

The Forgotten Jesus Podcast
S7E32
Faithful to Forgive - Matthew 5:43-48

Description – We're continuing today on the saying of Jesus from Matthew 5, looking today at forgiveness and what that looks like for our day to day lives.

Shameless self plug for Pastor Robby's new book:

<https://www.amazon.com/Movement-Ready-Church-Blueprint-Multiplying-Disciples/dp/B0F7F52V8Y/>

As we said early on in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is teaching primarily the 12, with the crowd around them to overhear the conversation.

Matthew 5:43-48

⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, Love your neighbor and hate your enemy. ⁴⁴ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ so that you may be children of your Father in heaven. For he causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward will you have? Don't even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what are you doing out of the ordinary? Don't even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Leviticus 19:18

¹⁸ Do not take revenge or bear a grudge against members of your community, but love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD.

What Jesus is going to do is connect these two ideas. The “but” here in v. 44 is better translated as “moreover” or think about it in addition to.

The question often is, “Who is my neighbor?” This is best understood as the one who is nearest to you. For a married couple, it should be your spouse, and if you have children, then it extends to them as well.

You have to be careful to not be putting on a performance when you're out at work or at your vocation, and then come home and crash, or veg out, and don't engage or spend time with your kids.

Exodus 18:15-16

¹⁵ Moses replied to his father-in-law, “Because the people come to me to inquire of God. ¹⁶ Whenever they have a dispute, it comes to me, and I make a decision between one man and another. I teach them God's statutes and laws.”

The idea here is that Moses is helping mediate between one man and another. They are brothers, as in the idea that the whole community of Israel is neighbors / brothers / family.

Anyone outside of the family of Israel is their enemy, so the gentiles, the Romans, etc.

Of these 6 statements, "You've heard it said, but I say to you..." this by far is the hardest of all the sayings. Love the Romans? Love your enemies? And then pray for them?

This one really shows us just what the upside down kingdom looks like for Jesus and His followers.

You come to this one, and there's no way we can do it in and of ourselves through our own strength.

Luke 6:35-36

³⁵ But love your enemies, do what is good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High. For he is gracious to the ungrateful and evil. ³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

The motivation for "why" is given to us in Luke's gospel. When we forgive those who hurt us, and return to them love, we're giving them a picture of Christ and the Gospel.

"And you will be children of the Most High." But aren't we already adopted into the family of God? Yes, but living this way will enable us to benefit from living under God's rule and reign in our lives.

We don't retaliate against a person who hurt us, because when we retaliate against them, it's only hurting us.

Think about Joseph, who forgave his own brothers who sold him into slavery. When they're brought back before him and he has all the power, he extends forgiveness.

Matthew 5:48

⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

What about this passage? What's going on here?

Well, some think and teach that the whole sermon on the mount is impossible for us to live out, so we are forced to cry out to Jesus to help us live this out. But as we read through this, if it's a kingdom ethic, or rules for living out in the kingdom of Jesus while here on earth then it's the goal, and we can strive for it, but we may not get there.

The only way we can be perfect, or reach towards the goal, is as we abide in the Father and His Word. We have to have perfect love towards others as our heavenly father has perfect love towards us. The bible tells us that, "perfect love casts out fear."

When we display God's love, we show this love that God has for us to the world around us.

We can't be perfect, but we can live in such a way that shows God's love and perfection to the world around us.

You can summarize all of the sermon on the mount so far, (Matthew 5) in one word: Love.