

# What Are You Doing More Than Others?

by Dick Woodward

---

*The sermon emphasizes the call for Christians to love unconditionally, reflecting God's grace and being distinct in their actions.*

**Duration:** 20:32

**Scripture:** Genesis 3:9-13, Lamentations 3:22-23, Matthew 5:43-48, Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Attitudes"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of love as described in 1 Corinthians 13. He refers to Henry Drummond's idea that love is passed through the prism of Paul's mind and comes out as a cluster of virtues. The preacher emphasizes that love cannot be defined and highlights Jesus' teaching style of asking questions. He connects the concept of love to being Godlike and challenges the listeners to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. The sermon also briefly mentions the book of Jeremiah and the prophet's lamentations over the suffering of the people, but finds hope in a revelation from God.

---

## Transcript

Hello and welcome. We are glad that you have chosen to spend this time with us studying the Sermon on the Mount here in the Mini-Bible College. Like you, I know it is difficult to impossible to love others who do not love us unless we have divine help.

Listen carefully to our teacher today as he helps us to understand better how we as disciples are to love even as God loves. Now here is our teacher to share more on this subject. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even tax collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect.

I have read verses 46 through 48 of Matthew chapter 5, which is perhaps the most difficult passage in this Sermon on the Mount, or perhaps the whole New Testament. This paragraph says, You have heard that it was said, You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.

For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust. In order to understand the supreme ethic of Jesus, the highest ethical teaching that has ever been expressed by

anyone on earth, it is important to have certain things in mind. We shared a great many of them in our last study, but I would like to focus on this one more time before we move on to chapter 6. I like the way Jesus interrogates those he is teaching.

Have you ever noticed how many questions Jesus asks? All the way through the Bible, God is asking questions to man. The first four things God speaks to man in the Bible, there in Genesis chapter 3, are questions. Where are you? Who told you? Have you eaten from the wrong tree? What have you done? That is the way God begins his dialogue with man.

Jesus is God in the flesh. Notice how often he turns what could have been a sermon into a question-and-answer approach. I once noticed this in the Gospel of Matthew.

Jesus asked 83 questions in the Gospel of Matthew. He could have said, it would not profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul, but he did not state that as a declarative fact. He asked the question, what do you think? What would it profit a man if he gained the whole world and lost his own soul? Or what should a man give in exchange for his soul? Here at the heart of this difficult teaching in Matthew 5 about loving enemies and not resisting the evil persons of this world, Jesus asks some very probing questions.

If you love those who love you, what reward have you? Another way to say it is, if you love those who love you, what grace are you practicing? Another way is, what's special about that? The idea is simply this, and it is an idea that runs throughout the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount. You must be different. Notice again how consistently that is taught in the Scriptures and the teachings of Jesus.

In Matthew 20, they are coming down a road, and the mother of James and John came and bowed before Jesus. Jesus looks down at her and asks this question, what do you want? Most people were on their face before Jesus when they wanted something, and sure enough, she wanted something. She wanted her two sons, James and John, to be on his right hand and on his left hand when he comes into his kingdom.

We are told on the way to the upper room, the disciples were arguing over who was going to be first and greatest and the most important in his kingdom. Well, he gathered them together and he gave them a little teaching. He said, now that is a game that the world plays.

The world is always trying to play that game. They want to be over everyone and have everybody else under them, but with you it cannot be that way. With you, it's different.

With you, it's got to be different. He went on to teach, if you want to be great in my kingdom, then get a basin and a towel, start washing feet. That is how you become great in my kingdom.

See, the emphasis in the world is that you would be like that, be great, be mighty, but not among you. With you, it must not be so. You must be different.

I majored in psychology when I was in college and I probably never got over that. I heard psychologists say things like, there is no such thing as love in this world. There's only need.

Show me somebody that you say you love and I will show you somebody you need. When a teenage boy looks at a beautiful girl and says, I love you, what does he really mean? The psychologist taught me that he probably means, I love me and I need you and so I want you. That is what he really means.

Psychologists who become cynical, especially those who leave Christ out, seem to become cynical about this whole thing called love. When people say they love, what do they really mean? I heard a psychologist say, you can substitute the word need for the word love. Is that true? Well, it does not have to be true.

It certainly should not be true for the authentic follower of Jesus Christ. But what about the people at the bottom of the mountain who have not come to the first Christian retreat? Jesus seems to be giving a commentary about them. If you only love those who love you, does it take any grace to practice that? Is there anything special about that? Is there anything different about that? Look down at the bottom of the mountain.

Why, even the publicans do that. Publicans were the most hated people of the Jewish culture when Jesus came. They collected taxes for the Romans from their fellow Jews.

They were traitors. They had betrayed their own people. They actually worked for Rome and very often they had added a percentage for themselves.

Since they had the power of Rome behind them, the poor people were powerless to do anything about it. Publicans were about the most despicable people that could be cited here. Jesus said in this teaching that even the publicans do that.

Publicans love the people who love them. And so Jesus is saying, if you only love people who love you or love people out of need, what do you think you are practicing? That doesn't take any grace. There's nothing special about that.

There's nothing different about that. Remember that we talked about being the salt of the earth, meaning that you are the influence that is to preserve the world from corruption, much in the same way that salt was rubbed into meat to keep it from spoiling or corrupting. Remember we said that one of the many things this metaphor is teaching is that you must be different.

Rubbing meat against meat does not preserve meat. Salt rubbed into the meat preserves the meat because the salt is different from the meat. What Jesus is saying consistently through this teaching is that you must be different if you're going to be a solution and you're going to be an answer.

You cannot simply go down there to the dog fight and the rat race and as we have said, be a dog or a rat and fight the other dogs and race the other rats. You've got to be different. And then you've got to show the world that it can be different, that there really is a different way.

It leaves you with this very profound question. If you greet only your brothers or your friends, if you only speak to those who are your friends, what are you doing more than anyone else? Frankly, as you approach these difficult paragraphs of Matthew 5, this may be the most challenging truth that you get from these paragraphs. What are you doing more than others? Is there anything different about you? If we really understand what the teaching of Christ is, such as the scriptures that describe the new birth, like 2 Corinthians 5.17, therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

Old things have passed away. Behold, all things have become new. Then we understand that all this is God's doing.

If we really understand regeneration, redemption, salvation, then we will understand what it means to be the new creation in Christ, what it means to have Christ in you, for you to be in Christ, to live your life in

this world together with him, joined in union with him, the way branches are united to a vine. What does all that mean? One thing it should mean is simply this, we should be different. There should be something different, something special about us.

If there's nothing different about us, if we are no more of a solution or an answer than all those other people there at the bottom of the mountain, then how can we fix them? But if by the grace of God, through the miracle of reconciliation and through the miracle of regeneration and redemption and salvation, if all these are not words, but descriptions of a reality, of an experience, of a relationship that continues as we move through life, then the bottom line is this, we will be genuinely different. And that difference should be obvious in terms of the way we answer this question, what are we doing more than others? The question is asked primarily in the context of love. Remember this unconditional love.

If you only love those that love you, if you only greet those that greet you, everybody does that. What he is suggesting to us here is simply this, that is conditional love. That is what passes for love at the bottom of the hill in this world.

When people say they love somebody, unless they are a born again new creature living in Christ, with Christ living in them, then it probably is true that they are only loving those who love them. They are loving conditionally, so that if people meet their conditions, then they love them. If people do not meet their conditions, they don't love them.

In other words, it is a kind of love that is based upon performance. If you perform, then I will love you. That is what the world calls love.

The most outstanding characteristic of the love which the Bible teaches, the love that defines God, is agape love, meaning unconditional love. God loves unconditionally. He makes his rain to fall and his sun to shine upon people regardless of their performance.

He loves us and he went to the cross and died for us, not because of any performance on our part, but simply because he loves us. That is what these words like grace and mercy mean. Grace means the attribute of God whereby he gives us all kinds of good things that we do not deserve.

Mercy is the attribute of God whereby he withholds all the bad things that we do deserve. Grace and mercy, these words are telling us something about God. They are telling us that God is love and that God loves unconditionally.

Well, that is the plan of God and that is the plan of Christ for every one of us. What do you do more than others? When Jesus gave this supreme ethical teaching here, love your enemy, when people persecute you, curse you, hate you, when they say all manner of evil against you falsely for my name's sake, well, this is how you are to respond. All of this is showing the world what God is like.

It is simply God-likeness. And when you love unconditionally your enemy and the people who do all these things to you, you are being as your heavenly father is. That is what he is like.

Jeremiah was an Old Testament prophet who was raised up by God like other prophets and he specifically addressed the Babylonian captivity. Jeremiah preached for years in the city of Jerusalem and he preached for repentance. He preached for revival.

He challenged the people of God. If you will repent of your sins, if you will have a spiritual awakening, a spiritual revival, then God will not have to chastise you. But if you do not turn to God, then he's going to bring chastisement upon you.

The Babylonians are going to come and besiege this city and many of you will be massacred. And those that are not massacred will be carried off in chains to Babylon. Jeremiah preached that.

His motivation and his message at first seemed to be repent and it will not happen. But then, when it was obvious that they were not going to repent, he changed his message. He said that the chastisement is coming.

One day they looked out on the horizon and there were the Babylonians. For two years, the Babylonians besieged the city of Jerusalem. During all of that time, Jeremiah kept preaching the message that God had laid upon his heart.

After the people were massacred and those that were not massacred were dragged off in chains in a death march to Babylon, Jeremiah was there in the city and he was permitted by the Babylonians to remain there. He sat there in a place that they call Jeremiah's cave and in this cave, he lamented. The prophecy of Jeremiah is difficult to outline because he is the weeping prophet.

He was sobbing all the time. It is difficult to outline the book because people don't sob in outline form. He was pouring out his heart, weeping through his prophecy.

And then there is this little postscript to the book of Jeremiah called Lamentations. And what are Lamentations? More sobbings and more cryings. He was crying because the people had been massacred.

He was crying because the young women had been raped. He was crying because the people had been dragged off on a death march to Babylon. And he had witnessed all of that.

And so he's crying through Lamentations until about the middle of chapter three. Then he had a great revelation from God. And because of this revelation, he said he had hope.

What was the revelation that God gave him there in that cave? It was simply this. God never stops loving us. He knows that God never stops loving because God loves unconditionally.

God's love is not conditional. And so Jeremiah gives us the words from which we have put together the hymn with the great words, greatest thy faithfulness, thy compassions are new every morning. You will find those words in the middle of the third chapter of Lamentations.

Now that's not in the New Testament, that's in the Old Testament. Many prophets like Hosea and Jeremiah and others realized that God is a God of love and his love is unconditional. The word mercy simply means the unconditional love of God, love that we do not deserve.

We certainly deserve the opposite, but he loves us anyway. That is what mercy is. Mercy is found about 365 times in the Bible, once for each day of the year, because God knows that we need his mercy every single day of the year.

But you see, that is the character of God. That is what God is like. God is love.

But when we say God is love, what do we mean? Go to first Corinthians 13 and you will discover what it means when the Bible says that God is love. In the middle verses of first Corinthians 13, you have a beautiful description of the love of God. It's the Greek word agape.

It's a special quality of love. It is not true to say that anything that goes for love is God. As we have pointed out, most love that professes to be love is not the love of God.

It is conditional. It's based upon performance. That's not the way God loves.

So in the middle of first Corinthians chapter 13, we have love described. Henry Drummond, 1851 through 1897, a great Scottish preacher, said that in the middle verses of first Corinthians 13, the concept of love is passed through the prism of the apostle Paul's Holy Spirit-inspired mind, and it comes out the other side as a cluster of virtues. I think that is a beautiful way of describing verses four through seven of first Corinthians chapter 13.

You cannot define love. It's so difficult even to describe it. Paul gives us a cluster of virtues, 15 of them in all, and he says that if you have love, then virtues like these will come out of your life.

Go through first Corinthians 13 verses four through seven. Look up each of those words until you are sure you understand what they mean, and there you will discover a cluster of virtues that describes for us love, the quality of love that God is. You could say that in those verses you have a description of the character of God.

If you analyze those virtues, you will see that the love which is God is unconditional, and because it is unconditional, it is indestructible. It is very inspirational, too, because when you love somebody anyway, and not because of their performance, you inspire them to be all that God wants them to be. I think that Paul tells us in that great chapter that the quality of love is irresistible in the last analysis, but as the concept of love is passed through the prism of Paul's inspired mind and comes out the other side as a cluster of virtues, as we've seen in first Corinthians 13, it all comes down to the same thing we have seen in this last paragraph of Matthew chapter five.

The whole motivation for our loving this way is simply this, that you may be sons of your father in heaven. Be therefore as your heavenly father is. Jesus is saying to be godlike, and he is challenging us with the mission of being godlike, which is another way of saying he is challenging us with the mission of being the salt of the earth and the light of the world, a city on a hill that cannot be hidden, a candle on a candlestick, a solution, an answer.

He is simply challenging us to be like God, to be love like God is love, unconditional love. In our home, we have a huge plaque that is hanging on our kitchen wall. It's the first thing you see when you come into the house, the way the family enters the house, and that big wooden plaque says, God loves you anyway.

When our children, and we have five of them, were going through their teenage years, some of them struggled with their faith and had to prove that these things were true. They are all in Christ now, praise the Lord, but they had their struggles. And sometimes they came home later than they were supposed to come home.

Sometimes only the Lord and they knew what they had been up to. But I had that big plaque up there on the wall because the first thing I wanted them to see when they came into the house was that big plaque that said, God loves you anyway, no matter how late it was, no matter what they had been up to. Then as

you go down the hall toward the bedrooms, there's another plaque on the wall.

It's embroidered in crimson red on white satin and is framed. And it says, I love you anyway. I wanted my children to be faced with these two truths.

God loves you anyway, and I love you anyway. It's one thing to express that kind of truth for your children as their father and mother. It's quite another to express that kind of love toward an enemy.

But you see, that is what God does. God loves you and me just that way. He expressed his love for this whole world, not because the world was good, not because of some great performance on the part of the world.

Romans chapter five says, while we were yet enemies, while we were ungodly, while we were sinners, he expressed his love, his agape for us in Christ. Jesus is simply saying in this last paragraph of Matthew chapter five, that we should be like that because God loves anyway, we should love anyway. Now it takes grace to do that.

But if we have his grace, if we are his disciples, then Jesus has a right to ask this question. What are you doing more than others? Is there anything special about you? Is there anything different about you? When people look at you, do they say, you must be getting grace from God or you could never do the things you do. You could never be the things you are.

God bless you until next time. The truth is as disciples, we are to practice the word of God in everyday living. And we pray that these lessons are helping you to grow in your knowledge and faith until we meet again next time.

May our God who gives encouragement and peace, give you courage as you follow Christ Jesus and all you say and do glorifying the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/28/SID28318.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/dick-woodward/what-are-you-doing-more-than-others/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**