

Love Your Enemies

by Don McClure

The sermon emphasizes the importance of loving our enemies and living a transformed life, which requires us to allow Christ to take over our heart and life and to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 49:05

Scripture: Matthew 5:39-48

Topics: "Loving Enemies", "Christian Perfection"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of hating our enemies and the importance of loving them instead. He emphasizes that Jesus challenges the common belief of loving only our neighbors and hating our enemies. The preacher highlights four things that Jesus wants us to do, which include controlling our anger, overcoming lust, building successful relationships, and keeping our word. The sermon concludes with a reminder to strive for perfection, just as our Heavenly Father is perfect. The preacher encourages the audience to study and internalize the teachings of Jesus in order to live a transformed life.

Transcript

Matthew 5, verse 43. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you due to good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.

That ye may be the children of your father which is in heaven, for he maketh his son to rise on evil and on the good, to sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same. And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your father which is in heaven is perfect.

Father, we thank you for your word, and Lord, we thank you for what is becoming to mean to us, Lord, this wonderful sermon. We pray, Father, that as we study it, that it would just be written indelibly upon our heart. Lord, that it would be, Lord, a message that we would be determined we want to live more than anything in the world.

So we ask that you would continue to take it and write it upon us. Teach it to us, Father, we ask it in Jesus' name, amen. Well, here in Matthew chapter 5, which we're finally finishing up this chapter, I think the rest

of the sermon should go probably not any faster, but anyway, theoretically, it should.

But beginning, of course, just quickly by reflection, it's all based in the Beatitudes. And the Beatitudes are this wonderful place to where a transformed life begins to occur. Transformed by Christ, it's where Jesus begins to take over our heart and our life.

It's how we give him the place of Lordship, of mastery, of supremacy within our life. It requires that we are poor in our own spirit, that we mourn over our own sin, that we come meekly before God, that there is something within us where we have lost affection for our own life, our own heart, our own life. We find ourselves there before God, Lord, is there any way you can replace me? Is there any way that you can do anything for me? And there that produces a meekness within us that hopefully now goes on to a hunger, a hunger for God, a hunger for God that hopefully will never, ever end our entire lifetime.

Oswald Chambers once said, the great objective of all of life is to be lost in God. And I think that's such an awesome sort of a thing to think about. That's the destiny of life.

We are created in his image and we fell away and now it ought to be the great pursuit of our heart, Lord, I want to be lost, lost in God, lost in his being, in his love, in his life, in his power. And that's what's happening in the Sermon on the Mount. When I'm finally desperately tired of my own nature, want God to come and to fill me with himself.

And then comes his merciful heart, his merciful spirit, begins to make me a peacemaker, pure in heart, and then makes me a peacemaker. And then he goes on and he now looks at us after he's through this, he says, you're the salt of the earth. He says, but however the salt has lost its worth, good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under the foot of men.

You are the light of the world. And a city that's set upon a hill cannot be hid. He says, your life is to be salt, is to be light.

When you now exemplify to the rest of the planet, the rest of the world around you, that real life is found in losing it. And whosoever would save his life will lose it, but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. And in losing my life, I discover his and the discovery of his, letting him take over my life and fill my life.

Then comes about making me the salt of the earth, the light of the world. And then he goes on and he tells us some of these wonderful things that he, that as we have been through other areas, all under our own skin, we're now in our own heart, in our own life, he reveals the fact that he is really on the throne. The fact that he has really taken over.

There's some wonderful things that begin to occur. Somebody there that went outside of Christ, outside of his throne in anger. It's so easy to be angry, to be upset, to be furious at people.

But there Jesus, he said, you have heard that hath been said by them of old time, thou shall not kill and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say unto you that whosoever is angry with his brother is in danger of the judgment. And there he looks there and he says, there the wonderful thing.

Now you don't have to worry about not just killing somebody. Those things used to maybe be fearful things before you were in Christ, but now you can even be set free from being angry. If I'm on the throne of your heart, the throne of your life, anger is something that is going to dissipate.

It's just going to go. Another wonderful area of a transformed life and evidence of it is lust. He says, you have heard that hath been said by them of old time, thou shall not commit adultery.

But I say unto you that whosoever looks at a woman to lust after in his heart has committed adultery with her already there within his heart. But that is something again, when Christ is on the throne, when I'm really there, when I'm tired of my heart, my life, my nature, when I'm poor in spirit, I mourn over it, I become meek. He fills me with himself, the power to see a transformed life, a transform experience is beginning to happen.

I can find myself there having the anger go and having this heart, my own nature, my own heart that can be so hostile, so angry, that can be so covetous, so lustful, so looking at the rest of the world around it and desperately wanting it. Another thing that's an evidence of somebody there on our own nature, just our own flesh, we make commitments, but we can't keep them. And we wish we could, we long to, few people really want to, you know, give themselves to other people and into real human relationships and fail with them, but we do.

But then the Old Testament there, the Jews kind of accommodate it because they said, you have heard that if a man gives his wife a writing, divorces his wife, let him give her writing and divorcement. But I say unto you that whosoever puts away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causes her to commit adultery. And there he's looking there and he says, don't worry, if I'm on the throne, if I'm king, I'll give you the ability to make your relationships work.

You don't have to be afraid of losing them. You don't have to be afraid of your own weakness of your own nature, only respect your own nature enough to stay clear of it and let me be enthroned, let me be king. And he goes on, he says, again, you have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, thou shall not forswear thyself, but shall perform to the Lord thy knows.

But I say unto you, swear not at all. And there he looks there, let your yea be yea and your nay be nay. The wonderful thing now is he says, listen, if I am king, if I am the Lord of your heart, the Lord of your life, if I am enthroned within you, your yea will be a yea, your words will be true.

You won't have to manipulate and deceive and try constantly to twist things around for your own advantage. You can just simply begin to open your mouth and say and speak the truth. And here he's looking, these are all evidences under the skin of a Christian, you might say, within the heart of a child of God.

Another area that's transformed within us is the area of our own self-interest. And when he goes on, he says, you have heard that it hath been said, you know, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but I say unto you that ye resist not evil. Whomsoever shall smite you on the cheek, turn to him the other also.

And then he tells us going, and then he goes on and he says, things of our own interest, our own pride, that can be so strong within us. But there it begins to be transformed. And he says, if somebody sues you at court for like your coat, give him your cloak also.

And he says, if somebody compels you to go a mile, go with him too. Give to him that asketh. Don't turn anybody away.

And all these things of my own life, my own pride, my own stuff, my own coat, you know, my own time, my own having to go a second mile and go out of my way for somebody and or to be interested in other

people so much so as I would want to give to somebody. And here Jesus said, the most wonderful thing happens to the child of God. He says, these areas are transformed.

And to me, as I believe I've said before, as we've looked at through this sermon, these I believe are the greatest battles of the Christian. These right here in chapter five are some of the greatest and most fundamental areas that if ever a Christian ought to find themselves in prayer. They're where the real, the greatest battles are.

And Jesus said, in the world you'll have tribulation. And I know that that's obviously many forms of tribulation, but my personal conviction is the deepest tribulation that anybody ever has is the tribulation within our own heart. The trials within our own soul, over our anger or over our lust, over our ability to maintain and keep relationships or to keep our word or to deny ourself.

Those are the great battles. Those things we have every day and constantly going on around us. And when we as a Christian realize, God, this is the battle.

These are where I want to begin to draw a line. And God, I want victory in these areas. Jesus, I want you so enthroned within my life that my anger can be taken away, can be taken out of my heart, that my lustful heart can be tamed and you can be enthroned and you can be king and you can take these things away.

One of the things I think so often, you know, we have clinics and we have courses and we have all these, you know, one, two, three, four step plans to one thing or another. But here, Jesus, he has essentially one step plan of anger management. And he has a one step plan of, you know, pornography and or of lust.

And he's got a one step plan of rebuilding relationships. And the one step is, he says, enthrone me. Let me be king.

And there's where we fight the battle because we don't fight that battle. We're constantly under our own energy and our own strength, trying to put down a nature that we're feeding. And we're building up instead of denying and wanting to see it buried.

And now here he looks at the last in these areas of things under our own skin. He's in the next chapter. He's going to shift gears.

But here now he talks about in our own skin of hating and of hating our enemies. And something there, another, you know, the battle that we so often have within us when now, you know, he turns and he tells us, you have heard that it has been said, thou shall love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. You know, you've heard that, you know, that you love the people around you and you love your neighbor, but it's just fine to just simply determine who your enemies are and then it's OK to hate them.

And Jesus, you know, he turns there and he says, but I say unto you, love your enemies. Here now he turns and he tells them four things that he wants to see us do. But first, I suppose it's important just even to define a little bit, you know, what our enemy is.

You see, because Jesus there, these things here in the rest of chapter five after the Beatitudes, they're kind of divine revelations or revelators almost of our own heart. If I say Jesus is my Lord and yet I can't control my anger, if I say he's Lord of my life and lust is going on, I say he's Lord of my life and relationships continue to fail, I say he's Lord of my life and I can't keep my word, I say he's Lord of my life and yet I cannot deny myself. And I find all of these things are people things, if you've noticed, they're

getting along with people, relating to people.

These are things that really show if I've experienced the Beatitudes or not. And if I've experienced the Beatitudes, I'll be able to look at these things and realize, Jesus, these are the battles that I want to see you win and these are the areas of my life you're working in, transforming me, bringing me back into your image. If I'm not in the Beatitudes, if I'm not, you know, letting my life be transformed by the Lord, all these battles will just rage uncontrollably.

I'll go from one to another to another. I can go, you know, right from anger to lust, to broken relationships, to broken commitments, to get out of my way and again my pride flares up. And they're just symptomatic of who is on the throne, of who is really Lord.

And if I'm in fellowship and I've been through the experience of the Beatitudes, I understand them, I have his power, the power of his presence, the power of his Holy Spirit to succeed and have victory in these areas. And if I don't, I won't. If I don't let him be king.

And I think one of the things as well that Jesus here points out is that the problems in our life are never, ever, ever outside our skin. The problems here, Jesus is saying in this chapter, the problems in my life are under my skin. They are not people.

So often we look at it and say, you know, a life would be wonderful if it wasn't for you, you know, or something, and or this person or that. If I didn't have to deal, and it's always something out there, if that could be fixed. And a lot of people spend a tremendous amount of time and energy and effort praying about and struggling with and, you know, worrying about and trying to manage everything outside their skin.

But here the real issue is that when somebody realized there's no enemy outside my skin, the enemy is under my skin. And if Christ is enthroned there, if he is really king, he'll take care of all the battles outside. And he'll demonstrate the victory that he has as being king and Lord by giving me the victory over these things.

I'll realize that there's no enemy, there's no weapon formed against me that'll prosper. There's nothing that'll ever come across my path if I'm right with him, that'll take me down. And so if something is taking me down, rather than that's the problem, no, that just reveals who's enthroned.

That reveals who is, who's the king. And essentially the bottom line is, is that the only person that can do these things in chapter 5 or 6 or 7 essentially there, is somebody that is letting Jesus be king. Letting him be, be, be enthroned.

You see, Jesus' great project with all of us, every single one of his blood-bought children, all of us, is the replacement of self with the Holy Spirit. When Adam fell and the self essentially rose up, pride took over, I will, I'll have, I want, I can do, I will do, get out of my way and watch me. This whole nature was created.

And here the thing that Jesus, when he comes into our life now, his plan is, is to put that to death and to replace it with the one that was to be there in the first place, the Holy Spirit. And he spends wonderfully patiently our entire life dealing with self. That's his real project, I believe, above all other projects that he has.

Oh, he wants to use us in our life and bear fruit and be salt and be light. And he wants us to serve him and he's got wonderful plans for our life, but his great project with us personally is to transform us back into his image, back into his nature, back into his character. And unfortunately, we spend so much of our life not realizing that and just concerned still about our own self, even as a Christian.

You know, we spend so much time and energy looking out for self or else looking out for other people who might make self angry, you know, who do attack myself or offend myself or hurt myself or not nice to myself. Then all of a sudden this whole thing comes up and I'm in trouble. George Mueller once wrote about himself.

There was a day when I died, utterly died, died to George Mueller and his opinions, preferences, tastes, and will died to the world. It's approval or censure died to the approval or blame even of my brethren and friends. And since then, I have studied only to show myself approved unto God.

Let me read that again. It's awesome to me. There was a day when I died, utterly died to George Mueller and his opinions, preferences, tastes, and will died to the world.

It's approval or censure died to the approval or blame even of my brethren and friends. And since then, I have studied only to show myself approved unto God. I don't know about you, but how I wish I could write that in my diary as he did in his.

How I would love, you know, that and then not get struck with lightning after I wrote it, you know, or have my wife read it and just think she picked up the comic books, you know, or something there and listen to her laugh. But wouldn't you love that to have something there where you could write that and put your name in it and say, there was a day that I died. I died to myself.

I died to my nature. I died to my will. I died to my preferences.

I died to having to have anything, approval or censure or anything at all. I died to it. And since then, I'm only alive to study, to show myself approved unto God.

What a wonderful thing. And here Jesus tells us another way that you can determine if you're, if you're died. Another way to determine effectively, if you've really given up, and he says, you have heard that it has, you know, been said, thou shall love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy.

But I say unto you, love your enemies. Now here, first of all, I suppose enemies, I might say, fall essentially into two categories. One to me is essentially kind of philosophical or political or national or military or, you know, distant enemies, I suppose, kind of like the, you know, Philistines were or the Moabites or the Edomites, national enemies or political enemies or moral enemies, just in, not with a face on them, but just whether it's the Saddam Husseins of the world or it's, you know, the Adolf Hitlers or, you know, the Republicans or the Democrats or whatever, you know, these big forces out there that I hate them or the abortionists or whatever else that we look at and say, these are enemies, you know, or something that some would look at in one way or another and call them that.

And, and that could certainly be and is, of course, but then there's personal enemies. And there's enemies of those that have personally abused or manipulated, deceived, ripped off, hurt, conned. Somehow or another, what they have done is they got into our heart and into our life and in the process of it, they did something that we looked at them and you are an enemy.

And I suppose this, this is the whole gamut of them. This is whether when we're looking at the huge picture of the world or we're just looking at somebody that individually we find ourselves, our own nature says, I hate them. I just hate them.

And here Jesus, when he sits on the throne, he looks at us under our skin and he tells us, he says, now love your enemy, love your enemy. And of course this may seem impossible and without him it is, but it's also something that many times to us in a natural thing, we still look there and we, we, we look at this and say, I love my enemies. How? This is terrible.

And I think one of the reason is, is that we, we don't understand love. First of all, I think love is not a feeling. Love is not an emotion.

Love is a behavior. It's, it's, it's, it's simply a behavior at the deepest sense at all of it. I believe it's something there that we're looking for this overwhelming force.

That's just going to sweep over our heart. You know, there's still called love, this mushy gooey, you know, sweet sort of a thing, something that kind of wells up within us, just carries us off. And we're saying, God, I've got to love my enemy, you know, or something, or we've got this picture sometimes of love, of being, you know, a man and a woman running towards each other in the midst of a flowery field with an orchestra playing romantic music and birds flying and dropping rose petals on them.

And they run and meet in the middle and melt in each other's arms. And we say, that's love. That isn't love.

It isn't love at all. Now, I'm not saying that it isn't potentially a reward of love or a response to love, you know, or, or a, a, a, something that can come from it, but that is not love. And sometimes I think we are looking there like, God, give me this, this emotion or giving this feeling where I can just go to them.

And it just compels me. And I don't hear the music playing. I don't, you know, hear there's no flowers around or run through the field or something as if we're waiting for some sort of an experience where I'd love them.

Love isn't that at all. That isn't love. Love is quite different than that.

Love essentially, it's a behavior. I said, love is giving your life for somebody. That's what love is really all about.

Love is dying on a cross for somebody. Love there is finding there in a sense, not so much an emotion, not so much this great big feeling that's there. It's a behavior where somebody lays down their life for somebody, regardless of what feeling or what emotion may or may not be there.

So many people sometimes were just praying, you know, earnestly, God, give me love. Give me love for my husband. Give me love for my wife.

Give me love for my children. Have you seen these children? God, give me love, you know, or something. And we're crying out to, you know, wanting this, this feeling there where I can just run, you know, to them and embrace them.

And, and then we end up, you know, in despair, you know, sometimes there. And he never, God's not giving me love. I'm praying for love.

I'm asking for love. But the thing is, I'm so glad Jesus didn't sit in the garden the night before he was crucified and wait for some sort of a feeling before he could go die for us. His feelings were quite the contrary.

He sweat as it were great drops of blood. And he says, Father, I would that you would remove this cup from me. All of his feelings told him, hey, let's go the other direction.

Everything internally within him for what he was about to have to go through at the cross. But at the same time, love compelled him. He behaved in love.

He did the work of love. He laid down his life, not because he felt like it. Love was not a feeling.

It was a behavior. It was something there that it was driven within his heart. And when we find out there, I think that God looks at us and we're saying, God, give me love.

And God says, no, I gave you blood. You, you let it bleed. You let it, you know what it is to give yourself for somebody to lay down your life for your husband or for your wife or for your children or for the people at the office or the other people you don't get along with or whatever it is that you may be having difficult times with.

This is one of the greatest tests of if Jesus is on the throne of our life, loving our enemies like this, it really reveals ultimately who is really enthroned. If I am so completely given to him through the Beatitudes, if I have so surrendered my life that I mean business, I really want to say I died one day. I calculated it out.

I planned it out. I longed for it. I prayed for it and I died and I meant business.

I gave my life in full surrender to him and the evidence of it. Or one of the ones here, as we look at tonight is the fact that now I am experiencing a behavior. I have the capacity, maybe not the feeling, but the capacity, the behavior to be obedient and say, Lord, I'll lay my life down.

You want me to hang upon a cross for somebody. You want me to, you know, to shed my own blood or my own life to, you know, for them. That's the business, you know, of what it is here.

And that's what Jesus actually did for us. Paul actually writes in Romans chapter five, you want to know the other side of the things. The Bible says, for if when we were without strength in due time, Christ died for the ungodly.

And then he goes on a couple of verses later and he says, God commends his love to us in that while we were yet sinners. Here, the Bible looks at us and he says, you want to know what he God was dealing with when Jesus said, I love you. As he looks at people who are without strength, who are ungodly, who were sinners.

And then in verse 10, he says, for if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his son, while much more being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. But here, when Jesus was sitting there and giving of his life in obedience, in love for us, it wasn't a feeling. He could look over at the other side of the equation and listen to us and say, well, here's somebody that's, uh, they're, they're without strength.

They are ungodly, they are sinners, and they are all out enemies of my throne and my kingdom and what I'm all about. And yet he died for us. That's love.

God, we were enemies. The Bible says in Christ died while we were enemies. And when he's thrown and thrown in my life, he says, now you can do it.

Now I want to do it through you. These were all things that Jesus did for us when we were enemies. And now when he's enthroned, he says, I, I want you when people can come to you and, and they may be, are everything opposed to you.

They don't get along with you. They don't like you. They'd like to take you down.

They're enemies of you. He says, love your enemies. And here that, uh, when we find that this is, is the great issue in life, and I'm sure some here, you've been deeply hurt.

You've been offended. There are people I'm sure that you look at and you would say this person, I hate them. If ever, if any, if ever I had an enemy, it would be this person.

How they abused or they ripped off or they deceived or what they did to my life, what they have done to it and the, the, the scar that is upon it. And, uh, somebody there that also sometimes we look at people that do that. And what even makes us angrier is they, they willfully did it.

They planned it out. They literally wanted to hurt us. They wanted to take us down.

Maybe we were young and innocent and even worse yet, they didn't care what the abuse was. And something there that in the natural man, if anything would bring out hate, these are the things so often that would do it. And I'm sure that there's some here.

And yet at the same time, the things that qualified somebody to do those things, the fact that they themselves, they were, were people who were ungodly and they were sinners and they were without strength. And they were enemies of God and enemies of the nature of God and the character of God. Thus they were corrupt human beings, socially corrupt, morally corrupt, terribly corrupt.

And yet then, uh, in as bankrupt as somebody could be. And, and yet sometimes we look at them and say, they didn't have to do it. They did this willfully to me.

And that they did it personally to me. And that makes it worse. That's why I hate them.

But you see, the thing is, is sometimes it's interesting. I've noticed about us. We look at somebody and we think they're capable of better.

You ever notice that you'd maybe the person that you maybe hate, or you, you would call an enemy. They're oftentimes somebody they were capable of better and they chose to do what they did to me. They didn't have to do it.

It wasn't an accident. It was planned and it was willful. And these are the types of things that happen to people.

But so often if we were, you know, if we looked at somebody and we realized there, though, they maybe look like they're mentally capable and they look like they're, you know, emotionally stable or something, but in reality, they are spiritually so dark and so far from God. They aren't, they look healthy, but inside there as crippled as a human being could be. And when we would realize that sometimes we look at somebody and realize that a lot of people terribly crippled inside, they look fine on the outside.

You would, but would you ever go up to a person that if they were crippled in a wheelchair and you're up a flight of stairs, would you say, Hey, come here, come here. I want you up here. And if somebody sat there and watched it, what are you doing to them? They, they can't get up there, but you know, they wouldn't look at that person and think there's something wrong with them.

They'd look at something that you and say something wrong with you. Well, there's a lot of people that are far more crippled than that. It's internally.

It's their own heart. It's their own life. They can't live right.

They don't know how they have done what they've done because of their far off relationship with God. And for us to look there and realize, all right, they have done something that qualifies them to be an enemy. But God, you now tell me to love them.

You now tell me that you want me to be able to look at them as somebody who is without strength and is ungodly and is a sinner. And though an enemy of mine, you have put a life within me that now I can reach out to the very person that is their chief victim. And I can be the vessel through which you can transform them and help them get out of that chair that they're in out of that crippled state.

This is what he's saying. Love your enemy. Love them.

And there that when there's a love that comes along that it doesn't feel like maybe doing something, but I look at them and I know what it is. Lord, I'll give my life for them. I don't know how I feel about them, but I'll give my life.

I'll give my, you know, I'll be obedient. I'll die for them. I'll rise from the dead.

I'll come back. I'll return good for evil. And here Jesus said, this is something that if you do this, whatever they may do, if it's not the issue, this will reveal to you, I'm enthroned.

This is almost the crowning blow, you know, in a sense of the crowning story in revelation where Jesus can say, I am king. He then goes on secondly, and he says to them, he says, bless them that curse you. Now there's somebody, you know, that comes along and now he begins there that there's people that, you know, love your enemies.

I says, bless those that curse you. And it's kind of like there he gives counterattacks to attacks, you know, somebody comes along and so you went and did something for them and you loved them and they didn't do anything. They just came back and cursed you.

Well, this is a fine, you know, how do you do? You know, I love you. And I really, you did everything wrong to me. You hurt me.

You offended me. You were an enemy. And here I am.

I'm coming to love you. And what do you do? You say, get out of here. I don't need your love.

You so-and-so. And then they curse us and tell us, you know, whatever else they want to tell us. But, you know, the interesting thing, now he says, now I want you to go back and bless them that curse you.

To bless, as you've already seen through the Beatitudes, means to make joyful. Boy, you may want to look there and say, now Lord, you not only want me to love them, now you want me to go make them happy. You know, sort of a thing.

Come on, what in the world is with you? You want me to do all I can to make their life joyful. I don't understand this, but he says precisely. That's exactly what I want you to do.

I want you now through the, because that's exactly what he did for us. He died for us, rose again, loved us, but he didn't let it sit there. He spent years chasing us down.

Years after he had died. Years after he'd given himself to us. And in one way or another, any way that he could bless or show that he could give us any joy in life, he continued to do it.

And here there's something there that Jesus essentially saying there that when, you know, when also when you look at us, what did he do when he did finally chase us down? And he did finally get us. What did he do? He blessed us. Here we were as, you know, we were without Christ, living ungodly, without strength.

We were enemies. He finally catches up with us. He finally grabs us.

We finally turn over to him. He says, good. Now what I want to do is I want to make you happy.

And that's what the Beatitudes were all about. And now Jesus, he turns to you and he says, you go. That very one, the hardest person in the world.

There that is your enemy that you naturally hate, love them. And then when they curse you, bless them. Make it a desire to make them happy.

There that's exactly what Jesus did when he met us. We gave him our life. He says, you know what you need? You need a good blessing.

I know exactly what you need. You're so messed up. You are so rotten to the core.

You are so hopeless. You are so desperate. You are so carnal.

You're so wicked. You're so selfish. You're so rebellious.

You know what you need? You need a thorough blessing from one end to the other. You need me to take your life and just to fill it with joy. And the wonderful thing, I mean, that's so often how he's won us, how he's loved us, how it's come through that he's done so many wonderful things within our life.

And when people come along there that have attacked and they've been arrogant or they've been wicked and they've been carnal and they've been hateful to us, we ought to be able to look at them and say, you know what you need? You need a bunch of joy. That's what you need. Look at you.

Yeah, you know, it's miserable for me to be around you. I must be really be miserable to be inside of you. You know, sort of a thing.

You need some joy. I'd love to find out ways I can make your life more enjoyable. That's what he's doing here.

That's what it's all about. Here we have people around us that are there to curse us, put some sort of spell upon our lives. That's what a curse is all about.

They want to bring a big dose of suffering and of pain and of sorrow and of hostility or whatever. And for us to be able to turn and just say, you know, what you need is you need a bigger dose of happiness. That's what you need.

Here, Jesus, that's what he's done for us, hasn't he? That's how he's won us. Thirdly, he goes on and he tells them, he says, you know, that do good to them that hate you. Here again, a series of counterattacks.

So often we come and say, God, I loved him. I loved that dirty, rotten, no good scoundrel as you told me to. You know, but at the same time, it didn't work.

And God says, well, my, oh, my, I'm not surprised. But then he comes back and he says, well, then, you know, have you blessed them? Have you really there looked and said, God, they need your joy. They need somebody there to come along and to be a blessing to them.

Maybe one of the reasons their life is so remote, so negative, so empty, so wicked. They've never known anybody to come and do any blessing upon them, to do, to desire to bring in any joy within them. And now when that doesn't work, he says, do good to them that hate you.

Again, it's a whole series almost of counterattacks on the enemy, how to get him, how to win him. The one that curses us, you know, that now we, we bless them. And now somebody that hates us, he, now Jesus said, well, I'll tell you what, the next time, now let's go do good to them.

And, uh, uh, and when we realize that, that he looks at it, he says, do good. It's a powerful thing. Romans 12, 19, Paul said, Dearly beloved, avenge not yourself, but rather give, uh, and, uh, but give no place unto wrath, for it is written, vengeance is mine.

I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him. If he thirst, give him drink.

For in doing so, thou shall heap coals of fire upon his head. Here now, Paul says, listen, there's somebody, he's your enemy and he's hungry, feed him. If he's thirsty, you know, give him something to drink.

And then he goes on and he says, for in doing so, he says, you will heap coals of fire upon his head. Now, maybe at first reading, you may say, now that I could go for, you know, or something, but that is not really what Paul meant there on how we might think of it. If somebody just saying, really, I can do that.

I'd love to eat some, you know, get them just turn my barbecue upside down on him, you know, and sort of a thing. But, but what this means here is you may be aware is, is that back in Bible times in the Eastern world, whenever you had anybody over at your house for an evening or something, and there you'd had a nice, wonderful time and your house is nice and warm and comfortable, but now they're leaving, they're going home and their house is dark and it's cold. They've been gone all night.

And there, they don't have any heating air can, you know, heating system. They just go turn it on and five minutes later it's going, Oh, he's got to go home into that cold house and they've got to start a fire and get the kindling going and get the whole thing so they can start to warm up their house. But what you always did is you sent people home, they had kind of these insulated sorts of containers that they would put coals

into.

And then what you would do is you'd send everybody home and they would carry, as they carried water or whatever on their head, is that you would send them home there with coals to start a fire immediately in their own house. You would take them out of your fireplace, send them home. And so their house could be immediately heated up and made warm.

And here Paul is saying, listen, when you've got an enemy, do good to them. They're thirsty, give them water. If they're hungry, give them food.

In so doing, you know, this guy that way, he's your enemy and he loves messing with you and loves making life difficult for you. But when you send him home to his cold heart and his cold life in his cold, empty soul that he's got to go home to every night, you send him home. And yet you have loved him and you have blessed him and you have done good to him.

He gets home and you have heaped coals of fire upon and said, there's a warmth that begins to get within his heart, his heart. He sits there and realizes somebody is warming my life. Somebody is doing something.

And here Jesus looks, he says, I'll tell you, this is the greatest adventure in the world. This is not just simply, we shouldn't be looking at this as a project of, I have to do this. As much as a project of, Lord, I would love to have a victory in my life that no matter who it is in the world, that is my greatest of enemies.

You so live within me that the very love that got you out of heaven and down here to get me and chase me down and follow me and your kindness and your gentleness and your patience and your goodness and your long suffering that has captured me. If I could see that capture me in such a way is now it starts coming out of me towards people. Then I could say the day George Mueller died and put my name in there, that something happened and something was transformed and somebody else took over.

And here is Paul says, send them home there. And you know, a lot of people, they just want to say, I don't get mad. I get even.

But Paul says, I don't get mad. I warm their heart. I do something more than that.

And then Jesus gives us the fourth and the last process of winning an enemy. He says, pray for them with despitefully use you and persecute you. Here when we look in so often, how many of us have enemies, but have we loved them? And then after we've loved them and it didn't work, you know, maybe in and of itself, how many of us found ourself then blessing them? And then after blessing, we found ourself, I'm going to do good for them.

And then after doing good, we now look there and I'm going to pray for my enemy, not pray about them, by the way. If you ever noticed, there's quite a difference about praying about your enemy and praying for them. You know, God, if you've seen the man I'm married to, you know, as if we're praying for him, we're not praying about him, you know, God, by, you know, Lord, have you seen those children? God, have you, God, that, that boss of mine, that person here, that guy that did this to me, and we're just praying about them.

We weren't praying for them. You see, when somebody prays for somebody, then now you're talking about intercession. This is now where I look at somebody there that I've loved and maybe it hasn't worked.

And then I find myself there wanting to bless and maybe it hasn't worked. And now I find myself there doing good and maybe it hasn't worked. Now I'm interceding and interceding means I want to present them to God.

That's Jesus is saying, Father, forgive them. They know not what they do. When I'm praying for somebody, now I'm saying, God, please.

All right, they're an enemy and they took me down and they hurt me deeply. My life has got some scars. But I suppose one of the greatest triumphs that could ever happen in my life, if you would intercede, God, and transform them into the very person that I hate, dies, not physically, but the one that really did it under their skin, dies, is forgiven and is washed and is cleansed as I've died in Christ.

And they are transformed. And now that very person, you know, can be one. Again, so often, you know, we pray about Lord, my children, you know, what's a mother to do, you know, or something there.

And I think the Lord says, I'll tell you what to do. You forgive them. You pour out your heart.

When you intercede, it's when you're looking at somebody like Jesus did with with Peter, you know, and he said, Simon, Satan sought thee that he might sift you as wheat. You know, he said, but I prayed for you. And here as he looks at him, that your faith fail not.

And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. He says, Peter, I've interceded for you. Satan wants to take your life and destroy it.

I've interceded and I prayed for you. And when you get converted and when your life gets turned around, you will now have a message to take to the rest of the world. Intercession and prayer.

For those that despitefully use you. You know, so often there when something, you know, these people that are around us, the people that can manipulate, he says, pray for them. People that get under our skin.

And then he goes on and I'm going to close here in the next three minutes. Watch this. Wherever I am, that you may be the children of your father, which is in heaven.

He says that you, if you will go to battle in these areas, if these are the things that you look at in your heart, in your life and say, God, give me love and give me the ability there to bless, you know, those that hate me and to do good or to bless those that curse me and to do good to those that hate me and to pray for those that despitefully use me and pursue me, Lord, if that can happen, I'll be the child of my father who's in heaven. For you make it a son to rise in the just and the unjust. Here, Jesus said every day says God's grace is out there for you and on them all just the same.

Aren't you grateful that that grace was there when you were on the other side? Remember when before you were saved, when you were enemies, when you messed up everything, but God had enough graces, it fell on you and it got you. And he says there, well, if it fell on you and it got you, know that it keeps on falling day by day to get another. I think the tragic thing sometimes I look at Christians that have the luxury of having enemies.

All right, Christians, they look there and it's okay to have an enemy. I was once an enemy of God and he's forgiven me and now we're friends and Jesus did a lot for me, but I don't need to do that for anybody else. I can have enemies.

No, you can't if you want him enthroned. You can have enemies maybe, but not if he's king. Sometimes we're like when my kids were little, I'd, we used to go on vacations up then down the coast and things and when we go into Oregon into John Corson State, you know, you get into Oregon, beautiful state, but the bumper stickers all over it says, you know, welcome to Oregon.

Now go home. You know, I mean, you look at that. Well, that's a fine out you do.

I come up to your state and you know, we don't want anybody else here. Now, all of them came to the state at one point or another, but now that I'm here, I don't want anybody else coming to Oregon. You know, what a weird thing, but yet every one of us many times were like that.

Well, we tell people, you know, welcome to heaven. I'll get out of my life, you know, or whatever else. I don't want you.

I'm done with you. And here Jesus said, no, this is for everybody. As a Christian there, everything that a person has done to me, I've done to God in one way or another.

And God's forgiven me and he's loved me and he's redeemed me. And when we sit there and begin to cry out, God, give me love. It's a behavior.

It's an act of the will. I think one of the most wonderful stories I ever remember in a sense is my father-in-law. Some of you knew him, Philip Anderson.

He was here for years. He's in heaven now, died in 1996. But in the early 70s, when we came down here and he heard about this place, and this is before the tent, we're still in the old chapel down the street.

But he heard about these hippies and he heard about, you know, this church that had hippies in them. And he hated hippies. He was one of these guys that he did had no time for hippies.

He looked at them and he says, they're the biggest rebels in the world. They rebelled against God and they rebelled against man. They rebelled against society and they're bums and they're lazy and most of them are thieves and they're on drugs and they're ruining society and they're morally bankrupt and they're just corrupt the human beings they'd ever seen.

And then they're dirty. And he was a doctor. He hated dirt.

But he says, and then they're dirty. They're just walking pits of infestation of junk, you know, or something. And that was some of the he thought about.

And, uh, but we, so here's where we're, the Lord's leading us. And so here's where we are. So we decided we got to get him down here and we're in the old chapel.

And so finally the first time he came, Jean, my wife, she brings him in and gets him all the way down at the front. He didn't, she didn't want him looking around and staring at anybody else. There was, she went, I want you to hear Chuck.

I want you to hear the Bible study. That's what she did is put blinders on, look up there. Don't worry about the people.

And she got him down there, got him really right down the front. She was just so happy and just prayed. And then at the last minute, just before they asked, would everybody please squeeze in if there's any room in your aisle, you know, please.

And she's just praying like crazy. And sure enough though, down came a guy in bare feet, cut off jeans, tank top shirt, hair all over his body, you know, there was a couple of eyes kind of sticking out there somewhere. And he looks there over at my father-in-law and she's just, oh, this is bad, you know, and, uh, and he looks and he says, is this seat saved? My father-in-law, Jean watched me look down, looked up, looked back at him and he says, yes.

And she just heart sank. He says, it's saved for you. And just that moment, his heart broke as he just saw there what God was doing.

And so I think the most wonderful thing was, is something happened within him. I think an act initially of will, of just behavior, to love, the obedience, the responsibility hit him. Here was somebody there that maybe he didn't agree with, but the gospel was to be given to him.

And then he might have to go home and take a bath, who knows? But the, uh, he'd have paid for it. But anyway, the, but this is the love God wants for us. And when you and I, Jesus, I want to one day write in my diary, I died.

I planned it. I laid it out. I calculated it and I died.

And Jesus began to reign. And the one of the greatest evidence is, is love and blessing and doing good to others in praying for them. Father, we thank you for your love.

We thank you for your word. We thank you for your desire to work within us. And Jesus, I just pray that you would be so enthroned within us that we'd see under our own skin, in our own heart, the greatest of victories, the greatest of battles, Lord, the issues of our own rage, our own lust, our own inability to keep relationships or our word or deny ourself.

And now to love our enemies. God, give us this love. We ask it in Jesus name.

Amen.

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