

Westboro Baptist Church - Sermon Preached June 14, 2015

“And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;” (2 Peter 2:5).

“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith” (Hebrews 11:7).

I fear I may have caused some amount of confusion in one of my recent sermons wherein I discussed not wishing God speed on those who promote false doctrines; that position may have seemed at odds with Brother Brent's sermon from last year regarding Matthew 5:43-48. I deeply apologize for any such confusion and will attempt today to bring clarity to this very important issue of how we address, think, and feel toward our enemies while engaged in the wars of the Lord.

Christ gives us some very clear instruction at Matthew 5 and in the companion passage found at Luke 6 regarding our enemies and how to treat them. This instruction, while clear, is not necessarily easy to follow. This instruction is important to wrap our minds and hearts around, to embrace and work into our daily thinking, our daily prayers, and our daily routines. It is of importance because to regard our enemies in any way other than spitefully is to war against our depraved nature. Look at the earliest days of fallen Man to see how easily and quickly we fall to violence and hatred of one another

“And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him” (Gen 4:8).

These were the first humans born into the world, and one killed the other. This tendency and violent reaction toward each other has not changed over the centuries. If, as the great philosophers and thinkers would have you believe, Man has become more refined, more civilized and sophisticated, I ask why our prisons are so full and why are we surrounded by violence on every side? Of course, if this arrogant argument regarding the advancement and refinement of Man actually had any merit, the exhortations to love our enemies would not have proceeded out of our Savior's mouth. No, friends, this is a base part of our depraved nature that has not changed since The Fall, and it is a thing we must each personally grapple with and war against. Even as we do battle on a daily basis **against** our enemies, we must be careful and use caution in how we wage this war and how we **treat** them. We must be mindful to look at this spiritually, not carnally, and to be honest with ourselves in our inspection of the matter and how we regard it. I know it is a thing that creates great conflict for me on a regular basis, and we must bring these thoughts into captivity.

To examine this closer let us look first at Matthew 5:43-48

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matt 5:43-48).

And then at Luke 6:

“But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also. Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again” (Luke 6:27-38).

Here we have two passages which cover the same ground, with the Luke passage giving us more specifics on what we ought to do in our behavior towards these enemies of Christ.

I also hope that the context of Luke 6 hasn't been forgotten by any of you. Look at the verse immediately preceding this passage which says

“Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets” (Luke 6:26).

Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you! As we've studied previously, the

use of the word woe is not insignificant, it indicates a direct condemnation by Christ. Woe unto us if we are loved by the world!!! Damnation and hell-fire upon us if the world loves us and embraces us and looks upon us with great favor. Having enemies should be well expected by all of us as the norm, and indeed it should be embraced by the people of God. These enemies ought not be of our making, made by worldly deeds; these enemies should not be made because we go about committing acts of violence or making ourselves to stink instead of endeavoring to live peaceably. No, we should have enemies and stink to them because we are to them the smell of death. That smell of death arises because of the words we speak, given to us by their ultimate enemy, their Judge and Creator. We must live our lives such that our enemies are the enemies of God for one reason and one reason only – because we are the servants of God. The enemies of the Church of God are first the enemies of God.

We will have enemies. We do have enemies. But we cannot treat our enemies, as men treat their enemies! We cannot think of the enemies of God as men think of their enemies! We cannot feel toward the enemies of God as men feel toward their enemies! Christ, our Master, demands of us better things, He has established a standard we must strive to adhere to and be examples in how to live it. He has told us to be “perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect”.

Look back at the passage from Matthew 5 and take notice what Jesus does with His words. He does battle with an incorrect, widely and dare I say universally held belief and cultural standard that is inconsistent with His teaching and purpose – He declares “ye have heard it said”. Notice He specifically does not say “it is written”. This is a thing we must be most careful about. We must stick to “it is written” and not wander into and make that which is not written become that which is “commonly said”. I believe this is a very simple error to make and when made is very difficult to overcome. Remember these Pharisees were wise in the law, they were really smart, had studied it their whole lives, and knew what it said. For hundreds of years though, these really smart people in the law had moved away from what was written and made it about what they said. That's a terrible spot to get into and we could easily fall into that spot if we are not careful.

When you look at what is written, of course you find nothing even close to this concept of hating your enemy. Nowhere in the law is any form of hatred called for, espoused, or even hinted at. Nowhere do the prophets teach us to hate our enemies as men do. And for any of you who might say, “Well, what about David? He says he hates those that hate the Lord!” Well, yes, he does! But don't think great thoughts, read, and strive to understand the words

“Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies” (Psalms 139:21-22).

Notice how in alignment with Christ's edict this is. He hates them with a perfect hatred, which is not the hatred of Man, looking at outward things, but with that spiritual judgment that causes us to take the precious from the vile! He despises their thoughts toward God, their rebellion, their willful debauchery, so much so that he is grieved in his heart to see the God of Mercy affronted in such a multitude of ways. He despises the way they flaunt their sinfulness down Main Street, and the attempts they make to bring God into their sins, indeed their demands that He bless them in their sins! How does that hatred manifest itself? Look to verse 19

"...depart from me therefore, ye bloody men...."

He will not have anything to do with those people, especially as it relates to spiritual matters. But you'll notice he doesn't speak anywhere in this Psalm of hard words, thoughts or deeds against them! He doesn't speak to lifting up his hand in vengeance or with some sense of avenging God of them for their rebellion. He doesn't seek to change them, or rid the world of them – because he readily acknowledges their already determined end at the beginning of verse 19

"Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God....."

Remember, this is a king who rules with absolute power. He easily could have set out on a campaign to root out the enemies of God and punish them, even unto death. But he didn't. Yes, he went to war as he was commanded to do, and destroyed those whom God told him to destroy. But he had no self-designed campaign to rid the earth of God's enemies by his hand. He submitted himself to the clear judgment of God in the matter, knowing He would rid Himself of His enemies in due time. David did not seek to execute personal vengeance or use his power to right what he sees as an affront to God. He is speaking here of how his soul is vexed by the sinfulness of those who claim to be God's people but are really his enemies. He hates them in a just way, as lawbreakers, as traitors to his merciful master, but seeks not to destroy them – he leaves that to God. We have no evidence in scripture of David mistreating one of his enemies out of spite or personal malice. You have this example from David that I think makes this point:

"And I am this day weak, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruiah be too hard for me: the LORD shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness" (2Sa 3:39).

David would have been well within his power to have dealt with Joab in any way he saw fit, as the king, but he left him for the Lord to deal with.

Then of course there is this example as well, which demonstrates David's submission and understanding of vengeance:

“And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, Blessed be the LORD, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his servant from evil: for the LORD hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head” (1 Samuel 25:39).

David knew, adopted, loved and followed this standard:

“Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD” (Leviticus 19:17-18).

This idea of hating your enemies and exacting revenge against them, for any reason, is in direct contravention of this direct statement regarding the matter:

“To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste” (Deu 32:35).

The Pharisees in particular had lost sight of this clear truth and commandment not to pursue vengeance against your enemies; they had so lost sight of it that it was now a common saying to love your neighbor but hate your enemy – I mean, because that clearly needs saying, right? Of course, the admonition from Scripture to love your neighbor says nothing about hating your enemy as we’ve seen, and to be clear, I believe the context makes it plain by using the words ‘brother’ and ‘neighbor’ that this is not just speaking about people in your family or this body. If you look up those words, especially neighbour, they are the most general words used in Scripture to describe the people around you. In other places, brother has a specific meaning, narrowing it down to fellow believers, but not here at Leviticus 19. Here, brother and neighbor mean anyone walking with you in the earth, and by obvious rules of inclusion, that would include your enemies. This was a self-serving thing that the Pharisees had done and taught to justify their spiteful behavior, and here Christ undoes that false teaching and makes it clear for the rest of human history that hating even your enemies is a grievous sin. YES! A sin! In one fell swoop Christ undoes hundreds of years of societal error and sets a clear plumb line standard for His followers to see and adhere to.

As an aside, notice that if it served Christ’s purpose to redefine marriage as between two men or two women or a man and a tomato or a woman and a dolphin, He could clearly have done so at Matthew 19 or anywhere else. As this passage clearly shows, where societal “norms” needed resetting, Christ was more than capable of resetting them to the standard. But He did not redefine marriage, and in fact established in Matthew 19 that the proper standard society should recognize did not, has not, and never will change from one man, one woman, for life. So all you new age phony goof-

balls who want to present this sin-tolerant, anything goes, weed smoking, Birkentstock wearing view of Christ or espouse this new-age, the-times-change-and-so-does-God-so-the-church-must-too nonsense, you need to just put aside that lie and carefully consider what He does here in Matthew 5 to correct an improperly held and widely pushed societal “norm”. If He didn't change a norm, He didn't change it on purpose.

So, if we are supposed to love these wicked people who so spitefully use us, why do I tell you not to wish the blessings of God upon them, not even wishing them God speed? How can those two things be possible, since they are seemingly contradictory? That, my friends, is why I insist that this is a spiritual discussion. If we look at this with an earthly, carnal eye, then indeed it would be impossible, and we must then resort to silly ideas like "hate the sin but love the sinner", which of course makes no sense and is utterly unscriptural. If we look at this through the lens of carnal knowledge, we end up in the corner sucking our thumbs needing some sort of narcotic to regulate our mood swings. Consider this:

“Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual” (1Co 2:13).

We must not look at these things as Man's wisdom teaches, which is exactly what Christ is saying in Matthew 5. That means we must be very careful not to look for things in Scripture which aren't there, to ascribe things in the words that aren't there, to add things, subtract things or ignore things that are plainly in the words. These may be hard sayings for some, things that go directly against our nature, that go against the common thinking, or the societal norms. They may even go against ways we have thought in the past, making changes even harder. Look around us, friends. How hateful is this world? Not just the all-around violence, the racism, the baby killing, the child abuse, the hard looks, the hard words; look at the spiritual violence, the hatred of truth, the hatred of a standard of any kind in any context. If you aren't actively promoting sin, applauding it when it happens around you, joining in the lynch mobs of anyone that won't practice some soul-damning act, you are hated by this world. It is everywhere around us all the time.

I'm telling you that we must genuinely love our enemies. We must hold no grudge or ill will toward them for any reason. This love is not simply an absence of hatred, some sense of neutrality. It is a genuine Biblical love for them. Jesus doesn't tell us simply not to hate them, but to love them. This love must be genuine or why call it love? Christ directs us to be perfect, and if our love is not genuine, or has some sort of caveat to it, we are not striving to be perfect and are at risk of being in direct violation of this clear directive. If we try to find ways around this, we are precisely like the Pharisees Jesus is preaching against here. We are the same hypocrites they are routinely called if we do not look at our enemies and feel genuine love from our hearts, not just platitudes and claims of love or trying to make it out that this or that thing we're

doing is love.

We have discussed this love from this pulpit as meaning our preaching on the streets. That of course is very true, since you can't look at Leviticus 19:17 and come to any other conclusion. If you don't tell everyone you can the truth about God, you have not properly demonstrated love to them. I submit to you, however, that simply standing on a street corner holding a sign is not enough, and we must each carefully consider how we look at the battle we are engaged in and what our motivations are. **Why** we are warning our neighbors is very important. We can absolutely do the right thing for the wrong reasons. Are we warning people out of genuine concern for their souls, or out of some half-baked sense of what we want to define as duty, or even worse, some pride-infested sense of self-worth, some belief that we are superior to those with whom we walk this earth, because we believe we have been entrusted with these words we have some right to the favor of God and some right to look upon those to whom we preach with contempt? That's dangerous ground right there if that's where you're walking, and I'm telling you we've walked that ground a few times over the years. I know I have in one way or another at times.

Does this love mean we are not vexed with the unrighteous behavior of the world around us? Does it mean we cannot look upon this horrifically sinful generation and not get genuinely angry about the way they mock our God, how they flaunt their wanton disregard for the clear, simple commandments of our Master? Does it mean in any way that we should not rise up in zeal and cry aloud as the Sons of Thunder did with hell-fire and brimstone preaching against these wicked people we walk amongst? Can we not rise up in righteous indignation and cry against these altars, pull down their idols, and mock their false religion? Does it mean we have to walk around with downcast eyes, wringing our hands and having a mewly tone in our voice, begging people to "just please come to Jesus if you wouldn't mind putting that fag flag away", apologizing for our service to the one and only King?

Absolutely, unequivocally, 100% NO!!! We must not equivocate, compromise or in any way draw back away from the preaching of God's standard. We must do it without apology, we must be zealous for our God, and we must do it all because we love these people.

Let's go back to Romans 12 where Brother Sam spent some time with us recently to see more explicitly how we should behave toward our enemies:

"Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that

weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:9-21).

When we meditate upon how not to be conformed to this world, one of the first things we must do is let our love be without dissimulation – that is, without hypocrisy! Meditate on that and you’ll start to feel heartily the importance of this. Look around us at what this world calls love, and you don’t have to dig very deep to see how full of lies and hypocrisy it is. The world’s definition of love is not ours! The Bible’s definition of love is not the world’s definition! The execution of Bible love, that is dwelling in honesty in all things on the earth, both in your own heart and from your own mouth, is at complete odds with the “let everyone do what they want” definition of love we are bombarded with from every angle every waking hour of every day. There is no love of God in the hearts and minds of the world, there is no love for His servants or His word, much less love for one another. All around us all we see is gnashing and biting on one another, and that is a pit we must steer very, very far from.

In the same passage, we are instructed to love without hypocrisy and to abhor evil. These two concepts go hand in hand and are part of that perfection Christ instructs us toward in Matthew 5. There is no contradiction here if that abhorrence is in the spirit of Godly perfection and in love we seek to help those who practice evil by speaking to them the truth. If you do not abhor the evil, I do not know how you can properly warn the world against it. That was the problem the Pharisees faced. They couldn’t bring themselves to abhor evil and keep themselves from it.

Look at the love we are exhorted to here, and notice that there is a general love and then brotherly love. That’s intentional. There is the love that we feel toward the saints of God who labor in this vineyard, who war with us on a daily basis, a love and affection that grows over time as we are more tightly compacted together, as we grow in faith and spiritual understanding. Then there is that general, default love that we must hold toward the rest of Mankind, a love which may be difficult to find in our hearts given the grievous and wretched way we are treated by the people we sojourn amongst. That love grows from the same beginnings. And we must find both types of love in our hearts if we are to grow in our love of God.

I suggest to you there is only one way to find this love given this environment, where the world mocks us, scoffs at us, belittles our faith, works to rip our children from our arms, seeks our livelihoods and of course our very lives on a daily basis. Paul tells us how

“...Be not wise in your own conceits” (Romans 12:6).

This simple admonition is the beginning and ending of our ability to love the enemies we find ourselves surrounded by. If we are high minded toward our station with God or over the light He has given us and the understanding of His words He has afforded us, we tend toward pride and arrogance, which cannot abide in the same place as love toward our enemies and each other. We must fully accept and submit to the fact that we are no different than these with whom we do battle. We are from the same fallen bloodline. We are no different in our natural depravity and our sinfulness, we are subject to the same passions and the same temptations. The only thing that makes us any different is the grace of God, and if we do not keep that in the forefront of our hearts and minds at all times we quickly become “wise in our own conceits”. If we humble ourselves before God and keep that in front of our eyes and at the top of our hearts a proper view of our enemies is possible.

How do we do that? How do we look at these people in love who view us with so much hatred they physically tremble with rage, and if they saw us on fire would throw themselves onto the fire just to make sure there was enough fuel to consume us? We are told nine different times in Scripture how to accomplish it – *“Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself”* (Lev. 19:18, Lev. 19:34, Matt. 19:19, Matt. 22:39, Mark 12:31, Luke 10:27, Rom. 13:9, Gal. 5:14, James 2:8). Connect those verses with Ephesians 5:29 *“[F]or no man ever yet hated his own flesh”* and Proverbs 11:17 *“[T]he merciful man doeth good to his own soul: but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh”*. When we look upon these enemies with the proper spirit and view them as we view ourselves, as weak, base, depraved creatures unable to save ourselves, how can we look upon them in anger and wrath or look to raise our hand in vengeance toward them? Would you seek vengeance against yourself? Of course not. It is a preposterous idea. And that is why the commandment is there. Be clear, this is not a suggestion, it is a commandment. And that is the proper spiritual view of our enemies, which again is why I tell you we must view this spiritually not carnally. This is as much about the spirit with which we approach our warfare as anything.

As a matter of practice, we have clear direction on what it looks like to love your enemy, aside from that obvious, primary element of telling them the truth. And when I say primary element, I mean that if you aren't doing that first, i.e., pronouncing the truth to the enemies of God boldly, plainly, clearly, regularly, at all costs, then none of these other things amount to a hill of beans. They are the new window coverings you're installing on a burning house. Warning this generation to flee the wrath to come is the greatest most important kindness and love we can show to them, regardless of how they feel about it, and we mustn't forget that, nor must we let them drown it out with their caterwauling about how hateful it is to hear the truth, and try to substitute that loving-kindness with some material thing that THEY call charity. We must use the scriptural definitions and spiritual view of these things.

But let us examine some of the things that are specifically called out as additional ways to love our enemies:

- Feed your enemy food or drink if they're hungry or thirsty, and clothe them when they need it. I'm not going to compel you to give a free lunch to the guy holding a "Homeless Vet" sign at Huntoon and Wanamaker – he's obviously steeped in that idolatry of flag worship and trying to use it to his advantage. But I'm not going to discourage you from giving what you can when you feel it is right to do so; there is no sin in earthly charity, just do it quietly and don't expect a pat on the back for doing what God says is right to do, as those who look at these matters carnally do.
- We must help our enemies when we see they need it. Look to the story of the Samaritan to see how this looks. I've thought this was a parable, but I'm not so sure. It doesn't say in Luke 10 that Jesus spoke to them a parable, or language like that. I think this may have been a story of the day that He uses to drive home this point. We can't look at some person in trouble, no matter if it's Jerry Berger or Byron Ensley or one of these others who have so heavily oppressed us and not offer them help if we see them in need, so long as it doesn't endorse some sin. Now, if they don't take it, that's their business, but we can't just walk away from these people if we see them in distress.
- Pray for your enemies – I stress **for them** not just for deliverance **from** them. We've covered this in the past, but again, this praying for your enemies is asking God to show mercy on them, not because He won't if we don't ask, but because it is our obligation to Him to do so and to be pleased with what He has done whether He shows that mercy or not. If He'll have mercy on us, why not anyone? Are we so special that we somehow deserve this mercy? God forbid that thought should ever enter our hearts or minds. That also doesn't mean when we are in the throes of an attack where they are trying to take our children or our livelihoods, or our church building or our websites or even our very lives, I say it doesn't mean we don't pray to God to deal with them. We must pray for deliverance. But we also have to leave it open to Him to deal with them in whatever way seems fit to Him, because what if the method of deliverance for us is to cause them to see their sins and repent? How foolish would those in Damascus have felt, and how sinful would they have been if they were praying for deliverance from the oppression of Saul and instead of praying for deliverance they were praying for his liver to shrivel up and his lungs to collapse and his brain to explode, all in the name of being specific in prayer? Indeed how offensive might that have been to Paul when he found out about it? Even under the oppressive thumb of our enemies, when they are allowed to execute some power against us, we must be watchful of our tongues and careful of our prayers, submitting ourselves to God to address the oppressors in whatever manner He sees fit, and always loving our enemies. None of that makes imprecatory prayers sinful or out of line. They must be used with great consideration

however.

- If they strike you, don't strike back, but offer up your other cheek. I think this one is pretty simple, and doesn't need a lot of explanation. We don't hit back when they hit us. Period. We don't sue them no matter how much they deserve it, we don't seek remedy against them at the law, we just let it go. I'll say also that I do think this is different than when the government backs us into a corner seeking to remove our ability to preach, but we must consider those events in this context.
- Bless them. Not in some generic, mealy-mouthed, dress-wearing Popish "bless you my son" sense. Do not bless them in their sins, do not advocate for their sins, and for the love of God don't encourage them in their sins. This is what I was targeting in my discussion on God speed. We must not encourage others to sin by wishing God to bless them while they run to some sinful activity, while they go into a house of idols to worship the devil or swish off to the staging area of a fag pride parade, or walk in line to kill their unborn baby! I think the best and most appropriate thing we can ask God to do is have mercy on their souls, and that is the blessing I have taken to using – "May God have mercy on your soul". And despite the way that phrase is depicted many times as a pejorative, it isn't. When issued from a heart that genuinely wishes that God would indeed have mercy on their soul, there is nothing pejorative about it. It is also a completely different thing than "God bless you". I cannot stress that difference enough!! Why would we want God to bless their idolatry, their fornication, their fagdom, their pedophile priests, or any of the other sinful enterprises they undertake as a vocation? Let me add here that I will not ask God to bless this or any other nation for that very reason. At every level of government they are only about promoting sin and making the commission of sin the only legal activity in the land! It would be a sin to ask God to bless this nation. Now, that doesn't mean I won't ask God to look upon these leaders and give them a proper spirit to do their jobs correctly. I will and do absolutely ask Him to give us just rulers, that we might deal with people in our ministry that aren't going to actively oppress us or work against us or seek to bring us harm through their governmental power. Again, that is not the same thing as asking God to bless this vile, cursed nation. Hopefully you see that.
- Not returning railing for railing (1 Peter 3:9). This is one of the hardest things to do, to not get sucked into some empty disputation and go tit for tat against these false preachers, their minions, and the countless arm chair theologians in this world. It is one of the many reasons I find social media so abhorrent. It is too simple to have your life sucked away one response at a time as you reply to every forum comment, Facebook post or Tweet that you think does disservice to God. There's preaching and there's empty disputation. We all need to come to grips with which is which and not fall into the latter, myself included.

I encourage you to study closely what I consider to be the best examples of how to model our view of our enemies and our behavior toward them.

- Look to the life of Noah. Noah is noted as a preacher of righteousness, and by his act of building the ark he condemned them, not by his words. They were already condemned, but his actions proved it. It was his obedience to the commandments of God that showed their condemnation. He didn't rail against them or waste his time with pointless disputation – the flood was coming and he was told to get the ark built to the saving of his house. He preached along the way the warning necessary, but that was it. He preached righteousness and the consequences of sin. His actions and obedience demonstrated them.
- Consider Jeremiah. I've wondered at him for a long time, at the way he mourned over the horrific things that were happening and going to happen to those people he lived amongst, all while preaching an unmitigated warning to them that more and worse was coming. His affection and yearning for his people to turn to the Lord was so strong God told him to stop praying for them because He wasn't going to hear him anymore on the matter. If you look at the world around us and occasionally don't feel some sadness for these people who are destroying themselves, study this man. He was treated just as and maybe more horrifically than we have been, and he still mourned for the horrible things that befell his countrymen, not in an inordinate way where he cursed God for His righteous judgments, of course. He loved those people and genuinely wished for them to turn from their evil ways, but wasn't about to get sucked into their institutionalized evil for fear of losing his own soul.
- Finally, consider Moses. Now we know Moses was the meekest man alive (Numbers 12:3) but we also know his patience wore thin and his anger waxed hot with the children of Israel many times, as when he broke the tables of the law (Ex. 32:19). But despite the Lord telling him to step aside so that He could destroy them and make of Moses a greater nation than the Israelites, Moses knelt before God with his face to the ground praying for their forgiveness and the mercy of God rather than His unfiltered wrath to fall on them. If this man, who knew the horrible sinfulness of these people first hand, was chided by many times, rebelled against regularly, and the people sought to kill on several occasions can pray for God's enemies, can't we?

And now comes the “I told you all of that to tell you this moment” :-). I believe that a perfected love of our enemies is required to perfect the charity we seek amongst ourselves as the Body and Bride of Christ.

“Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:” (1 Timothy 1:5).

“And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness” (Colossians 3:14).

In order to achieve that perfectness, the perfection that Christ exhorts us to, we must pursue all things from a pure heart, charitably, and that includes an unfeigned love of our enemies. A proper, scripturally sound love that is not conformed to the world and is visible in every way possible. We must have a love that is a part of our daily battle against Satan, who is at war with the very idea of the love of God and the love our Savior exhorts us to. The love of our enemies is a testament against the unholy deeds and words they commit and speak against us, and we have examples in scripture to follow in proper behavior if we will humble ourselves and submit to the commandments of God. Without this true and unfeigned love for our enemies, every utterance of "I love you" that we say to one another is, frankly, a lie and cheapens the very words, just as the world cheapens them by calling the pursuit of their unnatural desires and lusts "love". If you're going to misuse and abuse the word, just don't use it. If you can't love your enemies as Christ has commanded, don't try to carve out some exception for yourself in the plumb line standard, nudging it just a little bit off plumb so you can feel good about yourself and fool yourself that you truly love the people of God, you just can't bring yourself to love these other people, though. You live that lie long enough, thinking if you say it enough times it has to be true, and you'll die with that lie going straight to hell. It's not like math, where if you can do the hard stuff, you can almost by default do the easy stuff, too. You have to do the hard stuff before you can properly, truly, genuinely, in the right spirit, with the right truth, and really mean to do the so-called easy stuff, where your actions follow the words every single time. That's the goal. 100% love and charity every minute of every day that is genuine, pure, unfiltered, unadulterated, unfeigned, actions match your words, compacted, open hearted love for the brethren. Your enemies get to come along for the ride, but you have to master that love of them FIRST.

I know this is a hard thing to do, to love these people who hate us. I struggle with it as much or more than probably any in this congregation, so don't think I'm talking to any of you individually. I'm not. I'm talking to all of us collectively, that as a body we might be perfected and be found acceptable before God when the Bridegroom comes.

And to any of you hateful birds listening in Internet land, don't think this is some call for a softening of our message, our delivery methods or our preaching. It's not. God still hates fags, God still hates fag enablers, and the vast majority of mankind is still going to hell. We aren't here to condemn you, we're here to tell you you've already been condemned and there's nothing we can or would do about that. Obey today while there is still time is our warning, and may God have mercy on your soul.

I love you all dearly, and apologize again for whatever confusion I may have caused with my previous sermon. Hopefully I cleared all that up. If not, let me know and I'll try again.