

MATTHEW 5:38-48 / OCTOBER 25

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

Read and Pray

This week's sermon continues our series through the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus challenges us to respond differently to people who wrong us. As a group, read Matthew 5:38-48. Consider how Jesus calls us to reflect God's love even toward those who have hurt us. After reading, spend time in silent prayer. What stood out to you? What might the Spirit be pressing into your life?

Sermon Recap (to *apply*, not rehash the sermon)

Review the sermon with your group. Focus especially on:

- We win our enemies by losing our rights. Jesus calls us to surrender personal retaliation and respond with the self-sacrificial love he demonstrated on the cross.
- Loving our enemies is more than refusing to retaliate. Jesus calls us to actively do good to those who have wronged us.
- God extends grace even to those who reject him. By loving our enemies, we reflect the character of our heavenly Father.
- Jesus does not command us to tolerate abuse. His call to love our enemies is not a call to remain in harmful or dangerous situations.

Group Discussion

1. Look again at Matthew 5:38-48. What commands does Jesus give about how we should respond to people who wrong us? Which of his instructions is most surprising or difficult to accept?
2. In verses 38-42, Jesus challenges our instinct to defend our rights or get even. Why is surrendering our right to retaliate so difficult? What does our desire to get even reveal about our hearts?
3. Jesus commands us to "love [our] enemies and pray for those who persecute [us]." How is this different from simply avoiding conflict or choosing not to retaliate? What does this kind of love reveal about God?
4. The sermon challenged us to consider someone who has wronged us. When you think about that person, what is your heart's natural response? What might need to change in you before you can genuinely seek their good?
5. Pastor Bryan shared how John Perkins brought blueberries to someone who was hostile toward him. Who might God be calling you to actively love rather than avoid or resent? What could your version of bringing "blueberries" look like?
6. Romans 5:8 reminds us that "while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." How does remembering the way Jesus loved us when we were his enemies change the way we approach people who have wronged us?

WEEKLY REFLECTION QUESTIONS

REFLECT:

Where are you holding on to resentment or a desire to get even with someone?

RESPOND:

What is one intentional step you can take to show Christlike love toward someone who has wronged you?

REACH:

Who in your life needs to experience the love of Jesus through the way you treat them?

PRAYER

- ☐ Thank Jesus for loving us when we were his enemies and reconciling us to God through the cross.
- ☐ Ask God to reveal where bitterness or resentment is keeping you from loving others as he has loved you.
- ☐ Pray for the people who have wronged you, asking God to bless them and give you wisdom to respond with grace and love.