

In the Dust of the Rabbi
Part #4 – **“Loving Our Enemies”**
Pastor Joel Spiridigliozzi / July 1, 2007
Audio Message available at
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“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even the pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

(Matthew 5:43-48)

Christ and His Example: Jesus did not just teach to love our enemies but he lived and practiced what he taught.

1. Jesus washes the feet of his betrayer Judas (John 13:1-17).
2. The Triumphal Entry (Matthew 21:1-11). A week later the same people that worshipped him cried out “Crucify Him” (Luke 23:1-49).
3. Peter’s Denial (Luke 22:54-62). Peter’s Reinstatement (John 21:15-19).

Christ and His Example is later duplicated by the Early Church:

1. Stephen (Acts 7:54-60) – v. 59-60 *“While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ Then he fell on his knees and cried out, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them.’”*
2. Paul the Apostle who ironically was one of the greatest enemies of Christ and His followers. Paul says, *“We work hard with our own hands.*

When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered, we answer kindly” (1 Corinthians 4:12).

In the same way that Jesus challenged the religious of his day he challenges the church of today. If the religious of his day allowed HATE to enter their hearts than assuredly the Christ follower of today is in danger of doing the same.

Why Do We Hate?

1. We want our own way.
 - **The cultures philosophy** says, “lie, cheat, steal, and hurt – do whatever it takes to get what I want.”
 - **Jesus’ philosophy** says, “give, surrender, submit, and LOVE – do whatever it takes to let others see the love of God.”
2. Misconceptions of who the enemy is.
 - *“The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:4,5).*
3. Pride
 - Ethnocentricity and Egocentricity
4. Low-self Esteem
 - We would struggle less about what people might think of us if we came to the realization how much people don’t think of us.
5. Unresolved Hurt
 - Hurting people hurt people.
 - Unforgiveness is like a prisoner who sits behind bars with the keys to the door in his or her hands.