

## Sermon On The Mount Part 5

Forgive Your Enemies

*Matthew 5:38-48, 6:14-15*

*Memory Verses: Matthew 6:14*

### MANUSCRIPT

#### Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

Over the last month we have seen how the Sermon on the Mount speaks to us as believers in every facet of our lives. We should have an attitude of humility and righteousness delivered as salt and light. He gives us a general picture of who a follower of Christ is but he also gives us the intricate specifics as to alleviate all of our questions and doubts. Jesus is just as concerned with the attitude of a believer as he is the actions of a believer.

Due to the fact that today is a Next Gen service we will be skipping around a bit in the text, but what you will find is that our course correction works on two levels. First, today's message dovetails nicely with where Don left off last week on anger and reconciliation. Secondly, today's message is more relevant for our students and children than where the text would have taken us. We will save that message for next week.

Today we will be talking about forgiving our enemies. How many of you have found that perhaps one of the most difficult things you've ever had to do was to forgive someone who was almost entirely against you? In lack of a better word, they were your enemy, and they were out to get you unless you would get them first. It's very hard to forgive in that situation isn't it?

A couple of weeks ago me and Gary Gray were in the jail leading a bible study with some of the inmates and a man named Dennis interjected and asked about forgiveness. He told us about how he was a drug dealer on the corner here in Danville and some guys jumped him, stole his drugs and money, and beat him to within an inch of his life. Six months later after he had recovered in the hospital and at home he was at the mall and he saw one of the guys who jumped him. He went out to his car to grab his gun because he was going to kill this guy. But then, something spoke to him and said, man... just let it go. The very next day he was in the supermarket and saw the same guy again. But this time instead of going out to his car to get his gun and kill this man, God spoke to him and told him to go up to him and tell him that he had forgiven him and that he wanted it to be done and over with. He told us that he and the man that almost beat him to death were now friends.

Now I don't know if you understand the type of culture that this man is coming from, but you just don't hear these kinds of stories unless

the hand of God is involved. Normally when one guy hurts someone, there is revenge, and then revenge for that revenge, and then revenge for that revenge, and it's a never ending cycle of vengeance and violence. But because of what Dennis did, the cycle was broken. Forgiving our enemies is hard, but not impossible, especially with Jesus.

Look with me at our passages today in **Matthew 5:38-48** and **6:14-15**. I know that people have wronged you. I know that people have hurt you. I know that you have adversaries and enemies who wish ill things towards you. But we must be the ones who put an end to the cycle. We are not to retaliate or seek vengeance, rather we are to turn the cheek and forgive. Why? Because we are the only ones who can. It is not natural to forgive our enemies and love them. But we are not natural in Christ. We are supernatural and in him we can do all things. **The hardest thing, and perhaps the most influential thing you may ever do, is love and forgive your enemies.**

#### Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first way the Bible wants to show us how to love our enemies this morning is ... **We Show Our Enemies Christ's Love When We Refuse To Retaliate.** Let me get some young volunteers up here. Here I have a couple of really **cool toys**. Now I want you to each pick the best toy. Now, if I let you guys just play with these toys for a while eventually you may get bored with your toy and you would want to try out another toy, right? But what's if they person that had the toy you wanted didn't want to share, what might you do? Well if you were a child living under my roof, you might do one of a couple of things. You could scream and throw a fit. You could try to take the toy and cause a fight. Or you could just simply hit, kick, or throw something at the person. Why might you respond that way? Because they have something you want and they wouldn't share it and so you have to express your anger and frustration with them don't you? If we were being honest, it's a selfish response, because we want what we want.

Now look at what Jesus says. Let's look at the parallel passage in **Luke 6:27-31**. In **vs 29** we see that we are to turn our cheek when someone strikes us. Now be honest, if someone hits you, what do you want to do back? You may want to hit them right? But Jesus says, turn to them the other cheek as well. Meaning, don't do what you want to do, rather do something totally unexpected. Let them know that you are not going to retaliate. Retaliate means get back at them. They may want to hurt you, but because you love Jesus, you aren't going to hurt them back. Look at the rest of **vs 29**. If they steal something of yours, or don't share with you, then don't get offended and try to retaliate, rather, do something completely unexpected, give them something else. Give them the opposite; give them love.

My mom always used to say it this way... **when someone does**

something mean to you, **kill them with kindness**. Instead of getting back at them and fighting evil with evil and wrong with wrong, fight evil with good. **Romans 12:21** says don't be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good. We show our enemies Christ when we don't retaliate. **The hardest thing, and perhaps the most influential thing you may ever do, is love and forgive your enemies.**

The second way the Bible wants to show us how to love our enemies this morning is **We Show Our Enemies Christ's Love When We Show Them Respect**. In one aspect we are to respect our enemies' tact, guile, and ruthlessness. Never underestimate your enemy. But in another way we are to respect our enemies in the way we respect those we care for and admire. It is this respect that is hard to come by. In fact, the one person you probably respect the least is the one who has shown you no respect. So how do we learn to respect people who don't respect us? How can we love those who hate us?

We see it here in our passage. First, bless them. Look at **Matthew 5:43-44a, Luke 6:27-28a**. A blessing is a sincere desire for good things for someone accompanied by an intentional effort to see those good things accomplished. A blessing isn't just a hope that good things happen, but it is you actually doing something to make something good happen. **James 2:15-17** says what good is it to tell someone go in peace, be warmed and filled without doing anything for them? So what this means is that you should go out of your way to find something that you can do for your enemy that would actually be good for them; benefit them... its the exact opposite of retaliation.

Secondly, we must pray for them. Look at **Matthew 5:44b, Luke 6:28b**. How hard is it to pray that God would prosper and do a good work in the lives of those who are against us? You know you are strong in your faith when you can pray for your enemies. Pray that God would bless them financially, physically, socially, and most of all, spiritually! Pray for their salvation. Pray for reconciliation. Pray that you would somehow be able to show them the love of Christ.

Thirdly, we show them respect when we go out of our way to treat them like we would our friends. Look again at **Matthew 5:46-47, Luke 6:32-36**. We must never simply love those who are lovely because as the Bible makes clear, if we do that, how are we any different than the world. Get this.... **One of the most obvious actions that set us apart from the world is our love for our enemies.** Non-Christians don't love their enemies. This type of love only comes from a heart surrendered to Christ. If you want to be a light in the darkness and a city on a hill for Christ... this is how you do it. **The hardest thing, and perhaps the most influential thing you may ever do, is love and forgive your enemies.**

The third way the Bible shows us how to love our enemies is... **We Show Our Enemies Christ's Love When We Release Our Feelings of Resentment For Them**. Forgiveness is simply a release of resentment for our enemies. It doesn't mean we forget what happened, it simply means we no longer resent the ones who did it to us. Jesus says in the sermon on the mount in **Matthew 6:14-15** that we must forgive our enemies of what they have done to us or God cannot forgive us of what we've done to him. There are a couple aspects here that we've gone over before, but we must be reminded of.

First, Our sin against God is way bigger than we ever recognize. Any sin against God demands the punishment of hell and yet we've sinned time and time again. Yet, through Christ God has forgiven us of all of our sins and instead of condemning us to hell, he has opened to us the gates of heaven. That's huge. So, if he has forgiven us of something that big... what in this life is too big that we can't forgive someone else of? There is nothing anyone can do to you worse than what we've done to God, and yet he has forgiven us. **You can forgive anyone of their wrongs because God has forgiven you of all of yours.**

How many times must I forgive my enemy? Look with me at **Luke 17:3-4**. Meaning, and I'll say this as plain as I can, no matter how many times someone wrongs you, if you they repent and seek reconciliation, you are required before God to forgive them. This is how we show the world that we are different. We forgive and release our resentment for our enemies. **The hardest thing, and perhaps the most influential thing you may ever do, is love and forgive your enemies**

### Application

Love your enemies, respect your enemies, care for your enemies, don't retaliate against your enemies, forgive your enemies. It's as simple as that. You say, well Shevi, it's not that simple. You don't know what they did. Your right, I don't, and if I was in your shoes I'd feel the same way. But I do know this. I know what Jesus did. **Romans 5:7-8** tells us.... very rarely will someone die for a righteous man, though some will, but God showed his love for us, his enemies, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. If Jesus died for his enemies so that they could be forgiven of their sins and go to heaven... You can love your enemies! **The hardest thing, and perhaps the most influential thing you may ever do, is love and forgive your enemies**

### Conclusion

So who are your enemies? How do you show them the love of Christ? How have you cared for them? Blessed them? Prayed for them? Have you retaliated and sought vengeance towards them?