

## **Matthew 5:43-48**

### **The Meaning of Christian Love**

#### **Introduction:**

In our day so many think of God's love towards the sinner is defined as "unconditional love" God loves the sinner in such a way that all God is, is love. They see God with only one attribute, when He possesses many attributes. God is love but love is not God, I John 4:16. Think of it, if God were only love, there would be no justice. It would infringe upon His holiness and Judgment of sin. If God were only love, there would be no hell. Love is SPECIAL, destined for those who are in God's family. "Love is perfected with us, that we may have confidence in the Day of Judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment and the one who fears is not perfected in love." (I John 4:17-18)

#### **I. The Christian's Love Toward His Enemies**

##### **A. Confusion**

1. Commands to exterminate the Canaanites – Deut. 20:17
2. Imprecatory Psalms – Turn To: Psalm 69:4,22-28

##### **B. Judicial injunctions**

1. The zeal Christ has for His Church – John 2:12-17 cf. Mal. 3:1-6
2. Jesus pronounced woes upon the Pharisees – Turn To: Matthew 23:13-15

##### **C. How does God love His enemies?**

1. By sending the sun and rains upon them.
2. By Common Grace

##### **D. The Way we love our enemies – v.44**

1. By praying for them
2. By blessing those who persecute us – Rom. 12:14

##### **E. What is God's attitude towards those who disrespect and mistreat Him?**

1. He does not treat them for who they *are* or what they *do* but is governed by His love. – John 3:16
2. He caused us to be born again – I Pet. 1:3

#### **II. The Love of God Towards us**

##### **A. Redemptive sense**

1. God did not see in us something attractive – Rom. 5:8
2. God loved us first – I John 4:10

##### **B. Various words for love:**

1. Storge – Parental love
2. Eros – Sexual love
3. Philia – Affectionate love – John 21:15-17
4. Agape – Sacrificial love

##### **C. What exactly is Jesus commanding us to do?**

1. Jesus is not commanding us to love our enemies as we do our children.
2. Jesus is not saying we are to fall in love with our enemies as husbands and wives.
3. Jesus is not saying we are to like our enemies.
4. Jesus is saying we must love as God loved us which involves action by praying for them...

#### **Conclusion:**

1. *Since this love involves action. We must pray for their conversion. This is the surest way to kill bitterness in our heart.*
2. *Expressing this agape love causes us to imitate our heavenly Father in a state of perfection (teleios- the right end, purpose and goal in mind, a functional perfection)*