

Pursuing Peace

Sunday, April 28, 2019



Scripture & Key Points

Pursuing Peace

Matthew 5:9, 43-48

Jesus does not say that “peacekeepers” are blessed; he says that “peacemakers” are blessed. The difference is crucial: one simply keeps peace, while the other overcomes evil with the advancement of good.

Robby Gallaty – Here and Now

1. Love your **enemies**

You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall **love your neighbor** and **hate your enemy.**’ But I say to you, **Love your enemies** and **pray** for those who **persecute** you...
vs. 43-44

If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat, and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink... Proverbs 25:21

This is the supreme demand. Through the medium of prayer we go to our enemy, stand by his side, and plead for him to God.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

2. Evidence your **relationship**

...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.** vs. 45

*Loving as God loves does not make us the sons of the Father, but **gives evidence that we already are his children.** When a life reflects God’s nature, it proves that life now possesses his nature by the new birth.*

John MacArthur

3. Contrast your **culture**

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

4. Live **perfectly**

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

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



Ice Breaker

- In high school, what kind of people did you find most challenging to like? What would characterize or label the crowd you hung around? Has much changed over the years with your social group?

Discussion Questions

1. Read Matthew 5:43-44. Consider the earlier portions of the Sermon on the Mount in chapter 5. Jesus repeatedly says “You have heard it said...” and “But I say to you...” What is Jesus trying to have his listeners understand?
2. What in the culture of Jesus’ day seems to be incomplete when he says “Love your neighbor...”? See Leviticus 19:18
3. What does the Bible say about hating our enemies? Exodus 23:4-5, Proverbs 25:21
4. How do you think the people Jesus spoke to had gotten to the place of justifying their pride and prejudice and hating others? How do we do the same thing today?
5. One way Jesus says to love our enemies is to pray for them. What other actions can we take to love our enemies? What are possible reasons that Jesus mentions prayer as an action of love?
6. How does the love of the Bible contrast with that of culture? See 1 Corinthians 13 – Are the characteristics adjectives or verbs? Does it make a difference?
7. Read Matthew 5:45. How does God bless all humanity? What does this reveal about His character?
8. Read Matthew 5:46-47. Who do you find easiest to love? Who do you have difficulty loving the most? Is it based on economic background, race, lifestyle, _____?
9. Take a moment to recall the types of people Jesus was known to love and socialize with. Is that different from what you see today in most of the church community? How could we as a church develop in our love for the outcasts and unloved in our community and world?
10. Read Matthew 5:48. What a standard! As people listened to Jesus what could have been the side conversations? What does it make us realize about ourselves? About our need for God?
11. Read the quote by J. Oswald Sanders. How have you experienced supernatural love for others that you never dreamed possible?

Application

- What hurts, disappointments or situations are the most difficult to show unconditional love for ALL people?

Prayer

- Ask God to allow you to pray for and show supernatural love to a person you find difficult to love.