

Love your Enemies

Matthew 5.43-48

Overview

- **Vs. 43:**
 - Love your neighbors (Leviticus 19.18)
 - Jesus affirms (Matt. 22.39, Mark 12.31 etc.)
 - Neighbor: Jesus affirms mankind is our neighbor, including enemies (Lk 10.25-37)
 - Hate your enemy: Not found in the Bible:
 - Likely taken from the inference of Leviticus 19.18 that those who aren't "sons" are not to be loved

- **Vs. 44:**
 - Love: An inward affection that leads to an outward action
 - John 14.15, 24: If there is love it then acts, or it doesn't act though it says it believes
 - One of those actions that is most appropriate is to pray for them
 - Love is defined in 1 John 4.10 as Christ's sacrificial offering of His life for sinners
 - Enemies: Appears to be 'persecutors' in the alternative parallel of the verse
 - Note Matt. 5.10-12 regarding persecutors to the Faith
 - Pray for them (Pray for their salvation, for their obedience to the Truth, etc.)
 - "You": Disciples of Jesus (Matt. 5.1-2)

- **Vs. 45:**
 - Loving enemies does not earn salvation, but instead it demonstrates ones salvation:
 - Same teaching may be found in "peacemakers" (Matt. 5.9)

- God has made peace with us, SO THAT we might also make peace w/ others
 - We do this with everyone just as God offers a kind of Common Grace/Love to everyone in the sun and the rain coming on the just and the unjust

- **Vs. 46-47:**
 - A kind of love that only gravitates to the same kind is not in any way unique and it does not express the kind of Gospel love that Jesus brings

- **Vs. 48:**
 - This likely is an ending to a section within the sermon
 - Christ had been building one issue on top of another then He has a crushing blow here in this verse to be perfect as God is perfect
 - This is necessary b/c God cannot compromise on His holiness otherwise He would be stained
 - This expectation along with the others in this section (anger, lust, etc.) should cause us to reach out to Christ for a righteousness that we cannot attain and lay hold of Christ who fulfills the Law for us (Matt. 5.13-16)
 - Christ is pushing us into our need of Grace

Questions

Discussion Starter: *Take some time at this kind of mid-point in the Sermon on the Mount and ask if there are any things that have been especially enlightening, helpful, conviction, etc. Or, Share any personal or historic stories of people loving enemies as a gateway to the love of Christ.*

1. Read Matthew 5:43-48. Using Scripture, define what Love is and what Love is not. Compare this to how society often views love.
2. Who is the “your” or “you”? Who are the enemies?
3. Take a moment and apply this passage – pray for your enemies.
4. In verse 45, why would Jesus connect loving our enemies “so that you may be sons of your Father in heaven”? How exercising true biblical love toward our enemies illustrate that we are in the Faith? How does Jesus show that God does this?
5. Summarize Jesus’ argument in verse 46-47. How should the local church reveal a love that is different than the rest of the world?
6. How do you see this in the life of the Restoration Church? Encourage those in the group that do this well.
7. What are some ways your relationships need to change in relation to this passage?
8. Read 1 Timothy 1:12-17, and consider where we find the resources to love our enemies given how difficult the task? How does the Gospel answer this question?
9. Why would Jesus expect perfection? How is perfection possible?

Accountability Question: *What are some enemies that you need accountability to love and pray for? What are some ways you are loving sameness instead of loving those not like you?*