

The Gospel of Matthew

Kingdom Righteousness
 “Love Your Enemies”
 Matthew 5:43-48

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“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

in order that you may 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 unrighteousness.”

Matthew 5:43-48

“For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax-gatherers do the same?

And if you greet your brothers only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

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“Love Your Enemies”

A. What did the Law teach?

- Love your “neighbor” – refers to fellow-Israelites, aliens or sojourners in the land (Lev. 19:17-18)
- show kindness to your “enemy” – fellow-Israelite who “hates” you (Ex. 23:4-5)
- show no mercy (*herem*) to your “enemy” (i.e. the idolatrous Canaanite peoples – Deut. 7:2)

“Love Your Enemies”

B. What did Jesus teach?

- He expanded the scope of “neighbor” to include all types of enemies (c.f. “Good Samaritan”)
- He made clear that the “*herem*” commands do not directly apply to disciples of the kingdom
- He corrected any distortion of the Law that allowed for personal animosity to anyone

“Love Your Enemies”

1. Who are our enemies?

- those who overtly oppose us and seek our harm
- unbelievers in general (“the unrighteous”)
- those who do not love us
- those outside our group – ethnically, religiously

“Love Your Enemies”

2. How are we to love?

- *what love is not*: never opposing falsehood, never disagreeing, never correcting/rebuking, never offending

“Love Your Enemies”

2. How are we to love?

- “greeting” – genuine expressions of desire for another’s welfare
- “doing good” – practical acts of helpfulness in the ordinary things of life
- “praying” – asking God to have mercy on them and work for their ultimate good

“Love Your Enemies”

3. How can we love like this?

- A. “because He first loved us”
- we were enemies who were shown mercy by God
 - as sons, we are to reflect the character of our Father

“Love Your Enemies”

3. How can we love like this?

- B. “your reward in heaven is great”
- the surpassing value of our inheritance frees us to show radical, risk-taking love