

Sermon on the Mount

Pursue Perfection

Matt 5:43-48

This morning in Bible class we discussed how we pursue peace by going the extra mile instead of seeking vengeance. When we give more than is asked of us, we build bridges and restore relationships.

Points to Consider:

- Pursue perfection through selfless love
- Pursue perfection through selfless actions
- Pursue perfection by pursuing God

Pursue perfection through selfless love

Matt 5:43 *"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you..."*

Lev 19:17 *'You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him. 18 You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord. NKJV*

In Leviticus 19:18 God gives the command to _____ your neighbor as yourself. The idea of _____ your enemies must have been man's conclusion.

Lev 19:33-34 *'And if a stranger dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him. 34 The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God. NKJV*

They were to love _____ who lived among them as themselves.

Deut 20:10-18 *"When you go near a city to fight against it, then proclaim an offer of peace to it. 11 And it shall be that if they accept your offer of peace, and open to you, then all the people who are found in it shall be placed under tribute to you, and serve you. 12 Now if the city will not make peace with you, but war against you, then you shall besiege it. 13 And when the Lord your God delivers it into your hands, you shall strike every male in it with the edge of the sword. 14 But the women, the little ones, the livestock, and all that is in the city, all its spoil, you shall plunder for yourself; and you shall eat the enemies' plunder which the Lord your God gives you. 15 Thus you shall do to all the cities which are very far from you, which are not of the cities of these nations. 16 "But of the cities of these peoples which the Lord your God gives you as an inheritance, you shall let nothing that breathes remain alive, 17 but you shall utterly destroy them: the Hittite and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, just as the Lord your God has commanded you, 18 lest they teach you to do according to all their abominations which they have done for their gods, and you sin against the Lord your God. NKJV*

God told them to kill the _____ of the cities that refused peace.

God also told them to kill everything that breathes from the cities God gave them as an inheritance.

As a result, they falsely assumed that everyone who wasn't a pure Israelite was an enemy and should be hated.

Jonah 4:1-3 *But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry. 2 So he prayed to the Lord, and said, "Ah, Lord, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a*

gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm. 3 Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live!" NKJV

After the people of Nineveh repented God relented of the disaster He had planned against Nineveh because He is gracious, merciful, and _____.

He gave the people of Canaan over 400 years to _____.

He gave the Egyptians _____ before their complete destruction. Some actually listened along the way and protected their family from God's anger.

Jesus tells us to love our enemies

1 Cor 13:4-8 Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never fails. NKJV

Pursue perfection through selfless actions

_____ those who curse you

Rom 12:14-21 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. 16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. 17 Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. 18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. 20 Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. NKJV

Blessing someone includes _____ good things to them and about them and _____ good things for them.

We are to be a blessing to those who curse us and do evil things to us.

We are to _____ our enemies food, water, and fire.

Acts 16:25-34 But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. 26 Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. 27 And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. 28 But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here." 29 Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. 30 And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." 32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. 34 Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household. NKJV

Paul was kind to his enemy resulting in his enemy becoming his _____.

Practical Application

- Perform a personal evaluation on how well you are living the principles in this section.
- When was the last time you did something good for someone who has purposely hurt you?
- When was the last time you sent an encouraging card to someone who has said hurtful things to you or false things about you?
- When was the last time you prayed asking God to do something good for an enemy?

- You might need to make an enemies list. Not to do them harm but to do them good. Think about people who you might not agree with religiously, politically, socially or economically.

Pursue perfection by pursuing God

Matt 5:43-48 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? 48 Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect. NKJV

The reason we love our enemies and treat them kindly is so we can be _____ of our Father in heaven.

Matt 5:9 *Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of _____.* NKJV

God provides His enemies with sunshine and _____.

Without sunshine and rain there is little to _____ food.

A direct and intimate connection to the Father is the only way we can live Jesus' message.

Rom 5:6-11 *For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. 10 For if when 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. 11 And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.* NKJV

God gave us His only begotten Son who died for our sins while we were still His enemies.

Because of Jesus' sacrifice we moved from being God's enemies to being His _____.

We are His children who should bear the _____ of our Father in the way we treat our enemies.

Quote from *Invitation to a Spiritual Revolution* by Paul Earnhart, "This divine good will has nothing to do with some attractive quality found in us. We have succeeded to a man in making ourselves morally repugnant (Ecc 7.20; Rom 3.9–18), and it is highly unlikely that we shall ever in this life understand how fully His holy nature is repelled by our ungodly ways. The yearning of God for men arises, as it must, from His own gracious character and will. In His mercy He wills to do good to those whose very lives are an offense to His nature. He has loved the unlovable." (79-80)

It is much easier to love the unlovable when we recognize _____ unlovable status before our holy God.

Matt 5:3-4 *Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.* NKJV

Unless we recognize our own spiritual poverty, we will never love our enemies.

Gen 1:26-28 *Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.* NKJV

God always intended for those created in His image to love _____ others created in His image. This includes our enemies.

Another contrast

Matt 15:7-9 *Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: 8 "These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. 9 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."* NKJV

Heb 10:19-25 *Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and having a High Priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.* NKJV

The scribes and Pharisees drew near to God with their mouths. We are to draw near to God with a true

Practical ways to Pursue God

1. Enter into the presence of God through the blood of Jesus (Pray).
2. Be cleansed from your sins.
3. Remember your confession. Maybe state it multiple times a day. You can say, "I will live my life today for Jesus because I believe He is the Son of the Living God."
4. Remember that God is faithful.
5. Stir up another Christian to do good works.
6. Assemble with the saints every chance you get.