



Loving Others Like God Does

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;" (Matthew 5:44).

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"For if ye love them which love

you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?" (Matthew 5:46).

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. 44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; 45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? 47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?" (Matthew 5:43-47).

The natural is always easy and inviting. It does not take grace to live a natural life. But God is not calling us to a natural live but a spiritual one. Spiritual living is supernatural, and requires God's grace to attain. In this message Jesus examines the natural and spiritual in the areas of love and courtesies. Note what Jesus is teaching here and how it contradicts with the norms of the society:

- 1) It is natural to love your neighbour and hate your enemies, but Jesus commands "Love your enemies" (vs 44).
- 2) It is natural to bless those who bless us and curse those who curse us, but Jesus commands "bless them that curse you" (vs 44).
- 3) It is natural to do good to those that love us and restrain doing so to those who hate us, but Jesus commands "do good to them that hate you" (vs 44).
- 4) It is natural to pray good prayers for those who love us, and bad prayers for those who hate and persecute us, but Jesus commands "pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (vs 44).

God does not just merely command but also takes time to explain the reasons why, so that

our actions will be based on intelligible decisions of faith. For the above commands, He propounded the reason "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (vs 45).

He further explained that a different world cannot be created by indifferent people. Darkness cannot dispel darkness. It takes light to dispel darkness. If the actions of sinners can be classed as darkness, and we act as them, then our darkness will not be able to dispel theirs but rather intensifies it. Two wrongs do not make a right. Someone must deliberately chose to act differently so as to bring in God's presence to transform the darkness of this world into the light of God, and that somebody can be you - and indeed, God wants it to be you. Now ponder on these questions that Jesus posed to bring out the salient truths:

- 1) "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye?" (vs 46). The obvious answer to this question is "None".
- 2) "do not even the publicans the same?" (vs 46). The answer to this question is "Yes". The clear implication is that if we act like publicans, then we become publicans by nature!
- 3) "And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others?" (vs 47). The answer to the question is "Nothing". And the implication is that we operate at the same level as other sinners, who know not God.
- 4) "do not even the publicans so?" (vs 47). Obviously yes, and that implies becoming publicans by nature as well.