

Matthew 5:45

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven:
for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and
sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

Analysis

Enemy-love and prayer for persecutors reveal family resemblance to your Heavenly Father. God's common grace—sending rain and sun on righteous and wicked alike—models impartial benevolence. As God's children, Christians must reflect His indiscriminate kindness, not showing favoritism or withholding love based on merit.

Historical Context

Ancient cultures, including Jewish and pagan, typically limited love to one's own group. Jesus's teaching was revolutionary, extending love even to occupying Roman forces and hostile religious leaders. This became Christian distinctiveness that attracted notice and converts.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. Who are your 'enemies'—people you struggle to love and pray for with genuine goodwill?
2. How does God's common grace giving good gifts to all people challenge your selective kindness?

Interlinear Text

ὅπως	γένησθε	υἱοὶ	τὸν	πατὲρ	ὑμῶν	τὸν	ἐν
That	ye may be	the children	which	Father	of your	which	is in
G3704	G1096	G5207	G3588	G3962	G5216	G3588	G1722
οὐρανοῖς	ὅτι	τὸν	ἥλιον	αὐτοῦ	ἀνατέλλει	ἐπὶ	πονηροῦς
heaven	for	which	sun	G846	he maketh	on	the evil
G3772	G3754	G3588	G2246		G393	G1909	G4190
καὶ	ἀγαθοὺς	καὶ	βρέχει	ἐπὶ	δικαίους	καὶ	ἀδίκους
and	on the good	and	sendeth rain	on	the just	and	on the unjust
G2532	G18	G2532	G1026	G1909	G1342	G2532	G94

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 145:9 (Good): The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.

Luke 6:35 (Evil): But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.

Acts 14:17 (Good): Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

Job 25:3 (Resurrection): Is there any number of his armies? and upon whom doth not his light arise?

Ephesians 5:1 (Parallel theme): Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

Matthew 5:9 (Parallel theme): Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

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