



NEW TESTAMENT • LESSON 14

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT – LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

Love your enemies.



MONDAY

THE STORY: MATTHEW 5:38-42

In this passage, Jesus cautions us against taking revenge. This passage is not meant to completely prohibit all resistance to all evil. For instance, Jesus resisted the evil of Satan and would not be forced to become Israel's king (John 6:15). This passage is not prohibiting us from defending ourselves or defending someone who is defenseless, such as a woman or child. Rather this passage is speaking to our sinful heart that desires to bring judgment on anyone who wrongs us. Here Jesus is introducing grace. The power to live a grace-filled life in this world comes when we consider eternity. If our hope lies beyond this life (into the next), we can easily give up material blessings and our violated sense of justice here and trust the Eternal Judge to vindicate our cause in his time.

TALK ABOUT IT:

What is revenge? (Revenge is when we want to return insult for insult or return harm for harm to someone who has done something against us. In our sinful hearts we want to judge them.)

Can you think of a time when you wanted to seek out revenge? (Parents, help your children think of a time when they sought revenge.)

PRAY:

Ask God to help us demonstrate love toward those who sin against us, just as Jesus demonstrated love toward us.



TUESDAY

THE STORY: MATTHEW 5:43-47

Love those who persecute you. In Leviticus 19:18, God commanded the Israelites not to bear a grudge against anyone. He said to love your neighbor as yourself. Here Jesus presents a radical clarification: Even our enemies are our neighbors, and we should love them! This would be particularly offensive to the Jew. To consider a Samaritan or other Gentile as a neighbor was unthinkable. What the Jews did not know is that Jesus came to break down the barrier between Jew and Gentile. All people are created in the image of God; Jesus died for people of every race, tribe, and nation. Jesus demonstrated the ultimate example of loving His enemies when He died on the cross.

TALK ABOUT IT:

How did Jesus set the example in loving His enemies? (Jesus died on the cross as a sacrifice for the sins of those who were His enemies. He took the punishment his enemies deserved.)

How can we practically follow Jesus' example? (If we are to love our enemies, certainly we are to love our brothers and sisters. Children often fight against those who love them. The truth is, when someone sins against us, they pit themselves as enemies against us in that moment. If one child strikes another, he becomes that child's enemy. It is in these situations that God allows us to practice following Him. Should we encounter real enemies who insult us for what we believe or even if we were beaten, we can respond in love. When Jesus was on the cross, he called out, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" See Luke 23:34).

PRAY:

Thank the Lord for His example and ask for help to follow Jesus in loving all men.



**WEDNESDAY
WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?**

THE STORY: MATTHEW 5:17-20

Jesus followed his teaching to love His enemies. Paul said to the Romans:

“If while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, how much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.” (Romans 5:10)

The requirement that we should love our enemies and be perfect is an impossible task. The only way we can be perfect is because of Jesus, who did not treat us as our sins deserved. He also gave us His perfect obedience in exchange for our sinfulness. Jesus did this and made a way for us to have fellowship with God in heaven. As Christians, we stand forgiven and hold the honor of perfect obedience given to us as a gift by Christ. Even though we cannot follow perfectly, we should strive to follow Jesus’ example to love those who persecute us. By doing so, we give the Lord glory.

TALK ABOUT IT:

How does this passage describe our condition when Christ died for us? (We were sinners - enemies of God.)

How does this passage fit with Mathew 5:44, which tells us to love our enemies? (Jesus provided the ultimate example of loving His enemies when He died on the cross for our sins.)

How should Jesus' love for us (when we were His enemies) encourage us to love our enemies? (We should extend the same love that has been extended to us by the Lord.)

PRAY:

Ask God to help you love your enemies.



THURSDAY

THE STORY: MATTHEW 5:21-26

Be perfect as God is perfect. With this command to be perfect, the notion that one might merit salvation by one's obedience is utterly dispelled. If perfection is the standard for obedience, who can qualify? No one qualifies for this righteousness by his or her own works. We can qualify only because Jesus lived a perfect life in our place. For those who believe and place their trust in Jesus, God imputes Christ's righteousness to their account. We are thus perfect in Christ on account of His perfection alone.

TALK ABOUT IT:

Why is Jesus' perfect obedience important for our salvation? (Perfect obedience is God's standard for righteousness. Apart from perfect obedience we could never dwell with a perfectly holy God.)

Will we ever be perfect? (Yes, when we reach heaven, remaining sin will be removed, and we will live forever with Christ without sin!)

PRAY:

Thank the Lord for fulfilling the law perfectly.



FRIDAY
ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

THE STORY: ISAIAH 50:5,6

Jesus, at the time of His arrest, was beaten and spat upon. Jesus received this punishment, suffered cruelly and was crucified for our sins. He did this with joy, scorning the shame of the cross for our sake. It was in doing so that Jesus exemplified his own teaching when He said in Matthew 5:39, “Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.”

TALK ABOUT IT:

Why didn't Jesus resist? (Jesus willingly took our punishment that He did not deserve. To resist would have been to reject being our substitute.)

How should Jesus' example affect the way we treat one another? (Jesus' example in suffering for us should motivate us to want to obey Matthew 5:44 and love our enemies.)

PRAY:

Thank the Lord for suffering the punishment we deserved for our sin.