

**The Gospel of Matthew #48**

**Sermon on the Mount: Six Examples of the Right Use of the Law:**

**6. Loving your enemies**

**UNCONDITIONAL LOVE**

**Matthew 5:43-48**

I. What the rabbis taught: Love your friends and hate your enemies: v43

Lev 19:18. Nowhere the command to hate!

But consider the commands to exterminate the Canaanites and Psalms  
like 139:19-22

Again need to distinguish between personal and judicial!

II. What Jesus taught: unconditional love to friends *and enemies*

5:38-42 NEG

v43-48 POS

The breadth of your love shows who you are like:

Love your enemies

Pray for your persecutors > Like your Father in Heaven: sends  
His sun & rain on both evil and good

Love only those who love you > like extortionist tax collectors  
that you despise

Greet only your tribe > like Gentiles you despise

If you hate your enemies, you are no better than the enemies you hate!

You become like your emotional focus, positive or negative!

Climax of purpose of the Law: **be like God**

So: be sons of your Father (v45)

be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect (v48)

The Law's requirement, upheld by Jesus is: perfection

Be exactly like God in the way you love!

III. How Jesus loved—you!

Remember His love for His enemies: Luke 23:34

5:44: Love your enemies: agape

Agape love is almost always connected to the cross

Egs: John 3:16; Gal 2:20; Eph 1:4b-8

Because we so far from v48, we are His enemies

But **Romans 5:6-10!**

Some of you still avoid Him because you are convinced He does not like you. If you could only see how much He delights in you! No longer an enemy, but His beloved child!

#### IV. How this controls us

II Corinth 5:14-15

You are free, not to return evil in kind, because you are not controlled by people, but by the Gospel and the Spirit

My immediate reaction is to respond in kind

(“Well if you want to be like that...” ;

“Two can play that game...”)

But the Spirit reminds me of the Gospel and my response is determined from within, not without.

That is true freedom.

Where are you in bondage to someone who controls your behavior? If no one comes to mind from Mt 5:44, then you are not being honest with yourself. Not just obvious enemies, but simply people you feel negative, critical, ungracious toward.

Repent and believe the Gospel.

Come to Jesus now.