

## Love Your Enemies

### • Opening

- Continuing our series on the Sermon on the Mount
  - Matthew shows how Jesus fulfills OT history (ch. 1:1-17), OT prophecy (1:18- 4:16)
  - SOM= fulfills OT Law, Not to demolish but to complete (5:17)
    - Moses and similarities with Jesus here
    - Reveals depth and meaning of law
  - The American rock singer turned pastor, John Wimber, said, ‘Jesus is insatiable. Everything we do pleases him but nothing satisfies him. I have been satisfied with Jesus. He has not been satisfied with me. He keeps raising the standards. He walks in high places.’
  - In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus ‘raised the bar’ to the sky, not to bring us down but to lift us up: ‘I’ve put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand – shine!’ (5:16, MSG).
- Love your enemies

### Matthew 5:38-48 (NRSV)

#### • Intro

- Jesus is clarifying the Law in the SOTM, he says over and over “you heard that it was said”, But I say to you. . . .
  - In this passage= An eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth-resist an evil person, turn the other cheek, go two miles, let them borrow; You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy-love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to them, pray for persecutors
- Having mercy on others is right at the heart of Jesus’ teaching. ‘Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven’ (5:44–45a). Love is more than showing mercy, but mercy is an essential part of love.
- Mercy= not getting what you deserve, compassion, forgiveness
  - Bruce and Monte’s speeding stories

### Tension: Jesus says “Love Your Enemies”, why and how?

- 1. To have mercy on your enemies is to imitate your Father in heaven – ‘that you may be children of your Father in heaven’ (v.45a). God’s mercy extends to those who are hostile towards him: ‘He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous’ (v.45b).
    - “Rain”= Meme for the Love of God stop raining! 😊
    - V. 43 “You shall love your neighbor”, Jesus is quoting **Leviticus 19:18** which, interestingly the same verse he quotes when asked what the greatest commandment is and Love God 1st, then 2nd “**You shall love your neighbor as yourself**”, the first part of the verse also says “**Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against any of your people**”
    - In loving our enemies we are fulfilling the 2nd greatest commandment
  2. To have mercy like this marks you out from the world: ‘If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?’ (v.46). We tend only to love people who are like us, or whom we like. But you are called to be different. You are called to what Dietrich Bonhoeffer referred to as ‘the “extraordinary”... the hallmark of the Christian’.

- In Romans 12:20 Paul quotes Proverbs 25:21-22 “No, “if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.””
  - Passage in Proverbs adds “and the Lord will Reward you”
3. There is a connection between forgiving and receiving forgiveness. We cannot receive God’s mercy ourselves and then show no mercy to others. We do not earn forgiveness by forgiving others, but Jesus says that our forgiveness of others is essential to receiving forgiveness from God. ‘You can’t get forgiveness from God, for instance, without also forgiving others. If you refuse to do your part, you cut yourself off from God’s part’ (6:14b–15, MSG). Daily, receive mercy and forgiveness, and daily have mercy and forgive others.
- Our greatest need is forgiveness! Why Jesus came
  - The Lord’s Prayer “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us” (Matt. 6:12)
  - Matt. 6:14-15 after the Lord’s Prayer Jesus clarifies ‘if you forgive the Father will forgive you, But if you don’t forgive others neither will your Father forgive you’= That’s a hefty fine!!
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- Jesus also explains how you can express this mercy practically in what you do. He highlights the importance of prayer. He tells you to ‘pray for those who persecute you’ (5:44). Praying for your enemies helps you to see them as God sees them. In prayer you stand side by side with them, take their guilt and distress on yourself, and plead to God for them. Prayer is the acid-test of love. Coming into the light of God’s presence reveals the true feelings in the depths of our hearts.

## Closing