

"5" Things for Enemies

Luke 6:27-36 (New American Standard Bible)

²⁷ "But I say to you who hear, **love** your enemies, **do good** to those who hate you, ²⁸ **ble**ss those who curse you, **pray for** those who are abusive to you. ²⁹ Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also; and whoever takes away your cloak, do not withhold your tunic from him either. ³⁰ Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back. ³¹ **Treat people the same way you want them to treat you.** ³² If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³ And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴ And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back the same amount. ³⁵ But **love** your enemies and **do good**, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and **your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High;** for He Himself is **kind to ungrateful and evil people.** ³⁶ **Be merciful,** just as your Father is merciful.

Introduction

(Invite the congregation to circle the words and phrases **highlighted in bold** above).

A friend of mine owns a business that requires detailed attention. So, to find out how thorough the workers are before he hires them, he gives the candidates a written test that begins with an instruction as follows: *Please read **all the questions first to the end without skipping. Do not start answering the questions without reading to the end.*** He said to me, he hasn't found one employee yet who thoroughly follows the instructions.

We have the same problem in the Church today. Many a believer faces life's challenges without thoroughly reading the instructions from Jesus. We do not pay attention to the Lord's instructions, which we call commandments. The outcome? We are defeated. We are lost without answers. We get frustrated and even upset with our inability to overcome challenges. For instance, how do you handle annoying people in your life? Most of us simply avoid them. We also complain to God saying, *Lord, why me? Why don't You remove this annoying person from my life? Why do I have to endure this test? I don't deserve this!*

To such people, Jesus says, *"Have you read My book? Have you thoroughly read my instructions and followed through? Walk entirely in the way that I command you, and it will be well with you"* (Jeremiah 7:23). So, here we go, folks, this morning, we are going to back to the basics: that is, to pay attention to His instructions in the context of our enemies. If you are struggling with unfriendly people in your life, this sermon is for you. Let's pay attention

to Jesus' instructions **all the way to the end**, shall we? Then, we will walk in His ways, and everything will be well with us. Amen?! Let's dig in.

Content

Who Is My Enemy? Let's begin with a standard definition of enemy: "*a person who hates somebody or who acts or speaks against somebody/something*" (<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/enemy?q=enemy>).

So, our enemies are antagonistic to us. They do not treat us well. They are abusive to us. They harass us. They oppress us. Some of them even curse us.

Next question,

Why Do I Have Enemies in My Life? You may wonder why God doesn't make your life free of enemies. Well, welcome to the real world. My simplest answer is that *who doesn't have enemies?* Maybe, you don't have them right now (thank God for that!), but most of us either have had them before, or will have them later. Even Jesus our Lord, perfect and innocent Son of God, had foes from time to time. They called Him a demon. They called Him a lunatic. They tried to push Him off the cliff to kill Him. They tried to stone Him a couple of times. Some of them even crucified Him on the cross. No matter how nice and polite we may be to everyone, we simply cannot avoid our enemies. Sometimes, a spiritual attack comes upon you through your enemy just to persecute and harass you for no apparent reason than to put you down or discourage you.

Why Do I Have to Love My Enemies? For the following three reasons, including but not limited to: First, because your Father in Heaven wants it. Next, because you are His child. Loving your enemies is a sure mark of God's children. Third, because God will reward you if you do. By the way, Jesus' command to love and bless our enemies only applies to **human and visible enemies**, not to our spiritual and invisible enemy, the devil. **Jesus never commands us to love the devil our ultimate enemy.** So, if we do not love the devil,

How Do We Deal with the devil? We must fight and resist him all the way (1 Peter 5:9), because if we don't, the devil will devour us. He has only one goal: steal, kill, and destroy us (John 10:10). Remember how Jesus dealt with the devil: He was not friendly or kind to him at all. **Be gone! Satan,** He declared (Matthew 4:10). Jesus came to earth, not to love the devil, but to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8) and eventually will throw him in the eternal fire (Revelation 20:10).

5 Things Jesus Commands Us to Do for Our enemies. Look at the sermon title which says, 5 things **for** enemies. Mind you. It's five things we ought to do **for** our enemies not **against** them.

So, let's check out the five things we are called to do for our enemies.

1. Love (v. 27, v. 35): Here, Jesus commands us to love our enemies. He doesn't mince His words. He is not joking here. He doesn't waste His words, either. He only says what is good for us. He only commands us what we can do, too. He also says exactly what He means, and He means exactly what He says. Just in case, if we miss the first time, He says again, love! Love who? Enemies! YOUR enemies!

For many people, the natural reaction to their enemies is to hate. Of course, God understands it, and we do, too. However, Jesus commands us not to hate the enemies, but to love them! Once we understand what God wants us to do with our enemies, and once we are willing to do His will no matter what, 80% of loving the enemies is already done (John 7:17).

Please understand here that **love is an action verb**. The opposite of another action verb 'hate.' Someone says that *love isn't love until you give it away!* How true it is! Unless we put it into action, it is no good. Christ commands to express our Christian love in a tangible way to our enemies.

Interestingly, the verb **'to love' here is 'agapao' (αγαπαω) in Greek**. In other words, it is the love that only God can exercise. To love our enemies is absolutely divine. It is absolutely impossible in human eyes and human power, but it is equally possible in God's eyes and His might. That means, without God's empowerment, we cannot love our enemies. So, if you feel that you cannot love your enemies, that's understandable. You can be honest with God saying, *Lord, You know I can't*. But don't stop there. Say to Him, *I want to do Your will for me. Help me, Lord. Declare to God and to yourself, I will love my enemy 'Not by my own might nor by power, but by Your Spirit.'* (Zachariah 4:6). *With Your help, I can do it, and I will love my enemies*. Then, the Lord will strengthen you to love your enemies. (Philippians 4:13).

Remember: Jesus never commands us to do something impossible. He knows that we can do it with His help. So, let us admit our human limits but at the same time acknowledge divine empowerment in Christ. This is the starting point in the business of loving enemies.

2. **Do Good (v. 27, v. 35):** Dealing with difficult people, most of us would settle for less: *Stay away from them. Do nothing towards them, either harm or good. Just stay away from them.* But that's not what Jesus wants: He commands us to do GOOD to our enemies as we want them to do good to us. Look at verse 31. **Treat people the same way you want them to treat you.** This is known to us as Golden Rule. Most of us think that we apply this rule to those who are good to us or at least neutral to us. But note here that Jesus squeezed this rule in the middle of how we treat our enemies! He reminds us that **Golden Rule also applies to the enemies!** Do you want them to be nice to you? Then, be nice to them. Do you want them to treat you well? Then, do good to them first.

So, the real question is: How do we do good to our enemies. As long as you are willing to obey God's will, He will give you an idea of what to do it.

Let me tell you a true story of a Chinese farmer. He was a believer in Christ and his neighbor was not. Their rice paddies were next to each other. His field was on the higher ground and that of his neighbor was lower. To grow rice, you must keep the paddy watered all the time. If there's not enough water in the field, you have to irrigate the field with water wheel. One summer, there was drought. Not enough rain. So, the farmers had to water the fields every other day working on the water wheel for several hours. This Christian farmer watered his field and by the end of the day he was happy. On the following morning, when he went out to his field, lo and behold, all the water from his field was gone! He investigated and found out that there was a hole that drained the water into his neighbor's field! Of course, when he inquired, his neighbor totally denied the allegation!

Now, what would you do at this point if you were this believer? This farmer didn't say a thing to his neighbor. He simply patched the hole and irrigated his field again. Before he went home, he made sure there was no hole. The next day, it happened again! Another hole on the other side of his field took all the water from his to his neighbor's. Since he was the believer in Christ, he inquired of the Lord what to do. The Lord gave him an idea. This is what he did that day: he patched the hole again, and started filling the field, not his own, but his neighbor's field first! It took twice longer than usual, and he was dead tired by the end of the day. Lo and behold, the next day, the waters remained in his field! No leakage! No holes! Praise God.

Consider Jesus. He even washed Judas's feet on the night before He was crucified! Yes, that betrayer's dirty feet! If you were Jesus, would you have done it? Well, Jesus commands us to do good to the enemies. Doing good has an effect on the enemies. It is the

equivalent of heaping up burning coals on the head of your enemy. That leads us to the next command. To bless them.

3. Bless (v. 28): Paul the Apostle echoes what Jesus said. He wrote: ¹⁴ **Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ...** ¹⁷ *Never repay evil for evil to anyone. ...* ¹⁹ *Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written: "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.* ²⁰ *"But if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for **in so doing you will heap burning coals** on his head."* ²¹ *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good* (Romans 12:14-21).

To bless your enemy is a choice. When it comes down to enemies, we have two choices. Either curse or bless. Jesus commands us to bless them. Choose to bless. It is a sure-fire way of overcoming evil with good. Only those who practice this mystery know the power of blessing on the enemies. Here's another reason why we should choose to bless over curse. The blessing you send out to any individual, either it will stay with the worthy person or come back to you if he is not worthy: ¹² *"As you enter the house, give it your greeting. ¹³ If the house is worthy, see that your blessing of peace comes upon it. But if it is not worthy, take back your blessing of peace"* (Matthew 10:12-13). Next, Jesus commands us to

4. Pray (v. 28): For our enemies. Do not curse. Pray for them that the best thing will happen to them. For instance, this is what I do with my enemies. I pray that the Lord would give them the best gift ever: salvation. I pray that they would get to know Jesus our Savior and Lord. That they would be saved and have eternal life. E.g., Consider Saul, a.k.a. Paul. Before he got to know Jesus, he was a persecutor of Christianity. When he threatened and imprisoned the believers in Christ, the Early Church followed Jesus' command to pray for the enemy. They indeed prayed for him, not against him. What do you think the Church prayed for the persecutor? To become a believer in Christ, wouldn't you say? Well, the Lord answered their fervent prayer for him and made him a Christian. So, pray for your difficult people so that they will come to know Jesus. Pray for their best. Pray for their peace and prosperity.

5. Be Merciful (v. 35): I love this verse. Be merciful to your enemies knowing that your mercy culminates in forgiveness (John 20:23). Mercy means to remit the sin of your enemies. Interestingly, if you do not show your mercy to them, and if you never forgive your enemies' sin, what will happen to you? If you think nothing will happen to you, you are gravely mistaken.

How, then, do you take Jesus' word? *But if you do not **forgive** other people, then your Father will not **forgive** your offenses (Matthew 6:15)?* Don't tell me that it doesn't apply to your situation. Don't think that His word excludes your enemy's case. His word applies to all cases and to all people with no exception. By forgiving our enemies, we are doing a great service to ourselves.

Learn to delight in mercy, be merciful to your enemies and forgive them as the Lord does (Micah 7:18). People love to quote Micah 6:8: *what does the Lord require of you But to do justice, to love **kindness**, And to walk humbly with your God?* The word 'kindness' is 'hesed' in Hebrew. It means, "a sense of love and loyalty that **inspires merciful and compassionate behavior toward another person**" (<https://www.bibliatodo.com/En/christian-reflections/what-is-the-meaning-of-the-hebrew-word-hesed/>). Be merciful to your enemies, and walk humbly with God.

The Rewards: In the beginning, I said three reasons **why we should love our enemies:** first, because it is God's will. Next, because we are His children. Finally, because there will be a great reward. When we love our enemies, the Lord rewards us with rewards both in Heaven and on Earth.

There Will Be Rewards Both in Heaven and on Earth. To receive the reward in Heaven, we must wait. But there's also a great reward on earth. This is what I have figured out and experienced so far. First, a reward in emotional, mental, and spiritual health. Love is a far better option than hate, for sure. Hate eats you up from within and can cause cancer in you. Love and blessing do the opposite--they melt away the cause of cancer in you. Next, it enriches our relationships. Our relationships become much more rewarding. I am a first-hand witness for that. E.g., Lee (the worst nightmare turned into my best friend overnight). Dupree (remembered me in his will). Culp (best advisor).

Conclusion

Remember the story of the Chinese farmer? After he did good to his nasty neighbor, his neighbor came to him, confessed his trespass, and asked for forgiveness. His neighbor, who was deeply touched with this Christian love, later became a believer himself.

There you have it, folks. If you really want to overcome the situation with difficult people, follow thoroughly what Jesus has said. Do the five things for your enemies, then, you will be most delighted with the outcome like I have been. Amen.