

**Gospel of Matthew “Loving Enemies”**  
**Matthew 5:43-48**  
**May 29, 2022**

Matthew 5:43-48

43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’  
44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is 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 do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Leviticus 19:17-18

17 “You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. 18 You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.

This definition of neighbor can suggest a neighbor is someone like me.

Psalms 97:10

10 O you who love the Lord, hate evil!

Psalms 139:21-22

21 Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord?

And do I not loathe those who rise up against you?

22 I hate them with complete hatred;

I count them my enemies.

The idea was fostered that the more we love our neighbor the more we may be inclined to hate the enemy of our neighbor.

Exodus 23:4-5

4 “If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall bring it back to him.

5 If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying down under its burden, you shall refrain from leaving him with it; you shall rescue it with him.

Luke 10:36-37

36 Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” 37 He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “You go, and do likewise.”

*Who is a neighbor?*

### Matthew 5:44-45

44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is 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 “common grace” of creation is God loving his enemies.

### Matthew 5:46-47

46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

Pray and Greet.

Jesus is not soft on evil.

Kingdom life is not about getting even but being set free. Having options you didn't have before.

### Matthew 5:48

48 You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

To forgive and love is to be affected at the heart.

### **Grow Group Discussion Questions**

- What did God say to you during our Sunday gathering?
- There can be lots of enemies, societal, political, and religious. What comes to mind when you contemplate “enemy?” Do you have any personal enemies?
- Discuss how easy love can also foster hate. Can you love something or someone so deeply that you begin to hate anything that hurts what you love?
- How hard would it be for a Jew to hear “love your enemies” while under Roman occupation? Where are the modern day enemies and “occupations?”
- How can the sun and rain teach us about God's love and mercy?
- Why does it need to be difficult before our sonship and divine love is expressed?
- What does it mean to you that your life in Christ is headed toward this maturing and perfect love? Can you detect how your love and mercy towards someone that has hurt you is changing?
- How can your Grow Group encourage you to live differently as you apply these Scriptures to your life?