

# Love Your Enemies

(Matthew 5:43-48)

Series: *Jesus Uncensored: The Sermon on the Mount*

March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018

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## Something to think about:

Do you have enemies?  
How do you treat your enemies?  
Do you love them?

What does Jesus have to say about loving our enemies? Let's take a look...

## **Matthew 5:43-48 (NLT)**

<sup>43</sup> *"You have heard the law that says, 'Love your neighbor' and hate your enemy. <sup>44</sup> But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! <sup>45</sup> In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike. <sup>46</sup> If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. <sup>47</sup> If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that. <sup>48</sup> But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.*

The Gospel of Luke, in the New Testament, has another version of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, and in Luke's version of this passage, this is what he writes...

## **Luke 6:27-36 (NLT)**

<sup>27</sup> *"But to you who are willing to listen, I say, love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you. <sup>28</sup> Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you. <sup>29</sup> If someone slaps you on one cheek, offer the other cheek also. If someone demands your coat, offer your shirt also. <sup>30</sup> Give to anyone who asks; and when things are taken away from you, don't try to get them back. <sup>31</sup> Do to others as you would like them to do to you. <sup>32</sup> "If you love only those who love you, why should you get credit for that? Even sinners love those who love them! <sup>33</sup> And if you do good only to those who do good to you, why should you get credit? Even sinners do that much! <sup>34</sup> And if you lend money only to those who can repay you, why should you get credit? Even sinners will lend to other sinners for a full return. <sup>35</sup> "Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for he is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked. <sup>36</sup> You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate.*

Between Matthew and Luke's account of Jesus' instructions on what it means to love our enemies, we can come to a clear understanding of what Jesus expects of the true child of God. And, it must be noted that this type of love can only be lived out by a person who is fully/completely surrendered to the love of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

**Key Point:** *"Loving one's enemies is a sign of a true child of God."*

So, how are we to love our enemies? What are the ways Jesus instructs us to do this?...

### 1. **Pray** for those who **persecute** you.

*When we learn the art of praying for those who persecute us, we release them to God rather than carrying the weight of their sin they have heaped upon us. In essence, we are able to ask God for their transformation and peace the way He has transformed us and extended peace to us.*

### 2. **Do good** to those who **hate** you.

*Romans 12:20-21 (NIV), <sup>20</sup> ... "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." <sup>21</sup> Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

### 3. **Bless** those who **curse** you.

*When we speak well of our enemies, we break the curse and the hold they have upon our lives. When we are able to see our enemies as people created in the image of God – like we ourselves are – we are able to overcome the need to retaliate with verbal venom and gossip that tear down and destroy their character and reputation.*

## **Something to take home:**

If you have ever sinned, you are an enemy of God. But, there's good news.

*Romans 5:6-11 (NLT), <sup>6</sup> When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners [enemies of God]. <sup>7</sup> Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. <sup>8</sup> But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners [enemies of God]. <sup>9</sup> And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation. <sup>10</sup> For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. <sup>11</sup> So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.<sup>1</sup>*

And, it's out of this friendship with God that we are able to love and forgive others the way Christ loves and forgives us.

*Ephesians 4:31-32 (NLT), <sup>31</sup> Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. <sup>32</sup> Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.*

**Key Point:** *"Loving one's enemies is a sign of a true child of God."*

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<sup>1</sup> Parenthesis mine.



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## KICK STARTERS:

- ⇒ Define the word “enemy.”
- ⇒ Give some real life examples of what/who an enemy is...

**SCRIPTURE:** (Before studying this material, consider listening to the corresponding message online at: <http://www.northmaincog.org/media/sermon-media>)

### Matthew 5:43-48 (NLT)

<sup>43</sup> “You have heard the law that says, ‘Love your neighbor’ and hate your enemy.  
<sup>44</sup> But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! <sup>45</sup> In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike. <sup>46</sup> If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. <sup>47</sup> If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that. <sup>48</sup> But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.

### Luke 6:27-36 (NLT)

<sup>27</sup> “But to you who are willing to listen, I say, love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you. <sup>28</sup> Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you. <sup>29</sup> If someone slaps you on one cheek, offer the other cheek also. If someone demands your coat, offer your shirt also. <sup>30</sup> Give to anyone who asks; and when things are taken away from you, don’t try to get them back. <sup>31</sup> Do to others as you would like them to do to you.

<sup>32</sup> “If you love only those who love you, why should you get credit for that? Even sinners love those who love them! <sup>33</sup> And if you do good only to those who do good to you, why should you get credit? Even sinners do that much! <sup>34</sup> And if you lend money only to those who can repay you, why should you get credit? Even sinners will lend to other sinners for a full return.

<sup>35</sup> “Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for he is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked. <sup>36</sup> You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate.

## GROUP DISCUSSION:

1. After reading the passages for today’s discussion, what is going on in the texts?  
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2. What does Jesus say we should do to our enemies (Mt. 5:44; Lk. 6:27)?  
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3. Jesus indicates that loving our enemies shows that we are acting like true children of our Father in Heaven (Mt. 5:45). How does loving our enemies do that?  
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4. Jesus gives some practical advice on acting in love toward our enemies. The first action Jesus insists we do is to “pray for those who persecute us.” What good is it to pray for those who persecute us? Why is it important to pray for those who persecute us?  
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5. Another action Jesus insists we take is to “do good to those who hate us” (Lk. 6:27). How is it possible to do good to someone who hates us, and why is this important? Read Romans 12:20-21. What are some practical things we can do for our enemies?  
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6. In Romans 12:20-21, Paul says that doing good things to our enemies ultimately “heaps burning coals upon their heads.” Heaping burning coals upon our enemy’s head is a purifying and refining thing rather than a vindictive and spiteful thing. The process of burning something in the fire has a refining and purifying affect. How can our good deeds toward our enemies help to change them for the better?  
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7. A final thing that Jesus insists that we do for our enemies is to “bless them.” How hard is it to bless someone who curses us? The actual Greek word for “bless” in Luke’s passage actually means to “speak well” of someone. We are to speak well of our enemies. Describe some good things that result from speaking well of our enemies?  
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8. Romans 3:23 reminds us that we’ve all sinned and fallen short of God’s glorious standard, thus making us all *enemies* of God. Read Romans 5:6-11. What did God do for us while we were His enemies? What does this mean for us in the way we should treat our own enemies?  
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## SELF-EVALUATION/APPLICATION:

- ⇒ **WHO ARE YOUR ENEMIES? Take some time this week to:** 1) Pray for those who persecute you. 2) Do good to those who hurt you. 3) Bless those who curse you.
- ⇒ **MEMORIZE THIS:** *Ephesians 4:31-32 (NLT), <sup>31</sup> Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. <sup>32</sup> Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.*