

Love Your Enemies Matthew 5:38-48

What is Jesus correcting? (vv.38, 43)

V.38 is a quote from Exo 21:24, which tells judges how to determine penalties for crimes. But the Pharisees used this verse to show that if someone hurts you — you can seek revenge. But the Old Testament commanded us not to seek revenge (Lev 19:18).

The first half of v.43 is from the Old Testament — the second half was what the Pharisees taught (“hate your enemy”). But the Old Testament did not call us to hate our enemies, but to care for them (Prov 25:21, for example).

So Jesus is not correcting the Old Testament. He’s correcting the Pharisees’ distortion of the Old Testament.

How is it possible to do what Jesus commands? (vv.44-45)

Jesus is not saying that first we have to love our enemies before we can have God as our Father. He is saying that love for enemies shows that we have God as our Father.

When we trust Jesus, are forgiven for our sins, at that point for the first time we have God as our Father — humbled by His mercy, filled with His presence, secured by His promises.

When that happens our hearts are changed — and we love our enemies.

So love for enemies shows that we are sons of our Father in heaven.

So what will happen in our hearts when God becomes our Father?

We won’t seek revenge when someone hurts us (vv.38-41)

We will want to give freely to meet needs (v.42)

We will want to do good for our enemies (vv.43-44)

Why is this so important?

Because we must be perfect as God is perfect.

By faith in Christ we are —

Counted as perfect through Jesus’ blood and righteousness

Actually perfect through Jesus the moment we enter heaven.

Becoming perfect now as we experience God as our Father.



SERMON ON THE MOUNT

MERCY HILL CHURCH SPRING-SUMMER 2012

HOME GROUP DISCUSSION OF SUNDAY'S TEACHING

(Sometimes in our home groups we talk about Sunday's teaching, so we can work together on responding to God's Word — asking questions, sharing insights, talking together.)

What was the Holy Spirit saying to you Sunday through this passage?

What questions, ideas, objections, encouragements did you come away with?

Does it make sense that Jesus is correcting — not the Old Testament — but the Pharisees' distortion of the Old Testament? Why or why not?

How much do you experience God as your Father? On a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high) — how much do you feel humbled by His mercy, filled with His love, secured by His promises?

Do you agree that vv.44-45 are NOT saying that we first love our enemies and then come to have God as our Father — BUT they are saying that first we come to have God as our Father (by faith in Christ) and then will love our enemies? Why or why not?

Can you see how experiencing God as your Father (the humility of His mercy, the joy of His presence, the security of His promises) — will cause you to obey Jesus' 3 commands? Why or why not?

Which of Jesus' 3 commands is easiest for you to obey? Which is hardest?

What can you do to have a deeper experience of God as your Father?

What is the Father calling you to do in response to these Scriptures?

Share prayer requests that come up in the discussion, jot them down below, and pray for each other.



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