

Becoming like Jesus when facing enemies (Based on Chapter 13 of *Costly Grace*)

The Big Idea

Our trust in Jesus is revealed by the way we love our enemies.

Biblical Foundation

You have heard that it was said, “Love your friends, hate your enemies.” But now I tell you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may become the children of your Father in heaven. For he makes his sun to shine on bad and good people alike, and gives rain to those who do good and to those who do evil. Why should God reward you if you love only the people who love you? Even the tax collectors do that! And if you speak only to your friends, have you done anything out of the ordinary? Even the pagans do that! You must be perfect—just as your Father in heaven is perfect. Matthew 5:43-48 (TEV)

Dietrich Bonhoeffer says, “Love is defined in uncompromising terms as the love of our enemies. Had Jesus only told us to love our brethren, we might have misunderstood what he meant by love, but now he leaves us in no doubt whatever as to his meaning.” What do you think about this comment?

Steve Pettit says, “God gives us a love that needs no ‘because’—that is, God doesn’t say, ‘I love you because’ He just loves us.” What does a love that needs to “because” look like?

The cross is a reminder that we were once Christ’s enemies. How did he treat us?

The Cost of Discipleship

We can no longer love according to the world’s definition of love. We must let God define our love and we must love *all* others unconditionally.

Discuss these statements:

- I was once an enemy of God. God can redeem my enemies the same way he has redeemed me.
- I will love my enemies because I *believe* Jesus more than I believe my fears.