



## **Sermon Notes: "Supernatural Love"**

Matthew 5:43-48

2.23.25

### **Historical Context:**

The command to love is from **Leviticus 19:18**, but the command to hate is found nowhere in Scripture. Human reason tainted by depravity made the logical leap that if you were to love your neighbor, there must be non-neighborly people - *namely, your enemies* - who must be hated. – Chuck Swindoll

### **Understanding Supernatural Love:**

- Agape: The love of God for humankind that is unconditional and sacrificial.
- It is given from the Father, we see it in Jesus, and experience it through the Holy Spirit... yet the Church has been given the task of revealing it to the lost and broken world.

### **How to Love our Enemies:**

- Pray for them (vs44)
- Show them the same general grace and mercy as God does (5:45)
- Be friendly first (vs47)

### **Big Idea:**

When Jesus calls us to love our enemies, He's not just giving us a difficult command - He's inviting us to demonstrate the miracle of our new creation in Him.

### **Being "Perfect":**

- It comes from the root word "telos" [τέλος] which means "end, goal, purpose, or completion." The most literal translation would be "reaching its end" or "arriving at its intended goal."
- When Jesus calls us to be "perfect," He's not demanding divine, flawless behavior. He's calling us to grow into spiritual maturity where our love becomes complete - loving both friend and enemy, just as God has done.

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### **So What?**

- It's Easy.
- It's too Hard.
- It's Impossible.

### **For Study, Reflection, Discussion:**

1. Review the sermon notes from Sunday. Was there a particular point that stuck with you? *What* was it and *why* did it resonate with you?

### **Read Matthew 5:43-48**

2. When Jesus commands, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (v.44), is there anyone who comes to mind? If not, when was the last time you showed kindness to someone who has hurt you or opposed your faith? Have you prayed for them lately?
3. Looking at verse 45, how does God demonstrate His love for both the righteous and unrighteous? How can we mirror this in our own lives?
4. Jesus points out that even tax collectors love those who love them (v.46). In what ways might our love still be operating at the "tax collector level"?
5. When Jesus asks, "What are you doing more than others?" (v.47), how would you answer Him today?
6. As we consider being "perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (v.48), where do you see yourself growing toward this complete, mature love?

### **Specific Action Step:**

***This week:*** Identify one person who has opposed or hurt you. Choose one specific way to show them kindness - not to change them, but to fulfill your purpose as God's child. It might be as simple as a genuine greeting, offering help, or speaking well of them to others.

### **Don't Forget:**

- Today: New Sunday School Class – Heart of God
- This Week: Women's Night Out for February – Thurs, Feb 27<sup>th</sup> @ 6:30 pm
- Milligan Univ. Scholarship Dinner - March 10<sup>th</sup> (*Please sign up by March 2<sup>nd</sup>*)
- Be Praying for Disaster Relief Trip to Arden NC: March 23<sup>rd</sup> – 29th.

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### **Prayer:**

Heavenly Father,

You show no partiality in giving good gifts - sending rain and sunshine on both the just and unjust. Transform our hearts to love like You do. Give us strength to pray for those who hurt us, courage to show grace to those who oppose us, and humility to be friendly first. Help us grow toward the complete, mature love You designed us for. Let our love for enemies become living proof that we are Your children.

In Jesus' name, who loved us while we were still enemies, Amen.