



World Christian Fellowship

www.wcflondon.com
wcflondon@gmail.com

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.*

The Sermon on the Mount preached by our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a sermon designed to show men that they fall short of the standard for entrance into God's kingdom.

Now as Jesus confronts the society of his day and as he confronts the religion of his religion people, first he wants to

knock the props out from under this system. Before they can be desperate enough to see the need of a Saviour, they must see the inadequacy of their system.

All through **Matthew 5:21-48**, compares their system with God's truth.

Jesus uses a little code: "You have heard it said, that's your system, but I say unto you that's God's."

- You think it's enough not to kill.
- God says don't even get angry.

- You think it's enough not to commit adultery.
- God says you shouldn't even think it in your heart.

- You think it's enough to do the paperwork when you get a divorce.
- God says you shouldn't even get a divorce, except for fornication.

- You think it's enough that you put an oath behind your word.
- God says everything you say ought to be true so you wouldn't even need an oath."

- You think that it's enough to give equal vengeance.

- God says you shouldn't be giving vengeance at all.
- You think it's enough to love your neighbour and hate your enemy.
- God says love your enemy.

Their system is substandard.

Their system that only deals with externals, outside and never deals with the heart attitude.

The Sermon on the Mount is a sermon on sin. It is to show us that we are sinners.

We are in the 6th illustrations of Jesus.

V 43, *“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.’*

It was their traditional teaching, but it did come from the Mosaic Law.

There is one statement made by Jesus shows us that what it means to be Christian in the eyes of the world.

“Love your enemies.”

Without question Jesus set the highest ethic ever set in the history of man, but too bad nobody ever lived up to it. This is the supreme facet of life.

If love is the greatest thing, the loving your enemies is the greatest thing that love can do.

From the Old Testament and the fullness of the New Testament concept of loving your enemies.

In the sermon on the mount, we can sum it up with 2 questions on the person who claims to belong to the Kingdom of Heaven.

V 47, *what do you do more than others?*

What does your system have more than any other human system?

What makes you different?

Matthew 6:8, "Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.

Do not be like them!

What do you do different than anybody else?

What sets you apart?

What Jesus is saying in both simple statements is this.

My standards are not like other standards.

What I require is not what other people do.

My standard is a higher standard.

Jesus is indicting the whole religious system was substandard and dealing with externals not internal.

God had rescued the Jews them from their Egyptian slavery and made them His covenant people.

Leviticus 18:2-5, *“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘I am the Lord your God. ³According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances. ⁴You shall observe My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them: I am the Lord your God. ⁵You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the Lord.*

Because I am the Lord your God, you don’t act like anybody else acts.

You don’t live according to any standard,

- not the one you came from and
- not the one you’re going to.

Because He was their covenant God and because they were His special people, they were to be different from anybody else.

Sadly, throughout the centuries that followed, Israel kept forgetting their uniqueness. They kept forgetting that theirs was another standard and they kept falling into sin.

Numbers 23:9, *For from the top of the rocks I see him, And from the hills I behold him; There! A people dwelling alone, Not reckoning itself among the nations.*

This is the words of **Balaam** when he has been called to curse the people of Israel.

Psalms 103:35-38, *But they mingled with the Gentiles And learned their works; ³⁶They served their idols, Which became a snare to them. ³⁷They even sacrificed their sons And their daughters to demons, ³⁸And shed innocent blood, The blood of their sons and daughters, Whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; And the land was polluted with blood.*

So, God kept sending them prophets, and the prophets kept reminding them about their uniqueness.

Ezekiel 20:32, *What you have in your mind shall never be, when you say, 'We will be like the Gentiles, like the families in other countries, serving wood and stone.'*

Ezekiel 20:7, *Then I said to them, 'Each of you, throw away the abominations which are before his eyes, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.'*

Jeremiah 10:2, *Thus says the Lord: "Do not learn the way of the Gentiles; Do not be dismayed at the signs of heaven, For the Gentiles are dismayed at them."*

God wants His people to be different.

God wants His people to be unique.

Kingdom character is absolutely distinct, and unique.

The key to it is that you can't live that way unless you are infused with divine power.

We are called on to be unique.

God is calling us out of the system to be a separated people with convictions, commitments, and standards that we live by that are not the world's standards.

Nowhere is the distinction between the life of man and the Kingdom of God made more clear or unclear than in the life of a believer.

Jesus is confronting Israel here because Israel, as religious as Israel was, was walking in the flesh.

He attacks their humanistic religious tradition by saying it falls woefully short of God's standard.

A lawyer came to Jesus and asked Him what the greatest commandment was.

Matthew 22:37-40, *Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." ³⁸This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' ⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."*

You can keep all the law and all the prophets, one by one, or you can just love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength and your neighbour as yourself and that will cover it all.

Romans 13:8-10, *Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You*

shall love your neighbour as yourself.”¹⁰ Love does no harm to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilment of the law.

V 43, *“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.’*

Leviticus 19:18, *You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the Lord.*

They left something out.

but you shall love your neighbour as yourself:

Love your neighbour as you love yourself.

How do we love ourselves?

You love yourself. You do.

Whose teeth did you brush this morning?

Whose hair did you comb?

Whose wardrobe hangs in your closet?

Whose savings account is in your bank?

You are concerned about yourself.

You love yourself.

To love means to serve the needs.

You serve your own needs!

You have an unfeigned, unhypocritical total love for yourself.
There aren't some days when you fall out of love with yourself.
You love yourself all the time.

You are genuine about it!

It's a permanent love.

Why?

Whenever you have an interest, you want to fulfil it.

Whenever you have a need, you want to meet it.

Whenever you have a want, you want to supply it.

Whenever you have a desire, you want to fulfil it.

Whenever you have a hope, you want to realize it.

Whenever you have an ambition, you want to see it come to fruition.

You are really working in your own behalf.

You are very concerned about your own welfare, own comfort, own safety, own interests, own health, physical, spiritual, temporal, and eternal things.

We are very concerned about ourselves.

We seek our own pleasure.

We know of no limits to gaining what we want.

Now that is exactly the way you are to love everybody else.
Jesus said even your enemies.

How do you measure up?

The last time you had a choice between doing what you want or sacrificing yourself so somebody else could do it, which way did you go?

Who do you really care about?

The standard is very high people. Love your neighbour as yourself is very, very high, very high. Humanly speaking, it is impossible, because humanly speaking we are totally absorbed in ourselves. I mean just think of it.

Think of it from the standpoint of your income. Probably at best you keep 90% of what you finally get after taxes and maybe give the Lord 10%.

When it comes to how much you spend on you as opposed to spend on the people how much on others is miniscule to even think of how much you might spend on them. As to how much you give to the needy and how much you use for yourself.

Those kinds of comparisons are very remote because we don't even think like that.

Loving your neighbour as yourself is a very, very heavy principle. That's the way we are to love.

But you see they weren't interested in that and so they just dropped it. Love your neighbour.

They omitted something. But beyond that, they added something.

What did they add?

“Hate your enemy.”

Now where did that come from?

Did that come out of the Bible?

No, nowhere does the Bible command us to hate our enemies.

Where did they get that?

It was the logical extension of their perverted thinking.

We are to love our neighbour. Now we have got to figure out who is our neighbour.

So, they said, “Our neighbours are the Jews, not the Gentiles.” That’s what the Pharisees believed. Only the Jews qualified and among the Jews only certain Jews.

Certain Jews didn’t qualify as neighbours.

Matthew 9:10-11, *Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. ¹¹And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, “Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”*

We have two categories of people.

Tax collectors and the sinners.

They are the public sinners, the prostitutes, and the criminals.

The Pharisees saw it and they said, “Why your master eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

They said their neighbours are the Jews, but only the Jews who aren't tax collectors or sinners.

So, they eliminate all of them. They aren't our neighbours.

They found a woman taken in adultery one time and they picked up stones to stone her. So, it was a very defined neighbour.

John 7:48-49, *Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? ⁴⁹But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed.”*

They are talking about a crowd. This rabble mob of uneducated, not knowledgeable people with no commitment to Pharisees' tradition that doesn't know the law are cursed.

So, they have eliminated the tax collectors and they have eliminated the sinners and they eliminated the crowd that weren't committed to the law they were.

Who was their neighbours?

The people in their group.

If you were in their group, you could and would be loved. But outside their group you were an enemy whether you were the rabble mob or a tax collector or a public sinner.

They fed their evil proud hearts by concluding that anyone not a neighbour was to be hated.

The Bible says love your neighbour. Therefore, if someone who is not your neighbour is not to be loved and the opposite of love is hate, so love your neighbour means hate your enemy.

They had a perversion in their hearts.
Their prejudice found a way.

Who is your neighbour according to Old Testament?

Leviticus 19:34, *The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.*

If they would have read a little farther, they would have known that even a non-Jew a stranger, whatever he was, was to be loved as they love themselves.

How they conveniently ignored the law of God?

Exodus 12:49, *One law shall be for the native-born and for the stranger who dwells among you."*

There aren't different laws for different people.

If you are to love, you are to love, and it is as broad as the commandment of God is broad. It wasn't only the Pharisees who were like this.

There were three groups in Jesus' time.

- Pharisees,
- Sadducees, and
- Essenes.

Essenes were the ones who went out of town, and they set up a community on the edge of the Dead Sea, which is now known as Qumran. It's the place where we have found the Dead Sea Scrolls.

They lived apart from society. They lived out in the wilderness in a primitive life and copied copies of Scripture and lived in a very austere anti-social way.

The Essenes have among their writings these statements that show they had the same attitude as the Pharisees.

“Love all that God has chosen and hate all that He has rejected. Love all the sons of light, each according to his lot in God’s community and hate all the sons of darkness, each according to his guilt in God’s vengeance, The Levites curse all the sons of Belial.”

To the Essenes the sons of Belial were the non-Essenes.

So, they cursed everybody who wasn’t in their group, just like the Pharisees. Their love was a prejudiced, narrow, ugly thing that just gave them license to hate everybody.

If you don’t think they hated, just watch them interact with Jesus Christ. They were so filled with hatred. One of the evasive maxims of the Pharisees that we have discovered in archaeology is this statement.

“If a Jew sees a Gentile fallen into the sea, let him by no means lift him out, for it is written, thou shalt not rise up against the blood of thy neighbour, but this man is not thy neighbour.”

If you see a Gentile drowning, stand there, and enjoy it. Don't save him. He is not your neighbour. With such an outlook, it is little wonder that the Romans charged the Jews with hatred of the human race.

No place in the Old Testament does it ever say to hate your enemy. But there are some things in the Old Testament that at first might be a little hard to understand.

Where did they ever get these ideas?

They wanted a way to hate.

They wanted to justify it in their religious system so it wouldn't encroach on their self-righteousness.

So, they had to invent some way to hate.

The Old Testament promises to exterminate the Canaanites. When God brought Israel into the land of promise, the land was filled at that time with the Canaanites who were vial, retched people.

They were a cancer on human society of the worst kind. The Canaanites did Human sacrifice, bloodletting, massacres of babies, etc. So, God wanted the Canaanites were to be wiped out.

When Israel came into the land they were told regarding the Ammonites, the Moabites, and the Midianites, to wipe them out. They are not to be treated with kindness.

Deuteronomy 23:3-8, *“An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the assembly of the Lord; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the Lord forever,⁴ because they did not meet you with bread and water on the road when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you.⁵ Nevertheless the Lord your God would not listen to Balaam, but the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the Lord your God loves you.⁶ You shall not seek their peace nor their prosperity all your days forever.⁷ “You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother. You shall not abhor an Egyptian, because you were an alien in his land.⁸ The children of the third generation born to them may enter the assembly of the Lord.*

Later, the Amalekites were to have the same fate. In fact, God says wipe not only them off the face of the earth, but the memory of them as well, so they won't even be remembered.

So here was God saying to these people, “You go in there and you clean those people out of that land.” Certainly, the

Pharisees would have looked on this and said, “You see God says, you know you have got to hate your enemies.”

Some people have been confused by this. They say how could God be the same God who said love your enemies and the God who wanted to wipe out all these nations?

That is a kind of a confusing thing at first.

But there was another thing that probably added fuel to their fire too and that’s what is known as the **imprecatory Psalms**. (Calling curses or evil upon a person)

Major imprecatory Psalms include **Psalm 69 and Psalm 109**, while **Psalms 5, 6, 11, 12, 35, 37, 40, 52, 54, 56, 57, 58, 59, 79, 83, 94, 137, 139 and 143** are also considered imprecatory.

Those are the Psalms in which David praised judgment on his enemies. People have often said how can the Bible say love your enemies and then David’s praying, “Oh God judge my enemies. oh God punish my enemies. catch them in a trap, catch them in snare.” “Judge them Lord, do away with them.”

How can he be praying that if he’s supposed to be loving his enemies?

So, no doubt they had taken some of these imprecatory Psalms and used them as a basis.

Illustration.

In **Psalms 69**, David here is praying one of these imprecatory Psalms. He's calling judgment down upon these evil people.

Psalms 69:22-28, *Let their table become a snare before them, And their well-being a trap. ²³Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see; And make their loins shake continually. ²⁴Pour out Your indignation upon them, And let Your wrathful anger take hold of them. ²⁵Let their dwelling place be desolate; Let no one live in their tents. ²⁶For they persecute the ones You have struck, And talk of the grief of those You have wounded. ²⁷Add iniquity to their iniquity, And let them not come into Your righteousness. ²⁸Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, And not be written with the righteous.*

Giving God both barrels and asking Him not to spare anything.

Did this become a justification for the hatred of the Pharisees?

Very possibly, along with the destruction of the Canaanites. They would say we ought to hate our enemies.

They use it as a justification for their own personal hatred and vendettas. But if they did that, and it's likely they did, then they missed the point of both the word to destroy the Canaanites and the Psalms.

Because they have nothing to do with personal relationships. Just like our last study on an eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth, there are certain things that are judicial laws that do not apply in terms of personal relationships.

They had again confused that.

They had taken the judicial code of an eye for an eye and they dragged it down and made it a way of living on a day-to-day basis.

The same thing is true here. They had taken the judicial act of a holy God in preserving a righteous seed, and they had dragged it down to be a justification for their personal hatreds.

In the first place the Canaanites were a vial people. So nauseating and corrupt were their abominations that the Bible says the land vomited them out.

When someone goes to the doctor with cancer and the doctor cuts the cancer out, we don't say the doctor is a cruel, unloving, uncaring, unsympathetic, without compassion person. We thank him for cutting cancer out.

When God said get rid of the Canaanites, that was not an act of evil. That was an act of goodness to take out of human society a retched, filthy, vile, people that would do nothing but pollute it. That is a judicial act on God's part.

That does not give license to an individual Jew to despise an individual Canaanite or to hate him because of something he has done.

What God does in His judicial act, does not change the fact that the same God who judged the Canaanites, loved every one of them with the same love He loves you.

Just as I love my child, when I punish my child, the punishment comes because of the evil. It does not deny the love. So, there is a judicial element.

If Israel had followed their customs, **Leviticus 18** says, she would have shared their fate and God wanted to preserve a righteous seed.

Why?

To bring out a righteous Messiah to redeem the world.

So, the preservation of Israel was a great concern with God's heart so that you would have a witness in the world, and He was cutting a cancer out of human society.

God was doing no more than that in a collective way and setting aside those evil people for the good of society. The only holy wars in history, for they were the wars of God against the world of idols.

It is not just enmity which Jesus condemns, for then He would have condemned the whole history of God's dealing with His people. On the contrary, He affirms the old covenant. There was a place for a holy war then.

What about David calling down all this judgment on his enemies?

Psalms 69:9, Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up, And the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me.

David, why are you so upset?

David, why are you so concerned?

David, why are you praying judgment on these people?

Because of what they have done not to me, but Your house.

It is not personal.

David had the greatest enemy in his life be his only son, Absalom.

David prayed that God would judge his son and God would judge his enemy, and yet he cried from the deepest part of his heart. "Oh Absalom, Absalom, my son, my son."

The fact that he prayed for judgment to glorify God and preserve his people didn't mean he didn't love his son. Those are things you have to hold in tension.

- We love the lost, and yet we pray that God would be vindicated, and their sin would be stopped.
- We love the lost with all our hearts and our hearts ache for those without Christ.

Yet we pray that Jesus would come and set His Kingdom up and put their unrighteous people aside.

We have the same reaction of dear John the apostle as he saw the vision in Revelation 10.

Revelation 10:10, *Then I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter.*

It is sweet to see Christ reigning again, it is bitter to see what happens to the lost.

Why?

Because he had the tension of loving God with all his heart and loving people too.

Same it was with David.

It was zeal for God's house that ate him up.

I am not defending myself. It is you I am defending.

It's one thing to defend the glory of God and the honour of God and it's something else to hate people personally.

You must understand those two in balance.

The judgments and curses are always judicial, not personal.

What is to be my attitude toward anybody, even my worst enemy?

My attitude is to be one of forgiving love, while at the same time I pray, Oh God, do not let your enemies continue to dishonour Your name, but take the glory that is due to you.

My great attitude toward an enemy is to love them and to pray God would save him. If God doesn't save him, that God would judge him so that he can bring Christ to be the rightful ruler of this world and set righteousness in its proper place again.

- ✓ God punished Adam, but He loved him.
- ✓ God loved Cain, but He punished him.
- ✓ God loved the whole world, but He drowned them.
- ✓ God loved Sodom and Gomorra, but He burned them to ashes.
- ✓ God loved the nation of Israel, but He set them aside for a time.
- ✓ God loved His only begotten Son, but He let Him bear sin and die.

- ✓ God loves the world today, but He promises that it's going to go up in a flame someday.
- ✓ God loves you, but you will spend an eternity in Hell if you don't know His Son.

The scribes and the Pharisees never made any distinction in this tension. They took judgment passages and because of their evil, perverse, prejudiced hearts, they allowed them to become justification for them to hate people. That was the wrong thing altogether.

What did the Old Testament really teach about loving your neighbour?

Deuteronomy 22:1-4, *“You shall not see your brother’s ox or his sheep going astray, and hide yourself from them; you shall certainly bring them back to your brother.² And if your brother is not near you, or if you do not know him, then you shall bring it to your own house, and it shall remain with you until your brother seeks it; then you shall restore it to him.³ You shall do the same with his donkey, and so shall you do with his garment; with any lost thing of your brother’s, which he has lost and you have found, you shall do likewise; you must not hide yourself.⁴ “You shall not see your brother’s donkey or his ox fall down along the road, and hide yourself from them; you shall surely help him lift them up again.*

If your brother has an animal that gets loose and goes astray, you want to immediately come to assist. The point being you meet another person's need.

You find a stray couple of sheep or an ox somewhere, and you really don't know to whom it belongs at all. You take it, feed it, care for it, as long as it's necessary.

When somebody loses it, you don't own it because you found it. You just keep it until he comes to get it. Then you give it to him.

What does this have to do with anything?

It's talking about your brother here.

Exodus 23:4-5, *"If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again. ⁵If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its burden, and you would refrain from helping it, you shall surely help him with it.*

Same exact principle as Deuteronomy 22.

Only Deuteronomy 22 used what term Brother.

Somebody who hates you and his animal falls down, the normal reaction is, "Serves you right buddy. Hope your animal dies and you have got to put the whole load on your wife."

God says, no you go and help, even if it's your enemy. In other words, the standard never changes. The term brother is big enough to include whoever happens to have a need.

That's where we determine the meaning of neighbour. Neighbour is as big as need.

When the Bible says, "love your neighbour," it simply widens up the whole thing.

Job has some diseases and some problems in his life, and he is really being used by God as an illustration. He hasn't really done any sinful thing to bring this upon him, but all his counsellors think he has and so they are forever telling him that he's a sinner. Job starts to muse and respond a little bit to this issue, and one of the things.

Job 31:29-30, *"If I have rejoiced at the destruction of him who hated me, Or lifted myself up when evil found him ³⁰(Indeed I have not allowed my mouth to sin By asking for a curse on his soul);*

You would have a right to accuse me if I had ever rejoiced at the destruction of somebody that hated me. Because when there is somebody who is your enemy and they fall into problems, the first reaction is that you love it. You just love it.

The worse the problem, the better you like it. That's human nature.

Job says, but I didn't do that, or I would have sinned.

Job 31:31-30, *"If I have rejoiced at the destruction of him who hated me, Or lifted myself up when evil found him ³⁰(Indeed I have not allowed my mouth to sin By asking for a curse on his soul);*

Psalms 7:3-5, *O Lord my God, if I have done this: If there is iniquity in my hands, ⁴If I have repaid evil to him who was at peace with me, Or have plundered my enemy without cause, ⁵Let the enemy pursue me and overtake me; Yes, let him trample my life to the earth, And lay my honour in the dust. Selah*

If I have sinned by being evil to one who was good, or if I have sinned by being evil to one who was evil to me.

David really pinpoints two things.

It's wrong to be evil towards those that are good to you.

It's even wrong to be evil towards those that are evil to you.

He is justifying himself to God here and saying God I have looked at my heart.

- I have never given back evil for good, and
- I have not given back evil for evil either.

The Old Testament never justifies hating an enemy. That's a sin. Job recognized it as a sin and so did David.

Psalm 35:12-13, *They reward me evil for good, To the sorrow of my soul. ¹³But as for me, when they were sick, My clothing was sackcloth; I humbled myself with fasting; And my prayer would return to my own heart.*

What did sackcloth signify?

- Remorse,
- Sorrow and
- Mourning.

When a Jew put on sackcloth and ashes, he was in mourning. He says when I was good to them, they were cruel to me, but when evil fell upon them, I mourned over them. My heart broke over them.

This is the spirit of Jesus who hangs on the cross and looks at those who spit on Him and says, "Father forgive them. They know not what they do."

This is the magnanimous, unbelievable, inhuman, supernatural forgiveness that comes here from the heart of David who has been given evil for good, and yet when his enemies suffer his clothing is sackcloth.

David says I fasted, mourned, and I prayed for my enemies when they fell into calamity.

David brings together in our thoughts, **Deuteronomy 22, and Exodus 23.**

Psalm 35:14, *I paced about as though he were my friend or brother; I bowed down heavily, as one who mourns for his mother.*

When a man can weep over his enemy like he weeps over his mother in calamity, he has learned a dimension of love that is far beyond the human level.

This is the teaching of the Old Testament.

Psalm 35:15-16, *But in my adversity they rejoiced And gathered together; Attackers gathered against me, And I did not know it; They tore at me and did not cease; ¹⁶With ungodly mockers at feasts They gnashed at me with their teeth.*

Basic truth.

Proverbs 17:5, *He who mocks the poor reproaches his Maker; He who is glad at calamity will not go unpunished.*

When you rejoice over evil fallen on someone, you will not be unpunished.

That is a sin, even that person be an enemy.

Proverbs 24:29, *Do not say, "I will do to him just as he has done to me; I will render to the man according to his work."*

Don't be a retaliatory person. Don't strike back at your enemy. That's the opposite of what we know as the golden rule.

Proverbs 25:21-22, *If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; And if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; ²²For so you will heap coals of fire on his head, And the Lord will reward you.*

Your enemy is your neighbour. That's what the Old Testament teaches.

Your enemy in a human sense is your brother.

Not in the spiritual sense, in a human sense is your brother.

Illustration:

Genesis Chapter 13 and see how the Old Testament honoured this kind of attitude toward an enemy. Abram and Lot had a

dispute. There were too many of them and their animals to occupy one plot of land.

Genesis 13:6, *Now the land was not able to support them, that they might dwell together, for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together.*

There was a strife between the herdsman of Abram's cattle and the herdsman of Lot's cattle. So here you have enemies. You have a minor warfare.

How is it to be handled?

We see the virtue of the Abraham.

Genesis 13:8-9, *So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren. ⁹Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left."*

An amazing reaction.

Abram ended the fight right there because he said, "Lot, you take whatever you want, and I will just take what's left. You pick out the best and you take it."

That is how to treat an enemy. Give them the very best!

Genesis 13:10-13, *And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. ¹¹Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other. ¹²Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent even as far as Sodom. ¹³But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the Lord.*

Now we could talk a lot about the stupidity of Lot pitching his tent towards Sodom and how it, eventually, got closer and closer until he was in Sodom.

Abraham treated an enemy as the Bible would want us to treat one.

He loved him as he loved himself.

Instead of seeking the land for himself, he sought the best for his enemy. The Bible honours that kind of virtue.

2 Samuel 16, David.

David was a terrible father. You have got to be a terrible father to end up with an Absalom. But he did. Absalom, his son, whom he was far too lenient, turned out to rebel against him. Absalom came against his own father, wanted to usurp

his throne. Absalom not only came against David, politically, but Absalom, broke David's heart.

David is running, fleeing from his own son. David who is the king.

2 Samuel 16:5-8, *Now when King David came to Bahurim, there was a man from the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei the son of Gera, coming from there. He came out, cursing continuously as he came. ⁶And he threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David. And all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left. ⁷Also Shimei said thus when he cursed: "Come out! Come out! You bloodthirsty man, you rogue! ⁸The Lord has brought upon you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned; and the Lord has delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom your son. So now you are caught in your own evil, because you are a bloodthirsty man!"*

You know why you are getting what you are getting.

You know why Absalom has turned against you. Because you dethroned Saul, because you took Saul's place. Remember, Shimei was from Saul's family.

There was just enough truth in that to make it painful. It says, later, when David wanted to build the temple, God said, "No,

because you have hands full of blood.” He hadn't murdered Saul, but he had fought many battles and bloodied his hands.

2 Samuel 16:9, *Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, “Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Please, let me go over and take off his head!”*

Now, apparently dead dog was a bad thing to call somebody. Abishai could think of him dead dog.

2 Samuel 16:10, *But the king said, “What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? So let him curse, because the Lord has said to him, ‘Curse David.’ Who then shall say, ‘Why have you done so?’ ”*

What David is implying here is maybe the Lord told him to do this.

You see David is feeling the guilt of his failure with Absalom. David is facing the realization of his bloody hands. David is saying, “How do you know that God has not asked him to do this?”

2 Samuel 16:11-14, *And David said to Abishai and all his servants, “See how my son who came from my own body seeks my life. How much more now may this Benjamite? Let him alone, and let him curse; for so the Lord has ordered him.”¹²It*

may be that the Lord will look on my affliction, and that the Lord will repay me with good for his cursing this day.”¹³ And as David and his men went along the road, Shimei went along the hillside opposite him and cursed as he went, threw stones at him and kicked up dust.¹⁴ Now the king and all the people who were with him became weary; so they refreshed themselves there.

David said I could care less about this guy. The pain is from Absalom. What he adds to the thing is minimal to me. Don't bother with it. Let him alone and let him curse for the Lord has bidden him.

But David's heart was right. At that moment he loved with the love the Old Testament taught.

Conclusion:

The Jews were dead wrong in Jesus' day.

The Old Testament didn't teach to hate your enemy.

That was their evil, prideful, prejudice teaching that.

Neighbour encompassed even an enemy.

In the year **1567, King Phillip, II of Spain** sent the **Duke of Alva**. Duke of Alva was notorious for his bitter hatred of everybody who embraced reformed Christianity. It was the time of the reformation and people were turning from

Catholicism to biblical Christianity and believing in Christ in a proper way. In fact, the time of the Duke of Alba was known as the Reign of Terror in Spain, and the council of Alba was calling the blood council, because they slaughtered so many people who embraced the reformed faith.

But the historians tell us about one man, a man named **Dirk Williamson** who became a Christian, a Protestant Christian, and thus was condemned to death in a torturous manner. Somehow, he made an escape, and he began to run for his life. It was near the end of winter and there were still some patches of snow on the ground, and as he ran and ran, he finally came to the inevitable, a lake. The lake was frozen, but not frozen very hard because winter was nearly over. Yet he had no choice because he was being chased by one lone soldier. So, he decided he would run across the lake

As he ran, the lake ice began to crack and creek and shake under his feet as he pounded across. But he didn't stop because he wanted to avoid the terrible death that awaited him if he were caught. He stretched his legs further and further in his strides until at last in one gasping leap he lunged himself and landed on the solidarity of the shore.

As he began to take his next step, he heard a cry of terror from behind him. He looked around, and the soldier who had been

chasing him had fallen through and was clutching the ice for his life.

No one was near to help the soldier but Dirk.

But the soldier was his enemy.

What would you do?

The historian tells us that Dirk went back, picking his way over the crackling ice, rescued his enemy, and brought him to safety. That's the heart of the matter isn't?

That's the spirit of Jesus.

The spirit of Stephen, of Abram, of David.

How about you?