

#5 “Love as I have loved you.” The Hardest Command of All...Love Your Enemies

Five “Callings” of Jesus that Changed the World – #5 “Love as I have loved you.” **Love Your Enemies**

Love as I loved you – Five loves Jesus exemplified and taught His disciples

1. Jesus’ first love is God His Father

*“...for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in regard to Me, but so that the world may know that **I love the Father**, I do exactly as the Father commanded Me.”* John 14: 30-31

2. Love ourselves

“He who acquires wisdom loves himself;” (Proverbs 19: 8a BSB)

We covered many of the “love...as yourself” verses to support this command

3. Love our neighbors – The Good Samaritan Story came from this. Luke 10:25-37

4. Love our enemies

*“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**, so that you may prove yourselves to 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 do you have? Even the*

tax collectors, do they not do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Even the Gentiles, do they not do the same? Therefore you shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Matthew 5: 43-48

Let's seek to understand the context of Jesus' words. Where did the phrase "hate your enemies" come from?

...(hate your enemies) is the addition, or wrong interpretation of the Scribes and Pharisees: wherefore the Jew (o) has no reason to charge Christ, or the Evangelist, with a false testimony, as he does, because the latter is nowhere written in the law, nor in the prophets, nor does Christ say it is; he only observes, that it had been traditionally handed down to them from the ancients, by the masters of the traditions of the elders, that the law of loving the neighbor was so to be understood as to allow, and even enjoin, hatred of enemies:"
(From commentary of John Gill)

Thus that phrase was not part of the Law but added by Scribes or Pharisees as an inference God **never** said. Jesus' amazing statement (command) to His disciples and those who listened was shocking. It remains shocking to most today—including Christians. If we are to live in obedience, which is the foremost evidence of our salvation, we must examine His words in light of His other teachings and those of the Apostles. Then answer three questions:

- *Who is my enemy?*
- *What does it mean to "love my enemy"?*
- *Where does my living testimony stand in light of these words?*

Who is my enemy? Enemies of the Triune God are our enemies. Traditionally speaking, *An enemy is one who dislikes or hates another and seeks to harm, contradict, and fight (against) the one he is set against. Thus, an enemy of God is one who*

opposes the presence and purposes of God in this world. (from Got Questions)

What does it mean to love my enemies?

The answers are found in the words Jesus spoke after giving this command and, more importantly, His example.

- *“Pray for those who persecute you, so that you may prove yourselves to be sons of your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5: 44)*
- *And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others?*

My paraphrase: be hospitable, kind, and even helpful when you can if it does not cause you to fall into sin or support the sins of others. We hate and despise the sin, not the one who is sinning because we were once the same – enemies of Christ.

“If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; And if he is thirsty, give him water to drink;” Proverbs 25:21

- The one great example of this were Jesus’ words from the cross.

“And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And they cast lots to divide his garments.” Luke 23:34

Remember You were once an enemy of God

“And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled.” Colossians 1:21

What about war? the view of C.S. Lewis:

“Does loving your enemy mean not punishing him? No, for loving myself does not mean that I ought not to subject myself to punishment—even to death. If you had committed a murder, the right Christian thing to do would be to give yourself up to

the police and be hanged. It is, therefore, in my opinion, perfectly right for a Christian judge to sentence a man to death or a Christian soldier to kill an enemy. I always have thought so, ever since I became a Christian, and long before the war, and I still think so now that we are at peace. It is no good quoting 'Thou shalt not kill.' There are two Greek words: the ordinary word to kill and the word to murder. And when Christ quotes that commandment, he uses the murder one in all three accounts, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. And I am told there is the same distinction in Hebrew. All killing is not murder any more than all sexual intercourse is adultery. When soldiers came to St. John the Baptist asking what to do, he never remotely suggested that they ought to leave the army: nor did Christ when he met a Roman sergeant-major—what they called a centurion..."

Where does my living testimony stand in light of Jesus' words?

- *Understand what it means and what it does not*
- *Actions are your evidence*
- *Keep the perspective that Jesus did*

The final victory belongs to the Lord Jesus:

*"For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is **death**. 1 Corinthians 15:25-26*

The Invitation

- Do you understand you are an enemy of Jesus?
- Did you know Christ died to remove your sins and restore you to God?
- Will you repent of your sins and receive Jesus as your Savior today? If not, why not?

For Christ's sake,

Walter