

DO we *LOVE* our ENEMIES? Matthew 5:44-48



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All scriptures are NKJV unless noted otherwise.

KEY WORDS: *Love enemies, reconciliation, bless, pray for.*

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Summary: *Are you really a child of God? Our Savior says one of the signs proving we are God's children is that we love our enemies and bless them and pray for them. Is that a "must" though? Are we doing it? This teaching examines all that – plus shows the way "HOW" to do this difficult assignment.*

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Hi again everyone. We all have people we dearly, dearly love – and love to be around. Maybe it's a special brother or sister, or just a good David-and-Jonathan kind of deep friendship that is from a deep love for each other.

Who is that person to you? Maybe it's your husband; maybe it's your wife. Face it. Some people are just plain easy to love, to be nice to, to enjoy being around. Then there are the other kind!

Other people just seem to annoy you and maybe others. Annoying is one thing. But if someone starts to hurt you badly, that's another level of dislike.

Maybe you find out the woman you thought was a very good friend has just committed adultery with your husband. You're understandably furious now – and feel like you can kill them *both*.

Or how about people who physically hurt you, or who beat you up for no good reason? Or who got drunk and killed a child with their car? Or people you know are stealing from you, or cheating you, or someone has just killed your sister? How WELL do you think of any of those people? These are no longer friends – but enemies.

Can you LOVE them? Do we have to love them? What if we don't?

Now, it's also true that many of us probably at one time or another have had people who upset us so much, we want *nothing* to do with them *ever* again - and we don't want to be around them or even be in the same church group or same room as they. If they come in to the room, we might leave.

Unfortunately, that person sometimes could even be your dad or mom, or a brother or sister. But usually it's someone who humiliated you publicly, or a neighbor who hates you so much they broke some of your ribs, like what happened to one of the US Senators.

Some of us could even admit to HATING some people at one point or another. But most who know their Bible won't use the word "hate" – but would admit there are people they want nothing more to do with any longer. They could even wish them dead. Have you ever hated someone that intensely?

Typically, most people when hurt – want to hurt back, strike back, avenge, settle the score. But what is Yeshua teaching?

So now we're back in our time machine I talked about last time, and you happen to be in Capernaum or Galilee while this young man Yeshua/Jesus was preaching and healing. You got your whole family and friends to come out and hear him on the sides of a hill deliver words which really could rock your boat! The Sermon on the Mount.

What Messiah is giving are not suggestions – but direct commands! And they're not easy! This one today is especially difficult.

Matthew 5:43-48 (v. 43-44 here)

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'

44 But I say to you, **LOVE your ENEMIES, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you**, and **PRAY FOR** those who spitefully use you and persecute you, ..."

And by the way, what I have in **RED** print above are part of Yeshua's commands *that most translations all skip!* NIV, RSV, ESV, NLT, Holman, CJB – all the translations that use texts from Alexandria, Egypt primarily – SKIP those words. So theirs just says "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." And they leave out blessing and doing good for those who hate us.

I believe KJV/NKJV carry far more strength. "LOVE your enemies, **BLESS those who curse you, do GOOD to those who hate you**, and pray for those who are attacking/persecuting you." The Aramaic Bible in Plain English, Literal Standard version also have the complete wording.

[There's additional information at times in the audio version. Sometimes there's more in the notes. My notes are not transcripts as that just takes too much time -- so I recommend you use both.]

So Jesus says – "No, I don't teach that you should hate your enemies. I say – LOVE them. HOW do you show your love, you ask? Well, BLESS those cursing you. Do GOOD to people who can't stand you and YOU can't stand THEM. Pray for anyone attacking or persecuting you; Bless those who are spreading gossip about you or trying to smear your name. And be sure to PRAY for them."

This teaching by the Son of God about TRULY loving your enemies in practical ways, in real ways – is surely one of the hardest commands in the New Testament to keep and follow. Surely.

So welcome y'all to Light on the Rock. I'm Philip Shields, founder and host of this free web site. I hope you'll get a LOT out of this topic today. I'm wondering how many of us are applying this verse in active ways in our lives.

And please let others know about us. Be sure to be checking both the VIDEO sermons and the AUDIO sermons like this one, as I'll be adding to both. The audio-only sermons are faster to produce and post.

So back to Yeshua's startling words: "LOVE your enemies". Now pause for a minute and write down the names of those you'd consider your enemies, or the least desirable people you know. Not those in the news – but people you know whomyou can't stand.

And how about this for an "enemy"? How about being able to love your best friend and your husband whom you found in bed together? Whether you divorce or not, can you love him too? (Even God divorced Israel – but only after thousands of infidelities! And he still loves Israel!) HOW on EARTH are you going to be able to love the one who hurt you so much – and you divorced him (or her)? Again, God is the standard.

Here's a thought: WHO won't you speak to?

There are "church people" who left a group, or were kicked out of a group, who can't talk together anymore. Are there people you won't associate with because of their reported sins – even long after they've repented of sins? *Are there people you haven't spoken with for years and years?* LOVE them anyway. Reconcile. Get together. Talk again. Send them a card.

DO your part to love those you've not been involved with for a long time.

Now expand your horizon. Now include national and local political leaders you can't stand. Have you done it? Written then down?

Now look at each of those names – within your list – DO you love each of them? Honestly, probably NOT, and that's why they're NOT on your "we'd like to invite to dinner" list. ARE we praying for them? ARE we BLESSING them?

If we're not loving, praying for, blessing and being kind to them, we're in direct conflict with God's words through Yeshua the Messiah.

Let's read it again

Matthew 5:43-44

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'

44 But I say to you, LOVE your ENEMIES, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and PRAY FOR those who spitefully use you and persecute you,

I gave a sermon recently titled “**3 things to focus on now**” and this was one of the points. Several admitted loving your enemies would take a lot of work, admitting they do NOT love their enemies and can't see how they ever could truly LOVE their enemies and truly from the heart.

It's HARD to obey this command. Let's face it. We might understand “forgive your enemies” – but to love them? Let's start learning to do it.

Yeshua is saying his brothers and sisters won't get “hard” towards others. We stay soft-hearted somehow, regardless of the pain they inflict on us. Through Christ, we won't let pain steal our kindness for others. There's a joyful tenderness for others – among the family of God – towards EVERYONE.

OK, we can also understand other “loves” -- like loving God above all else, loving one another, loving our wife or husband, loving our family and children, loving our country – but honestly, do we have to love our ENEMIES? YES. It proves we are God's children.

To genuinely love our enemies and bless and pray for them – really means we need to love EVERYONE, like God does. Let that sink in.

To love even our enemies means we are to love everyone.

Some of you misunderstand the Bible and don't believe God loves everyone. He does. He doesn't love what everyone does, but the people – yes, he loves. And we have to become like that.

Loving everyone becomes possible the more we become like God by letting him truly RESIDE inside us (John 14:23). Loving everyone needs to become like “muscle memory” – something we do automatically eventually when some action is done over and over. Like tying a necktie. We just do it, without much thought. It just becomes automatic.

Loving everyone becomes who we are, who we've become over time through Christ in us – a lover of people, all people. Whether they've been good or bad, whether they're a part of this ethnic group or tribe or race or country – we love people. Even our enemies.

Now we're becoming more and more alike GOD, like Matt 5:45-48 says, if we're growing in love for everyone.

Here's another thing to ponder: severe persecution is coming – sooner or later – much rougher than the world has ever seen, Yeshua says. It will be against conservatives in general and believers in Christ in particular. Just watch. It's all prophesied. It's going to be hard to feel good things about someone HURTING you, hitting you, kicking you, jailing you, burning your house down – or burning you and your loved ones alive at the stake. All that could be coming to more than a few. It's already happening to many believers in Africa and Asia.

But we're told – LOVE your enemies, bless those who curse you, do GOOD to those who hate you, and pray for those persecuting you! *We need to be learning all this now, so when*

the really bad times start, we're loving them anyway. By then, it's our natural response, our "muscle memory" reaction.

In Hebrews 10 we read how the early believers in the apostles' day reacted to terrible things against them:

Hebrews 10:34

"For you had compassion on me in my chains, and ***joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods***, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven".

[Audio has more notes about praising and thanking God for all things – Philippians 4:6-7]

Would we be reacting like that? The more we get in the habit of practicing all that right now – the better we'll be at it when the really big tests come. We're having daily tests now to prepare us. Hopefully someday, the right response will **be like "muscle memory"**, automatic, like tying a tie.

And so WHY does Yeshua say we must learn this and do this?

45 THAT you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."
(Read that again!)

46 For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?

48 Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect."

Yeshua says the reason for doing this is this: It verifies and proves we are children of the one true God. It proves whose family you're a part of. When we show love to "good" or "bad" people, we're acting like God here.

*The commonly cited "proof of being God's people" is **John 13:34-35** – that we love one another as Christ has loved us. By that kind of love for each other everyone will know we are Christ's disciples. **As believers, we need to get better at this too.***

LOVE is God's hallmark. Love is what God IS. Ditto for his perfect Son – Love is his hallmark too. And in all of us who have God's spirit – love is the first listed fruit of the spirit.

But Yeshua/Jesus expands who we are to love in the Sermon on the Mount.

It's not just Christ-like love for one another – for fellow believers – but ***for EVERYONE***, even our enemies, even really bad people, even sinners, even nonbelievers, even people you can't STAND!

Our Father's example of loving His enemies

WHY must we love our enemies? Because that is what GOD does. That's what his family does. Our God "blesses" good and bad people alike with rain and sunshine.

John 3:16 reminds us that God so LOVED the people of the world that he asked his own son to die for everyone's sins. **That's just the way God IS.**

Think of someone you love more dearly than anyone else. Maybe a child or your spouse. Now think of 5-10 people in your mind who are just evil to the core. Now imagine asking the one you love most dearly and asking him or her to go die a brutal, tortured death for those 10 horrible people. That's what God did – but for billions of ungodly people.

He loved us before we could love him (1 John 4:19). The example starts with God taking the first steps. He put His love in motion by calling us to salvation, leading us to repentance (Rom. 2:4) and forgiving our sins.

Jesus, the first son of God, follows suit. He does the same thing.

Romans 5:8

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Christ also loves even his enemies, proving he is the son of God. He loved us before we loved him. He died for the ungodly (Rom 5:6).

Paul tells us in **Galatians 2:20** that Christ is now his new life, and he says Christ "loved ME, AND gave himself for ME." **Revelation 1:5b** – "To him (Christ) who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,"

I said Yeshua/Jesus is the First-born son of God, as there will be many more children of God (**Romans 8:29**). He's the firstborn among MANY brethren. When we show love to enemies, we're identifying as children of God. That's what Jesus said, remember – "Love your enemies, etc. – THAT you may be sons of God..." I hope you see its importance!

Loving those who are hard to love proves we are children of God. We're behaving like the head of our church - Christ – who is under God the father. So the first Son of God, the firstborn among MANY more brethren (Romans 8:29), did exactly that: He loved *everyone*.

Luke 15 is one of my favorite chapters in all the Bible. In it, Jesus lists several examples of utter joy when a sinner repents – the parable of the lost coin, lost sheep, and prodigal son.

The stage is set for these parables with this important anecdote.

Luke 15:1-2

"Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. 2 And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, "This Man receives sinners and eats with them."

The most holy person on earth had a way of making people who were known by everyone as "sinners" to come and be with him, eat with him and feel comfortable around him. Yeshua was called a "**FRIEND of sinners**". (**Luke 7:24**). Yeshua wasn't calling them "sinners". The religious folks were calling them that.

Would you and I be called “a FRIEND... of the bad guys? Of Sinners?” This is the same holy man – Yeshua – who told religious leaders that harlots would enter the Kingdom before they would! (**Matthew 21:31-33**).

When one of his disciples – Judah (Judas is the Hellenized form) came to identify Yeshua for arrest in Gethsemane, Yeshua’s first word to Judas was “Friend” (Matthew 26:50) FRIEND. Imagine that!

Yeshua ended that section in Matthew 5 with v 48-- “Be perfect therefore, as your father is perfect”. Perfect. So when we act like God – and love even ungodly and wicked people – it’s showing we are being completed, finished, perfected – to do something as crazy sounding as praying for haters and doing good to nasty people.

And this is entirely the way we grow to love our enemies: Open the door to God living in you (John 14:23) and invite Him to love everyone again – in you. All people, even bad people, even ungodly. We don’t love the things they do, but we love the people.

This will require us to be praying a lot and feasting a LOT on the Word of God - - so that God IS living and acting and doing inside of us what He loves to do: love people. Every person. Even enemies.

First thought: What Loving, Blessing and Doing Good do NOT mean

Proverbs 8:13

“The fear of YHVH is to hate EVIL;
Pride and arrogance and the evil way
And the perverse mouth I hate.”

To love enemies does not mean we love the evil they do. No. We must hate evil. We CAN be angry at what evil people are doing and we can do something.
Jesus showed a lot of anger to the cheating money changers in the temple and overturned their tables and drove them out of his Father’s house.

Mark 11:15-17

So they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple and **began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves.**

16 And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple. 17 Then He taught, saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"

Loving people does not mean we have to remain inactive or silent in the face of evil. We must speak out against evil, even as Christ did.

Peter castigated the man Simon in Samaria pretty harshly too. **See Acts 8:20-23** if you aren’t familiar with it. Simon wanted to buy his way into being an apostle and Peter told him to be ashamed of himself and repent!

So loving our enemies does not mean we can’t speak strongly about what they espouse. We love the person but disavow their life-style or actions.

We ARE to hate EVIL as Prov 8:13 says – but not hate the people. We must be a preacher of righteousness (like Lot and Noah) and condemn evil works – **without getting nasty against the people.**

Some of you are nasty towards elected leaders you can't stand. That's wrong. Speak against their policies if you like, but we must always honor, and even pray for, with thanksgiving – for all those God has placed over us. Never name-call any elected leader.

1 Timothy 2:1-5

“Therefore I exhort first of all **that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of THANKS be made for all men,**

2 for KINGS and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.

3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

Pray for your president or prime minister, that they will come to know God and lead in a way helpful to God's children. Read the scripture above again please.

I John 2:15 says WE also must hate Satan's world's systems – the cosmos – but again, not the people.

1 John 2:15

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

But Jesus clearly said God so loved the world that he sent Yeshua, his son, to die for the world. So love the people –see BEYOND the people interacting now – to what they can be and will be when God works with them, calls them, leads them to repentance in his time.

ONE MORE THING: Loving your enemy does not mean putting yourself into harm's way. If you had to leave your husband as he was hitting you, beating you, and it was dangerous to be around him – you can still pray for him, love him, but you do not have to go back to live with him.

So sometimes we have to love people from a safe distance – but we MUST take the obedient next step and PRAY FOR them, do nice things for them (bless them) showing yourself to be so different from most people.

Audio: There was a book about “boundaries” that we set around us. The book advocated not allowing people who don't meet our norms to come within our boundaries – even if it means your father and mother and siblings. This is NOT what I – or the Bible – are talking about! (More on the audio). This was a form of early “Cancel culture” that we see today. Some people are “cancelling” even their parents, instead of honoring them.

WHAT KIND OF LOVE IS THIS?

The word “love” --Matthew 5:44; John 3:16 and most other places.

It's from the Greek word we commonly hear as 'agape' love. **GOD's love.** From my "**Complete Word Study of New Testament Words**"— New Testament word #25 in Strong's – "To esteem, love, indicating a direction of the will and finding one's joy in something or someone.

"Agapao" and "agape" **differ** from "phileo" (5368). Phileo points to love, *affection, friendship* due to common interests (like family, work, etc.).

So Phileo is used of liking someone because you have common goals and *interests or backgrounds – like a brother, friend, father or family member. So Abraham is called God's friend (philos) when Abraham had adopted God's interests as his own – like being willing to sacrifice his son, as God did.*

BACK TO AGAPAO or agape: that means we CARE about people, **to meet their needs, regardless of any close ties. We see in our enemies a NEED** – mostly for coming to love Christ and God – and we bless them, pray for them and love them – even though they are not believers and even though we may not have much in common interest. This opens doors to them seeing believers in new light.

(**Like during a black plague** that gripped Rome: the ones doing the most caregiving – were believers. This softened the anti-believer stance for a while.)

Complete Word Study of New Testament Words: "Believers are never told to love their enemies with the word phileo because that would mean to have the same interests as they have."

Contrast that with the word "agapao" which sees a need and takes care of it, but our interests are diametrically different.

Agapao love is used 143x in the New Testament.

Agape – from root agapao – is used: 116x. 116 and 143 = **259x total.**

Phileo - #5368 – is used **only 25x in** the New Testament.

However, agape also clearly has the meaning of warm affection as well, and many verses are given to show it. "Most scholars agree 'agapao' is used **of God's love towards man and man toward God.**"

Divine love – agape – loves just because. It's the strongest of loves. It's choosing to love someone regardless of the personal cost to you; regardless if that one you agape love will love you back – or not.

The Greek word dictionary goes on to say agape also reflects RESPECT, when referring to superiors -- to love and serve with fidelity and to honor.

I don't believe we can ever come to fully agapao love an enemy who has badly hurt you or your family --- without outside help! We need God's help, especially for things impossible with men. See Matthew 19:26.

HOW do we get to the point of genuinely LOVING enemies?

- 1. The “HOW to Love your enemy” involves surrendering your feelings to God and INVITING Him to take over in your heart. This starts with being FILLED with God’s spirit and letting God’s spirit FLOW mightily in us.**

ASK GOD to “spread HIS love in your heart”.

Romans 5:5

“Now hope does not disappoint, because THE LOVE OF GOD has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

This involves lots of prayer – lots of it – and lots of study in God’s word to fill our minds and hearts with the mind of God and Yeshua.

We invite Christ and Father in these tough situations to demonstrate in US, to ACTIVATE in us, *the same love* that caused Jesus to say on the cross, “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do”. (**Luke 23:34**).

Some things are just impossible for carnal man to do – but with Christ, we can do all things (Philippians 4:13). Ask God “to have the run of the house” in your life as they come abide in you (John 14:23).

- 2. STEP OUT IN FAITH AND FOLLOW THE STEPS Yeshua himself gave, after saying to LOVE our enemies. Right after that, He gave practical steps—though these are SKIPPED in the modern translations! This is why I use NKJV mostly.**

What did Yeshua say? **Matthew 5:44**—“**BLESS** those who curse you, **DO GOOD** to those who hate you, **PRAY FOR** those” who badly use you.

FIND WAYS TO BLESS those being unkind to you.

(In the audio: Story of Rachel in first grade – a boy was being mean to her... we taught her this concept. She decided to take fresh home-baked choc chip cookies... story on audio. Wrote a note to the boy but he couldn’t even read yet!). Father sends rain on the bad and good remember.

We surely know things about them that we can pray about for them! These are the “HOW TO”—by Yeshua himself. **PRAY for them.** Pray for their marriage. Pray they come to Yeshua/Jesus. Pray for anything you know they are dealing with. Ask God to bless them. Do kind things to the unkind.

- 3. UNDERSTAND others with compassion. We all are broken at times. Be much less judgmental.** It’s easier to love someone you’re not condemning. Compassion helps us be more gentle and loving.

Even just profound lack of sleep can make one irritable and nasty. We’re all broken and fractured in certain ways. (Our own story on audio).

Many people have bad health issues. Or family issues and they feel so REJECTED, hurt, broken – and they take these frustrations out on others. People can be worried – with no money, no home, no food... and they start acting strangely and in unloving ways.

Yeshua's compassion is all throughout the Gospels. HE saw the crowds and had compassion and fed them all.

Many people find it hard to be positive because of severe ongoing pain. (My own story for pain on audio). I mean pain from migraines, sciatica, rheumatoid arthritis, plantar fasciitis, neuropathy, torn ligaments, pulled hamstrings, nerve pain... Pain or sleep apnea can keep you from sleeping and is very annoying – making people very annoying!

Try to think of the enemy with compassion.

Many grew up without a father or a great example of a mom. That hurts. I grew up without a father after age 12. Seldom saw him before that.

When we recognize this in one another, our hearts can be softer and more responsive, and more loving.

- 4. AS MUCH AS IS POSSIBLE – RECONCILE.** Passover is all about reconciliation and we've ALL been called to be part of a ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18) – that includes, verse 19 – God not imputing their sins on them. We carry that message by reconciling with enemies.

At Passover we also wash one another's feet. Sure, it's a picture of service and humility – but it's also a picture of showing you see the other person as having been washed by Christ.

In 2 Cor. 5:18-19 Paul says that includes the message of not imputing their trespasses against them. Now WE have that message. We share how God is not imputing their sins against them – *and neither do we! We're not always finding fault, or how people failed, in other words. (I'm still working on that.)*

We will NOT be able to reconcile with everyone – but we should try to live at peace as much as we can. This means asking God for a new heart. This means re-educating our hearts. When we're hurt, we just don't need to hit back, to hurt back, to retaliate any more. We don't need to gossip about them or put them down.

Let's not let what other people do or say against us make us hard-hearted. We're called to a higher plane than that. Paul was able to speak salvation to the Philippian jailer, for example, even though just hours earlier the jailer had put him and Silas in stocks and chains.

Look what Paul tells us in Romans 12:

Romans 12:14-21

“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.

17 Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.

18 *IF IT'S POSSIBLE, as much as depends on you, live peaceably* with all men.

19 Beloved, **DO NOT AVENGE yourselves, but rather give place to wrath;** for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. 20 Therefore **"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;**
If he is thirsty, give him a drink;
For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head."
21 Do not be overcome by evil but **overcome evil with good."**

God is so patient. In Noah's day --- he gave mankind 120 years to repent, for example.

Audio: Coals of fire on his head. Watch for a blog that explains this.

5. ESTEEM others better than yourself. This makes it easier to love them.

Philippians 2:3

"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself."

Ask God to forgive you for ever looking down on people. **We can't LOVE people if we keep judging them and declaring them too evil to love.** Neither can we love those we won't forgive – for sins we know about or heard about or were done against us.

Start with people you are estranged from – maybe not outright enemies yet but start with them. These may be your mom or dad or sibling!

Look who Jesus chose as his friends and followers.

- A tax collector – Matthew.
- An ill-reputed woman who had 5 men in her life –he met her at the well in Samaria (John 4) and she became a great evangelist about Christ to Samaria. Yeshua was known as a friend of SINNERS (Luke 7:34).
- Mary Magdalene – had 7 demons cast out of her. She would have likely been known as "the weird woman". She was given the honor of first seeing the resurrected Christ.
- He ate with sinners; they hung out with him. Would you and I have had them as our visible friends? Would you sit next to them in your church?

6. This last point is a huge one to successfully love your enemies:

See your enemies' end result after God is finished working his plan for them. See them coming to salvation someday. See them as your spiritual brother or sister someday. YOU may have a part in bringing them fully to God someday.

We can love anyone if we remember he/she is going to be someday in the family of God – when God leads them to repentance, in God's time and way.

Recognize these hateful people as your brothers and sisters – but they just don't know it yet. But someday they will be.

See them at a future Passover washing your feet – and you washing their feet. See them as being washed by Messiah – because that's exactly what it is.

It would be very hard to love someone who has killed someone in your family, or who has committed adultery with your spouse, and has killed your marriage; or someone who broke up your family, who attacked you in broad daylight like we're seeing more and more in the news.

Yes, we admit: Some people are almost impossible to love. Love them anyway. Pray for them anyway. Bless them, anyway, proving you are a child of God.

We all caused the death of Christ by our sins. ***And yet both the Father and Son - - LOVED us and forgave us and washed us in Christ's blood. That was God's thinking!***

We have to start thinking the same way about everyone – even our enemies. Even anyone persecuting and even killing fellow believers.

*SEVERE persecution, hardship, trials, pain, suffering, horrors, even tortured DEATH – are coming to many in the years ahead – just for being a believer in Christ. **We'd better be getting used to loving our enemies now, as there will be MANY enemies in the years ahead. See 1 Peter 4:12-14***

But there's also coming a glorious ending for those of us who obey our Messiah and love one another and all our enemies.

Revelation 12:10-11

10 Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "**Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come**, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.

11 And they overcame him by the blood and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death"

Revelation 17:14

"These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; **and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.**"

I want to be there. I want you there too. The faithful children of God will be with Christ at his return.

Loving one's enemies is one of the most difficult topics to preach on. But let's start doing it. So let's love our enemies. Let's bless those who curse you. Let's do good to those who hate us. Let's PRAY for those who hurt and persecute you. This way, we'll show we are children of our father in heaven.

Let's start doing it now. It's not just a suggestion. It's a requirement. God bless you all as you start putting Christ's message into action in your life.

(Closing prayer.)