

## Devotions with Matt

May 22, 2020

### OUR TRUE ENEMIES

What makes an enemy? Is having an enemy based on geographical locations? Border lines? Skin color? Religious theology? Political affiliation? I am sincerely asking because as my fingers hover over the keys to type this devotion, I can't figure out for the life of me what makes an enemy. Wars are started with our enemies, but what made them an enemy in the first place? There are those who attack us and our allies, but what did we do to make us their enemies? I still am trying to figure it all out.

The only real answer I can come up with is that there is evil in the world. The Bible tells us that The one who has stored up godly treasures in his heart brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. Evil spurs hatred, jealousy, selfishness and greed. Those things create enemies of others in our own minds. We were created to live in harmony, unity and love with all others, but having an enemy somewhere has become the norm. If someone doesn't have any enemies, real or imagined, in this day and age, they are not considered "normal".

So as Jesus addresses the crowd from the mountain in Matthew 5, He tells them to love their enemies. It would have been a moment of silent disbelief and shock in the hearing of those words then as much as it is today. Who can love their enemies? They are our enemies after all! There is supposed to animosity between the two parties, not love. Right? Jesus is extending the Biblical command to love our neighbors into the next stratosphere. He's taking love beyond the ones who we like, who are nice to us and who look and think like we do. Almost everyone can love our loveable neighbors, but who can love our unlovable enemies? It is not a natural thing for us to do. To love our enemies is not natural, but supernatural. Only the love of God deep in our hearts will allow us to love our enemies.

So, who are our real enemies? It is not the ones who are different from us. It is not the ones who disagree with us. It is not our political rivals. It is not the ones who live across a border or an ocean. It is not the other broken humans on the face of the planet. Our true enemy is the lie that says they are our enemy. Our enemy is our broken thinking that we must hate "them". It is a whisper of Satan in our ears than stirs up hatred, envy and suspicion of another. It is the stronghold of our sin nature that believes we need to make enemies out of another.

The kingdom of God, where Jesus is King, is about reconciliation, forgiveness, restoration and healing. Those are all part of His supernatural grace in our lives. We cannot learn to love our enemies until we realize that, in our sin, we were all once enemies of God. Yet, He was willing to come and make peace with us through His Son Jesus Christ. He now no longer calls us enemies, but we have become His friends.

There are borders, barriers and fences all around us that cause division among us. We look at those on the other side as enemies. Jesus' love breaks down all those barriers. When the barriers are gone we realize that



people are not our enemies. We see them as broken, lost and helpless and in need of a Savior- just like we are. We are in a battle against sin, evil and Satan. We are in a battle against hate, violence and war. We are in a battle against our own dark hearts.

Those are our true enemies and we can't defeat them naturally. It will take someone far greater than we are to do so. In that fight against our true enemies, we are in this all together. We are all on the same side. We all need Jesus.

**Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. -Ephesians 6:10-12**

In Christ,

Matt