

Westboro Baptist Church
April 27, 2014

This continues from last Sunday, the subject is how we should treat our enemies

Mt. 5:43-48 ¶ Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. 44 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; 45 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. 46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? 47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? 48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Bless Them that Curse You -

Gill - Bless them that curse you: when wicked men curse you, as Shimei cursed David (2nd Sam. 16:5), do not "render evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing"; give good words, use kind language, mild and soft expressions; such as may either win upon them, or put them to shame and silence: "bless, and curse not"; the latter belongs to them, the former to you; "let them curse, but bless thou": curses better fit their mouths, and blessings thine.

Calvin - We learn from these words, how far believers ought to be removed from every kind of revenge: for they are not only forbidden to ask it from God, but are commanded to banish and efface it from their minds so completely, as to bless their enemies.

Matthew Henry - When we speak to them, we must answer their reviling's with courteous and friendly words, and not render railing for railing.

1 Pe 2:21-23 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when

he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.

Do Good to Them that Hate You –

Gill - ***Do good to them that hate you*** – *These that hate you in their hearts, and discover their hatred by their actions; do not make returns in the same way, but on the contrary, do them all the good you can; perform all the kind offices that lie in your power; let them partake of your bounty and liberality; if poor, feed, clothe, and supply them, as you are able, with the necessaries of life; and give them wholesome advice for the good of their souls: by "so doing," you will "heap coals of fire on their heads" [Rom 12:20]; of enemies, make them friends; engage their affections to you, and you may be happy instruments in doing them good, both in soul and body.*

Trapp - *Do good, that is, be ready to help them and relieve them at all essays [necessities]. Christ did them all good for bodies and souls; for he healed Malchus' ear and washed Judas' feet.*

Matthew Henry - *Do good to them that hate you, and that will be a better proof of love than good words. Be ready to do them all the real kindness that you can, and glad of an opportunity to do it, in their bodies, estates, names, families; and especially to do good to their souls.*

Poole - *Be charitable unto and do good to your enemies. And for our enemies, this precept prohibits not the seeking of a just satisfaction for wrongs done unto us in a way of public justice, yet not without a mixture of charity. Beloved, we do not usually even do this when it comes to the criminal acts that are done against us for our unapologetic words. We usually refrain from bringing the charges against those that misuse us and we usually do not even participate in the charges that are brought or make witness impact statements or such.*

Clarke - *Do good to them that hate you - Give your enemy every proof that you love him. We must not love in tongue, but in deed and in truth.*

Pray for Them That Despitefully Use You –

Gill: *Pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you - What Christ here commands and advises to, he himself did; for as he hung upon the cross, he prayed for his crucifiers, who were then using him in the most despiteful, as well as cruel manner; saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do": and in this he has left us an example, that we should tread in his steps; and here in he was quickly followed by his holy martyr Stephen; who, whilst he was being stoned, prayed for his persecutors and murderers, saying, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." This breathes out the true spirit of Christianity, and is peculiar to it. The whole of this is directly opposite to the tenets of the Jews, particularly the Scribes and Pharisees; who allowed of revenge, and keeping anger against any person that had done them an injury.*

Matthew Henry - *We must pray that God will forgive them, that they may never fare the worse for anything they have done against us, and that he would make them to be at peace with us; and this is one way of making them so.*

Trapp - *Pray for them, that God would pardon their sins and turn their hearts. This is our Saviour's precept, and this was his practice. He melted over Jerusalem (the slaughterhouse of his saints and himself), and was grieved at the hardness of their hearts, Mr 6:3,4.*

Clarke - *Pray for them which despitefully use you - is another exquisitely reasonable precept. I cannot change that wicked man's heart; and while it is unchanged he will continue to harass me: God alone can change it: then I must implore him to do that which will at once secure the poor man's salvation, and contribute so much to my own peace.*

One of our elders recently said: *An enemy of the church of God today, could be brought low by the Lord, and be a humble servant tomorrow. Today's Saul of Tarsus may well be tomorrow's Paul.*

What about imprecatory prayers? *Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: depart from me therefore, ye bloody men. For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain. 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 (Psalm 139:19-22).

Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee. (Jer 7:16; Jer 11:14; Jer 14:11)

John 17:9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

Beloved, there is a place for imprecatory prayers, that divine justice be accomplished, but listen to Paul: *Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words. At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. (2 Tim 4:14-16).* There is an imprecatory prayer by Paul with a general caveat for mercy. It cannot ever be about our private revenge, but divine justice by God is another matter. The men of Sodom vexed Lot's righteous soul day by day and he watched their destruction. (2nd Pet. 2:6-9).

Be Therefore Perfect, as your Father -

Gill: ***Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father-** Such, who profess God to be their Father, ought to imitate him, particularly in their love to men, which ought to be extended to the same objects, as the divine goodness is; that, as he shows regard in a providential way to all men, good and bad, just and unjust, and his tender mercies are over all his works; so ought they to love all men with a natural affection, and hate no man, no, not their enemies:*

The companion passage to Matthew 5 is in Luke 6.

Luke 6:27-36 But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, 28 Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. 29 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. 30 Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. 31 And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. 32 For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. 33 And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. 34 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. 35 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. 36 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

There are just a few new concepts in the Luke version, not contained in Matthew's account.

31 And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

Mat. 7:12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Matthew Henry: We must make righteousness our rule, and be ruled by it. We cannot expect to receive good things from God, if we are not fair... and do that which is honest, and lovely, and of good report among men. We must not only be devout, but honest, else our devotion is but hypocrisy. We must do that to our neighbour which we ourselves acknowledge to be fit and reasonable: the appeal is made to our own judgment. If I were making such a one's bargain, labouring under such a one's infirmity and affliction, how should I desire and expect to be treated? And this is a just supposition, because we know not how soon their case may really be ours.

Clark - This is a most sublime precept, and highly worthy of the grandeur and beneficence of the just God who gave it. The general meaning of it is this: "Guided by justice and mercy, do unto all men as you would have them to do to you, were your circumstances and theirs reversed."

Trapp - To wind up all in a word (for it would be too tedious to set down each particular duty), let this serve for a general rule of direction in common conversation, and mutual interdealings one with another. This is the royal law, the standard of all equity in this kind, a sealed weight and rule, according to which we must converse with all men.

35 for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.

Matthew Henry - It is the glory of God that He is kind to the unthankful and to the evil, bestows the gifts of common providence even upon the worst of men, who are

every day provoking Him, and rebelling against him, and using those very gifts to His dishonour.

36 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

Clarke - Be ye therefore merciful – we should be compassionate. We are to be easily entreated, and are at all times ready to contribute to the uttermost of their power to relieve or remove the miseries of the distressed. A merciful or compassionate man easily forgets injuries; pardons them without being solicited; and does not permit repeated returns of ingratitude to deter him from doing good, even to the unthankful and the unholy.

Abraham could have punished the King of Sodom for their over the top awful sin, by rightfully claiming the loot that he saved but he did not. Abraham would not take as much as a shoelace from the King of Sodom, Gen. 14.

I have read this story many times and I still find it to be amazing.

Gen. 14:1 And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations; 2 That these made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar.

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10 And the vale of Siddim was full of slimepits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there; and they that remained fled to the mountain. 11 And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way.

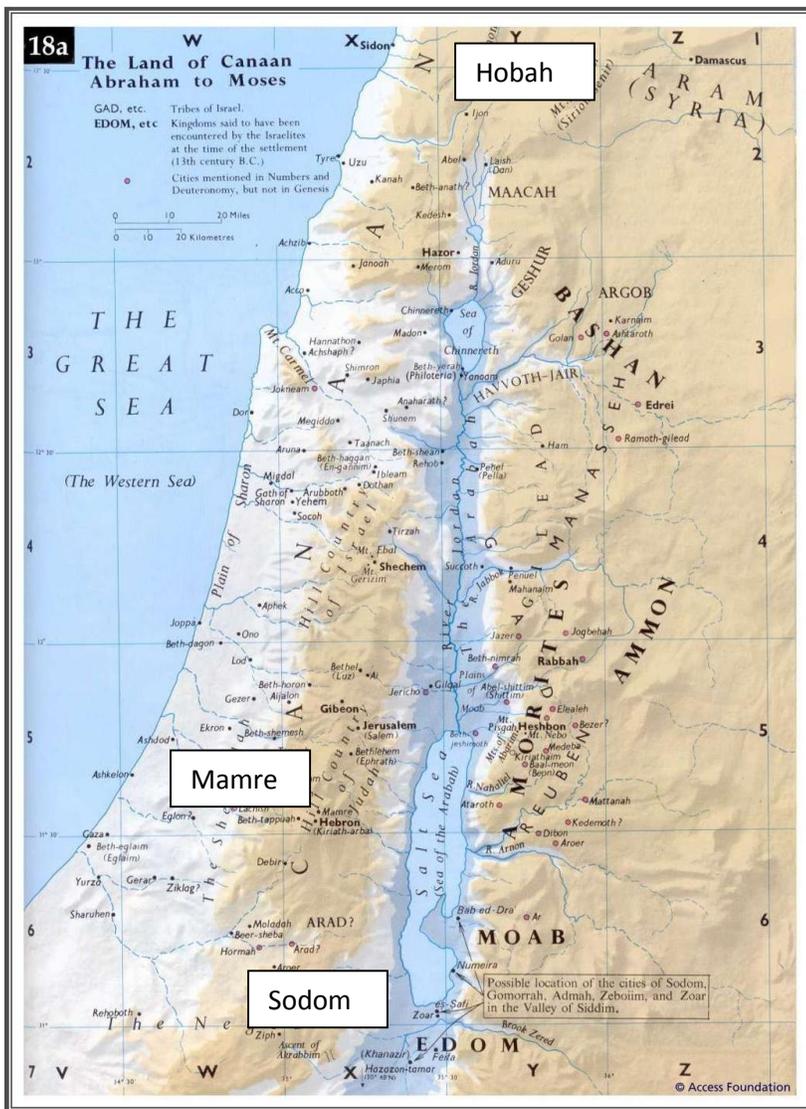
Gill - Ver. 11 - And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah - They entered these cities and pillaged them, and carried off everything valuable in them, that was portable or could be driven, as their cattle. They ... came for plunder, and to get an equivalent for nonpayment of tribute.

12 And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed. 13 And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with Abram. 14 And when Abram heard that his brother

was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan.

Abraham took his life in his hands here to get Lot and his family back. Abraham had a few hundred men and he chased four armies who had thousands of battle hardened experienced soldiers across what would later become the nation of Israel.

The round trip to Dan/Hobah was around 120 miles. That is a long way beloved to pursue an army through hostile lands to get your beloved brethren back.



15 And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus.

Gill Ver. 15. And he divided himself against them, he and his servants by night. Together with his confederates; and very probably their whole three was divided into four parts... to make a show of a greater army, thereby to intimidate the enemy. Abram seems to have understood the art of war, and the use of stratagems in it; and, as it might be night before he could come up to them, he took the advantage of that, and fell upon them unawares, when some were asleep in their beds, and others drunk, as Josephus relates; and

who also says, it was on the fifth night after Abram had knowledge of what had

happened at Sodom. It appears this commando-Navy Seals type operation, took about a week to pull off.

16 And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people. 17 And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale. 18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. 19 And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: 20 And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all. 21

And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.

Gill - Ver. 21, And the king of Sodom said unto Abram give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself - meaning by "persons" or "souls," as in the original, his own subjects that had been taken and carried away by the four kings, and were now brought back by Abram; and by "the goods," those of his own and his subjects, which their conquerors had spoiled them of, but were now recovered, and which he was very willing Abram should have as his right, according to the laws of war, and as a reward of his labors.

22 And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth,

Gill - Ver. 22 -When he set out on his expedition, it is very probable he prayed to God for success, and swore that if he prospered him, that he would receive no profit or advantage from it to himself; or now in the presence of Melchizedek he lift up his hands and swore that he would take none of the goods he had recovered to his own line.

Barnes - I have lifted up my hand. This is a serious matter with Abram. Either before, or then and there, he made an oath or solemn asseveration before God, with uplifted hand, that he would not touch the property of Sodom. He must have felt that there was danger of moral contamination in coming into any political relationship with these cities.

23 That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich:

Gill - Ver. 23. That I will not [take] from a thread even to a shoelatchet - That is, from a thread used in sewing garments (such as a lace for the head/hair) to, the string which fastens the shoes to the foot. He would take nothing of his from head to foot. He would not take that which was of the least value and importance that could be conceived of lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich - lest he should upbraid him with it afterwards, and say, that all his riches were owing to him; whereas God had promised to bless him, and make him rich and great, as he had begun to do, and still would more and more; and in whom his trusted, and to whom he was desirous all the glory of his greatness and riches should be ascribed.

Matthew Henry - He not only resigned the persons to him, who, being delivered out of the hand of their enemies, ought to have served Abram, but he restored all the goods too. He would not take the least thing that had ever belonged to the king of Sodom...The people of God must, for their credit's sake, take heed of doing anything that looks mean or mercenary, or that savours of covetousness and self-seeking. Probably Abram knew the king of Sodom to be a proud and scornful man, and one that would be apt to turn such a thing as this to his reproach afterwards, though most unreasonably. When we have to do with such men, we have need to act with particular caution.

Beloved here are additional verses on this general subject of how we are to treat all people.

Titus 3:2 To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.

Gal. 6: 10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men... especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

Rom. 12:17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. 18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. 19

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. 20 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. 21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

“If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst give him drink,” does not seem to be primarily talking about spiritual food or drink but literally if your enemy lacks something provide it to him or her. Although, this could certainly be a secondary application of the verse.

Poole - *Doing them common offices of kindness. If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink. This is a doing good to them that hate us, relieving them in their pressing necessities.*

Gill - *If he thirst give him drink; which includes all offices of humanity and beneficence to be performed unto them:*

Barnes - *Hunger and thirst here are put for want in general. If thine enemy is needy in any way, do him good, and supply his wants.*

Prov. 25:21-22 *If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: 22 For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee.*

Gill = *If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat - Which includes all manner of food; whatever persons may have in their houses, that they should bring out and feed the hungry with, even though an enemy; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink;...these two, bread and water, take in all the necessities of life; and giving them is expressive of all acts of beneficence and humanity to be performed to enemies.*

Beloved, this is talking about food, drink, clothing or some other basic necessity of life, that they cannot fulfill and you can.

Ex. 23:4 *If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again.*

1Th 5:15 *See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.*

1Pe 3:9 *Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.*

2nd. Pet 2:16 *As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. 17 Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.*

Prov. 4:17 *Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth: 18 Lest the LORD see it, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him.*

Heb. 12:14 *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: the LORD shall reward thee.*

Mt 10:16 *Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.*

James 3:14 *But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. 15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. 16 For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. 18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.*

Heb. 12:14 *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.*

Gill: **Follow peace with all men** - *That are in a natural and domestic relation to one another, being of the same family; and that are in a civil and political one, being of the same nation, city, or society; and that are in a spiritual one, being members of the same church... yea, even peace is to be followed with enemies, as much as in us lie...*

to Christ, the Prince of peace; and to the Spirit, one of whose fruits is peace; and to the characters of the saints, who are sons of peace, and who are called to peace, and who make a profession of the Gospel of peace.

*Gill - **And holiness:** this being added to peace, shows that peace is no further to be followed than is consistent with holiness; and holiness here does not design any particular branch of holiness, as chastity of the body and mind, but the whole of holiness, inward and outward; and intends true holiness, in opposition to ceremonial holiness, which the Hebrews were fond of, and pursued after.*

Whatever we do in whatever situation we are talking about regarding our enemies the spiritual proposition is: the flesh does not want to love our enemies beloved, it wants to hate them and exact revenge on them. The flesh wants to take pride in who we are and what they are. "There but for the grace of God go I." The actual saying was this: "There but for the grace of God, goes John Bradford." It was spoken by John Bradford, (the English reformer) while imprisoned in the Tower of London when he saw criminals being led toward their execution at Tyburn. Following Edward the VI's early death, England was ruled by Mary Tudor "Bloody Mary" who was zealous to bring back the Roman Catholic religion and to discipline so-called "heretics." Before Mary's reign was a month old John Bradford was arrested on a trivial charge and confined to the Tower of London, never to be a free man again. He was burned at the stake on July 1, 1555. If it were not for the grace of God beloved, we would be as our enemies.

I love you all. Amen