

Brandon Phillips / General

The King and His Glory / Kingdom of God; Sin; Righteousness / Matthew 5:21–48

Jesus informs His hearers of six demanding truths that characterize the Kingdom ethic which is the heart of OT law.

Pre-Sermon Comments

Discussion Questions:

In [Matthew 5:43-48](#), Jesus calls us to love our enemies. How do you understand this command in the context of family relationships?

How can understanding and applying Jesus's teaching in [Matthew 5:43-48](#) transform your personal relationships?

Is there a specific relationship where you need God's help to apply the principles of loving your enemy?

Introduction

[Revelation 2:4](#) (LSB) ⁴ 'But I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love.

Discussion Questions

The pastor initially made a judgment about the children hoping they wouldn't be noisy. How often do we make similar judgments in our daily lives?

What steps can we take to be more compassionate and less judgmental towards others, especially in trying situations?

[Revelation 2:4](#) mentions the Ephesians' loss of their first love. How can we, as individuals and as a church, ensure that our actions and motivations are rooted in our love for God and others?

Read [Matthew 5:43-48](#). How does this passage challenge our natural inclinations towards those we consider difficult or “enemies”?

The sermon highlights the lack of love often evident in our interactions on social media. Why do you think it's easier to lose sight of love and compassion in online interactions?

The sermon discusses the church at Ephesus, which was more focused on being right than on loving God and others. How can this mindset affect our relationships and interactions with others?

Have you ever found yourself prioritizing being right over being loving? How did it affect the outcome of the situation?

Matthew Review

[Matthew 5:20](#) (LSB) ²⁰ “For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses *that* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Sermon Text

[Matthew 5:43–48](#) (LSB) 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 causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *the* good, and sends rain on *the* righteous and *the* unrighteous. 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 “Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Proposition and Outline

Section Outline

In [Matthew 5:21-48](#), Jesus informs His hearers of six demanding truths that characterize the Kingdom way, which is the heart of OT law. Jesus teaches:

- Thou Shalt Not Get Angry! ([Matt 5:21-26](#))
- Thou Shalt Not Lust! ([Matt 5:27-30](#))
- Thou Shalt Not Get a Divorce (in most circumstances)! ([Matt 5:31-32](#))
- Thou Shalt Tell the Truth At All Times ([Matt 5:33-37](#))
- Thou Shalt Not Retaliate ([Matt 5:38-42](#))
- **Thou Shalt Love Your Enemies** ([Matt 5:43-48](#))

Today's Sermon

In [Matthew 5:43-48](#), Jesus teaches the final of six demanding truths that characterize the Kingdom way, which is the heart of OT law. Jesus teaches -

Thou Shalt Love Your Enemies ([Matt 5:43-48](#))

1. Jesus gives the letter of the command ([Matt 5:43](#)) [Review]
2. Jesus gives the spirit of the command ([Matt 5:44-45a](#))
3. Jesus illustrates the Father's heart behind the command ([Matt 5:45b-47](#))
4. Jesus gives an impossible command ([Matt 5:48](#))

Thou Shalt Love Your Enemies ([Matt 5:43-48](#))

Jesus gives the letter of the command ([Matt 5:43](#)) [Review]

[Matthew 5:43](#) (LSB) ⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.’”

[Matthew 5:17](#) (LSB) ¹⁷ “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.

God has always commanded love for your neighbor

[Leviticus 19:18](#) (LSB) ¹⁸ ‘You shall not take vengeance, and you shall not keep *your anger* against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am Yahweh.

The Jews twisted the intent of God’s Law

They twisted it by redaction!

[Matthew 5:43](#) (LSB) ⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.’

[Leviticus 19:18](#) (LSB) ¹⁸ ‘You shall not take vengeance, and you shall not keep *your anger* against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am Yahweh.

[Philippians 2:3](#) (LSB) ³ doing nothing from selfish ambition or vain glory, but with humility of mind regarding one another as more important than yourselves,

[James 2:8](#) (LSB) ⁸ If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF,” you are doing well.

[James 2:15–17](#) (LSB) ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for *their* body, what use is that? ¹⁷ Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead by itself.

They twisted it by redefinition

[Matthew 5:43](#) (LSB) ⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.’

They redefined the implication of neighbor

[Leviticus 19:33–34](#) (LSB) ³³ ‘And when a sojourner sojourns with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him. ³⁴ ‘The sojourner who sojourns with you shall

be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt; I am Yahweh your God.

[Luke 10:29](#) (LSB) ²⁹ But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

They redefined the intent of judgment

[Matthew 5:43](#) (LSB) ⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.’

Jesus gives the spirit of the command ([Matt 5:44-47](#))

Jesus supplies the necessary trigger for our obedience

[Matthew 5:44](#) (LSB) ⁴⁴ “But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

[John 1:1-4](#) (LSB) ¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

[John 1:14](#) (LSB) ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

[John 12:48-50](#) (LSB) ⁴⁸ “He who rejects Me and does not receive My words, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him on the last day. ⁴⁹ “For I did not speak from Myself, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. ⁵⁰ “And I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me.”

Jesus gives the true nature of our love

[Matthew 5:44](#) (LSB) ⁴⁴ “But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

The Jews had every fleshly reason to hate their enemies

[Joshua 3:10](#) (LSB) ¹⁰ And Joshua said, “By this you shall know that the living God is among you, and that He will assuredly dispossess from before you the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Hivite, the Perizzite, the Girgashite, the Amorite, and the Jebusite.

Loving your neighbor as yourself comes with an incredible promise

[Leviticus 19:34](#) (LSB) ³⁴ ‘The sojourner who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt; I am Yahweh your God.

[Deuteronomy 31:6–8](#) (LSB) ⁶ “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or be in dread of them, for Yahweh your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you.” ⁷ Then Moses called to Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, “Be strong and courageous, for you shall go with this people into the land which Yahweh has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall give it to them as an inheritance. ⁸ “And Yahweh is the one who goes ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.”

[James 2:15–16](#) (LSB) ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for *their* body, what use is that?

[Hebrews 13:5](#) (LSB) ⁵ *Make sure that your way of life* is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, “I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,”

True love always manifests itself in loving action

[Romans 12:17–20](#) (LSB) ¹⁷ Never paying back evil for evil to anyone, respecting what is good in the sight of all men, ¹⁸ if possible, so far as it depends on you, being at peace with all men, ¹⁹ never taking your own revenge, beloved— instead leave room for the wrath of God. For it is written, “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I

WILL REPAY,” says the Lord. ²⁰ “BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD.”

“In Bible times an oriental needed to keep his hearth fire going all the time in order to insure fire for cooking and warmth. If it went out, he had to go to a neighbour for some live coals of fire. These he would carry on his head in a container, oriental fashion, back to his home. The person who would give him some live coals would be meeting his desperate need and showing him an outstanding kindness. If he would heap the container with coals, the man would be sure of getting some home still burning. The one injured would be returning kindness for injury.” ~ Kenneth Samuel Wuest

Discussion Questions

Why do you think Jesus emphasized loving our enemies and praying for those who persecute us ([Matt 5:44](#))?

How does this challenge conventional thinking about justice and retaliation?

How did the Jews twist God’s original intention for the Law, according to the sermon? What does it mean that Jesus reiterated the heart of the Old Testament Law?

Reflect on the passages from John (1:1-4, 1:14, 12:48-50). How do these verses establish Jesus's authority and identity?

Why is it significant that Jesus speaks with the same authority as Yahweh of the Old Testament?

The sermon suggests that fear can lead to hate. How have you seen fear influence attitudes and behaviors in your own life or in society?

How does the promise of God's presence and protection ([Heb 13:5](#)) help combat this fear?

The sermon emphasizes that true love always manifests in loving actions. Discuss how you can apply this principle in your daily interactions.

What are some specific actions you can take to show love to those who may not treat you well?

Jesus gives the total necessity of our prayers

[Matthew 5:44](#) (LSB) ⁴⁴ “But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

Persecution is a reality for the believer

[Matthew 5:10–12](#) (LSB) ¹⁰ Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ “Blessed are you when *people* insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. ¹² “Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

[2 Timothy 3:12](#) (LSB) ¹² Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

[1 Peter 4:12](#) (LSB) ¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you.

We must be Christians who pray!

Spurgeon says, “Prayer is the forerunner of mercy.”

MacArthur states, “The best way to have the right attitude, the agapē love attitude, toward those who persecute us is to bring them before the Lord in prayer.”

Discussion Questions

What do you think it means to be "blessed" when persecuted for righteousness sake?

Can you share a personal experience of facing persecution or trials because of your faith?

How did you respond, and how did it affect your faith and relationship with God?

Why do you think Jesus emphasizes praying for those who persecute us in [Matthew 5:44](#)?

How can praying for our persecutors change our attitude toward them?

What stands out to you in the story of Corrie Ten Boom and her sister Bessie regarding prayer for their persecutors?

How do the examples of Paul and Peter ([2 Timothy 3:12](#) and [1 Peter 4:12](#)) encourage you in facing persecution today?

Have you ever faced opposition or conflict within the church? How did you handle it?

Why is it important to pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ, especially during conflicts?

Why is it important to pray for our own hearts when we have conflicts with our brothers and sisters in Christ?

Jesus gives the necessary test of our love ([Matt 5:45](#))

[Matthew 5:45](#) (LSB) ⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *the* good, and sends rain on *the* righteous and *the* unrighteous.

We act like our Father in heaven when we love!

[John 13:35](#) (LSB) ³⁵ “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

[1 John 3:10–12](#) (LSB) ¹⁰ By this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifested: everyone who does not do righteousness is not of God, as well as the one who does not love his brother. ¹¹ For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; ¹² not as Cain, *who* was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother’s were righteous.

[1 John 4:18-21](#) (LSB) ¹⁸ There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

¹⁹ We love, because He first loved us. ²⁰ If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. ²¹ And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

The Father demonstrates His love even for unbelievers by providing for them

[Matthew 5:45](#) (LSB) ⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *the* good, and sends rain on *the* righteous and *the* unrighteous.

[Psalm 145:15-16](#) (LSB) ¹⁵ The eyes of all wait on You, And You give them their food in due time. ¹⁶ You open Your hand And satisfy the desire of every living thing.

John Wesley: "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can."

Discussion Questions

In [John 13:35](#), Jesus says that our love for one another proves we are His disciples. How does this principle apply in our daily interactions with both believers and non-believers?

[1 John 3:10-12](#) contrasts the children of God with the children of the devil. How do these verses help us understand the seriousness of harboring hatred versus practicing love?

Reflect on when you found it difficult to love someone who hurt you. How did you handle the situation, and what could you have done differently in light of [Matthew 5:45](#)?

1 John 4:18-21 speaks about perfect love casting out fear. How does understanding God's perfect love for us help us to love others, especially those who may be difficult to love?

Think about your own relationships. Are there any brothers or sisters in Christ you struggle to love? How can you take steps towards reconciling and showing them God's love?

How does the concept of common grace (God providing for everyone, even those who deny Him) deepen our understanding of God's character?

Jesus gives the thorough need for our loving actions

[Matthew 5:46-47](#) (LSB) 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?”

[Judges 21:25](#) (LSB) ²⁵ In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

Charles Spurgeon: "A Christian should be a striking likeness of Jesus Christ. You have read lives of Christ, beautifully and eloquently written, but the best life of Christ is His living biography, written out in the words and actions of His people."

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

[Matthew 5:16](#) (LSB) ¹⁶ “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Jesus gives an impossible command ([Matt 5:48](#))

[Matthew 5:48](#) (LSB) ⁴⁸ “Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Our ultimate goal is to be like Christ our Lord!

[Romans 8:29](#) (LSB) ²⁹ Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers;

[1 Corinthians 11:1](#) (LSB) ¹ Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.

[Ephesians 2:10](#) (LSB) ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

[Ephesians 5:1](#) (LSB) ¹ Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children,

[1 Peter 2:21](#) (LSB) ²¹ For to this you have been called, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in His steps,

[1 John 2:6](#) (LSB) ⁶ the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

[Leviticus 11:44](#) (LSB) ⁴⁴ For I am Yahweh your God. Therefore, set yourselves apart as holy and be holy, for I am holy. And you shall not make yourselves unclean with any of the swarming things that move on the earth.

[Leviticus 20:26](#) (LSB) ²⁶ Thus you shall be holy to Me, for I Yahweh am holy; and I have separated you from the peoples to be Mine.

We cannot be like Christ in our own power!

[Matthew 19:26](#) (LSB) ²⁶ And looking at *them* Jesus said to them, “With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

Conclusion

[Isaiah 6:5](#) (LSB) ⁵ Then I said, “Woe is me, for I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, Yahweh of hosts.”

[Romans 3:23](#) (LSB) ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Discussion Questions

What is the significance of Jesus calling His followers to love their enemies, especially in the context of family relationships as mentioned in Matthew 5:43-48?

Why is it challenging to apply the principles of loving your enemy, as outlined in Matthew 5:43-48, especially in online interactions and social media engagement?

What effect can prioritizing being right over being loving have on our relationships and interactions with others, as discussed in the sermon?

In what ways can social media interactions sometimes lead to a lack of love and compassion, as highlighted in the sermon?

How does fear play a role in influencing attitudes and behaviors, especially in relation to the concept of loving our enemies, as discussed in the sermon?

A Gospel Tract

God

Created and owns everything

[Gen 1:1](#)—*In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth*

[Psalms 24:1](#)—*The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, the world and those who dwell in it.*

Is Perfectly Holy

[1 John 1:5](#)—*This is the message we heard from Him and announce to you that God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all.*

[Matt 5:48](#)—*Therefore you are to be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

Requires perfect obedience to His Law

[James 2:10](#)—for whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.

Man

Has broken God's law

[Rom 3:10,23](#)—there is none righteous, not even one...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

Will pay the eternal penalty for his sin

[Rom. 6:23](#)—For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord

Cannot save himself by his good works

[Titus 3:5](#)—He saved us not based on works which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.

Christ

Came to earth both as God and sinless man

[Col 2:9](#)—For in Him the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form

Demonstrated God's love by dying on the cross to pay sin's penalty

[Rom 5:8](#)—But God demonstrated His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us

[2 Cor 5:21](#)—He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Rose from the grave and is alive today

[1 Cor 15:4](#)—And that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures

Sinners

Must repent of all that dishonors God

[Isa 55:7](#)—*Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have compassion on him and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.*

[Luke 9:23](#)—*if anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.*

Must believe in Christ as Lord and Savior

[Rom 10:9](#)—*that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.*

Will you repent and believe in Christ?

[Acts 17:30](#)—*therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance God is declaring to men that all everywhere should repent.*

Don't hesitate to contact Pastor Brandon or Pastor Keith if you have any questions about this sermon or if you would like to know how to follow Christ.

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Additional Quotes

You have enemies. For who can live on this earth without them? Take heed to yourselves: love them. In no way can your enemy so hurt you by his violence, as you hurt yourself if you love him not. ~ Saint Augustine of Hippo

Since Christian love is an act of the will, and not simply an emotion, He has the right to command us to love our enemies. After all, He loved us when we were His enemies ([Rom. 5:10](#)) ~ Warren Wiersbe

When we pray for our enemies, we find it easier to love them. It takes the “poison” out of our attitudes. ~ **Warren Wiersbe**

Love all men, even your enemies, not because they are your brothers, but that they may become your brothers; that you may be at all times on fire with

brotherly love, whether toward him that has become your brother, or toward your enemy, so that, by being beloved, he may become your brother. ~ **Saint Augustine of Hippo**

I have sometimes felt that, had God not redeemed my soul, I must reverence him for redeeming others. Had I never tasted of his love at all myself, yet the story of his love to his enemies is such that I could fall down and worship him. ~ **Charles Spurgeon**

When Jesus tells us to love our enemies, He Himself will give us the love with which to do it. We are neither factories nor reservoirs of His love, only channels. When we understand that, all excuse for pride is eliminated. ~ **Corrie Ten Boom**

The real direction indicated by the law is love, rich and costly, and extended even to enemies. ~ D. A. Carson

In Jesus and for Him, enemies and friends alike are to be loved. ~ **Thomas à Kempis**

Our religion commands us to love even our enemies, and to pray for those who persecute us, aiming at a perfection all its own, and seeking in its disciples something of a higher type than the commonplace goodness of the world. For all love those who love them; it is peculiar to Christians alone to love those who hate them. ~ **Tertullian**

No law has ever been passed that can compel one moral being to love another, for by the very nature of it love must be voluntary. No one can be coerced or frightened into loving anyone. ~ **A. W. Tozer**

Whatever a person maybe like, we must still love them because we love God. ~ **John Calvin (French Reformer)**

We shall not long have love to man if we do not first and chiefly cultivate love to God. ~ **Charles Spurgeon**

Love is the sum of all virtue, and love disposes us to do good. ~ **Jonathan Edwards (American Evangelical Preacher)**

To love is to will the good of another. ~ **Saint Thomas Aquinas**

To truly love your enemies, you must treat them as if they were your friends. ~
John F. MacArthur

Disciples exhorted to love their enemies (5:43–47) and not to judge ([Mt 7:1](#)) might fail to consider the subtleties of the argument and become undiscerning simpletons. This verse guards against such a possibility. ~ **D. A. Carson**

Perhaps some of you do not feel that there is anything very remarkable in this love of the Lord to the loveless. I should like you to try if you could love somebody who has nothing about him that is at all lovable.

Love's Climax, Volume 41, Sermon #2394, [1 John 4:10](#) ~ **Charles Spurgeon**

C.S. Lewis: "To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you."