

Open Your Heart and Mind

- Of Jesus' six examples of people missing the intent of God's law, what has been the most challenging to you and why?

Finding God in His Word (Read Matthew 5:43-48)

- What are some of the immediate thoughts that come to your mind when you read this passage?
- Many would say this is a passage and teaching that is impossible to carry out in this life. Why do you think people would say that? Do you think carrying it out is impossible? Why? What makes Jesus' teaching here so difficult?
- Discuss praying for the idea of praying for your enemy? In what ways have you seen God work through your praying for someone who is persecuting, causing difficulty for you, being your oppressor, etc?
- How do you reflect the idea of sending blessing on the just and unjust in your life with others, in other words, are their people, circumstances, relationships in which those who are good (friends) and those who are bad (enemies) receive from you blessings as a general course of life?
- In what other ways does God send His blessings on both the just and the unjust? Is this fair? Should it be?
- How or who would you define as an enemy? Why? What activities/actions make someone rise to the level of an enemy? What makes it difficult to let go of seeing someone or treating someone as your enemy?
- Jesus uses tax collectors and gentiles (despised Jews and despised non-Jews respectively) to illustrate that simply being nice or loving to those you like is common. Why do you think the people of Jesus' day needed to be challenged on that? In what ways are we as a church needing to be challenged on that?
- As Jesus closes this section out, he commands us to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect; in the Old Testament the Israelites were commanded to be holy as the LORD was holy. Perfection in this verse can carry the sense as growing in Christian maturity. But the word choice, does not allow us to escape that perfection, the very holiness of God is the standard. Why do you think Jesus sets God's perfection as the standard? Pastor Malcolm listed a few ways that God helps us in being able to attain to this perfection as disciples of Jesus. What other ways would you add?

Live the Christ Life

1. Is there someone who is your "enemy" that you need to seek out to love and be praying for today?
2. What practical ways today or this week could you extend blessing to those who are both good and evil?