

Study of Matthew

October 30th, 2022

Discussion Question: What is your approach to your enemies?

Matthew 5:43-48

"I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else." C.S. Lewis

Christians should view life and the world through a different lens. Our eyes should be anointed to approach life the way Jesus said to approach it.

"If God and His grace do not rule us, sin and Satan will have possession of us." (Matthew Henry)

Someone has said that the best way to capture an audience's attention is to offend them.

Romans 9:33 *"As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence (thing that offends): and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."* [KJV]

Today's passage is an attention grabber! We are not speaking of hating evil.

- Prov 13:5 "A righteous man hateth lying..." [KJV]
- Ps 97:10 "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil..." [KJV]
- Ps 119:104 "Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way." [KJV]

The scriptures teach us to disapprove of the wicked's conduct.

- To despise their motives and their opposition to God. To have no part in or be associated with their evil.

At the same time the values of the Kingdom demand we treat our enemies differently than the world treats enemies. A world characterized by conflict these righteous values make no sense.

Jesus gives us 5 things to do

1. Love (Your Enemies)

The word for love here is not only a matter of emotion but also of an attitude which determines our behavior; acting for the good of the one that we love; wanting what is best for them

This kind of love is an act of the will. It is deliberate and it makes a choice to do so based not on the worth of the object of love but based on the nature of the one loving!

Christ sets the standard here. Romans 5:8-10

Can you truly love others if you don't know Christ?

- We can have affection for others; but we can't love others unconditionally
- John 17:26 *"And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."* [KJV]

We love not because our enemies are worthy, but because we want what is best for them and that is an encounter with Jesus.

2. Bless (those who curse you)

Curse is to slander; to speak lies about

We are called to bless them...wish them well; speak well of

Speak life into them and promote their wellbeing; find things to commend in their life.

Proverbs 31:26 *"She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness."* [KJV]

1 Peter 3:9 *"Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing."* [ESV]

3. Do Good (to them that hate you)

Jesus not only tells us not to seek revenge but to do good to them that hate us. We are seeking their good!

However, let's use Jesus as our example. In doing good Jesus never let's error to go unchallenged. Doing good is not incompatible with controversy and rebuke.

4. Pray (that despitefully use you & persecute you)

Make supplication to God for; intercede for

Mark 11:24-26 *"Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. 25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. 26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses."*

If my prayers are recorded, I don't think that prayers for those who hate me and persecute me would fill up a page in the book. But note: believing and receiving for desires are associated with praying with a forgiving heart!

5. Be Perfect (vs. 48)

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Perfect implies complete (in various applications of labor, growth, mental and moral character, etc.)

"You, therefore, will be perfect [growing into spiritual maturity both in mind and character, actively integrating godly values into your daily life], as your heavenly Father is perfect." [Amplified]

With Jesus as our example we can be complete in Loving, Blessing, Doing Good and Praying