

The School of Christ

Lesson 10

LOVE IS SOMETHING YOU DO

Matthew 5:43-48

- › There are 6 antitheses in Matthew 5 - the Sermon on the Mount
- › The sixth: "You have heard it said, 'Love your neighbour & hate your enemy' ... but I say to you..." (v43-44)

- › 'Love your neighbour' (Leviticus 19:18) but 'hate your enemy' is a scribal interpretation
- › Indicative of dualistic thinking - a simplistic one or the other viewpoint

- › The heart of Love is the centre of the gospel

"Behold the One beholding you and smiling." It is precisely because we have such an overactive disapproval gland ourselves that we tend to create God in our own image.

It is truly hard for us to see the truth that disapproval does not seem to be part of God's DNA. God is just too busy loving us to have anytime left for disappointment.

Gregory Boyle

I. Love Does Not Equate with Feelings but Action

Matthew 5:43-44

You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy." But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

Matthew 5:43-44

UNDIFFERENTIATING LOVE

1. *Philia* - friendship Love
2. *Eros* - sexual Love
3. *Storge* - familial Love
4. *Agape* - giving for the good of the other - a word practically unknown before Christ

AGAPE LOVE

- > It is towards agape Love that Jesus invites us to journey
- > We may not like someone but still demonstrate agape Love - how we treat the other

II. Negative Actions Positive Responses

- > 'Agape' your enemies - the command of Jesus
- > Those persecuting you - you seek the best for them
- > Demonstrate 'agape' by praying for your enemies

No, 'if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Romans 12:20-21

III. Theological Basis for Our Response

Matthew 5:45

so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous.

Matthew 5:45

THE NATURE OF GOD

- › *Loves all*
- › *Desires the best for all*
- › *Makes His sun shine on all - rain for all*

WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD

- › *He is our Father in heaven*
- › *"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (5:9)*
- › *We are called to share in God's peacemaking*

IV. The World's Reciprocal Methodology

Matthew 5:46-47

THE WORLD'S APPROACH

- › Be nice to your friends and treat harshly your enemies - seen in political rhetoric
- › Even tax collectors (v47) and gentiles (v48) are nice to their friends

OUR HIGH CALLING

- › We are invited to supersede the world's philosophy - the Good Samaritan demonstrates our Love for neighbour (Luke 10)

- › God is our great Lover and we are to imitate him (Ephesians 5:1-2)
- › We are not to be selective in our Love

v. Be Perfect
The Final Imperative
Matthew 5:48

- › "Be perfect (teleios) as your Heavenly Father is perfect." (v48)
- › Be complete, integrated
- › Wholeness
- › Mature

JESUS AND THE YOUNG RICH RULER

- › 'If you wish to be perfect'
- › 'Come and follow me'
(Matthew 19:21)

AN IMPERATIVE TO IMITATE GOD

- › Based on an Old Testament saying - 'You shall be holy as the Lord your God is holy'
- › A call to be compassionate, merciful as God is

VI. Going Forward

'NO MATTER WHAT' LOVE

- › Being compassionate/perfect as God is compassionate reflects the greater righteousness that Jesus espouses (Matthew 5:20)
- › Not reducing humanity to 'friends' + 'enemies'

A NEW SOCIETY

- › As God's church we are to be at the vanguard of God's new society - a society of Love and compassion

- › Not to dismiss Jesus' invitation to Love as an unreasonable request
- › Sit with it - consider how we can Love our enemies

DECISION TO CHANGE

- › It's not a once for all decision - but a recalibration and reassessment of old and tired ways
- › Keep coming back to a place of Love for the other person