

LOVING THOSE WE DISLIKE

Matt 5:43-48

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Many things Jesus taught that might be considered hard.
 - 1. Repent - forgive, as often as necessary Lk 17:1-5
 - a. Jews resented other people/nations
 - b. To obey Jesus' command involved much faith.
 - 2. Many things in Christianity not easy. Bad habits to overcome. Attitudes must be changed. Hard feelings/bad language/dealing with petty differences must be worked through - can take time.
- B. Love your enemies Matt 5:43-48 & Lk 6:27-36
 - 1. How can I love someone who hurts me/abuses me; talks bad about me; hurts my family or baby.
 - 2. Maybe can identify little with apostles when they asked Jesus to increase their faith. Lk 17:5

C. TITLE

DISCUSSION:

I. WHAT KIND OF LOVE IS JESUS TALKING ABOUT?

- A. Do I love my enemy like I love my wife/children?
 - 1. Not warm fuzzy feeling/ tender affection
 - 2. Thayer: "love" = agape "to have preference for; wish well to; to regard the welfare of."
 - 3. Vines: Christian love; toward men generally; is not an impulse from feelings; it does not run with natural inclination.
- B. This love a learned behavior - as we mature spiritually
 - 1. Realizes each person even enemies has a soul
 - 2. Ever had someone that "pushes your buttons?" You can't stand to be around? They have a soul
 - 3. This is regarding welfare of ones who would harm
 - 4. Kind of love extended those we don't like as if we liked them - not hypocritical but genuine
- C. Willing to help - even when you don't want to.
 - 1. Samaritan helping a Jew Lk 10:30-42
 - 2. Our love must be like God's Jhn 3:16; Rom 5:8-10
 - 3. Did He send Jesus because we were likable, lovable people?

II. HOW DO WE SPECIFICALLY OBEY THIS COMMAND?

- A. Jesus said do good to those who hate you Lk 6:27
 - 1. Initiate benevolent actions for spiteful actions - don't go with first impulse Rom 12:20
 - 2. If injured seek opportunity to do good.
 - 3. Does this mean I can't pursue legal means for compensation for an injury? Not necessarily

- a. Holding someone accountable may be a means of showing love for them - Paul did Acts 25:1-11
 - b. Required Jews to appear and defend charges.
 - c. God Chastens those he loves Heb 12:6
 - d. Must recognize difference in revenge and justice
- 4. Remove stumbling block from enemies path
 - 5. Joseph Gen 45
 - a. Note his reaction as he reveals himself. vs 1-8
 - b. What would I have done? Tempted to do?
- B. Bless (speak well of - Strong's) those that curse you - Reply to bitter words with kind words - natural thing: talk harsh in response Lk 6:28; Rom 12:17; 1Pet 3:9-12
 - C. Pray for those that mistreat you Lk 6:28
 - 1. Hard to hate someone you are praying for.
 - 2. Stephen prayed for those who stoned him Acts 7:60
 - 3. Jesus Himself in Lk 23:34 best example.
 - 4. Pray for them not in general - but specifically.

III. WHY SHOULD I OBEY THIS COMMAND?

- A. Negatively - Not to turn them into friends.
 - 1. If you're nice to people; they'll be nice to you not necessarily true
 - 2. Not to try to pacify - just conform to Jesus' teaching.
- B. We obey - to demonstrate the love of God.
 - 1. To make them see themselves in light of God's love which they can see in you.
 - 2. God's love demonstrated for us 1Jhn 4:7-11. We show that love by obeying God's word
- C. It is a condition of being a child of God Matt 5:45
 - 1. Not child of God unless we love our enemies
 - 2. Terrible to be lost because of this
- D. Helps us be different; do more than others Matt 5:46-47
 - 1. If only salute friends - what is special about that?
 - 2. Christians do more than that
- E. So we can be perfect like our heavenly father Matt 5:48
 - 1. Perfect not without sin but mature or complete
 - 2. Not only be loving toward friends & neighbors - but we need to express our Christianity through our demonstrating our love to enemies.

CONCLUSION:

- A. Someone says: preacher, everything you've said is great - but I just can't do it. Yes you can with God's help Phil 4:13
- B. We can & will overcome by power of God; we can because we are a new person!
- C. A new creation in Christ Jesus! 2Cor 5:17-21
- D. Have you become a new creation, have you put on Christ?

(from Matt Allen - revised by jlh)