

Sermon Title: The Enemy Dynamics of Christian Love

Sermon Text: Romans 12:17-21

Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to demonstrate the Christian response in love toward enemies.

Sermon Proposition: There are 4 practical principles in demonstrating Christian love toward enemies.

“Revenge is the greatest instinct in the human race.” – Friedrich Nietzsche

I. The 1st principle of displaying Christian love toward enemies. V.17

(Matthew 5:38-42)

1 Thessalonians 5:15 See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.

1 Peter 3:8-9 Finally, all *of you be* of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, *be* tenderhearted, *be* courteous; **9** not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.

“Some fellows were stationed in Korea during the Korean War. While there, they hired a local boy to cook and clean for them. Being a bunch of jokesters, these guys soon took advantage of the boy’s seeming naiveté. They’d smear Vaseline on the stove handles so that when he’d turn the stove on in the morning he’d get grease all over his fingers. They’d put little water buckets over the door so that he’d get deluged when he opened the door. They’d even nail his shoes to the floor during the night. Day after day the little fella took the brunt of their practical jokes without saying anything. No blame, no self-pity, no temper tantrums.

Finally the men felt guilty about what they were doing, so they sat down with the young Korean and said, ‘Look, we know these pranks aren’t funny anymore, and we’re sorry. We’re never gonna take advantage of you again.’

It seemed too good to be true to the houseboy. ‘No more sticky on stove?’

‘Nope.’

‘No more water on door?’

‘No.’

‘No more nail shoes to floor?’

‘Nope, never again.’

‘Okay,’ the boy said with a smile, ‘no more spit in soup.’”

–Ray Stedman, “How to Hug,” sermon, March 20, 1977

[Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll’s Ultimate Book of Illustrations & Quotes*, Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 1998, p.493.]

II. The 2nd principle of displaying Christian love toward enemies. V.18

(1 Corinthians 6:1-8)

III. The 3rd principle of displaying Christian love toward enemies. V.19-20

Examples: Pharaoh, Joseph, Daniel, Israel

(Hebrews 11:32-40)

A. The principle of personal vengeance rejected. V.19a

1. Instead give place for God’s wrath. V.19

2. The Old Testament principle for a New Testament reality. V.19c

Leviticus 19:17-18 `You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him. **18** `You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I *am* the LORD.

Deuteronomy 32:35 Vengeance is Mine, and recompense; Their foot shall slip in *due* time; For the day of their calamity *is* at hand, And the things to come hasten upon them.'

B. The principle of purposeful goodness encouraged. V.20

Luke 6:27-30 "But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, **28** "bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you. **29** "To him who strikes you on the *one* cheek, offer the other also. And from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold *your* tunic either. **30** "Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him who takes away your goods do not ask *them* back.

Proverbs 25:21-22 If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; And if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; **22** For *so* you will heap coals of fire on his head, And the LORD will reward you.

1 Peter 2:20-24 For what credit *is it* if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this *is* commendable before God. **21** For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: **22** "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; **23** who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously; **24** who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness-- by whose stripes you were healed.

"Maybe you heard about the fellow who was told by his physician, 'Yes indeed, you do have rabies.' Upon hearing this, the patient immediately pulled out a pad and pencil and began to write.

Thinking the man was making out his will, the doctor said, 'Listen, this doesn't mean you're going to die. There's a cure for rabies.'

'I know that,' said the man. 'I'm makin' a list of people I'm gonna bite.'"

-Charles R. Swindoll, *Hope Again*

[Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll's Ultimate Book of Illustrations & Quotes*, Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 1998, p.493.]

IV. The 4th principle of displaying Christian love toward enemies. V.21

A. The 1st command do not be overcome by evil. V.21a

First, we must not allow the evil done to us by other people to gain victory and overwhelm us. Second, we must not allow ourselves to be overcome by our own evil response. This is often worse than the evil done to us.

B. The 2nd command overcome evil with good. V.21b

(Romans 12:1-2)

Conclusion: "There was a guy that could not get along with his wife and, on top of that, he couldn't get along with his mother-in-law. In frustration one day, he finally took a long walk. As he was about to return home, he got to the street corner and saw a hearse pull up to the stop sign. It had a big dog in it.

Behind that was another hearse. And then behind that second hearse, about fifty men were walking. He was seized with curiosity and walked up to the first hearse, knocked on the glass and a guy inside rolled his window down. 'Yes?' he asked. 'What is this?' asked the man.

'Well, in this casket is my wife. And in that casket in the other hearse is my mother-in-law. This big dog killed both of them.'

'Hmm. Can I borrow that dog?'

And the guy inside said, 'Get in line.'"

[Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll's Ultimate Book of Illustrations & Quotes*, Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 1998, p.493-494.]