

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

How to Think and Act in Evil Days, Part 2

Scripture: Matthew 5:43-48

Code: TMC271

You know, it's always sort of a divine appointment for me when I stand up to preach and I'm always amazed as to how the Lord begins to put things together. Changed what I was going to say, this morning, started thinking about it a little differently last night. I set aside some things that I had planned to do and just kind of being open to the Lord and waiting for some kind of direction in my own thinking. No voices from heaven have ever spoken to me, but I get these ideas and impulses and so I thought, "I think I'm going to do this," and then this morning I woke up and it was kind of confirmed and then I came here and all the Scripture that you put up there was about love. It was all about love, and that was exactly what I decided to talk about. And, in fact, the very emphasis was on the second commandment, "Love your neighbor as yourself," and that even more specifically was what I wanted to talk about. So kind of like a little bit of affirmation for me. And that means that I am here with the Lord's full knowledge. He's just sort of surrounded me with the truth that you should be thinking about for us to consider this portion of Scripture.

Now on Wednesday we began a little bit of a two-part series in helping to understand the world in which we live. And I showed you that we live in a world where people are lost and they're on their way to judgment. They're going to perish. They're going to perish forever in hell. That's inevitable. They're going to die and they don't know when. They're going to die and they're not in control of their death. That's what we saw in Luke 13 when the question came up about the Galileans who were offering sacrifices in the Temple and Pilate's men came in and sliced and diced them, slaughtered them and their own blood was mingled with the blood of the sacrifice. What a horrific thing that Pilate's men would slaughter these Jews from Galilee while they were offering their Passover sacrifices.

And the question in the minds of the people who were very aware of that was, why did that happen? Were they worse than other sinners? Are calamities God's way of killing the really bad people and leaving the better people and the good people? And Jesus picked up on that and said, "Well what about the tower in Siloam that fell over and crushed eighteen people? In the first case, you have people obeying God, doing what they were prescribed to do. In the second, you have innocent bystanders just standing there and some scaffolding maybe for the building of the Roman Aqueduct in that area collapsed on them and killed them. They were just innocent bystanders. And the question came up, "Are they worse than anybody else? Do the people who die in the tsunami die because that's a divine judgment? And the people who float to some high place and survive, are better people? Do calamities kill just the bad people?"

And we answered that question. No, the message to give, it was the same message that we give in every occasion like that whether it's a natural disaster or whether it's an act of war, or whatever it is. It might be an incidental death like we saw just the other day when seven of our Marines died in an explosion, were they the worst of the people who were on that base? Is that why they died? And the answer is no. The answer is, everybody deserves to die, we deserve to die after we've taken our first breath because in sin we were conceived, we were born sinners. God would have a right to take our lives. The soul that sins shall die, the wages of sin is death.

But that is not how to view calamity. Calamity happens to relatively good people and bad people. It happens to believers and unbelievers alike. The message of calamity, the message of disasters in the world, the message is simple, everybody's going to die. You're not in control of when you're going to die, you don't know when that is going to happen. It could happen in a very unexpected way, very soon, you had better be ready or you will perish. That's what Jesus was saying.

And then it was followed up, remember, by the parable of the fig tree which basically said the Lord is extending time, let it alone for a year to see if it will bear fruit before you chop it down.

So here we are in a world of people who are dying and they're all headed to eternal judgment and hell. They're going to perish and they're all living on borrowed time. All of them could die in any moment and God would be just in taking their lives because the wages of sin is death. He lets them live, He extends grace to them. He gives them time to repent. The patience of God, Romans 2 says, is intended to lead them to repentance. We have a responsibility then, living in a world of dying people on borrowed time to communicate the gospel to them. That's why we're here, that's what we want you to do for the rest of your life. Whatever profession you follow, wherever you end up on this planet, you're going to be there for this sole purpose. And that is because you alone have the answers that every eternal soul needs regarding their eternal destiny. You know the truth, you know the gospel. Only Christians know it. False religions don't know it. And that, by the way, is THE question religion must ask and answer. There's only one question, and that's this, "How do I escape hell and get to heaven?" That's the only question that is crucial for eternity. How do I escape hell and get to heaven? Any religion has the wrong answer has to be discarded, cannot be tolerated.

Well, that brings it down to the gospel, doesn't it? There's no salvation in any other than the name of Jesus Christ. "I am the way, the truth and the life, no man comes to the Father but by Me." We know that, that's the message we know, we believe and we must proclaim to a world of people living on borrowed time, all of whom will die and most of them in an unexpected way.

Now I ended up talking a little bit on Wednesday about the fact that the world in which we live is not only dying but it is increasingly hostile to Christianity. Probably you've been following in the news, a pastor who was arrested, a Christian pastor and held a prisoner in the Middle East and they don't

want to release him. We know about Christians being persecuted by Islamic governments and forces. We understand that. We know there's an escalating Islamification of the globe that is stunning and shocking and for many people it is frightening. And you could say the enemy is getting more powerful, and more powerful, and more powerful all the time. The enemy that could be labeled Islam, an anti-God, anti-Christ, anti-Scripture, anti-salvation, pro-Satanic system, growing at a massive, massive speed. It's a frightening future. And, of course, along the way, not only does it have its own worlds to conquer, but it wants to silence Christianity. Obviously Satan sets everything against the Christian message and so we think in the future, Christians, outspoken Christians are going to be persecuted. We talked about that last time.

First there will be a rejection of the Bible as a standard. That's happened in our country. Then morality will be turned on its head and everybody will advocate immorality, fornication, adultery is fine. Homosexual life is fine. Homosexuality is fine. Homosexual marriage is fine. Morality is completely turned on its head. Then it calls for tolerance for that and then it turns to intolerance for the people who aren't tolerant, and then that turns to persecution. And that's the flow. It's very likely that the world in which you live a few years after you're out of school, is going to be a world in which Christians will be persecuted. They will be persecuted. And there's a great danger in this. And the great danger in this is that all of a sudden the mission field, this world of dying people caught up in false religious systems, all living on borrowed time, about to perish becomes the enemy. They become the enemy rather than the mission field. That's the danger. That as the hostility ramps up toward Christianity, toward Christians, and it could come from your family. Jesus said He came to bring a sword inside a family. It could come from your...your environment, that is to say your work place or wherever it is that you are, your associations, it could come and it will come from your governments. And it will also come from massive forces, anti-God, false religious forces.

So the assumption could be that there's going to be an amping up of persecution and hostility and intolerance of the Christian message and the Christian gospel. And that poses the danger that all of a sudden we start seeing these people as our enemy and we get caught up in this sort of defense of Christianity as if it were some entity to be protected, circle the wagons kind of mentality. That would be completely the opposite to what we're called to do which is to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature because it's the only hope they have for eternal salvation. So we can't turn our enemy, no matter how volatile and vicious the enemy is, we can't turn the enemy into an object of hatred.

Now with that in mind, I want you to turn to Matthew chapter 5 because here is the companion that this is the underlying attitude that puts us in a position to do evangelistic work which we're called to do around the world no matter how the world treats us. Matthew 5 is in the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord gave that sermon to the leaders of Israel, in particular to dismantle their false religious system and expose them to how God thought. And there are a series of things that are said here which our Lord directs at the Jews and He does it in quite an interesting way, starting in verse 21. He says, "You

have heard,” and then verse 27, “You have heard...” and then in verse 31, “It was said...” and then in verse 33, “Again you have heard,” and then in verse 38, “You have heard.” And then in verse 43, “You have heard.”

Now what he’s talking about is their theology that had been taught to them by the rabbis. You have heard....You have heard....You have heard....You have heard. You’ve heard such-and-such about murder. You’ve heard such and such about sexual immorality. You’ve heard such and such about divorce. You’ve heard this about oaths and vows. You’ve heard this about retaliation, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. You’ve heard this about how you deal with your enemies. This is your theology. This is the rabbinic extant theology that had ripped the populace of Israel at the time of our Lord.

In contrast to that, He says in verse 22, “But I say...” Verse 28, “But I say...” Verse 32, “But I say...” Verse 34, “But I say...” Verse 39, “But I say...” Verse 44, “But I say...” I’m giving you a new theology here. We’re overturning your conventional thinking. You have heard, but I say...You have heard, but I say.

Now let’s just go to the final one of these comparisons down in verse 43, and let me just read it to you and then we’ll talk about it. “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, ‘Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous, for if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the pagans do the same? Therefore you are to be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.’”

Now Jesus gets to the end of this discussion, comparing traditional, apostate Judaism, the morality of traditional apostate Judaism with the heart of God. And He lands on the second great commandment. The first great commandment, according to Matthew chapter 22 is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. And the second like unto it is to do...what?...love your neighbor as yourself.”

When you think about that, that is putting that attitude into a very high category of responsibility. We all understand love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. And the second, right behind it, Love your neighbor as yourself. Back in Romans 13, Paul essentially says, “Love is the fulfilling of the whole law. If you—the first half of the Ten commandments are about God. If you love God, you won’t break those. The second half of the Ten Commandments are about man. If you love man, you won’t break those. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the whole Law. You can say to someone, “Look, forget the Ten Commandments, love the Lord your God with all your being and all your powers, and love your neighbor as yourself and that’s all you need.” I think of it...I don’t have a

sign in the kitchen that says, “One, don’t swear at your wife. Two, don’t hit her with anything. Three, answer her when she talks to you. Four, don’t be rude.” Why do I need that? I just have one law in my heart it says, “Love your wife.” I don’t need rules because love controls that relationship. And that’s exactly what you have here. And we are commanded in this second commandment, the second most important commandment...first one, love God—second one, love neighbors...neighbors. And neighbors distances the reality from family beyond the people that you normally love in your intimate circle.

Now, as we look at this text, I just want to show you three things, okay? Number one is the tradition of the Jews. And then the teaching of the Old Testament. And then the final truth from our Lord. The tradition of the Jews. “You have heard that it was said you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.” By the way, that command “love your neighbor,” appears originally in Leviticus 19. Leviticus 19:17 and 18, it’s verbatim. Love your neighbor, that’s where it comes from, the Mosaic Scripture. “You have heard that it was said,” that’s the familiar phrase that introduces the teaching of the rabbis that developed into their traditional morality and was passed down as the acceptable standard. Their tradition then was very simple, love your neighbor and they added, “Hate your enemy.” “Love your neighbor, hate your enemy.”

Now they conveniently omitted something. They omitted “love your neighbor as yourself.” So they diminished the requirement of that love, love your neighbor. But of course, you don’t want to love your neighbor like you love yourself because you’re far more important than your neighbor. You deserve more love than your neighbor. That would define the culture in which you’re living right today...the self-centered, self-fulfilling, self-aggrandizing, self-esteem mentality. But the Old Testament says, “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

What does it mean? It’s not a command to love yourself. Please, I’ve heard people preach on that, you’re to love yourself. No you’re not. You’re not commanded to love yourself. You already do that. That’s built into your fallenness. That’s part of your depravity is an inordinate love for yourself. You need to be cured of that. No, I mean, I’m not talking about self-preservation, and I’m not talking about failing to comb your hair. I’m not talking about failing to feed yourself. What I am talking about is it is part of being human to care for yourself, it is part of being sinful to overdo that preoccupation with yourself. We love ourselves in an unfeigned, fervent, habitual way. We love ourselves, we meet our needs, we meet our wants, we attend to our interests, we fulfill our desires, our hopes and our ambitions occupy us. We are more interested in what we say in a conversation than what somebody else is saying. That’s why it’s so hard to be a good listener. We do everything we possibly can to secure our own happiness, our own well-being, our own satisfaction, to make ourselves welcome, and comfortable and to fulfill our interests, to seek our own pleasure and fulfillment and we are really good at forgiving ourselves for all our failures and all our weaknesses.

Well that's exactly how you should love your neighbor. That's exactly how you should love your neighbor. Oh they left that part out because they weren't really prepared to take the command that far. But anyway, they did say you are to love your neighbor. And oh, by the way, they not only admitted part, they added something. And by the way, "Hate your enemy." Hate your enemy. Your enemy then is not your neighbor. They have just qualified neighbor as non-enemy. Okay. Narrowly defining neighbor. It would be a Jew, of course, for them because they resented the Gentiles. But not every Jew because tax collectors were not acceptable to them. Neither was the common rabble in John 7:49, the leaders of Israel declared the common people were cursed. So they had narrowed down neighbor to exclude enemies and to even exclude people they thought were lower than themselves, sociologically, or economically. They had a very narrow definition of neighbor.

They would have gone well to go back to Leviticus 19 and verse 34 and read the stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you and you shall love him as yourself. Stranger, somebody you never met. Or they might have read Exodus 12:49, "There shall be one law for the native and for the stranger who sojourns among you." Your loving your neighbor really has no limit. It can be a total stranger. In the Qumran community, the Essenes were a very sort of monastic cult within Judaism. They had some very interesting statements, here are a few of them. They mirror the attitude of the Jews in the time of our Lord on this issue. Quote: "Love all that God has chosen and hate all that He has rejected." Here's another one, "Love all the sons of light, each according to his lot in God's community and hate all the sons of darkness." Here's another one, "The Levites curse all the sons of Belial." In other words, anybody who is not in our group is a cursed son of Belial.

So in the tradition that had developed, the command to love your neighbor as yourself became a license to hate because they defined neighbor more narrowly, and narrowly, and narrowly until it excluded anybody outside their group and certainly excluded enemies. Here's a maxim of the Pharisees, quote: "If a Jew sees a Gentile fallen into the sea, let him by no means lift him out of there for it is written, 'Thou shalt not rise up against the blood of thy neighbor, but this man is not thy neighbor,'" end quote. Let him drown. I don't think Pharisees would have made good lifeguards, (loud laughter) rescue crews, or firemen, or first responders, or...thank you! (Laughter) It's a small wonder that the Romans charged—this is true—small wonder that the Romans charged the Jews with hatred of the human race. Hatred of the human race? What an attitude.

So, here is...this is the existing theology of Israel, hate your enemies. An enemy is anybody who is not a neighbor and a neighbor has been so narrowly defined, that it's this small little group of people that would be considered your friends and relatives. That's the tradition.

Let's look at the teaching of the Old Testament, just briefly, cause I want to get pass this to the most important part. The teaching of the Old Testament. What is the teaching of the Old Testament? What did the Old Testament say? People say, "Well look, if you go to the Old Testament, you might understand why they had developed this very narrow view of neighbor because the Jews when they

entered the land of Canaan were given the first command, the first responsibility was to exterminate the Canaanites, obliterate them. They were told in Deuteronomy 23, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Medianites were not a people to be treated with kindness. And if you get into the Psalms and you get into what are called the imprecatory Psalms, you can read like Psalm 69:22 to 28, all these things that are prayers to God to destroy the wicked. How does that kind of work with love your enemies? I think there's a very simple and lucid statement that was penned by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Dietrich Bonhoeffer knew what it was to be a Christian in the middle of vicious, vile, destructive, slaughtering, murderous Nazis. And this is what Bonhoeffer wrote, and I think it's true. "The wars of Israel against the pagan nations were the only holy wars in history...the only holy wars in history." The only wars prescribed specifically by God against idolaters for the preservation and protection of His people for redemptive purposes in the bringing of the Messiah and the salvation of the elect.

He's right. The prescribed commanded holy wars that Israel engaged in directly by the command of God are the only holy wars in history. As for the imprecatory Psalms, what do we make of those where David is praying these kinds of things? Well the way to understand that is the Psalmist speaks not with personal animosity, not with personal animosity but as a representative of God's chosen people. He is, after all, Israel's king. And he is defending the integrity of God. He regards the idolatrous enemies of God as worthy of judgment. You see that earlier in Psalm 69. He regards them as God's enemies and he is upholding the honor and the glory of God, sort of like Revelation chapter 6 where you have the martyrs under the altar in the fifth seal. And they're saying, "How long, O Lord, how long, O Lord, how long, O Lord," will You allow Your people to be martyred and You will not vindicate Your honor and Your glory." Or maybe the message of Habakkuk, the same message, the prophet, "How long, O Lord, how long, O Lord are You going to let the enemies of Israel be triumphant and be victorious?" These are judicial cries, they're not personal vengeance and personal animosity.

The people of God take up the cause of God, like the Psalmist said, "The reproaches that fall on You [in the same Psalm] the reproaches that fall on You are falling on me." In other words, when You're dishonored, I feel the pain.

So what you have here in the imprecatory Psalms are cries for the justice of God to go forth for the vindication of His name. Not personal retaliation, not personal vengeance. It's very different.

For example, you have in David who offers these imprecatory Psalms on behalf of God, a desire for God to be honored, and then you have the very opposite situation, if you remember in 1 Samuel 24, David could have killed Saul and he would have, I suppose, on many levels have had been just in doing that because it would have been an act of self-defense and Saul was trying to kill him. But he looked at Saul in his vulnerability and you remember in 24 he says in verse 10, "I had pity on him...I had pity on him." And he wouldn't take his life. And again in 2 Samuel 16, the cursing enemy Shimei comes against David and he's told you need to get rid of this guy, you need to get rid of this guy. And

David's response is, "Let him curse. Let him curse. The Lord will deal with this."

And that's kind of like Romans, isn't it? "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord." You don't take that into your own hands. So what is instructing us here? Verse 44, "But I say to you, love your enemies...love your enemies." Apart from a holy war, apart from an imprecatory prayer for the vindication of the glory of God and the dishonor of His name to stop, it comes down to the personal attitude of the believer. And what is my personal attitude toward the enemies of the cross? Toward the enemies of the gospel? Toward the enemies of the church? It is to love them, to love them. What does that mean...what do you mean to love them? Maybe to desire that they will repent? That's where it starts, to desire that they will believe the gospel, to desire that they will be saved, to hate them? No. To want them to go to hell? To want them to die in their sins? No.

How about having the attitude of Jesus who looks at the city of Jerusalem, and what does He do? He weeps. He weeps. "How often I would have gathered you as a hen gathers her brood, but you would not." You who murder the prophets, about to slaughter Me.

That has to be the attitude. No matter how vile or violent, no matter how threatening, we love those enemies. The worst Islamic terrorists, the most foul mouth anti-Christian person that irritates you, the one who criticizes Christ and dishonors Him until it literally causes pain for you, what's your attitude? It's an attitude of love. Let me say it again. To love them is to ardently and passionately and genuinely desire that they will repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. And that has to be the heart attitude that we take into this dying world.

In Exodus 23:4 and 5, it says this, "If you meet your enemy's ox, or his donkey wandering away, you shall surely return it to him. If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying helpless under its load, you shall refrain from leaving it to him, you shall surely release it." If you find the animal of someone who hates you, care for that animal. That's communicating love.

In the thirty-first chapter of Job, Job defends his virtue and this is what he says. "Have I rejoiced at the extinction of my enemy?" What an interesting insight. You want to know my character? Have I rejoiced at the extinction of my enemy or rejoiced when evil befell him? Do I get some kind of pleasure when a terrorist blows himself up? Do I get some kind of pleasure when a politician, an immoral, ungodly, profane politician proceeds in leading some kind of movement that changes laws for the worst? Do I rejoice when his plane crashes?

Well Job said this, "No, I have not allowed my mouth to sin by asking for his life." I've even heard people say, "Maybe the best thing that would happen would be the President would be assassinated. What? The best thing that would happen would be the President would be...what?...saved, along with every other person who is on the other side of the gospel.

Proverbs 25:21, “If your enemy is hungry, do...what?...feed him. If he’s thirsty, give him water to drink. And, O by the way, the Lord will reward you.” That’s Proverbs 25:21-22. Well that’s the Old Testament. The Old Testament is love your neighbor and your neighbor includes your enemy. All right, so you’ve got tradition in Jesus time. Love your neighbor and your neighbor is this very, very narrow group of people that you prefer and hate your enemy. That’s tradition. Old Testament teaching, love your neighbor and your neighbor means everybody, including your enemy.

And the final point is to look at the truth from Jesus. How did He give us clarity? I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. There are three things there that I...you can see them yourself. Three principles will correct a faulty understanding. Love your enemies, pray for your persecutors, and demonstrate your sonship. Love your enemies, pray for your persecutors, manifest, or demonstrate your sonship. Nobody has problems living with their friends. Jesus goes to the real issue in that second and great commandment, your enemy is your neighbor. Remember the Luke 10 Good Samaritan story? That’s a story about loving your neighbor. Your neighbor was an outcast alien. Here is a Samaritan and a Jew and they had no dealings. And yet there’s an expression of love. Love your enemies. The possessive pronoun there is very definite—love your personal enemy. Love is *agapate*, it’s a present constant command, be constantly loving. And *agapao* is the love of the will. It’s the noblest of all loves. It’s the love that’s not the love of feelings and emotion, it’s not *phileo* which has a shade of kind of affections. It’s the love of the will. It’s the love that determines. It’s the unconquerable benevolence of an invincible good will. Love your enemies. Love your enemies.

Luke 6, Jesus says, “To the point that you do good to those who hate you.” Second, pray for your persecutors. It can come to that. Pray for those who persecute you. Who’s the best model of that? Jesus on the cross. What did He say? “Father, forgive them, they don’t know what they do.” That forgiveness went into action fast because a thief was forgiven on the spot and so was the Roman centurion. Again, Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, “This is the supreme command, through the medium of prayer we go to our persecutors, stand by their side and plead to God for them. You pray for your persecutors. You go to your persecutor’s side, to your enemy’s side, spiritually speaking, and you take hold of your enemy and you lift your enemy before God in prayer.

It was back in 1880, some words were written that affected Bonhoeffer by another. He wrote this, “This commandment to love your enemies and pray for your persecutors will grow even more urgent in the holy struggle which lies before us. The Christians will be hounded from place to place, subjected to physical assaults, maltreatment and death of every kind. We’re approaching an age of widespread persecution, soon the time will come when we will pray, will be a prayer of earnest love for these very sons of perdition who stand around and gaze at us with eyes aflame with hatred, and who have perhaps already raised their hands to kill us. Yes, the church which is really waiting for its Lord and which discerns the signs of the times of decision must fling itself with its utmost power and with the

armor of its holy life into this prayer of love,” end quote.

That has to be the attitude of the true church. Love your enemies, show it by praying for your persecutors. And, thirdly, that will demonstrate your sonship, verse 45, “So that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.” That is just a profound statement.

The most godlike thing you can do, the most godlike thing you can do is love your enemies. Let me tell you something. If God didn't love His enemies, there wouldn't be any Christians. Right? Even while we were enemies, Paul says, He loved us. That's the basic principle. We manifest that we are genuinely the sons of God when we love the way God loves. We were all enemies and He made us friends, He made us sons, He made us joint heirs. We are to behave toward our enemies the way our heavenly Father behaved toward us.

How does God treat His enemies? He loves them. He loves them. How do we know that? Verse 45, “Causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.” The world is full of the enemies of God, they hate God. They defy God. They resent God. And the rain falls. And the sun shines. And they live life and they smell the flowers and they eat the food and they fall in love and they have children and they suck in all the wonders of life in creation. This is what Calvin first called common grace, it manifests the love of God for His enemies.

Psalm 145:15 and 16 says, “The eyes of all look to Thee and Thou dost give them their food in due time. Thou dost open Thy hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing,” common grace, common grace.

You know, when you think about that love of God that extends toward everyone, I like to break it into four simple categories, we're running out of time, I'll give them to you quick.

Number one is general goodness...general goodness. Just life in the world. Just look around you, we're living in Santa Clarita, how many real believers are in this town? But what a delightful place to live. That's common grace. Music is a common grace. Food is a common grace. Friendship is a common grace, recreation is a common grace. Scenery is a common grace.

But there's a second way in which God loves His enemies, compassion...compassion. He feels pity for them. Matthew—Jesus weeps. Luke 19—Jesus weeps. Jeremiah 13 and Jeremiah 48, Jeremiah literally cries the tears of God, tears of compassion. We see the compassion of God toward His enemies in the healing ministry of Jesus. Why did Jesus heal people? He could have come into the world and demonstrated His deity a lot of ways, how about flying? Huh? Just standing there and levitate. Go up to Galilee in the air. Take a few guys with you. Fly back, land. Pretty impressive? Or maybe He could leap a tall building at a single bound, like Superman. Why did He do what He did? Cause He was not only demonstrating miraculous power, He was demonstrating divine compassion.

There is compassion, medicine is the evidence of God's compassion. There's a milk of human kindness we talk about in even fallen wretched people that's part of the image of God, that makes them care for people. Not everybody that runs hospitals, not everybody that runs charities, not everybody that tries to relieve suffering is doing it because the Holy Spirit is in them. But it's part of the image of God. So God's love for His enemies is shown in common grace and compassion.

And thirdly, warning. God loves enough to warn. You must repent or you will all likewise perish. That's what we saw yesterday. You're all living on borrowed time. And the fourth way in which God demonstrates His love for His enemies is in the gospel offer...the gospel offer. God's general love for mankind, God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life. Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. Tell them to repent. Tell them believe in Christ, to be saved. God's love extends across the world through us to the corners of the world to bring the gospel offer to sinners. Does God love His enemies? Yeah. How does He love His enemies? By being good to all? By showing compassion to all. By warning all. And by offering the gospel. So just do that, okay? That's your assignment. Live the rest of your life loving the way God loves His enemies. That's how you live your life. You extend to your enemies love the way God extends love. No different, can't improve on it, show them kindness, goodness, compassion, warn them of what is to come and offer them the gospel. That is your calling as long as you're here.

Father, we thank You this morning for just the joy and the richness of being together and thank You for all these blessed and privileged young people who are in, in a very unique sense, enjoying Your lovingkindness by being here at The Master's College. We know that there are many, many tens of thousands who would wish to have this experience but this is Your goodness to these young people and to all of us who are here, what a wonder, what a kindness. Help them to make the most of it. And prepare them to go into a dying world and do all they can to love those people the way You love Your enemies which we once were and You loved us into Your Kingdom, may You use us to love others into that Kingdom as well. We'll thank You in Christ's name. Amen.

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