

The Mark Of A True Child Of God

Mt 5:43–45 (NKJV) — 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, 45 *that you may be sons of your Father in heaven;*

- I. This statement suggests to us that Jesus has lost his divine holy mind.
Mt 5:43–45 (NKJV) — 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,

But he meant every word of it! **Love your enemies?** This is a profound contradiction that challenges the very essence of our human nature.

Think about it! Have you heard anything more ridiculous than this in your life? Your enemies will kill you! And we are told to love them? That don't make no sense!
Make it make sense!

Love your enemies? That don't make sense!

- A. This is alien to our thoughts, our practices, and our nature.
1. Sometimes, it's hard even to love your own family members.
 2. Sometimes, even husbands and wives want to kill each other!
 3. Sometimes, we even want to throw out the babies with the bath water.
 4. We brought our children into the world and sometimes you want to take them out!
 5. How can we love those who want to knock our heads off?
 6. Are We supposed to love them? What you say? I don't think so!
- B. Notice he didn't say love your enemy. He said love your enemies!
1. That means all of them! Not just some of them.
 2. That means all of them! Not just some of them.
 3. That means all of them! Not just some of them.
- C. But not only did he say, **Love your enemies,**
1. **THEN, he said, bless those who curse you,**
 2. **THEN, he said, do good to those who hate you and**
 3. **THEN, he said, pray for those who spitefully use you and even persecute you,**
 4. Why would we want to do these things? That don't make sense! But we can make it make sense....he goes on to say...

- D. ***That you may be sons of your Father in heaven;
WHAT!
THAT YOU MAY BE SONS OF YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN!
WHY WOULD WE DO IT?
THAT YOU MAY BE SONS OF YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN!***

The mark of a true child of God is the ability to love our enemies.

- E. Is it really worth doing what he said to do? To become sons of God, is it worth
- a. loving our enemies?
 - b. Blessing those who curse us?
 - c. Doing good to those who hate us?
 - d. Praying for those who spitefully use us and persecute us?
2. Is being a child of God really worth doing those things?
- a. Don't some people deserve to be hated and not loved? They hate you. Why should you love them?
 - b. Some people ought to be cursed. Don't you think?
 - c. Some people need to be treated like they treat you. After all, they should reap what they have sown.
(1) An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, and all of us would be one-eyed buck tooth people.
 - d. Why should we pray for people who don't like us and mistreat us every chance they get? What did he say?

***THAT YOU MAY BE SONS OF YOUR FATHER IN
HEAVEN!!***

- F. He meant what he said! We have the power to be children of God, but that is not guaranteed unless we receive him. And when we receive him, he changes our nature (that is if we allow him).
Jn 1:12 (NKJV) — 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

To become a true child of God is not just a confession. It requires that we deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow him. That means imitating his life.

1. But is it worth loving our enemies?
2. We understand that he said to love one another. Yes, we might find it possible for us to love those who love us. But to love our enemies?

Come on man!

3. If we receive him, that means to believe in him. We have this right,

but to accept this right, we have to do as he has said to do, and that is to love one another as he has loved us!

- G. We are to love in spite of what they do to us, and if we do, he has promised
1. ***Mt 5:11–12 (NKJV) — 11 “Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.***
 2. What does he say we should do when people are against us?
Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.
- H. I might not want to love my enemies, or bless those who curse me, or do good to those who hate me, or pray for those who spitefully use me and persecute me,...
1. But if I choose to be a true child of God, I've got to learn to do that.
- I. Let us remember that he is not asking us to do something that he did not do himself.
Ro 5:8 (NKJV) — 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
- Ro 5:10 (NKJV) — 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.***
- J. If we are to imitate the life of Christ, we must learn to love our enemies. Look at what Scripture continues to tell us.
Eph 5:1–2 (NKJV) — 1 Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us.....
1. What is the first thing we must do as imitators of Christ as his children?
 - a. We are to walk in love!
 - b. We are to walk in love just as he has loved us and given himself for us.
- K. How do we do that? Listen to me!
1 Jn 3:7 (NKJV) — 7 Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.

The true child of God does more than profess Christ; they practice the word of Christ!

1. To be a true child of God, you must do more than profess Christ; you must practice Christ! You must practice..
 - a. loving your enemies
 - b. blessing those who curse you,
 - c. doing good to those who hate you
 - d. praying for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.
 - e. Then, practice makes perfect! Because **He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.**
2. It is not my nature, but it is his, and I must practice being like him!

We alone cannot love our enemies or do anything he has commanded us, but if he is in us, he will do it for, us if we allow it.

- L. If I want his blessings, I have got to start practicing righteousness and allowing his spirit to replace mine!
Jn 15:12 (NKJV) — 12 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.
Jn 13:34 (NKJV) — 34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.
 1. If he has loved us while we were his enemies, we have to love our enemies to be like him.
 2. Regardless of what we think. We have got to practice loving our enemies!
 3. We have got to practice
 - a. ***Blessing those who curse us,***
 - b. ***Doing good to those who hate us, and***
 - c. ***Praying for those who spitefully use us and persecute us!***
 4. We must learn to practice trying to love like him, even when we don't have enough of Christ in us to love as he has love. We must practice love!
- M. We must not try to defeat our **enemy**; we must practice **loving our enemy! Why? That we may be sons of our Father in heaven;**
 1. We must practice loving them because God, our Father, first loved them.

We must not just try to defeat our enemy; we must try to totally destroy our enemy by loving our enemy!

2. We must try to win their friendship and understanding. If we do, we will destroy our enemy!
3. This can only be done by the love of God operating in our hearts.
- N.** We must not retaliate **when people curse us**. What are we to do? We are to **bless them!** **Why? That we may be sons of our Father in heaven;**
 1. We must practice blessing people
 - a. Those who talk about us.

- b. Those who are plotting against us
 - c. Those who spread rumors about us.
- 2. No matter what they do, we must remember we are a child of God and not a child of the world.
 - a. The more we practice, the more we are declared righteous.
 - b. The more we practice blessing, even those who curse us, the more we resemble Christ.
 - c. The more we imitate Christ, the more we receive the promises of Christ!

O. When people hate us and **speak all manner of evil against us**, we must **practice doing good to them. Why? That we may be sons of our Father in heaven;**

- 1. We must practice not only with our words blessing people but we must bless them by doing good for them.
- 2. Even though they are hateful towards us, we must show them the love of the Lord by going out of our way as Christ did for us.
- 3. We must practice doing good until it becomes an instinctive habit to reflect God's image to hate-filled people.
- 4. We cannot retaliate with hate because only love can conquer hate! (Marvin Gaye)

If we retaliate against those who hate us, we magnify the hate in them and increase the hate in us.

P. Then, he tells us, **pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you. Why? That we may be sons of our Father in heaven;**

- 1. We must turn to the Father and pray for those who are taking advantage of and mistreating us.
- 2. We must not fight our own battles because the battle is not ours. We must allow the father to intervene for us.
- 3. We are told to pray for those who persecute us.

Q. We must practice these things until they become a habit. It must become our way of life to learn to love like Christ.

II. The love of Christ is revealed for us to imitate when we read **Lk 23:34 (NKJV) — 34 Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."**

A. Then, he said forgive!

Before we can love like Christ, we have to learn to forgive like Christ.

- 1. We must forgive them, because Christ our example forgave them!

B. What do we read? **Then?** When was **then?**

Lk 23:33 (NKJV) — 33 And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right

hand and the other on the left.

1. When did he forgive?
 - a. When they crucified him!
 - b. When he was dying on the cross.
 - c. When he had done nothing wrong to them.
- C. When did they crucify him?
 1. After they had cursed him
 2. After they had shown their hatred for him
 3. After they had spitefully persecuted him
 4. And while they were cursing, hating, and abusing him, what did he do?
 - a. He prayed for them!
 5. After the people had proved themselves as Christ's enemy, he overcame them with forgiveness and perfect love.
- D. Meaning if we are going to love like Christ, despite what someone has done to us, we must learn to **forgive them by practicing to forgive them.**

Matthew 18:21–22 (NKJV): Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?”

22 Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

 1. Forgiveness must become a habit by practice! Practice I say on
 - a. the person that cuts you off while driving.
 - b. Jumps in front of you in the line
 - c. Always has evil to say about you
 - d. Has abused you over and over
 - e. By not always bring up what some one did to you
 - f. Your enemy
 - g. Your hater
 - h. The white people, black, Hispanic, asian
- E. Why? So that you can love like Christ loved!

Ro 5:8 (NKJV) — 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

 1. Why would we do this?
 - a. Again, so that we might be a true child of God.
 2. It is impossible to love someone if you have not learned to forgive them!
 - a. You have not practiced enough if you keep bringing the injustice up!
 3. Not everyone who claims they are Christian is really a true Christian because if you cannot love your enemy enough to forgive them, you are not like Christ.
- F. We must learn to forgive our enemies before we can love them. We cannot love like Christ if we do not learn to forgive like Christ.
 1. Christ forgave us to show his love for us.

2. Father forgive them!

If we are going to love our enemies, we must first forgive them.

- a. Forgiveness is necessary before you can love!
- b. Forgiveness must be granted even if the person does not request it.
- c. Forgiveness is necessary for you to be like Christ.
3. If you say you love God, you have got to forgive your enemies, so you can love them!
- G. Forgiveness does not mean forgetting. It simply means you no longer hold the person hostage to their injustice towards you.
 1. It means that you stop bringing up what they did to you.
 2. Every time you remember what they did to you, remember what Jesus did for you, He forgave you!
 - a. Now forgive them!

The extent to which you can forgive determines the extent you can love your enemy and that reveals the extent of your maturity in Christ.

3. You should love Christ enough to forgive your enemy so you Can please your Lord.
4. Because when you forgive, Christ will forgive you. ***Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.***
- H. ***Lk 23:34 (NKJV) — 34 Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."***
 1. Notice one more thing, after they had
 - a. crucified him
 - b. spit upon him
 - c. crown of thorns on his head
 - d. done all this evil thing to him
 - e. proven what was in their hearts was deceitful and desperately wicked
 2. He did not tell the truth, as we would see it, that they were evil; he said, ***"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."***
He told the absolute truth and covered them with love when he said, ***"they do not know what they do."***
They were declared ignorant
 - a. not declared evil,
 - b. not condemned to the father
 - c. not ridiculed
 - d. not talked about over and over
 - e. not reminded of their sin
 3. His love covered the multitude of their sins.
 - a. Instead of love for our enemies, we re-create them by what we call them.

- b. There is life and death and the power of the tongue, and we conjure up more enemies by defining evil and low down and stupid and mean they were to us.
 - c. We use the power of the tongue to strengthen the power of Satan by declaring the injustice that they have done
 - d. we use the power of the tongue to conjure up memories that increase our anxiety about them
- 4. but Jesus covered them and said not evil of them but declared the ignorance of what they did.
 - a. He found a way to express love for them.
 - b. How many of you can find a way to love your enemy?
 - c. Jesus knew they had done evil to him, but he also knew they were doing evil to him because of their lack of knowledge, and he told the truth: they know not what they do.
 - (1) There are times when we have done wrong to others and did not know what we were doing.
 - (2) Therefore, we must forgive so that we may be forgiven.

How many of you will cover your enemy with love so that Christ may be seen in you?

- I. You may be afraid to love your enemy because you are afraid your enemy will take advantage of you. But let me give you one more Scripture:
1 Jn 4:18 (NKJV) — 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.
- J. You must practice forgiving your enemy so that you learn to love your enemy. Then, you can
 - 1. Practice loving your enemy
 - 2. Practice blessing those who curse you
 - 3. Practice doing good to those who hate you,
 - 4. Practice praying for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,

You have the mark of a true child of your father in heaven when you can love your enemies!

That makes sense!

Now practice!