

Our text today is from Matthew chapter 5. If you would stand with me for the reading of God's word. Matthew five beginning in verse 43. Jesus says beginning of verse 43. You have heard that it was said, you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy, but I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you so that you may be sons of your father who is in heaven for He causes his Son to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? If you greet only your brothers, what more you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Therefore you are to be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect. Let's pray together. Father we once again come into your presence thanking you for your salvation that you granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity. Thank you for the mercy and grace Father that was shown to us in Christ. Father we thank you for this text that we are going over today. We pray Lord that you will bless it. That You would bless the reading of it. To bless the preaching, the hearing. Father that you would give us understanding. That You would help us Father to realize, that loving our enemies Father is not something that is contrary to what you do. Father you indeed show a love even to those who hate you. And as we love our enemies we are loving as you do, in showing ourselves to be sons of the Father. Father give us understanding, give us strength, encourage our hearts with this text, and encourage our hearts Lord to know while we were yet enemies of You, that You loved us enough Father that you sent Christ to redeem us. Let that permeate our thinking this morning as well. Thank you for this portion of Scripture, thank you for the Lord Jesus Christ. And it's in his name we asked pray all these things. And all of God's Children said amen. Please be seated. We've been working our way through the Sermon on the Mount, and last week we had discussed the Old Testament law of an eye for an eye. We talked about what that was actually meaning. What the contrast was between the religious leaders and what Jesus was teaching them concerning the Old Testament law. And today is the sixth antithesis of Jesus against the tradition of the religious leaders of Israel. This is the sixth time that we read so far in the sermon on the Mount, where Jesus says you've heard it said, but I say to you, there is so much here, that it would be difficult to try to get it all in, but I pray this morning we could have at least a grasp on what Jesus is trying to teach us as he is commanding us to love our enemies. This morning we are going to look at as we work our way through the text we're going to look the Old Testament law what the Old Testament law actually said how it was

manipulated by the religious leaders to be what Jesus is saying how they taught you love your neighbor but you hate your enemy. We're going to look at Jesus's command to us to not only love them and what that means but to pray for them. You know that's something that we take sometimes and perhaps we pray a prayer as such like Father I pray that you will render correct justice against them or something along that line. That's not really what Jesus is trying to tell us as we pray for our enemies. We pray for our enemies. We pray for the salvation. We pray for their well-being. We'll examine the Father's love for both the righteous and the unrighteous. That God indeed even shows a love to those who hate him. We call this God's common grace to all mankind. And then last we're going to look and see how it is that our sanctification depends on us loving as God loves. So we'll begin verse 43. Jesus says, you have heard it said you shall love your neighbor's and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you. Now in that they just as Jesus has been doing so far throughout the Sermon on the Mount. He's going to clarify what the Old Testament law actually said and contrast it with what the scribes and the Pharisees are teaching. Now obviously they're teaching that you are to love your neighbor, but you're to hate your enemy. Now an enemy could be the Romans. An enemy could be just a Gentile in general. Whoever they regarded to be unclean. They say you hate these but you love your neighbor. It came from the passage of Scripture in Leviticus. Leviticus chapter 19 in verse 18. The text says, you shall not take vengeance, nor bear a grudge against the sons of your people. But you shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord. Now what they did was they took an emphasis on the Old Testament law saying you don't bear grudge against the sons of your people. And so they formed a belief system around that to say that all who are Israelites you love them, but you hate everybody else. But in fact the Old Testament law never gave an opportunity for hating in that way. In Deuteronomy chapter 23. Listen to what the law says here. Deuteronomy 23 in verse 7. You shall not detest an Edomite, for he is your brother. You shall not detest an Egyptian, because you were an alien in his land. Now it's very interesting when you think of the Edomite's. They are the descendants of Esau as the children of Israel had come out of Egypt they were making their way to the promise land. They get you read about it in Numbers chapter 20 and get to the land of Edom and then they request to the king let us pass through your land we won't even buy water we want take anything we just want to pass through your land in order to get where were going. And the king of Edom said you

may not pass if you do try to come in and we will come at you with the sword. And so Israel had to go around the land of Edom in order to try to get to the promise land. And the Lord says through Moses in the law don't detest Amorites. Don't hate them. He's your brother and then He goes on to say we can look at and say okay well Esau Jacob they were brothers, maybe that's why the Lord is not allowing them to hate Esau because they are in the family in a sense. But then He goes on to say, you don't detest an Egyptian. You are an alien in their land. Now there's no descendants that are in common with Egyptians and with the children of Israel they were slaves in the land of Egypt for 400 years were oppressed by them. And the Lord says to them don't hate them either you're an alien in their land you don't detest them you don't hate them even for an enemy like Egypt in that day. He still did not allow the children of Israel to hate them and Deuteronomy chapter 10 another passage that we went over on Wednesday nights beginning in verse 17 Listen to what He says here, For the Lord your God is the God of gods in the Lord of lords the great the mighty and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe. He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows his love for the alien by giving him food and clothing, so show your love for the alien for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. So he makes it very clear that you love your neighbor in Leviticus you don't hate the Egyptian you don't hate the Edomite's don't hate your enemies. You shall love for those that are strangers in your land there's nowhere in the Old Testament law where God says love only Israelites and hate everybody else, but that was the prevailing thought in the day of Jesus. That's what the scribes and Pharisees were teaching. We hate those that are not of us. And so Jesus reiterates what the law had already said, I say to you love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you. Now obviously love in this context is agape which means it's the selfless act of the will. It's not a feeling that you have. I doubt very seriously that we would have a feeling of love for our enemies especially if they've wronged us in a severe way. But what the Scripture does tell us to do is to love them with an act of the will love to do for them. The apostle Paul gives us some understanding of what that means as he quotes in Roman chapter 12 from the Proverbs. In Romans chapter 12 verse 20 the apostle Paul says, but if your enemy is hungry feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink, for in doing so you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Now the Old Testament again says the very same thing that Paul is teaching us there as Paula is saying to your enemies you do for

them you provide them food if they needed you provide them drink if they need it. This is something that you do as an act of the will showing kindness showing mercy and compassion to even those who are your enemies. In Exodus chapter 23, verse 9, very same idea there. Excuse me not verse 9 let's backup verse 4. If you meet your enemy's ox, or his donkey wandering away, you shall surely return it to him. If you see the donkey of one who hates you, lying helpless under its load, you shall refrain from leaving it to him, you shall surely release it with him. Very same thing Paul is telling us. The Old Testament told us. You do for them if you see them in trouble, if you see them in need, then you go and help provide whatever it is that they are lacking or whatever it is that they need help with. That would've come as a great shock to the people of Israel as Jesus is teaching them this. You don't just love those that are of you. You don't just do for them. You do for everybody. For even those that hate you for those that despise you. And the idea there love and pray for those who persecute you. These are the ones that insults you. These are the ones that back bite you. These are the ones that physically abuse you. Fill in the blank there, and Jesus says you show kindness to them. You don't just show kindness, as in just being nice to them, but you help provide whatever need that they have. One of the greatest examples that we have of this is in Luke chapter 10 it will be very familiar to you with the parable of the good Samaritan, because it has to come back to this question as the religious leaders had emphasized the fact that you love your neighbor Jesus is going to define for us who are neighbor is in this text so we can properly understand. In Luke chapter 10 beginning of verse 25 the text says, and a lawyer stood up and put into the test saying, teacher what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And He said to him, what is written in the law? How does it read to you? And he answered, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself. And he said to him you have answered correctly. Do this and you will live. But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, and who is my neighbor? It's the very same thing. He had the same idea. My neighbor is only an Israelite a Jew. So in verse 30 Jesus replied and said, a man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among robbers and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead. And by chance a priest, who is going down on that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. Likewise, a Levite also when he came to the place and saw him pass by on the other side. But a Samaritan who is on a journey came upon him. And when he saw him, he

felt compassion, and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them, and he put him on his own beast and brought him to an inn and took care of him. On the next day, he took out 2 denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said take care of him and whatever you spend when I return I will repay you. Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers hands? And he said the one, who showed mercy toward him. Then Jesus said to him, go and do the same. Now this is a very interesting parable one that would involve great anger toward the scribes and Pharisees. Jesus says, He gives this example, you have this man who's been robbed he's been mugged he's lying in a ditch. And you have a priest, a priest of Israel, coming down the road. Now someone who is ministering unto the Lord surely would have compassion, for those that are the Lord's creatures. And when he's seen this man, he went to the other side and he pass by. Then you have a Levite. A priestly line of Israel. He comes upon the man, what does he do? He passes by on the other side. He just leaves him there. These are people of Israel, the priest, and the Levite. But then you have a Samaritan who was hated by the Jews. The Jews hated them, the Samaritans hated them, the Jews regarded the Samaritans as half breeds. When Israel was taken out of their land out of the land of Judah by Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, there were certain one's that were still left in in the region that were the poor among Israel. When they deported many of them out Nebuchadnezzar also have foreign people to come and to dwell in the land and they intermingled with those that were left of Israel producing the Samaritans producing half breeds. So when the children Israel came back from Babylon they rejected them and that's why they ended up moving up toward what is now Samaria are what we understand in that day is Samaria. The Jews hated them. The Samaritans hated the Jews. And yet an enemy of Israel he comes upon this man who is an Israelite he sees him lying there and instead of passing by like the others, he takes this man he cleans his wounds he binds him up, he gives them a place to stay. He tells the innkeeper whatever else he needs whatever you pay for I'll pay you back when I come back through. Jesus says this is the one who acted as a neighbor. This is the one that loved even his enemy. This is one of the greatest examples that we have of what it means to love your enemy, even those that hate you I cannot emphasize that enough those that hate you. You do good for and you prove yourself or shown yourself to be a child of your father. Jesus says you don't just love them in doing for them, but you pray for them. Now what does this mean, when you pray for them? Again, it

does not mean Lord I pray for this one here who is my enemy I pray Lord that you would bring judgment upon them, Father you would render to them according to their deeds. When you pray for your enemy, and this is the difficult part when you pray for your enemy when you pray for those that hate you it is as if you are coming alongside this person that despises you and your lifting them up to the throne of God and praying to the Father, Lord save this person have mercy on this person even my enemy. That's what you're doing when you're praying for them. You know one great example is in the book of Job for the end of the book of Job the Lord tells Job's friends that until Job prays for you, I'm not hearing from you. When Job prays for you then I'll forgive. And so what is it that Job had to do after during all of this criticism from his so-called friends? He prayed for them; God have mercy on them. That's what you're doing when you pray for your enemy. You're coming alongside, Father have mercy on these. Have mercy on this one. Father grant them repentance, grant them the forgiveness of sins. You're praying for them. You're lifting them up to the throne of God. You're not praying for their demise. You know there's quite a few that I remember at our previous church when it comes to subjects about politics and when it came to Obama. Their prayer was the prayer of the psalmist I believe it's Psalm 28 I'd have to go back and look at it but in that Psalm or in one of those Psalms it says let his days be few and let another take his place. And so they would pray this. This was their prayer when we go around the table what would you like to pray for? What would you like to pray for? A number of them pray with the psalmist prays that his days be few let another take his place. That's not praying for your enemy. That's not praying for those ones as Jesus is telling us how to pray. We lift them up and we intercede for them. Understand from many of us we don't like Obama's policies any of that. I get it. It is very difficult to believe that a man like him could be a believer. I think he's not just to be honest with you because it's the fruit that gives way whether or not you're a believer or not. But instead of praying for his demise. Or praying for another to take his place and let his days be few. We ought to be praying to our Lord have mercy on him, and grant him the repentance of sins. In 1st Timothy chapter 2, this is what the apostle Paul says to Timothy beginning in verse 1, first of all then I urge that entreaties and prayers petitions and thanksgivings be made on behalf of all men for kings and all who are in authority so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth so you have the apostle

Paul telling Timothy during a time when Rome was oppressing the known world specially Israel he says I want you to pray not just for those that you know not just for those that are being converted not just for the churches I want you to pray for all who are in authority for King's for kings and all who are in authority for God desires that all men meaning all kinds of men be saved It's not just necessarily the poor that God desires to bring to himself. He's also saving those that are in authority. He saves presidents He saves those that are in authority elsewhere within governments. He is the God of all, and all kinds of men will be brought into his flock and so he says to Timothy pray for all men. This is good and acceptable. So this is what we do we come alongside we intercede for them we pray for them we pray that God would have mercy on them just as Jesus did on the cross when he's being murdered by his own creation what does he do? Father forgive them they don't know what they're doing and when you really think about the unregenerate person who does not have the Holy Spirit the only thing that they can do is sin. They don't know righteousness they don't accept the things of God because they are natural man they do what is natural for them to do sin their heart is inclined toward wickedness that is what they do that's what they're going to do. It should come as no surprise to us. And so when we see people doing naturally what sin in them is how it's flowing out of them it shouldn't come as a surprise but it should also bring compassion toward them knowing that they are in darkness knowing that they are in sin and desiring for them to come to the knowledge of the truth that should be something that we desire and have compassion not to see their demise but understand that they are blinded by sin just as we were at one time until God shined the light of Christ in us we could understand the gospel they can't. Not until God does that work within them, so we pray for them. So verse 45 we love our enemies we pray for our enemies for this is the love of the Father to all mankind. Look at this verse 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven for he causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous you love people in this way because God loves people in this way. God has a general love for all his creation we call it his common grace. Just as Jesus says here he causes the sun to rise on the evil and the good for the unrighteous and the righteous God has blessings that he dispenses to all his creation. He allows it to rain he sends rain as the text says for the righteous and the unrighteous there is a goodness of God to all a goodness of God even to those who despise Him who malign His name who trample on His goodness for those that have no gratitude for His blessings He still

has a kindness toward. You think about it, He allows the wicked to prosper doesn't He? He allows the wicked to be blessed with families to succeed in business to succeed at their job to have a roof over their head to have food we understand regardless whether there believes or unbelievers we understand all things come from God. God is the source of all these blessings and He even allows them to be for the unbeliever. Look at these passages of Scripture here in Genesis chapter 17 in verse 20. Now we remember that Abraham had two sons the first was Ishmael that he had with his wife's handmaiden Hagar and then at the proper time the Lord allowed Sara to conceive with Isaac and Isaac was the chosen of the two he was the promised son to Abraham and at one time he Abraham sends out Hagar and Ishmael sends them out of his home look here in verse 20. And as for Ishmael I have heard you behold I will bless him and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly he shall become the father of 12 princes and I will make him a great nation of my covenant I will establish with Isaac who Sarah will bear to you at this season next year. Now the Lord says to Abraham concerning his other son not the chosen son not the son that God is going to enter into covenant with, but he says to Abraham, I'm going to bless him. I'm going to make a great nation out of him too. He's going to multiply that is a blessing that God is giving even to the ones that are not chosen according to what God had disclosed Abraham prior to this. Isaac was the chosen one, but yet he's also going to bless Ishmael. He's going to make him fruitful. In chapter 39 of Genesis chapter 39 in verse 5 this is when Joseph is at the home of Potiphar. It came about from that time he made him overseer in his house and over all that he owned the Lord blessed the Egyptians house on account of Joseph thus the Lord's blessing was upon all that he owned in the house and in the field. Even the Egyptian Potiphar the Lord blessed any blessed on account of Joseph yes but he still blessed the Egyptians home the unregenerate, the pagan, the Lord still blessed in Psalm 36 there are many more Scriptures here, were just gone through a couple this so we can see indeed God is kind even to the unregenerate ones even to his enemies Psalm 36 beginning in verse 1. Now watch the flow of thought here from the psalmist transgression speaks to the ungodly within his heart there is no fear of God before his eyes work flatters him in his own eyes concerning the discovery of his iniquity in the hatred of it the words of his mouth or wickedness and deceit he has ceased to be wise and to do good he plans wickedness upon his bed and he sets himself on a path that is not good he does not despise evil your loving kindness so Lord extends to the heavens your faithfulness reaches to the



skies your righteousness is like the mountain of God your judgments are like a great deep oh Lord you preserve man and beast. Now you think about what the psalmist is painting here. He's speaking of the evil of the nations the evil of the unregenerate the evil that is in their hearts they hate him they despise him they love evil they hate good and yet he comes down and he says but oh Lord you're the one that preserves them. How interesting is that? The Lord has mercy, compassion, and kindness even for those who hate him so he is not asking us to do, or He's not commanding us to do anything different than what he himself does. You know it should come as a great encouragement to us that God does not love as we do. If God only loved those that love him we would still be in our sins still being under his wrath. You know the Scripture tells us in first John not that we loved him but he loved us first. Paul says here in Romans chapter 5 verse 10 for if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of his son much more having been reconciled we shall be saved by his life while we were enemies of God Christ died for us. God doesn't just love those that love him. Again if that were true all of us would still be dead in our trespasses and sin and under his wrath because we did not love Him first. He loved us. He showed love to us in Christ. He showed love to us in sending the spirit to regenerate our hearts that enables us to love Him. Aren't you glad that God doesn't love as we do? Sometimes we think he does. Sometimes we entertain the idea Lord I know you don't love that one. Look at how they're being. God doesn't love like we do, we ought to give Him praise for that otherwise none of us would come to know his love. So Jesus says this is the way the Father loves and he elaborates on it as application for us in verse 46. For if you love those who love you what reward do you have? Do not even tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers what more you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? He's making a point to say if you only love those that love you, that's no different than how the unbelievers do. That's no different than how the Gentiles or the tax collectors. That's no different than them. Why is it then that your love would stand out to others if you only love those that love you? There's no reward there. In that day many of the Jews hated the tax collectors do they were basically working for the Romans. They hated the Gentiles because they weren't Jews. So the Jews greeted Jews and Gentiles would greet one another the tax collectors would greet one another and love one another. Jesus says there's no reward in that. And that is something that the church as a whole is very guilty of is loving only those that love us. Jesus says there's no reward for

that. Now should that be something that would motivate us then to go outside of our bounds into love others? It should. Great is your reward in heaven. Should we really do that for reward in heaven? Yes otherwise the text wouldn't say it. Is it okay to be motivated by laying up treasures in heaven, by obeying the Lord? Yes, it's okay. Was that in the right frame of mind yet we hear that often with you do it in the wrong manner, if you're just doing this to get reward or whatever then you're doing it for the wrong reasons the Scripture never tells us that is in fact the Scriptures give us quite the opposite that if you do this great is your reward in heaven so you lay up treasures in heaven you do these things. If you're only doing it to be seen in to receive the praise of man then you're doing it for the wrong reasons but if you're doing it to please the Lord and laying up treasures in heaven that is motivation to do these things and it is good. Take pleasure in what you're doing and be motivated that God is rewarding you not because of necessarily your merit but according to his grace. He is going to reward you. Our love has to be something that stands out. Something that people notice. People don't notice when you just love those love you, but they take notice when you love even the unlovable. That shows a genuine, that shows a genuineness of your salvation, when you love those that are unlovable. When you do for your enemies and people take notice person hates despises them and yet they are doing for them. Is that weakness? Absolutely not. It's not weakness to do good for your enemies. Are you just trying to satisfy them so they leave you alone? No not at all. I am trying to show them the love of my Savior the love of my Lord through what I'm doing for them because this is how God loves. And that takes a very strong person to do that. Even for you young people. I know you're in school, so you have a lot of friends and you have those that despise you, but it's no different for you. Love those that despise you. Love those that hate you. Pray for them. Don't return evil back to them. Because then there is no witness of the genuineness of your salvation. But to love as God loves it is vital that we do so for our own sanctification. Jesus sums this up He says therefore you are to be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect. What's He mean? Does He mean sinless? No. He's basically summing up another way as the Old Testament commanded be wholly for God is holy. Jesus is saying you be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect. Giving the indication of being complete, being mature, lacking in nothing. If we desire to be like God be more like Christ then this has to be present within your life that you love those that hate you, that you love those that despise you. This makes you complete in Christ. It demonstrates you to be a child of

God. Now there's difficulty here because it's totally contrary to how we are. What we ought to do is to love our enemies to always do good but the reality of it is much of the time we only love those love us because that's easier way to go. But we have to get to the place where we commit ourselves to do what we know is pleasing to God. That's what you have to be committed to. That is what has to help to motivate you is you know this is pleasing to God and since it is pleasing to my Father who redeem me who saved me who granted me the forgiveness of sins you granted me eternal life I'm going to do what is pleasing in His sight. Therefore I'm going to love my enemies even when I don't feel like it. I'm going to do good to them even though I don't want to. I'm going to be committed to this this. This is how my father loves this is how my father loved me. This is how I'm going to love to. It is a difficult thing no doubt, but it is something that reaps great reward. It is something that you're doing when you're laying up treasures in heaven. Pleasing the Father. You're showing a genuine profession of faith. There's so much there that as you obey God what a witness which you are giving to others what a testimony you are giving to others. Robbie Zacharias he says this he says it's never the responsibility of the church to hate but it is our privilege to love. Never the responsibility to hate but it's our privilege to love. In order to be complete, this has to be here. It's difficult, it's trying, but it must be present in your life. And so understand for all of us it is something that we failed at, but let it be now that we begin to do this right. If we're not already doing it, and I pray that we are, but the reality is the things that I don't want to do. I do the things I do want to do I don't do. It's that struggle within us. Let us commit ourselves even now beginning this time beginning today that we fulfill what God is telling us here to please him and do so by loving your enemies and praying. Let's stand if you would. Let us pray together. Your Gracie heavenly Father we humbly come into your presence and we just want to thank you. Father that indeed you don't love is we do. Father that you loved us even while we were your enemies. Father you loved us while we were dead our trespasses and sin. And you sent Christ to redeem us. You sent Him into a world that hated Him. That forgiveness of sins would be granted. Redemption would be made. Father thank you. And we give you all the praise and honor for what you've done for us in Christ the love that you showed us. Father we come to you this morning we know our own hearts we know how we fail at loving our enemies as you command us to. Father forgive us. Father let us start a new today. Let us do right in your eyes and understand that we cannot grow in Christ without this being present in her

life. This is so vital. Father help us to see the importance of it. In just how much it needs to be present in our life. Because this is what is good and acceptable to you. Father I pray for anyone here that Father has not known your love. Father that is not known the forgiveness of sins or redemption through the blood of the Lord Jesus. Father pray this morning that today You will grant them forgiveness. That you would grant them that saving revelation knowledge of you. That you would draw them to yourself Father as only you can. Father we give you all the praise and honor for who You are. What You've done for us in Christ. Father help us by Your spirit to apply this text in our life. Thank you Father for this portion of Scripture. Thank You for the Lord Jesus. And it's in His name we ask and pray all these things. And all God's children said amen.