

Living & Loving in a Messy World - Week 3

Scripture: Matthew 5:43-48

Also: Leviticus 19:18; Romans 12:17-18; Ephesians 4:31-5:2

Discussion Questions

1. What has challenged you, changed you or confused you from this week's sermon or the Scriptures in it?
2. Read Matthew 5:43-48, where Jesus commands His followers to love their enemies. Let's unpack that passage:
 - In 43, Jesus starts with a contrast, a "This is how it is now, but it's not as it should be" statement. How does Jesus' opening statement fit our current world? Our culture & community? Us?
 - In 44, What is the primary command?
 - In verse 45a, Jesus puts a "so that" clause in. How does loving our enemies make us sons of God?
 - In 45b, God is used as an example; in verses 46 & 47, people are used as the example. How do those fill in the principle Jesus is teaching?
 - How do all these examples relate to Jesus' primary command?
3. Read Romans 12:17-18
 - Is there anyone in your life that you are allowed to pay back evil for evil?
 - How are you able to live at peace with all people? Are we responsible for everyone's peace?
 - How does this verse affect our relationships within politics? Our thinking about foreigners? Our relationships with our neighbors? Or our friends and family?
4. Read Ephesians 4:31-5:2
 - In verse 32, along with the instruction to forgive, one of the phrases reads "be kind and compassionate" or "be tender-hearted". What do those phrases teach us about forgiveness?
 - In verse 1, Paul instructs us to "be imitators of God, as dearly loved children". How does that connect with Matthew 5:45a?

May we be a peculiar people, made up of peculiar individuals who love and forgive our enemies, thus reflecting our Father in Heaven.