

SERMON: Love Your Enemies
SERIES: Love Where You Live
SPEAKER: Pastor Mark

July 1, 2018

CONNECT (5-10 minutes): Help the members of the group grow in relationships with one another so all people in the group know they matter. Spend some time discovering what is happening in the lives of your group members. Share how God has been revealing himself in each other's lives.

REVIEW (15-20 minutes): Use this time to review the passage and the sermon outline (see below).

Note: this is a great opportunity to share leadership.

Use these simple questions to review the sermon/passage or for if you don't have much time:

1. What does this passage teach you about God? About us?
2. How does this passage point us to the gospel? How does it challenge you? Change you?

SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 5:43-48

⁴³ "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 and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of your Father who is 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. ⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸ You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

SERMON OUTLINE:

- I. Who are my enemies?
- II. Why love out enemies?
- III. How do we love our enemies?

GROW (45-60 minutes): Use this time to go deeper with your group.

Use these questions to discuss the sermon/passage:

1. The word “enemy” in our passage might better be thought of as any outsider. Who are the outsiders in your life (those that are different from you)? A neighbor? Co-worker? A family member?
2. Why should we love our enemies? Pastor Mark shared 3 reasons:
 - a. It shows that God is our Father (v.44).
 - b. It deepens our intimacy with God the Father (see John 14:21).
 - c. Because God loves them (v.45) – we are acting like God when we love outsiders.Which of these stands out to you? Why? Have you ever experienced a deeper intimacy with God through loving an outsider (someone it was difficult for you to love)?
3. Read v.46 again. If you only love those who agree with you, you are no different from the “tax collectors.” Does Jesus’ statement here challenge or convict you in any way?
4. How do we love outsiders? Here’s 3 ideas from our text:
 - a. Greet them (v47)- What commitments can you make as a small group to greet outsiders this week at church?
 - b. Pray for them (v44)- What commitments can you make as a small group to pray for outsiders?
 - c. Meet physical needs (v45)- What commitments can you make as a small group to meet physical needs in your church or community?
5. Read v48 again and Romans 5:6-8. Jesus’ statement here is of course crushing without the grace and salvation of Jesus Christ. We can only love our enemies if we have been filled with this supernatural love. How does being loved perfectly, even as an enemy, allow you to love your enemies? How does this dynamic work in our hearts?

Pray: Confess any selfishness and failure to love outsiders. Thank God for his deep love for you, even when you were his enemy. Ask God to fill your heart with his love and let it overflow to the outsiders around you.