

Weaving the Word

Hate Your Enemies

Part 29 – April 26, 2015

Welcome to where we're learning to count the cost to follow the One who paid the price!

Let's imagine young Yeshua on the playground (knowing what we know about His nature). I'm convinced scripture teaches that **Jesus had the mind of man** (Luke 2:52) **and the conscience of God.**



And what an insufferable mix *that* would be!

He sees a bully harassing a crippled kid.

His conscience immediately puts Him between them; His angry fist reflexively draws back.

But **the closer He comes to striking the *bully*, the further away He can feel He's retreating from the *actual enemy* He's after:** the cowardly darkness hiding behind and compelling the bully.

This is the enemy of God!

And, He can sense that **striking the bully will *empower* this enemy.**

Confused. Frustrated. Angry. Frozen.

Suddenly, *He's* the victim of the bully's abuse.

But in His suffering He finds something weirdly satisfying.

He's accomplishing His goal.

The reason His perfect conscience caused Him to take instinctive action was to save the sickly boy from the playground bully.

And He *has*, by offering Himself in his place.

Weirder still, Yeshua (the boy with the conscience of God) finds His heart aching to save the *other sickly boy (the bully)* even as he repeatedly pounds the One he misperceives to be *his* enemy, and in so doing, strengthens the *actual enemy* of his soul.

Yeshua *hates* God's enemy, now *His* enemy, and vows to find a way one day to strike a blow that'll *kill* the bully of His bullies.



And, as He grows He becomes *The Way*.

And, He strikes that fatal blow, by offering Himself in place of everyone ... forever!

Two years *before that* fateful day, He's on the hill above the Sea of Galilee preparing to send out His young apostles in His name.



And so, **He speaks specifically to *them*, not generally to the gathered crowd, (Mat 5:2; Luke 6:20) regarding those who'll oppose their mission, contest their message, and bully 'em.**

But, how do you get these guys to grasp, on the battleground, what Yeshua has deeply sensed since His days on the playground?



Turn the cheek. Take the slap.

Fight the urge. Hold back.

Surrender the grudge. Trust the Judge.

This isn't weakness; it's Godliness.

And, it's the only true way to defeat our only true enemy.

Which apostle had been the most bullied by the Pharisees; and therefore, will likely struggle the most with this command?

Matthew, the tax collector.

The other disciples are quite aware that **Jesus has chosen a *pre-despised* apostle who's been *snubbed and shunned by the religious Jews*, for cooperating with the enemy (the Romans).**

It's the elephant in the room – or rather, *on the hill*.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, [thus defining which enemies He's referring to] that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, [So, why not shine your little light on 'em too? Give 'em another undeserved opportunity] and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. [So, why not sprinkle a little life of your own on 'em? Just to see what might grow] If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? [He said, likely looking at the *elephant*] And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? [Who snub the *elephants* they despise] Do not even pagans [lit. “tax-gatherers”] do that?” – Matthew 5:43-47 NIV

So, how *convicted* do you suppose Matthew is at this moment?

We get a good hint by weaving in Luke's parallel account.

"If you love those who love you, what **credit** [lit. "grace" or "proof of grace"] is that to you? Even '**sinners**' love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit [proof of grace] is that to you? Even '**sinners**' do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit [proof of grace] is that to you? Even '**sinners**' lend to '**sinners**,' expecting to be repaid in full. [Matthew only records the two statements wherein Jesus uses *tax collectors* as an example; it must've struck a nerve. And, it might've been a turning point for how the other 11 treated him] But love your enemies, [Again, in this context it's their religious persecutors] do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. [Matthew is the only disciple that we're told had a lucrative job and held a banquet in his house; and therefore would've been capable of lending money] Then your reward will be great, [What reward? This section began with: "Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven." (Luke 6:22-23a) These are the enemies He's telling them to love. So, what's the reward?] and you will be sons [and daughters] of the Most High, [Know why?] because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked." [That's us!] – Luke 6:32-36 NIV



You know what it's like? Rescuing raccoons from a fast approaching forest fire.



You don't expect cooperation during the process or appreciation after the effort. Their salvation must be your motive, and their rescue your reward; because, you will be regarded and treated as something you're not: the enemy.



But, **you wouldn't retaliate.** And, if you were unsuccessful you'd even shed tears for Mr. Bitey.

But, you'd know the attempt *itself* was worth it.



You'd proudly display the wounds you received in your rescue attempt as a kind of badge of honor.

And, what did Jesus do when he first saw His friends after He rose? Showed 'em His wounds.

The only difference between your enemies and wild raccoons is that wild raccoons are *easier to love!*

But, that's *only* because you're *not* a raccoon.

Jesus ends with something that sounds completely undoable.

“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” – Matthew 5:48 NIV

“I don’t ask much ... just ... *you know ... be perfect ... like God.*”

Perfect-perfect?! Well, yes but, “perfect” as in “complete”.

Don’t allow your love to be partially acted upon, by expressing it only to those you know will give you a guaranteed return.

Luke adds the second half of the statement.

“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.” – Luke 6:36 NIV

This means we must learn to love as God loves and hate as He hates.

“But, God doesn’t hate.”

Well, *actually* ...



There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him: **[because of His great mercy]** haughty eyes, **[proud and unfriendly]** a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers. – Proverbs 6:16-19 NIV

These are the *true enemies* we’re called to hate.

These are the weapons of the cowardly darkness.

These are the ways we often unmercifully treat our persecutors.

Learn to hate your *true enemies*, and you’re bound (or rather, *unbound*) to care about Mr. Bitey and all the bullies in your life.

And their salvation will be your motive, their rescue your reward.

It’s the only true way to defeat our only true enemy.