

ENCOUNTERING THE ENEMY

Matthew 5:43-48

Let us examine what Jesus explained about encountering our enemies with love

I. WHAT JEWS SAY (43)

A. LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

1. The Prescription: Based on Leviticus 19:18
2. The Deletion: As yourself
 - The Pharisees could not fathom loving anyone as much as they loved themselves
3. The Problem
 - The standard begs the question of “Who is my neighbor” - See Luke 10:29
4. The Reaction
 - It’s easier to obey this if I apply it only to the people who aren’t so hard to love

B. HATE YOUR ENEMY

1. The Concept: The Pharisees added something never indicated in Scripture
2. The Hatred: To detest, disregard, dislike, reject or abhor
3. The Object: Gentiles, Samaritans, tax collector and prostitutes
4. The Support: Based upon Deut. 23:3-6 and Psalms 69:22-24 and 137:9
5. The Error: Using nationalistic principles for personal vendettas

II. WHAT JESUS SAYS (44-48)

A. LOVE YOUR ENEMIES (44a)

1. This love is an imperative
2. This love seeks others best: Consider Christ’s example in Matt. 26:46-50
3. This love is action-oriented
 - Note Christ’s command and example in John 13:34, with 13:1-2
4. This love is need-oriented - See Luke 10:29-37

NOTE: The KJV includes the concepts of blessing and doing good to the enemy as well in this passage however, it is not included in the best early manuscripts. It is included in Luke 6:27-28

Over please >

B. PRAY FOR PERSECUTORS (44b)

1. Intercede effectively: See I Peter 3:8-12
2. Overcome intolerance
3. Imitate the godly: See Psalm 35:12-16, Luke 23:33-34 and Acts 7:59-50

C. GIVE INDISCRIMINATELY (45)

1. Imitate your Father - See Eph. 5:1-2
2. Duplicate God's generosity - Psalm 145:14-16

D. BE CONSISTENT (46-47)

1. Avoid Shallow Love
 - A selfish (46) and snobbish (47) love
2. Avoid Hypocrisy: Becoming what you despise ...

E. BE EXCELLENT (48)

1. Our Duty: "Be perfect" is stated here emphatically
 - a. To be perfect is be working as designed
 - b. It includes the idea of reaching its intended goal
 - c. Example: David with Shimei in II Sam. 16:5-14
2. Our Model: God Himself > See Lev. 19:12 and I Peter 1:14-16

CONCLUSION:

Jesus's attitudes toward engaging the enemy were quite different than those of most Jews of His day

I wonder if ours are as distinctive as His

- How do we treat our enemies?
- Does our treatment demonstrate a biblical perspective?
- Are we following Christ's instructions?