

Matthew's Gospel "The Sermon On The Mount"
"The Christian and Love"
Matthew 5:43-48
Part 23

The Key Verse in the Sermon: Matthew 5:20

The Context: Matthew 5:17-48

The Christian's Righteousness

Jesus shows six ways that our righteousness can exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees.

Each one starts with the phrase: **"You have heard."**

- **This phrase occurs 6 times**

Jesus then says to the people: - **"But I say to you"**

- **This phrase occurs 7 times**

Illustration #1 The Christian and Anger – **Matthew 5:21-26**

Illustration #2 The Christian and Sex – **Matthew 5:27-30**

Illustration #3 The Christian and Divorce – **Matthew 5:31-32**

Illustration #4 The Christian and sincere speech – **Matthew 5:33-37**

Illustration #5 The Christian and Revenge – **Matthew 5:38-42**

Today's study:

Illustration #6 The Christian and Love – Matthew 5:43-48

But Jesus says, "love your enemies"

1. Bless those who curse
2. Do good to those who hate you
3. Pray for those who persecute and use you

This is impossible - that is what Jesus wants us to realize.

There is no way in our natural strength that we can love our enemies, bless those who hate us, do good to them, and pray for them.

We will look at 3 areas in our study:

Verse 43 - What The Law Taught About Love
Verse 43 - What The Religious Taught About Love
Verses 44-48 - What Jesus Taught About Love

THE OUTLINE

1. Verse 43 - What The Law Taught About Love:

Matthew 5:43 - "You have heard that it was said"

Notice, it does not say "*You have read in the Law of Moses*"

The religious leaders taught 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR, and hate your enemy.'

- This is a partial quote from **Leviticus 19:18**

The Bible nowhere instructs us to hate anyone!

- **Leviticus 19:17-18**

Actions – God is concerned about what we do.

- **Leviticus 19:18 'You shall not take vengeance'**

Attitudes - God is concerned about our heart.

- **Leviticus 19:18 'nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people'**

There are some Psalms called "Imprecatory Psalms"

- **Psalm 139:19-24**

The Christian should be merciful –

- **Matthew 5:7**
- **Exodus 23:4-5**
- **Proverbs 25:21-22**

The Old Testament taught love:

- **Inward (heart)**
- **Outward (Actions)**

2. Verse – 43 What The Religious Taught About Love:

- **Matthew 5:43**

'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR, and hate your enemy.'

- **Leviticus 19:18**

They Committed 3 Big Errors:

Error # 1 They made an omission – They took out "as yourself"- "love your neighbor as yourself"

Why is this so important?

Because it is the basis for our actions towards others.

- **Ephesians 5:29**
- **Galatians 5:14**

Error # 2 They made a substitution – They took the word "neighbor" and exchanged it for "Jew."

- **Luke 10:29-37**

Error # 3 They made an addition – They added "hate your enemy"

The Religious actually taught the people to hate others which is the opposite of what the Scriptures taught.

- **Exodus 34:11-16**

- The Jews considered all the Gentiles to be their enemies.
- In the Jewish writings the Jews felt that they could hate these people and that they did not have to save one of them if they were dying. They people had an utter contempt for the gentiles.

- **Luke 14:26**

- God never intended for His people to be a people of hate, they were to be an example to the rest of the world as to how God's people were to conduct themselves, much like the church is today.

3. Verse 44-48 - What Jesus Taught About Love:

Matthew 5:44 - "But I say to you"

Jesus gives the proper interpretation for what the law really had in mind.

- **love your enemies**, The word “**Love**” is the Greek word **Agape** - *This is God's divine love. It seeks the highest good and is unconditional. It loves for no apparent human reason – it is a deliberate choice. It is motion, not emotion. Agape love is not based on feelings. It is an on-going commitment. (To wait for feelings means your enemy will die.) It is not dependent on the treatment received or on the reaction of others toward it.*
 - **John 3:16**
 - **Romans 5:8**

- **Jesus did not say to "like" your enemies, but to “love” your enemies.**
 - Like involves personal preferences – “feelings toward, to take pleasure in”
 - The other types of love feel and then act
 - This type of love acts and sometimes feels

love your enemies

This was a revolutionary statement in Jesus day.

- **Luke 6:27-35**

(KJV) Matthew 5:44 *[Some manuscripts add “bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you”]* **But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which spitefully use you and persecute you**

Three examples by Jesus:

1. Bless those who curse you: (Words)

- **"Bless"** - To bless means to speak well of them, to show love toward them. "Bless them O God; let that person have your best." Instead of exchanging insult for insult we are to speak well of those who curse us.
- **"Curse"** – “Bitter words, slander – to doom, to ask evil upon others.”

2. Do good to those who hate you: (Deeds)

- **Romans 12:20-21**

3. Pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you (Dependence)

Prayer is the most powerful weapon in love

1. It changes me - I can't hate and pray at the same time.

2. It changes others

- **Acts 7 -**

- **spitefully use you** – “to treat abusively, to accuse falsely, to threaten”

Matthew 5:45

When we love we resemble God

“in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven”

God's love is non-discriminating

“for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous”

- **Romans 2:4**
- **Matthew 5:46**

Our Love distinguishes from the world.

“Do not even the tax-gatherers do the same?”

Matthew 5:47

"And if you greet your brothers only, what do you do more than others?"

J. Oswald Sanders said, “The Master expects from His disciples such conduct as can be explained only in terms of the supernatural.”

Matthew 5:48

"Therefore you are to be Perfect – “well-rounded, complete in maturity, that for which it was created - teacher opposed to student, goodness, uprightness”

- **Matthew 19:26**

Application:

Matthew 5:47 “what do you do more than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?”

1. Bless those who curse you: (Words)
2. Do good to those who hate you: (Action)
3. Pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you: (Dependence)