

Matthew 5:43

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

The command to love neighbors was clear (Leviticus 19:18), but 'hate thine enemy' was an addition never commanded by God. Jewish tradition sometimes justified hostility toward Gentiles and enemies. Jesus exposes this distortion and will command the radical alternative: enemy-love.

Historical Context

While the OT commanded love for neighbors, it also commanded destruction of Canaanites and sometimes harsh treatment of enemies. Some Jews extrapolated that hating enemies was permissible or even righteous. The Qumran community explicitly taught hating 'sons of darkness.'

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How do you justify hatred or hostility toward certain groups or individuals?
2. What cultural or political enemies are you most tempted to hate rather than love?

Interlinear Text

Ἦκούσατε	ὅτι	ἐρρέθη,	Ἀγαπήσεις	τὸν	πλησίον	σου
Ye have heard	that	it hath been said	Thou shalt love	G3588	neighbour	thine
G191	G3754	G4483	G25		G4139	G4675
καὶ	μισήσεις	τὸν	ἐχθρόν	σου		
and	hate	G3588	enemy	thine		
G2532	G3404		G2190	G4675		

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 19:18 (Love): Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.

Matthew 19:19 (Love): Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Deuteronomy 23:6 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days for ever.

James 2:8 (Love): If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:

Psalms 41:10 (Parallel theme): But thou, O LORD, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them.