

CrossRoads Baptist Church
November 29, 2006 6:30 pm
Matthew 5:43-48

Neighbor Series #6

“Loving My Neighbor...Even My Enemies”

Matthew 5:43-48

You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy." But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax-gatherers do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

- I. Loving your Enemies is precluded that a conversion experience has taken place.

The Sermon on the Mount is not how you should live in order to make it to Heaven; rather, how one lives who is on his way to Heaven.

The whole Sermon on the Mount presupposes you are a believer and Jesus is addressing believers.

Matthew 5:3 Blessed...you are already blessed.

Matthew 5:16 “Your Father in Heaven.” Not the Father you hope to have, but currently your Father.

Matthew 5:20 you must have a righteousness that is greater than the scribes and Pharisees or you won't even see the kingdom of heaven. What righteousness is that?

Six antitheses to describe that the righteousness he is referring to is one from the heart due to a change of the heart resulting in changed behavior.

Verse 21: "You have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not commit murder' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' 22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court."

Verse 27: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery' 28 but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart."

Verse 31: "And it was said, 'Whoever sends his wife away, let him give her a certificate of divorce'; 32 but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the cause of unchastity, makes her commit adultery."

Verse 33: "Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not make false vows, but shall fulfill your vows to the Lord.' 34 But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool."

Verse 38: "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' 39 But I say to you, do not resist him who is evil."

Verse 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."

So what Jesus is doing here in these six commandments is showing his disciples how some of the scribes and Pharisees applied the Old Testament teachings, and then, over against that, what he was calling them to do—something different, or something deeper.

- II. Loving Your Enemies is with the knowledge that you know who your enemy is.

A Jewish teacher once said, “Quote: “If a Jew sees that a Gentile has fallen into the sea, let him by no means lift him out. Of course it is written, ‘Do not rise up against your neighbor’s life.’, but this man is not your neighbor.”

He gives us the identification of who are enemy is here in this passage:

1. They are those who curse you. Verse 44
2. They are those who hate you. Verse 44
3. They are those who spitefully use you. Verse 44
4. They are those who persecute you. Verse 44
5. They are those who are evil and unjust. Verse 45
6. They are those who are don't love you. Verse 46
7. They are those who are not considered your brethren. Verse 47

- III. Loving Your Enemies is with the knowledge that you know how to love your enemies.

How do you love them?

1. You make the deliberate choice to love them. Verse 44
2. You bless them. Verse 44
3. You do good to them. Verse 44
4. You pray for them. Verse 44

IV. Loving Your Enemies is with the power to love them.

You can't love them in yourself. But you say, "Lord, I can't; but you can."

Jesus who lives in us while he hung on the cross:

Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing. (Luke 23:34)

And it's what Stephen did as he was being stoned:

Falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them! (Acts 7:60)

Our Daily Bread: A Daily Devotional has the following devotional

Hostage of Guerrilla Soldiers - In August 1983, Russell Stendal was taken hostage into the jungle of Columbia, South American, by a band of guerrilla soldiers. For nearly 5 months he learned what it really means to love one's enemies. He wrote a letter home, saying, "I am in danger only of losing my life; they are in danger of losing their souls." Through kindness, Russell befriended his guards. One day the commander told him, "We can't kill you face to face; we like you. So we will have to kill you in your sleep." God enabled Russell to forgive, but for the next 10 days and nights he couldn't sleep. A submachine gun was repeatedly thrust in his face under his mosquito net, but the guards couldn't bring themselves to pull the trigger. On January 3, 1984, Russell was released. When he said goodbye, tears fill the eyes of some of his captors.

We're told to bless our enemies

That in this life we face,

For showing love that's not deserved

Reveals to them God's grace. --HGB