

SERMON NOTES
(1/22/12 - Abridged Talking Points)

Intro:

- Mean people are frustrating.
- They take more than they give, think the world revolves around them, it's their way or the highway. They treat others as stepping stones to get them where they want to go. They don't show respect/honor.
- Before I was saved, I dealt with them by hitting, mistreating them, slandering them... treated them the way they treated me...got other people to hate them too.
- When I met Christ and became part of God's family, I was in a struggle. I knew my old ways wouldn't work anymore. Honestly, they didn't work before.
- What should replace the hitting, slander, retaliation? How should I think about them, act toward them?
- I'm probably the only one here that struggled with that? None of you know what I mean, right?
- You have people in your life that are mean, too? Maybe an ex-husband or wife, a relative, someone at school, a co-worker or boss at work, a neighbor? They take more than they give, they act selfishly, being around them stinks?
- What do we do? How do we work through the conflict they produce in our lives? What does God want from us and why?
- Fortunately we are not the only ones who have asked such questions. Jesus was talking about this very thing in Matthew 5:38-48.

MATTHEW 5:38-48

³⁸ *"You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.'*

- From Lev. 24:20, Moses meant the punishment must fit the crime. The Rabbis taught that it meant it was ok to get revenge...to hate.

³⁹ *"But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person."*

- The word "resist" not the best translation. It is not incorrect but it doesn't give the full idea.
- The word is (anthistaymee) which mean to oppose by retaliation, think revenge, to become their enemy.
- (physical harm) – *"If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also."* In that day, to hit someone on the right cheek with the back of your right hand was the biggest insult.
- (legal) - *"And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well."* In that day you could be pulled into small claims court to settle a small debt you owe.
- (authority) – *"If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you."* In that day, Roman soldiers would make citizens carry their army gear from place to place.
- When people are mean to you, protect your heart. Don't let your heart consider them to be an enemy. Stay in the relationship. God has a purpose for it.

- We must use wisdom. This is not saying to stay in an abusive relationship...to be in danger...to not confront with truth...to not express displeasure with their actions. We can do these things but we are no longer using the truth as a weapon but as a healing sauve.

⁴³ "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' From Lev. 19:8 and Rabbis added "hate your enemies." It was an attempt at logic.

⁴⁴ "But I tell you: Love your enemies."

- "pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven."
- Bless them too. Why? Because God does. "He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."
- ⁴⁶ "If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?" People who don't care about God do this.
- Notice 2 statements "that you may be sons of your Father in heaven." "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."
- **Jesus wants family not shallow friendships! Jesus wants us to respond to enemies in a way that shows God's nature (love and hope for redemption.** Family loyalty, family characteristics, think like, act like, purpose like, goals like our Father.
- Our identity and security are from Him. We can now act with courage.
- Different motive to love now. We love like we were loved.
- We have a reason to love enemies. It is not about us (we are already in), but them. To not treat them as they deserve, to care for them as they don't deserve, to not become their enemy, to not hate but continue to interact and show them God's care for them.

Conclusion:

- Know anybody that needs loved like this? Wondering what to do? How to respond? Feeling uncomfortable with the old way of handling things?
- Does it make a difference to see "loving an enemy" not from law but from family characteristics? Just doing what Father does... **Jesus wants family not shallow friendships! Jesus wants us to respond to enemies in a way that shows God's nature (love and hope for redemption).**
- Maybe there is an ex husband or wife that needs this. **Jesus wants family not shallow friendships! Jesus wants you to respond to your ex in a way that shows God's nature (love and hope for redemption).**
- Can you rest in the fact that He loves you, has accepted you, is preparing a place for you and will take care of you?...and because of that can you show Father's love to the mean person?
- Fellow worker or boss. **Jesus wants family not shallow friendships! Jesus wants you to respond to your co-workers in a way that shows God's nature (love and hope for redemption).**
- Parent. **Jesus wants family not shallow friendships! Jesus wants you to respond to a delinquent parent in a way that shows God's nature (love and hope for redemption).**
- Acquaintance/former friend. **Jesus wants family not shallow friendships! Jesus wants you to respond to those who treat you like an enemy in a way that shows God's nature (love and hope for redemption).**
- Will you commit to try? Won't be easy. Satan will try to stop you. But for the family name...reputation...to please our Father...will you do it?
- To Be like our Father...wow.

- **Imagine if** we passed on the Father's love in these situations, what could happen in those relationships? If we didn't retaliate, no revenge and we loved instead of hated? Blessed them? Prayed for them? Helped them? Showed Father's concern for them?
- What if we trusted God with the judgment thing? He won't do it wrong. They won't get away with anything. God cares more about justice than you do.
- Love is attractive, it teaches, it convicts, it changes. It is a better conduit for truth than hatred.
- **Imagine what our church** would be like if we loved like our Father?
- Imagine the opportunities to love, lives to be part of, victories to witness.
- Would you be willing to give it a try? For the Father's sake? For the mean peoples' sake? God loved us when we were mean. Simply to do to them what God did for us? If so, let's tell God about our decision...

Prayer: we apologize, our desire, fill us, clean us, empower us in each of our situations...