

Love for Enemies

Read: Matthew 5:43-48

Summary:

Please read the following summary to remind those who were there and to give an overview to those who missed Sunday morning:

Contrast is the word that summarises the whole of the Sermon on the Mount. In this passage we hear Jesus teaching the disciples not to hate their enemy but to love them.

In the Old Testament God had instructed His people to love their neighbour as them self – a high standard. There were even taught that if their enemy was in trouble or needed help that they should give it.

Love is not a sentimental feeling that comes and goes but a choice. We know that Stephen prayed for those stoning him and Jesus prayed for those crucifying him. The more you love the more you pray, the more you pray the more you love. This is truly a breath taking standard of morality.

God loves all and gives to all. This is not 'universal salvation' (only one way to heaven is to believe and trust in Jesus) but there is 'common grace' for all. Even people in the world will love those who love them. Divine behaviour is to love people who show evil behaviour to us.

Jesus is not teaching that we should be utterly perfect but He is expecting us as Christians to mature and grow and be what we were made to be. We are new creations in Christ and that should change our outlook and behaviour in every aspect of life.

It is by our imitation of Jesus that the Christian Counter culture becomes visible!

Application:

Please select from the following questions, encouraging all to take part, to be honest and make room to pray for one another;

1. Was there anything shared on Sunday that needs clarifying for you?
2. What was the main thing God said to you on Sunday and what are you going to do as a result?
3. Who do you struggle with and what can you do to show love to them?
4. In what ways have you grown as a Christina this year? How do you want to develop during the rest of 2008?
5. We can only give and give if we receive from Jesus. Pray for each other to be filled with His Spirit now.
6. The way we treat others never depends on who they are and what they do to us. In what ways do you agree / disagree?