

Seeing Jesus in Relationships



Week 33: Seeing Jesus in Our Enemies

Scripture: Exodus 23:4-5, Joshua 5:13-14, 1 Samuel 24:1-22, Proverbs 24:17-18, 25:21-22, Matthew 5:43-48, Luke 6:27-36, 23:34, Acts 7:59-60, Romans 5:6-11, 12:14-21, 1 Corinthians 4:12-13, 1 Peter 2:21-25

Devotional:

“Enemy-making” is something that occurs rather easily in our relationships. In business, we can quickly find enemies in our competitors from other companies, or our co-workers within a company. At school we find other students we don’t get along with, or who seem always out to get us. Even in our churches we have others we bump heads with, or are seemingly competing with for budget dollars or support. In a broken world we have broken relationships, and so we find enemies at work, in school, and even in our families and at church. The degree of the importance of what we are fighting about, or of the severity of harm that has been experienced varies, but having some enemies in our relationships is a reality.

When Jesus talks to his disciples about how they are to relate to their enemies, he uses the most extreme, or serious, example. Jesus talks of a relationship with someone who persecutes you for your faith in God. This isn’t just someone who doesn’t agree with your beliefs and likes to argue with you about them, but rather one who is actively trying to harm you because of what you believe. If there was any situation where strong condemnation or action against another person would seem justified, this would be it. In fact, in some other passages of Scripture, this is more or less what we read or what is asked for. All this makes Jesus’ command here more incredible. Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, Jesus says. Even in this most extreme case, Jesus says to show love and to even pray for this enemy. If this is what Jesus calls for in the extreme case of persecution for our faith, what does it mean in all the other “enemy” relationships I have of various lesser degree? We often feel quite justified, and frankly satisfied, when we condemn our enemies or see them brought low, but Jesus’ words should give us serious pause in this.

What Jesus calls us to is an imitation of his own actions and character. Scripture makes it very clear that in our sin and rebellion we make ourselves enemies of God. For Christians we need to look at our actions towards our enemies and wonder, “What if Jesus treated me as an enemy the way I treat my enemies?” It is a humbling thought. Praise be to God, the way he does deal with us is to send Jesus in love to forgive us and welcome us back into relationship with him. Believing this and keeping God’s incredible love for us always in mind, calls us to take small steps forward in even the most difficult task of loving our enemies.

Song

“How Deep the
Father’s Love For Us”



Activity

Pray for someone
who is persecuting you
or for those
who are persecuting
the Church this week.

Memory Verse:

Matthew 22:37-39

Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart
and with all your soul and with all your mind.’
This is the first and greatest commandment.
And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’

Questions to reflect on this week:

- How have I seen Jesus in the **B**ible?
- How have I seen Jesus in the **L**ove I show toward God/others?
- How have I seen Jesus in **E**arth he’s created?
- How have I seen Jesus in **P**rayer?
- How have I seen Jesus in the **O**thers he’s placed before me?

[**BLEPO**: means “to see” in Greek]

Seeing Jesus is believing in Him!



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