
First Baptist Dyersburg • Sermon Notes

Love Your Enemies!

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We are living in a time where our nation and our world are greatly divided ideologically. This should not be a surprise to us. Paul warned Timothy of this in his second letter of encouragement and instruction to him:

You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. ²For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. ³They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. ⁴They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. ⁵They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that! (2 Timothy 3:1-5, NLT)

Jesus said that few will enter the Kingdom of heaven. This means that the odds are high that we will live our lives as Christ-followers in places where we are not the majority segment of the population.

¹³“You can enter God’s Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. ¹⁴But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it. (Matthew 7:13-14, NLT)

Jesus never said that being a disciple of His would be easy or safe. In fact, He said that the world would be against those who followed Him just as it was against Him. Here is how Matthew recorded Jesus’ words:

²⁶“But don’t be afraid of those who threaten you. For the time is coming when everything that is covered will be revealed, and all that is secret will be made known to all. ²⁷What I tell you now in the darkness, shout abroad when daybreak comes. What I whisper in your ear, shout from the housetops for all to hear!

²⁸“Don’t be afraid of those who want to kill your body; they cannot touch your soul. Fear only God, who can destroy both soul and body in

hell. ²⁹ What is the price of two sparrows—one copper coin? But not a single sparrow can fall to the ground without your Father knowing it. ³⁰ And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. ³¹ So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows.

³² "Everyone who acknowledges me publicly here on earth, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. ³³ But everyone who denies me here on earth, I will also deny before my Father in heaven.

³⁴ "Don't imagine that I came to bring peace to the earth! I came not to bring peace, but a sword.

³⁵ 'I have come to set a man against his father,
a daughter against her mother,
and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

³⁶ Your enemies will be right in your own household!'

³⁷ "If you love your father or mother more than you love me, you are not worthy of being mine; or if you love your son or daughter more than me, you are not worthy of being mine. ³⁸ If you refuse to take up your cross and follow me, you are not worthy of being mine. ³⁹ If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give up your life for me, you will find it. (Matthew 10:26-39, NLT)

Jesus gave us instructions for how we are to live life, particularly with people who are our enemies:

⁴³ "You have heard the law that says, 'Love your neighbor' and hate your enemy. ⁴⁴ But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! ⁴⁵ In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike. ⁴⁶ If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. ⁴⁷ If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that. ⁴⁸ But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect. (Matthew 5:43-48, NLT)

How are we to live like Christ and reflect Him to the world around us?

1. Don't conform to the world, but to the Word. We are to be in the world, but not of the world.

¹⁵ Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. ¹⁶ For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. ¹⁷ And this world is fading away, along with everything that

people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever. (1 John 2:15-17, NLT)

2. Remember that our true citizenship lies in heaven.

²⁰ But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior. ²¹ He will take our weak mortal bodies and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same power with which he will bring everything under his control. (Philippians 3:20-21, NLT)

3. Remaining focused on Christ and our eternal home will help shape our actions while we are on earth.

Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand. ² Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. ³ For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory.

⁵ So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don't be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. ⁶ Because of these sins, the anger of God is coming. ⁷ You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world. ⁸ But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. ⁹ Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. ¹⁰ Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. ¹¹ In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us.

¹² Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. ¹³ Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. ¹⁴ Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.

¹⁶ Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. ¹⁷ And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father. (Colossians 3:1-17, NLT)

In the midst of tragedy, how do we find hope to move forward?

1. God is purposefully at work in this world – in every season; in every life, and in every generation.

For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven. (Ecclesiastes 3:1, NLT)

You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed. (Psalm 139:16, NLT)

2. We will never be able to understand the entirety of God's work while we are here on earth.

Yet God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end. (Ecclesiastes 3:11, NLT)

3. When we have completed the purpose the Lord has determined for our life, He will bring us home.

³⁴ For God had promised to raise him from the dead, not leaving him to rot in the grave. He said, 'I will give you the sacred blessings I promised to David.' ³⁵ Another psalm explains it more fully: 'You will not allow your Holy One to rot in the grave.' ³⁶ This is not a reference to David, for after David had done the will of God in his own generation, he died and was buried with his ancestors, and his body decayed. ³⁷ No, it was a reference to someone else—someone whom God raised and whose body did not decay. (Acts 13:34-37, NLT)

³⁵ Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? ³⁶ (As the Scriptures say, "For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.") ³⁷ No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.

³⁸ And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. ³⁹ No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35-39, NLT)