

## Loving Our Enemies

### Scripture Reading — Matthew 5:43-48

*"Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you ..." Matthew 5:44 —*

I heard this story from a dear friend of our ministry. She grew up in the Netherlands during World War II. Under the Nazi occupation of her homeland her Christian family was ordered to house a young German officer. Understandably he was an unwelcome enemy.

One day this young man received a small package from Germany. He was so excited--his mother had sent him warm woolen socks! Something moved in the hearts of his unwilling hosts. In the midst of the war's hatred, death, and suffering, they could see a human soul in this enemy. They invited him to church and included him in their family devotions. On this small front, Christian love dealt a blow to the hatred of war.

Our Scripture reading for today highlights a seemingly impossible command: "Be perfect ... as your heavenly Father is perfect." Jesus sets before us the ideal of perfect love, God's high standard that we must always strive for.

Jesus knows that at times we are tempted to demonize our enemies. But he wants us to see humanity in them, to overcome evil with good, and to wear down hatred by showing love.

As we walk in Christ, we are surrounded by all kinds of people. We must remember that we are called to love not only our friends but also our enemies.

### Prayer

*Lord, in the bright light of your perfection we see our own imperfections. Fill us with your Spirit, we pray, so we may learn how to love others, even our enemies! In Jesus, Amen.*

**Devotion topics:** [Life](#), [Christian Life](#), [Seeking God](#)

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*Printed on June 18, 2019*

