

MESSAGE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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Andy Rauschkolb, Pastor to Young Adults, continued in our *Sermon on the Mount* series. Jesus was addressing the crowd and was in the section of the sermon where he was saying, “You have heard that it was said ... but I tell you ...” When Jesus says, “I tell you,” it is a time to sit up and take notice, pay attention. Jesus is saying, “This is how we do it in my house, and if you follow me, this is how you do it, too.” In this instance, Jesus most likely shocked his listeners, telling them they were to not only love their neighbor, but also to love their enemies and pray for those who persecute them. It takes only a short trip through the Psalms to see this would be a new concept to those in Jesus’ audience.

Agape—agape love is unmerited, gracious, and constantly seeking the benefit of the ones He loves.

Hesed—describes a sense of love and loyalty that inspires merciful and compassionate behavior toward someone who is in need.

SCRIPTURE

MATTHEW 5:43-48

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, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

JOHN 3:16

For God so loved the world that He gave his only son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

ROMANS 5:6-10

For at just the right time, while we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God proves His love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Therefore, since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from wrath through Him! For if, when we were enemies of God, we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life!

LUKE 23:32-37

Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. 33 When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. 34 Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stood out to you from Andy’s message?
2. Read Matthew 5:43-48. What is the new instruction Jesus gives? What support does he give?
3. Who would be considered “enemies” today? (Consider personal as well as to the Christian Church.)
4. Read John 3:16 and Romans 5:6-10. How did God exemplify loving his enemies?
5. Read Luke 23:32-37. What was Jesus’ response to those who persecuted him?
6. What are ways to love your enemies? Think of specific people in your life you need to love (*agape*) and pray for?
7. How can we pray for you?

PRAYER

Thank God for loving (*agape*) us so much to send his Son to save us. Ask God to reveal those we subtly and overtly name as enemies in our hearts. Ask for forgiveness for the comparison to, competition with, and devaluation of, others and seek ways to love and pray for their good.