



## Key References:

**2 Timothy 3:12–13** (ESV) – Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,<sup>13</sup> while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

**Matthew 5:43–48** (ESV) – “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’<sup>44</sup> But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,<sup>45</sup> so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.<sup>46</sup> For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?<sup>47</sup> And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?<sup>48</sup> You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

**Isaiah 1:17** (ESV) – learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow’s cause.

*“Moreover, if intercessory prayer is an expression of what love we have, it is a means to increase our love as well. It is impossible to pray for someone without loving him, and impossible to go on praying for him without discovering that our love for him grows and matures. We must not, therefore, wait before praying for an enemy until we feel some love for him in our heart. We must begin to pray for him before we are conscious of loving him, and we shall find our love break first into bud, then into blossom.” – John Stott*

*“Through the medium of prayer, we go to our enemy, stand by his side, and plead for him to God.” – Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

**1 Peter 2:23** (ESV) – When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

Read 2 Corinthians 3:16-18. **Why are we as a church doing this series?**

## 1 – ENEMIES

Andy mentioned different types of people in the gospels that should have been Jesus’ enemy; Centurion soldier, Canaanite woman, Samaritan woman at the well, Matthew the tax collector, and the high priest’s servant when Jesus was arrested. **How did Jesus treat his enemies?**

Andy said that these people represented enemies of God, historic racial enemies, would-be thief’s, oppressors, and persecutors. **Who does our culture say should be your enemy? Taking inventory, who is your enemy?**

Read 2 Timothy 3:12–13. **Does this scripture show that faithful Christians will always experience opposition? What is that conflict like in the west?**

## 2 – LOVE AND PRAYER

Read Matthew 5:43-48. **What points stood out to you most since Sunday?**

**How can we practice *agape*-love towards our enemies? How do you balance this with Isaiah 1:17 and Jesus’ interactions with the pharisees?**

**Read the quote from John Stott and discuss how praying for our enemies impacts our own hearts. Also discuss Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s. How much time should we devote to praying for our enemies?**

## 3 – OVERCOMING EVIL WITH GOOD

Read Romans 12:14-21. From this Andy drew seven points on how we can practically walk out Jesus’ teaching of loving our enemies. **For each one discuss; 1) An example; 2) How you apply it; 3) How it overcomes evil:**

1. Bless them (v11)
2. Live in harmony, and peace with them (v16,17-18)
3. Befriend the lowly amongst them (v16)
4. Do not repay evil to them (v17) (Isaiah 1:17)
5. Don’t gloat proudly at them with wisdom (v16)
6. Feed your hungry adversary (v20)
7. Trust in God’s plan for justice (v19) (1 Peter 2:23)

**Can you think of times in history or times in your own experience where you have seen good overcome evil in this way?**

Read Luke 23:32–34 and Acts 7:58–60. **What parallels do you see? Therefore, how can we act also in parallel? How is this week’s scriptures and teaching challenging you to become more like Christ?**