



World Christian Fellowship

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New Testament Love your enemy

Matthew 5:43-48

Matthew 5:38-48, *“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.’⁴⁴ 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,⁴⁵ 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 on the unjust.⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?⁴⁷ And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?⁴⁸ Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.*

Matthew 5:10-12, *Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.¹¹ Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.¹² Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

That's what David said. "Perhaps the Lord will require me some day for a right reaction to this cursing."

In whatever human relationship you are in, that's what God is after, that right reaction.

Maybe you have got conflict in your marriage.

Maybe you have got conflict in your family between the children and the parents.

Maybe you have conflict on the job.

Maybe you have enemies at home, and you have enemies at work and people who speak against you.

Maybe a brother-in-law or a sister-in-law or a brother or sister, another part of your family speak evil of you or your children.

It is so easy in our human world to get these things going and these enemies. We become bitter, begin to be hostile, and instead of reaching out in love to the people, instead of seeing them as our brother and our neighbour as the Old Testament does, we begin to see them as the enemy.

We miss the point of what Jesus says and we fall to the low level of Pharisaic religion. That's not to be. So, the Old Testament was very clear, and Jesus is in absolute agreement with it.

Lord's corrective to the error of the Jewish system. Jesus gives five principles to correct the faulty love of the Pharisees and the scribes.

Five ascending, connected, sequential truths, that lead us to a marvellous conclusion.

1. Love your enemies,
2. Pray for your persecutors,
3. Manifest your sonship,
4. Exceed others, and
5. Imitate your God.

1. Love your enemies

***V 44**, 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,*

“But I say to you love your enemies.”

Jesus speaks with authority here.

He is the Lord of the law.

He is the Son of God.

Jesus by using the emphatic pronoun is intensifying the fact that He speaks authoritatively. “I say unto you,” setting

Himself up as one who can speak over against their system no matter who their teachers have been.

No matter how long a list of renowned and well-meaning and well known and astute Rabbis there have been, “I say unto you.” Jesus is the Lord of the law.

What does Jesus say?

The first principle as we move up the steps, “*Love your enemies.*”

The idea we learn from the Old Testament is that your enemy is your neighbour.

Illustration:

Luke 10:25-29, *And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”* ²⁶*He said to him, “What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?”* ²⁷*So he answered and said, “ ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,’ and ‘your neighbour as yourself.’ ”* ²⁸*And He said to him, “You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.”* ²⁹*But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbour?”*

Who is my neighbour?

You want me to love my neighbour, who is it?

Jesus said let me tell you a story.

Luke 10:30-31, *Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. ³¹Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.*

Now a priest was a man who represented God to the people.

A man who stood in the place of God.

A priest was one who connected people with God.

A priest of all the people in society should have been one to behave as God behaved.

He was God's representative. And the priest came along, and he saw the man and he said that man is not in my group.

He went to the other side of the road.

Who wants to touch him?

He's not my neighbour. It's one of the rabble, Jewish people who is probably not even belonging to my religious party.

Luke 10:32-33, *Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. ³³But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion.*

Levite said he is not in my group either. Off they went.

The Samaritans basically were a race of people.

They were Jewish people who intermarried with the pagans who infiltrated the northern kingdom. They became half-breeds. The most despicable thing to a purebred Jew was for somebody to defile the uniqueness of being a Jew by intermarrying with a pagan.

Can you imagine the Jew wouldn't even enter a Gentile house?

- The Jew wouldn't even eat with a Gentile utensil.
- The Jew wouldn't even eat food cooked by a Gentile.
- They wouldn't even go into a Gentile house because they believed that the Gentiles aborted their babies in those houses, and they were desecrated places.
- They believed the wildest and craziest things about the Gentiles, and they despised them.

When they came back to their own country, they would shake the dust off their garments because they didn't want Gentile dust dragged into their land.

When they went from the south to the north, they would go across the Jordan and up the east side and cross over at the

top so that they wouldn't have to go through Samaria. They didn't want to defile themselves with that polluted land.

Here came a Samaritan, an enemy who would look at that bleeding Jew and say, "My, good for him. It's about time some of them got their due the way they've treated us." But the holy pious priest and Levite didn't see him as a neighbour, and the despised and hated Samaritan did.

Luke 10:34-37, *So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' ³⁶So which of these three do you think was neighbour to him who fell among the thieves?" ³⁷And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."*

You want to know something, people.

Who is your neighbour?

Your neighbour is anybody who needs you.

Anybody in my path with a need constitutes my neighbour. Not because they believe what I believe or think what I think or belong to my group. God loved us when we were enemies

and He died for us and it's that very love that we're to have for others.

Psalms 139:19-22, *Oh, that You would slay the wicked, O God! Depart from me, therefore, you bloodthirsty men. ²⁰For they speak against You wickedly; Your enemies take Your name in vain. ²¹Do I not hate them, O Lord, who hate You? And do I not loathe those who rise up against You? ²²I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them my enemies.*

David you are hating.

Yes!

David hating them with what kind of hatred?

Perfect hatred.

Is it right to be angry?

No!

Is there such a thing as righteous indignation?

Yes.

Is it right for me to be angry when somebody offends me?

No.

Is it right for me to be righteously indignant when somebody dishonours God?

Yes.

Would it have been right for Jesus to say you can't talk to me that way and punch somebody?

No.

But when Jesus came to defend the holiness and the honour of God with a whip, it was right.

There is a difference between anger and holy wrath.

There is a difference between personal hatred and perfect hatred.

David, as far as I am concerned, I will forgive them, and I will love them.

But for Your sake, I hate what they do to Your honourable name. I am grieved with them who arise up against You and so I hate them with perfect hatred. I know it isn't personal.

Psalms 139:23-24, *Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; ²⁴And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.*

God, You check out my heart.

You will see that my hatred is a perfect hatred.

You examine my heart and see if it isn't so.

Perfect hate is not personal.

What puts us a cut above everybody, what puts us above everything, is the capacity to personally love our enemies.

Yes, we pray for God's glory to be vindicated.

Yes, we pray for an end of the unrighteous who curse His name.

Yes, we allow God to come in fire and flaming vengeance.

Yes, we know the same Jesus who said, "Love your enemies"

Judicially God will act in punishment, but that's for God to do. In defence of God, we will uphold His holy name.

But in our personal relationships, we are to be characterized by loving our enemies. That will make us different than everybody in the world.

People in the world love their friends.

They do a pretty good job at that.

They love their families, not bad at that either.

They are even compassionate and sympathetic to people who don't have much.

But people in the world don't love their enemies.

- ✓ People in the world may not kill, but they get angry.
- ✓ People in the world may not commit adultery, not all of them, but they do it in their hearts.
- ✓ People in the world may do all legal things in their divorces, but they shouldn't have divorces anyway.
- ✓ People in the world sometimes keep their word, but they don't always keep their word.

- ✓ People in the world retaliate, some of them on a very equal basis, but they don't forgive and forget.
- ✓ People in the world love, but they don't love like this.

Jesus is saying I don't want you to be like that.

V 47, *And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?*

What makes you different?

You are not going to be different if you just sprinkle a little Christian activity on your human life.

You are not going to be different if just a little bit of commitment goes over to Christ.

What makes you different than anybody else?

If you belong to My Kingdom for one thing, it is that you love your enemies.

A high standard.

If you love them enough, they just might respond to the Christ who lives in you, made visible through that love.

V 44, *"But I say unto you, love your enemies."*

This was just a devastating statement in the society in which Jesus lived, because there was so much hate.

Jesus must have startled His audience, for He was saying something that probably never before had been said so succinctly, positively, and forcefully.

He was saying something that they just didn't do.

A native tribe in Polynesia who had around their huts special articles hanging all around the roof of the hut.

A visitor said, "What are they?"

They said, "They are reminders."

"Reminders of what?"

"Reminders of injury. When anybody injures us, or anybody does something against us, we hang a token of that injury there so that we will remember every time we have been wronged, and none is ever removed until full vengeance is gained."

That is the human way not God's way.

That is the way the Pharisees lived.

They were proud and prejudicial, judgmental, hateful men masquerading as religious.

Jesus devastates them just in one statement, "Love your enemies," what is contradictory to their entire lifestyle.

They hated the tax collectors,

They hated the Gentiles.
They literally despised them.

Jesus gives them a simple command that lays bare all that hate.

Who does Jesus have in mind?

Everybody.

What do you mean by love?

God doesn't expect you to love them philia, like a friend.

- He doesn't expect you to love them storgē, like you love someone in your own family.
- He doesn't expect you to love them eros, affectionate, desiring love.
- But what He does say is to love them agapaō, which is a love that seeks their highest good and seeks to serve their needs.

When Jesus said in **John 13**, *"Love one another as I have loved you,"*

He had just washed their feet.

They were ugly, arguing over who would be the greatest in the Kingdom. They were acting sinful, they were self-motivated and self-centred, and couldn't even be considerate enough to consider Christ going to the cross and comfort Him.

They were acting about as ugly as they ever acted in the New Testament, and yet He said, "Love each other like I have loved you."

Love is an act of service to one in need, not necessarily an emotion.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7, *Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, ⁶thinks no evil; ⁶does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

There are 15 characteristics of love given here. All of them appear in a verbal form. They are not presented as substantives; they are presented as verbs.

Why?

Because love is doing, love is an action.

Love can never be defined statically.

Love is always an activity, always an action.

Paul, in describing love, uses verbs, because love is only described in terms of what it does!

That's the kind of love that characterizes our Lord Jesus Christ.
That's the way God loves.

If you don't love like that, you need a Saviour. If you have received the forgiveness for a lack of love, and Christ lives in your heart, and you have forgiveness, and you have His love shed abroad.

Romans 12:20-21, *Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." ²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

When somebody does evil to you, don't retaliate, don't lose the battle, but overcome that evil with your goodness.

Let the enemy come and throw everything he can at you. It will never make you fall into sin.

When people cast their sparks of hatred at us, may they be as quenched as the spark in the sea.

2. Pray for your persecutors.

V 44, *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,*

Praying here, simply beseeching God on their behalf. Despitely using you is using you for a negative purpose, or abusing you; and certainly, persecution is clear.

When somebody comes along and does despite to you, or does evil to you, or harms you, injures you, persecutes you, what are you to do?

You are to go before the Lord on their behalf and intercede for them.

That is what Jesus did on the cross.

That is what Stephen did.

There are so many stories about those who have died for faith, and even while they were being consumed in the flames, they were praying for those who were persecuting them.

A Distant Grief book gives the story of **Kefa Sempangi**.

The soldiers came to take his life in Uganda under Idi Amin, and these men with the guns pointed at his head. He began to confront them with the gospel and pray to God to change their lives, and the very men that came to kill him bowed the knee to Jesus Christ.

“Pray for those who persecute you.”

There is no persecution in the world, and there is no hatred in the world as severe as hatred regarding religious things.

Men lives with sin, and man lives with tremendous guilt, and guilt produces fear, and the ultimate fear that man has is the fear of death, what's going to happen.

If there is a God and I have sinned, will I be punished?

Man lives with the imminence of punishment.

Thus, man lives in fear. So, man inevitably constructs a system in which he can deal with this fear.

He convinces himself that he is fine, that he has kept enough rules that God is going to let him into heaven, that he is not such a bad person.

Or else he just decides there is no God at all!

Convincing themselves that they will not come under guilt, will not have the fear of judgment, and will get rid of it by just saying there's no God.

When you meet with an individual and what would you say?

You are a sinner.

You will die and go to Hell apart from Jesus Christ.

You need to be redeemed, and you need to be saved.

You are striking that individual at the core of his deepest pain because you are dragging back all his anxiety, sin, guilt, and the fear that he has managed somehow to sublimate under his philosophy or religion.

That is why the most severe persecution is always religious because you are unmasking people at their most vulnerable point.

Besides that, persecution brings to focus the real battle between Satan and God, so religious persecution throughout history has always been the most intense, always.

When we really stand up and live for Jesus Christ in this society, we will get persecuted. and more and more, people, all the time, this is going to happen.

The question is, in the midst of the most heinous kind of hatred, at the point of the most serious reaction to persecution, can we pray on the behalf of the very one who seeks to destroy us?

That is what Jesus said we are to do.

Jesus is asking them to seek God for their highest good.

Jesus is not talking about the prayer of importunity to call down fire from Heaven and consume them.

Jesus is asking for praying for their salvation.

Prayer is the forerunner of mercy.

When we pray, we release God's mercy in a very real way.

The very ones who would take your life, pray for them.
We can point out our enemies and say they are enemies of the Cross and the Bible and the church, but we must love who they are.

Hate the sin and love the sinner and pray for them.

Wouldn't it be great if we just began to pray for the people who are set against us?

What to pray?

That they would be redeemed.

That prayer in and of itself will fill your heart with love. It will wash your soul to pray like that.

You have brought your life into conformity to God's standards when you can pray for your persecutors.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who suffered so much in Nazi Germany, said *"This is the supreme command. Through the medium of prayer, we go to our enemy, we stand by his side, and we plead to God for him."*

The cruel torture of crucifixion couldn't silence Jesus' prayer.
The crushing stones couldn't silence Stephen's prayer.
I wonder what has silenced your prayer for your enemy.

So, love your enemies, pray for your persecutors.

3. Manifest your sonship.

Why love your enemies?

Why pray for your persecutors?

V 45, 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 on the unjust.

The Bible says God is love.

If God is love, and you are His child, then you should be characterized by love.

1 John 4:20, *If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?*

Don't claim you belong to God if you don't manifest love.

Jesus is not saying,

You will become a son of God if you love

you can get yourself into being a son.

"You will prove the validity of the claim that you are a son when love is manifested in your life."

You will prove it!

Pharisees and scribes may claim to be the sons of God, but if you don't manifest the character of God, you will never convince anybody.

What is the biggest criticism that people have of the truth of the gospel?

It's the people who claim to live it, but don't.

That's always it.

There are so many hypocrites in the church.

But it's true that the biggest detriment to Christianity is Christians. We just don't live up to the standard that we ourselves ascribe to. So that's the problem.

Manifest your sonship, let it become a settled fact, prove it. You know, there are Christians, but you would never know it, because they don't love like this.

When you find someone, whose life is full of love, who overflows with love, who gushes out with love toward everybody, be he friend or foe, and the world will have a very difficult time if that person comes from a human source, because people don't love like that.

Exactly that is what the Lord says.

“You are to be the sons of your Father who is in Heaven.”

Your style of life ought to be one that isn't earthy. You ought to manifest a heavenly source.

That's why He identifies the Father as the one who is in Heaven.

Not your earthly father, your heavenly one.

Not with a human approach to life, as good as that may be philanthropically speaking, but in a manifestation of love that is only possibly described as heavenly.

V 45, *for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.*

First, He talks about the evil and the good, and then He inverts it and talks about the just and the unjust.

Jesus switches those two back and forth – the evil come first one time and the good come first the next time – in order that you might see the point here is impartiality.

He inverts the order, just to show you what he is saying is God loves everybody.

- When the sun comes up and shines in its beauty and spreads its warmth, it's for everybody.
- When the rain falls, it's for everybody.

The sun comes up and gives light, and it grows your grass, and it grows my grass, and it grows the grass of the people on our city who don't know that God even exists and couldn't care less.

Why?

Because God is good, and God is indiscriminate in His benevolence.

This is called common grace.

Divine love and providence touches everybody.

Be like your Father.

Let your love be so indiscriminate that your sun shines on everybody, and your rain falls on the just and the unjust. Then it will be obvious that you belong to your Father.

There's an old rabbinic tale that tells of the destruction of the Egyptians in the Red Sea, and when the Egyptians were drowned, it says the angels began to praise God. God lifted His hand mournfully and silenced the angels, and said, "The work of My hands are sunk in the sea, and you would sing?"

God loved Pharaoh.

God loved Pharaoh's soldiers because God is love.

Be manifesting your sonship by praying for your persecutors and loving your enemies.

Psalm 145:15-16, *The eyes of all look expectantly to You, And You give them their food in due season. ¹⁶You open Your hand And satisfy the desire of every living thing.*

Who is the source of all supply for every living thing?

It is God!

All men receive common grace, providential love.

Not all receive that very special love that is reserved for God's covenant people who come to the blood of Christ.

Illustration:

Ishmael was an illegitimate son, not the covenant son of Abraham, not the one God had planned for the Messianic line, but a son taken in adultery from Hagar.

Genesis 17:20, *And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation.*

God is even gracious to an illegitimate son. God is even gracious to a not a people, to an outcast. That's God's love.

Genesis 17:21, *But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time next year."*

God loved Ishmael, but He had something real special for Isaac.

God loves all, and the world, but He has something very special for His covenant people who come in faith to Christ.

Common grace is a wonderful thing, providential love is a wonderful thing, but it will not save you.

For that, you must come to Christ.

4. Exceed others.

V 46, *For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?*

If you just love the people who agree with you, and think like you, and belong to your little thing, are you to be commended?

Are you to receive reward?

We can never in any way imagine the emotion of the Pharisees and the scribes when He got done with that one sentence.

If there was anybody the Pharisees hated, then that was the tax collectors.

Why?

Because these were traitor Jews, who had committed treason against Israel by lining up with the Roman government to extort from the people taxes to pad their own pockets.

They had become the pawns of the Romans, who wanted a Roman citizen would buy a certain territory in the Roman empire, and he would have the rights to exact the taxes out of that territory. Then he would hire defector Jews, who wanted only money and thought nothing of their people, and those Jews would then collect the tax.

They had to get a certain amount for this guy, and all the rest they could skim off for themselves. They became despised, despicable.

What reward you have?

You just love the people with your own pride, and your own prejudice, and your own narrow little thing.

You are no better than traitors and tax collectors.

You don't prove you belong in My Kingdom.

They love each other.

Murderers have something in common, so do thieves, robbers, and adulterers, and whatever.

One of the major reasons that people commit crimes again and again is because they are more at home in the jail than they are on the outside, because that's their people. They love those people.

V 47, And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?

There is only one thing worse than a tax collector.

What was that?

A Gentile.

Jesus didn't pull any punches. When He told them they were no better than tax collectors and Gentiles.

What makes you different?

If you don't exceed the human standard, you are no different.

Why should you be rewarded for being like everybody else?

Why should God reserve His Kingdom for you?

Why should God reserve His crowns for you?

Why should God pour out His blessings on you?

You are no better than anybody else.

Religious people are no better than heathen people. Jesus is saying that people who function in the temple are no better than people who extort.

You are all sinners.

Just a matter of kind of sin.

You are no better than the rest.

What do you do more than anybody else?

What makes you different?

That is a question for us to face!

Those of us that are Christians. **What makes us different in the world?**

Are we different on the job because our ethics are different?

Is our conversation being different?

Is our attitude being different?

Is our love being different?

Are we different in our homes?

Are we different in our communities?

Because if we are not different, we have nothing to say to this society that they are going to believe.

“The Master expects from His disciples such conduct as can be explained only in terms of the supernatural.” **Oswald Sanders**

If your conduct can only be explained in terms of the supernatural, then you have got something to say to the society, they are going to take note.

**But if you are like everybody else, what is the difference?
What do you have that they don't have?**

5. Imitate your God.

V 48, *Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.*

This is the epitome of His statement,

How perfect?

"As perfect as your Father who is in Heaven."

You are to be like God.

That standard is too high.

You are right, and that's exactly what He wanted the Pharisees to know. You can't make it.

Illustration:

Matthew 19:23, *Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven."*

This is a very hard statement for them to hear.

Because they believed that rich people got into the kingdom easier than everybody else.

Why?

Because they believed, basically their system taught you get into the Kingdom by works. The richer you are, the greater your works.

Why?

You can buy more lambs to sacrifice.

You can buy more bullocks to sacrifice.

You can give more money into the temple treasury.

In other words, you are more religious. You can buy your way into the kingdom. The richer you are, the more sacrifices you make, the more money you give, the greater ease you will have in getting into the kingdom.

“A rich man with difficulty enters the kingdom.”

How difficult?

Matthew 19:24, *And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”*

A camel can't get through the eye of a needle.

That's pretty obvious. I got that right off the bat. Camels cannot get through the eye of a needle.

You must have heard all kinds of things.

About a needle gate, a little low gate, and all the camels had to crawl through. If they were going to build such a gate and archaeologists have ever found such a one. But if they were going to build one for camels, they wouldn't build it like that. They would make it big enough for camels to go through.

What is Jesus saying?

He is saying it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than a rich man to enter into Heaven.

Neither can a rich man buy his way into Heaven. It's just as impossible.

Matthew 19:25, *When His disciples heard it, they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?"*

They wouldn't have been if they knew about a needle gate.

If a rich man can't be saved, who can?

Matthew 19:26, *But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."*

Nobody can be saved.

Not a rich man, a poor man, or anybody in between.

The man with the most possible potential, money, whatever, can't do it.

Nobody can be saved on his own.

Nobody can do it through flesh or works, but with God anything is possible.

What Jesus is saying in the Sermon on the Mount is the same thing, "Be perfect."

They are supposed to say, "But I can't be perfect."

When He says, if you fall short of perfection, you need a Saviour.

That's where Jesus comes in and brings to you what Peter calls the divine nature, and makes you like God, a partaker of His nature.

Then God, in a miracle of salvation, does for you what you could never do for yourself – be like God.

When you came to Jesus Christ, positionally, you were made like God.

You were given His eternal life, His righteousness, you became like Him in that sense.

Now you need to bring your behaviour into harmony with your position.

- ✓ A Christian is not someone who keeps the Sermon on the Mount.
- ✓ A Christian is somebody who knows he can't, and comes to Jesus Christ for forgiveness for the sin of falling short, and receives from Christ the forgiveness, and then the power to begin to live these principles.

That's the point of the message.

Even when you fail, you are forgiven, because Christ has paid the price for your sin. That's the message.

If you are not a Christian, what's the message to you?

If you don't love like this, that's a sin, and if you are a sinner, you need a Saviour.

Jesus Christ will come in and forgive your sin of lovelessness. Jesus will cleanse your life, and He will plant His love in your heart, and then He will teach you how to love the way He wants you to love.

For some of you, this is a call to salvation.

For some of you, it's an exhortation to let the love that is their flow.

Conclusion:

Abraham Lincoln was held in contempt by a man named Mr. **Stanton**. He called Lincoln, “A low, cunning clown,” and he nicknamed him ‘the original gorilla,’ and he said that men were foolish to wander around Africa trying to capture a gorilla when they could find one in Springfield, Illinois. Lincoln never said anything to Stanton, and because Stanton was the best man for the job, when Lincoln needed a war minister for the United States, he chose Mr. Stanton. He appointed him over all the soldiers of the United States. He treated him with love and courtesy, and the years passed.

The night an assassin’s bullet tore out Lincoln’s life, in a little room to which the President’s body was taken, there stood that same Mr. Stanton, looking down into the silent face of Abraham Lincoln with all its ruggedness and character.

Speaking through his tears, he said, “There lies the greatest ruler of men the world has ever seen.”

Because Mr. Lincoln could love him with a forgiving love, he received and returned his adoration.

Jesus is calling us to love our unlovely, unlovable world with a love that knows no discrimination, and such a love will show that we are like God and reveal God to them. That’s the

beginning of an effective evangelism. May God help us to love the way we are to love to manifest His nature.