

# Empire Church of the Brethren

## Sunday Service Sermons

14 September 2025

### Loving Your Enemies

Text: "Hear what I say to you, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you." *Luke 6: 27-28*

I like the passage that adds that when you do this you heap burning coals on their head.

I did that once and watched the person squirm.

Have you ever been spitefully used?

I am not sure how this might work.

I guess it is used against your will.

Or how about lied about?

I have been lied about.

I had a student get mad at me and lie about me for several years.

It did little harm due to other students knowing me as I am.

But it sure did not feel good.

It is not a pleasant feeling to have an enemy plotting against us.

The only life that will stand the storms of life is one that is based on love.

This is an insight given to us by the Lord of life himself.

In this famous sermon Jesus makes love an essential for a storm-proof life.

Twice he repeats the admonition, "Love your enemies."

It must have been a shock to those who first heard it.

Their best spiritual leaders had been telling them to love their neighbors but to hate their enemies.

Jesus extends the admonition of neighborly love to include even the un-neighborly.

He used the word for "love" that was used of God's love for sinful humans.

The world had not changed.

This is still the kind of world in which even the most virtuous people have enemies.

Enmity against them may grow out of political differences, competition in the marketplace, moral differences, or even differences of religion.

The enemy may be in your own household or almost a stranger.

Each of us are to respond to each of these enemies with a Christ-like love.

The object of our love.

Those who first heard the admonition must have immediately thought of the Romans.

These conquerors of the land of Israel were considered to be enemies, therefore Jesus' admonition must have been thought almost immoral to some who first heard it.

Our Lord does not leave us in doubt about the true nature of this person we are to love.

Our Lord explains the admonition with the clauses that follow.

Do good to those who hate you.

Hate describes the enemies' basic attitude toward you.

In their hearts they have deep, malicious feelings of disrespect for you.

"Bless those who curse you."

To curse means to call doom down on the head of a person.

It is the verbal attempt to do you harm.

Such are the actions of the enemies we are to love.

The actions of love.

Part of our problem with this word from Jesus is rooted in our understanding of love.

Love has become sentiment and emotion in our day.

We sense the impossibility of having the same feelings for an enemy that we have for a member of our family.

But this word used by our Lord does not refer to emotion or sentiment.

It refers to action.

It is the will to do a person good and not evil.

The actions are selfless.

When you realize that someone hates you, your first natural reaction is to think of yourself.

Jesus describes actions in which self-interests are set aside that the interest of the enemy maybe considered.

He admonishes, "Do good to those who hate you."

This is translating the love, the desire to be helpful to the person, into some positive action.

It could involve finding some need in the life of that person and then meeting that need.

"Bless those who curse you."

The natural reaction is to defend yourself from hateful words and to seek to discredit the source of such words.

Love will ignore self and seek to build up the enemy.

Literally, it means to invoke a blessing on that person.

"Pray for those who mistreat you."

This is what Jesus did.

As his enemies were spitefully nailing him to the cross, he was praying, "Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

The actions are generous.

Our Lord presents us with several situations we might encounter at the hand of an enemy.

In each he calls for generous response on our part.

Striking someone on the cheek is more than an insult' it is an act of violence.

Such an act of violence is to be responded to with kindness and generosity.

The person who takes away our cloak does so violently.

He robs you of your personal possession.

The generous thing to do is to give him even more than he asks.

The principle is that love is generous.

Many who have spoken words of admiration for the Sermon on the Mount have never listened to it carefully.

The world will call you a fool if you conduct your personal life by this principle, yet this is the life that will withstand the storm.

Love will find a way to do for the enemy what you would want done for yourself.

Jesus is not calling for what is naturally done in the world of sinners, but what can only be done supernaturally by those who know the Lord.

The reward of our love.

"Your reward will be great, you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked."

Pragmatically, it can be demonstrated that it is better to live by the principle of love than not to do so.

Those who are committed to respond to every situation in love are able to withstand the storms of life more effectively.

They experience joy and peace.

There is a reward in character, this is primary.

"You will be sons of the Most High" means that you will be reflecting the character of God.

There is also a reward of fellowship.

Sons have access to their father.

To be a son of the Most High surely carries with it the privilege of fellowship with him.

This word of our Lord brings a deep sense of inadequacy to each of us.

While we readily admit that this is what we should do, we also know our natural tendencies toward revenge and hate.

We must remember that the one who spoke these words is able to make all things new.

And admission to him of our weaknesses and an invitation to his strength could be the beginning of a life that will withstand the storms.

And you will be able to live above the circumstances, not under them