

Proclaiming the Gospel

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness;
But unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (*1 Cor. 1.18*).

Edifying the Body of Christ (*Eph. 4.10-16*)

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The Wise Still Seek Him

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Bless Them!

What? First you say, "Know your enemies; Stand Strong," then you say "Know HIM." Now you say, "Bless Them." You might well ask, "What are you thinking!"

The Holy Word of God in Christ Jesus teaches us to "bless them . . ." in Matthew Five. Matthew 5.43-46 is a hard teaching – if we are honest with ourselves.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

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;

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.

For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

It is imperative that we do know our enemies, the enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must know the Holy Word of the Lord that we might know those who are walking another way. Often we see people who seemingly are so good and are perceived as "doing it right." There is a difference between goodly living and godly living. The Bible addresses the life of holiness in Jesus Christ, the life of righteousness in Jesus Christ. We have no righteousness. Isaiah 64.6 makes it very clear.

But we are all as an unclean [thing], and all our righteousnesses [are] as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

Romans 3.23 states that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Our sinful nature follows easily after the enemy, does what *feels* right. The world teaches that one is to do whatever *feels* good. The enemy uses all sorts of tactics to get us to live a life of waste, of ungodliness. The enemy says, "You deserve to do what *feels* good. You deserve to get your revenge when

To know Jesus is to know HIS way, to live Matthew 5.44.

Remember St. Stephen? He **knew** Jesus. He **knew HIM**. He preached Jesus! He did not partake of the sins of the religious ones; he did not join hands with them, but he spoke the Truth, preached against their sin (Act 7.51-53). The religious ones hated Stephen, stoned him to death. He saw them through the heart of Jesus and prayed as he was dying, "...Lord, lay not this sin to their charge . . ." (Acts 7.60).

My prayer?

Oh, Jesus, help me to surrender my all, my life . . . to you and to "Bless Them."

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Co-laborers together for Jesus Christ

Come apart and rest (Mark 6.31).

someone does something against you. Get back at them; they deserve it. Go ahead; you are a good person and they had no right to hurt you.”

Let us be sure we are walking a godly life in Christ Jesus. Jesus gave His life for us. If we repent of our sins, ask Jesus Christ to come into our lives to be both Lord and Saviour, our lives will be changed. We will be a new creature in Jesus Christ (II Cor 5.17). We will then understand Matthew 5.43-46.

When we know Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, we will:

Love our enemies
Bless them that curse us
Do good to them that hate us
Pray for them which despitefully use us and persecute us

We will go to the reverse side of the cross and see with the heart of Jesus Christ a hurting world, those who lie in His Name, those who persecute those that are living for Jesus, those who make all sort of evil for the ones who love Jesus with all their heart.

Matthew 5.46 makes clear the standard of the follower of Jesus Christ: “For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?” If a person says he is a follower of Jesus Christ, but follows the enemy, the teachings of the world, what has that person more than the world?

The Cross of Jesus Christ is our standard. If a person has been to the Cross of Calvary, sought forgiveness for his sins, and has renounced the world, Satan, then that person will understand Matthew 5.41 “And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.”

When Jesus is in us and we abide in Him, then “The Love of God” in Christ Jesus will flow in us and through us to touch even the vilest sinners as well as the “goodly” people who do not see that they have sin in their lives or who believe that whatever they do is alright. When we have the love of Jesus Christ flowing in us, we will be able to 1) love our enemies, 2) bless them that curse us, 3) do good to them that hate us and 4) pray for them which despitefully use us and persecute us.

Knowing Jesus as Lord and Saviour is living one’s life under His lordship, living for Him, obeying His Word, walking in obedience to Him though it may not make sense to the world or one’s family. Our calling is to bring lost souls to Jesus Christ and to edify the body of Jesus Christ. When the love of Jesus is flowing in us and through us, we will desire with desire to tell others of His great love and show them the way of salvation.

A most difficult aspect of walking in obedience to this command is found in Jeremiah 12 where Jeremiah has an issue with the Lord. Jeremiah speaks what is in his heart because he knows the Lord knows his heart. He states, “...Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? [wherefore] are all

they happy that deal very treacherously? Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root: they grow . . .” (Jer 12.1, 2).

And the Lord says to us? **Love them, bless them, do good to them** and **pray for them** which despitefully use us and persecute us? Oh, this is a hard word, a most difficult test in our lives to show forth “The Love of God” in Christ Jesus in us. Hear what the Lord says in Romans 12.19-21:

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but [*rather*] give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *[is]* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

God is God! It is He Who puts all things right. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is the living God. He does not sanction sin nor will He always strive with man, but it is He Who puts all things in place – not us. When people set out to hurt us, if we are serving the Lord Jesus Christ, they are coming against Jesus Christ – not us, though it *feels* like their anger, rage, hate, lies . . . done with the saying, “in the name of Jesus,” is against us. Though they desire to even kill us, they are coming against Jesus Christ, not us. Remember Stephen! Those religious ones came against Jesus Christ, though Stephen received the stones in his body.

There are those who say they know Jesus (meaning John 5.37-42). They know about Him, but do not know HIM. There are church-goers who do not know HIM. There are those hiding behind a pulpit while standing on a pulpitum (stage) who do not know HIM, but we must bless them by praying for them that they will come to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour – as their destination is determined by this.

Remember all those who in this present era as well as the thousands of years before have given their lives because “The Love of God” has so permeated their lives that they desire to see those hurting them, torturing them, killing them – come to Jesus and **know HIM** as Lord and Savior. They reach out to their enemies to bless them by leading them to Jesus. May the Lord Jesus forgive us when we fail to live the life the Lord Jesus commands us to live, a life full of love for a lost and dying world, when we fail to understand that we cannot receive “The Love of God” in Christ Jesus at the cross unless we are willing to receive that love for those who hurt us.

Walking the *Via Dolorosa* is difficult, but oh, the joy to walk with the Saviour.

Jesus was falsely accused, lied about, spit upon, stripped of his clothes, mocked, scourged, crucified . . . Remember! Remember! Remember His prayer on the cross?

“Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.”