

## **A Commandment With No Exceptions**

Matthew 5:43-48

### **INTRODUCTION:**

- A. Children understand the need for obedience. They also understand that some commands they are given are harder to keep than others.
- B. Likewise, as Christians, there are certain commands we are given from our heavenly Father that we find no problem in keeping. However, all of us realize there are certain commands that are much harder to live out.
- C. This morning, let's look at perhaps one of the hardest commandments the Lord has given.

### **RELIGIOUS LEADERS: LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AND HATE YOUR ENEMY (Mt. 5:43).**

- A. Loving your neighbor was a fundamental teaching throughout the Scriptures (Lev. 19:17-18, 33-34; Mk. 12:31).
- B. Even though they taught this message, the religious leaders struggled with this idea.
- C. The Scribes and Pharisees inferred and even added that people were to hate their enemies.
- D. The Law taught quite the opposite – Lev. 19:17; Exodus 23:4-5; Prov. 25:21-22

### **JESUS: LOVE YOUR ENEMY AND PRAY FOR THOSE WHO PERSECUTE YOU (Mt. 5:44).**

- A. Our enemies are those who are actively opposed or hostile to us (Luke 6:27-30).
- B. Jesus raised the bar and taught His followers to love their enemies. The Greek word Jesus used for love was "agape."
- C. Jesus raised the bar and taught His followers to pray for their enemies (Lk. 23:34; Acts 7:60).
- D. The words love and pray are both meant to be a continuous action and not just when it's convenient for us.

### **WHY SHOULD WE LOVE OUR ENEMIES (Mt. 5:45-48)?**

- A. We display we are different (1 Jn. 3:10; Jn. 13:34-35).
- B. We display the love of God (1 Jn. 3:16-18; Rom. 5:6-8).

### **CONCLUSION:**

- A. When Jesus said love and prayer for your enemies, He was giving us a command He expects us to keep.
- B. Are we willing to obey Jesus even when it comes to loving our enemies?