

SERMON-BASED STUDY: LOVE ENEMIES

Matthew 5:43-48, ESV – ⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’
⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of your Father who is 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 do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?
⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?
⁴⁸ You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Notes:

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- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week’s teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

ENGAGE WITH THE MESSAGE

- 1 What makes someone an enemy? How do we make enemies in our own mind?
- 2 This week we learned that we should pray for our enemies. How does praying for our enemies change our view of them?

- 3 How does showing love toward our enemies make us different from the world? Why is this important?

DIGGING DEEPER

A **1 Peter 3:9, ESV** – ⁹ Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.

1 Thessalonians 5:15-22, ESV – ¹⁵ See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. ¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not despise prophecies, ²¹ but test everything; hold fast what is good. ²² Abstain from every form of evil.

- 4 What does it mean to revile someone? Why is our speech just as important as our actions?

- 5 What connection is there between “not repaying anyone evil for evil” and “rejoicing always, pray without ceasing, and giving thanks in all circumstances”?

- 6 What does Paul mean by the phrase, “hold fast to what is good”? How does this practice help us to love our enemies?

B **Luke 10:29-37, ESV** – ²⁹ But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” ³⁰ Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. ³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. ³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. ³⁴ He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’ ³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” ³⁷ He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “You go, and do likewise.”

- 7 Some could argue that the priest and the Levite were following “appropriate protocol” or “natural inclinations.” What natural inclinations make it easier for you to act like the priest and Levite?

8 What would have been the Samaritan's natural inclination? Why do you think the Samaritan stopped and helped?

9 What is Jesus' command in response to this parable? What are some ways that you can stop and help those you consider an enemy this week?

TAKING IT HOME

Jesus reminds us that believers are to be different from the world, and part of that is to not follow the natural tendencies of how we treat those we consider an enemy. Who do you currently consider an enemy? How do you typically treat that person? What changes do you need to make to love that person as Jesus loves them? Share with your group or accountability partner what God has been showing you. Pray for one another as you seek to be people that love their enemies.

PRAISES AND PRAYER REQUEST

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FOR FURTHER STUDY

Leviticus 19:17-18, 33-34

Proverbs 25:21-22

Luke 6:27-36

Romans 12:14-21