveness in Christ.**
 - ✓ **Show your children that once they have tasted of God’s forgiveness and grace, they can joyfully and freely work for the day when they will be perfect, even as their heavenly Father is perfect (they will even be able to start *loving* their *enemies*)!**