

“Love Without Limits”
Matthew 5:43-48
Sermon Series: “True Love In An Unloving World”

Main Idea: We are to love everyone without limits, even our enemies, instead of just loving those who are like us and love us.

1. Loving our enemies means that we are listening to and believing Jesus instead of the lies of this world (v. 43-44).

-Check our prejudices and make sure we are not the problem

-Leviticus 19:18

-Rick Warren: “Behind every sin we commit, there is a lie that we believe.”

-Can’t add to or take away from Scripture (the rabbinic teaching about non-Jews being their enemies)

-Jesus teaching about our neighbor (Parable of the Good Samaritan) so everybody is our neighbor so we can’t categorize people.

2. Loving our enemies is characterized by obedient actions (v. 44).

A. We bless those who curse us.

B. We do good to those who hate us.

C. We pray for those who mistreat us.

C.S. Lewis in Mere Christianity: “The rule for all of us is perfectly simple. Do not waste your time bothering whether you “love” your neighbor; act as if you did. As soon as we do this we find one of the great secrets. When you are behaving as if you loved someone, you will presently come to love him. If you injure someone you dislike, you will find yourself disliking him more. If you do him a good turn, you will find yourself disliking him less....The difference between a Christian and worldly man is not that the worldly man has only affections or “likings” and the Christian has only “charity.” The worldly man treats certain people kindly because he “likes” them; the Christian, trying to treat every one kindly, finds himself liking more and more people as he goes on— including people he could not even have imagined himself liking at the beginning.”

3. Loving our enemies demonstrates that we are genuine children of God (v. 45-48).

How does it do this?

A. We are being gracious as He is gracious (v. 45).

B. We are living in the supernatural instead of the natural (v. 46-47).

Alfred Plummer: “To return evil for good is devilish; to return good for good is human; to return good for evil is divine.”

Verse 48 is the conclusion of the entire section that begins in verse 21. We are perfect if we do these things. However, we know that we fall short, which is why we need to a Savior. This shows us we can't save ourselves. We are to strive for this in God's power, however. And the most amazing thing is that some day we will be perfected. However, all of this is because Jesus died for His enemies.

Conclusion-Applications:

- A. Get saved; share the gospel connected to this concept (Romans 5:6-10)**
- B. Confess and reconcile if you are in the wrong (Matthew 5:23-24)**
- C. Forgive if you have been wronged (Ephesians 4:32)-“even as”: *kathos*-“to the degree that”**
- D. Examine our hearts and make sure that we are not making enemies out of people who are different than us**
- E. Bless, do good and pray (in other words, obey) and let our feelings follow our actions**