



**Sunday, March 13, 2011: Love Your Enemies**

**Scripture: Matthew 5:43-48, Leviticus 19:9-18, 33-37**

**Speaker: Joe Boot**

**Sermon Notes:**

1. In this passage, Jesus is correcting another misinterpretation and misapplication of the law.
2. "You have heard that it was said" refers to past teachers' interpretations of the law. This is confirmed by the fact that the command to "love your neighbour, hate your enemy" is nowhere to be found in the Old Testament.
3. Rather, the Old Testament commands the opposite: that we are to protect our enemy's property and render aid to him (for example, Ex. 23:4,5 – returning your enemy's stray donkey and helping him with a burden).
4. Jesus is reminding the people of the true intent of the law, which includes an obligation to love both strangers and enemies.
5. Love is about obeying the law of God in regards to others. The love that is commanded here is not a feeling; it's an act of obedience toward God.
6. We cannot juxtapose law and love (see Romans 13:8-10).
7. You cannot force yourself to have affectionate feelings towards your enemy. God does not command us to 'feel' love towards, or even to make friends with our enemy.
8. We are commanded to respect the life and reputation of our enemy (don't murder, don't slander), respect his property (don't steal, don't covet), etc. Jesus instructs us to pray for and bless our enemy.
9. This teaching of Jesus is not just about not striking back, it's about going the extra mile.
10. Good intentions are not a replacement for obedience to God.
11. The law of God is grounded in His being and nature. The reason He gives for obedience is: "I am the Lord your God" (Lev. 19:34).

12. The Pharisees had told the people to love their Jewish brothers and neighbours and to hate those outside the nation of Israel. They had developed justifications for hating others.
13. However, this notion conflicted both with Israel's own history (which involved many foreigners joining the covenant people), and Israel's calling was to be an example to the Gentile nations (Deut. 4:5-8).
14. Love your enemies, Jesus says, because even God shows general benevolence to the evil and the unjust (Matt 5:45).
15. God still blesses those that hate Him. However, His judgment will come upon them in the end. Matthew 5:45 is not saying that everyone will be saved (i.e. not universalism).
16. In response to the question, "Who is my neighbour?", Jesus told the people – with the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) – to love their most hated neighbours.
17. Your enemy is your neighbour.

**Application Questions**

1. Where did this teaching of hating one's enemy originate?
2. Read Romans 13:8-10. What is the biblical definition of love?
3. Compare Jesus' teaching to that in Leviticus 19:9-18, 33-37.
4. Give examples of foreigners being accepted among God's people in Israel's history.
5. Given the story of the Good Samaritan, who are my neighbours, and what are practical ways I can love them?