



WEEK NINE: LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

Jesus calls us to display the mercy of God the Father, through loving our enemies, in the same unconditional way he loves us.

TEXT: LUKE 6:27-36

1. JESUS COMMANDS US TO LOVE OUR ENEMIES

- Luke 6:27-31

In the parable of the good Samaritan, Jesus painted the picture of what it meant to love one's enemies – in a way that they, as Jews, would understand.

Actively loving those who directly oppose us, is something that the world does not see often or understand. This is because in order for anyone to authentically love way is impossible without understanding the gospel at a heart transforming level. God calls us to love our enemies because he loved us, while we were his enemies. The same power that raised Christ from the dead, lives in us, and empowers us to live a life of sacrificial love. It is the only way!

Although this kind of love is exactly opposite to our natural instincts, Jesus calls us to die to those instincts, submit to the Spirit, and love those, who are not only unlovable, but those who are evidently against us.

- ❖ Q: What is the difference between loving those who you can tolerate, and loving your enemies?
- ❖ Q: In your particular context, who would you consider an enemy, or someone that would be difficult to love, and why?
- ❖ Q: What do you think it would look like to love your enemy practically?
- ❖ Personal Reflection Q: When last did you show love to someone that regularly opposes you? (How many of us are ever around people that directly oppose who we are, or what we stand for? How do we engage with them? Do we hide? Do we confront them?)

2. LOVING OUR ENEMIES IS DISTINCTIVE BECAUSE IT DISPLAYS GOD'S GREAT MERCY TOWARDS THEM

- Luke 6:32-36

Jesus challenges the view that love is something that has to be reciprocated. We tend to view love from the basis of how it makes us feel, rather than it being purely about the other person. We give love because we want to receive something in return, and we withhold love, when we are denied it. Jesus redefined the parameters for love by saying that we are to love even when we get nothing in return. The gospel calls us to love without limit because God did that for us, and as we imitate him, we display his glory and grace to others.

10 THINGS JESUS I WISH NEVER SAID

- ❖ Q: Why do you think we view love as something that needs to be returned?
- ❖ Q: Why, as believers, does our love need to be totally different from the world's love, in order for it to be *real* love?
- ❖ Discussion Q: In what way is Jesus calling us to love one another within this Gospel Community, and how would it be different to the way in which we have been loving one another until now?

3. AS BELIEVERS WE MUST ALSO REMEMBER OUR GREAT NEED FOR GOD'S MERCY AND THAT WE WERE ONCE HIS ENEMIES TOO

- Luke 6:35-36 & Romans 5:7-10

The key to us being able to extend God's unconditional love to the world, depends on how deeply his love has impacted our own hearts. When we have experienced and embraced God's mercy, having seen the depths of our own sin, it is then that our hearts understand the desperate need for mercy in the lives of others. This then allows us to freely pour God's love into others, without being needy of love from them. The gospel releases us from need-based love because we have received the most precious love of all, in Christ.

The problem is, that many of us, particularly those of us who have been in church our whole lives, have grown up with a warped perception of sin, and we somehow believe that we are deserving of God's love. We know we are not perfect, but we do not see truthfully, our own need for mercy. This pride blocks our ability to see other's sin in the same light as our own, which then in turn, stops God's love and mercy from flowing out of us. Some of us just need to admit that we have an "us-and-them" mentality, which makes us look down on others instead of pouring out God's love on them. The reality is, that when we do not love fully and authentically, we are not living according to the design for which God made us, and we lose out on who he has called us to be.

- ❖ Q: Why is our ability to extend love and mercy a direct reflection of the Gospel's impact on our own hearts?
 - ❖ Q: Why is it important to understand the true nature of the depravity of our own sin, if we are ever going to truly love others?
 - ❖ Q: Why is pride the underlying issue for those of us who look down on others for their sin, while believing that we are intrinsically better or more moral than they are?
 - ❖ Q: What heart response is God calling us to through this week's message? (What will repentance and faith look like for you?)
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