

The context of the Sermon on the Mount is Christ giving New Covenant (NC) law. There are no contradictions unless Jesus is correcting the misuse of Scripture.

What enemy of "yours" is Jesus talking about? Enemies of the cross: those who willfully reject the cross, these aren't *our* enemies. Those who treat you like enemies: those who reject, slander, wrong, and mistreat you. Those less than friendly: vengeful punishment, distant, cool towards you. In the church, we must be willing to deal with this.

**Examining Enemies from (2) Sources: Those in the church and Me.**

**Three False Confidences and One True Confidence to Consider:**

1) **Deception of False Confidence**: V43, the text, "love your neighbor and hate your enemy," Deut. 23:3-6 and Ps 139 are potential sources of this saying of the time. Jesus confronts this misuse and deception of Scripture. The Ammonites and Moabites, descendants of Lot, rejected helping Israel as they traveled from Egypt and wanted to cross through their lands. Deut. 23:3-6 is a national separation of Israel and Ammon & Moab, but this was not commanded hatred against them. There were times when Israel fought against Ammon and Moab, Judg. 11, 2 Sam. 10, 2 Kings 3:1. But this certainly wasn't a call to hate the individual Moabite or Ammonite, Ruth as an example. This was a misuse of Scripture.

2) **Disclosure of False Confidence**: V44, we pray for our enemies because it softens our hearts. A faithful Israelite showed kindness to strangers.

**A Theology of Enemies from OT, 4 Major Pieces Concerning Hatred:**

>>1) **Severed Diplomatic Relations**: not to make treaties or covenants with other nations who have ill will towards Israel and those against God, Ex. 34:12, Deut. 7:2.

>>2) **Spiritual Separation**: this speaks to loyalty to God. In Ps. 139:21-22, David is dealing with wicked men (V19) who are trying to kill him. At the end of the Psalm David is asking God to search his heart and reveal wickedness. A scenario this psalm fits is when David is being pursued by Saul and David spares Saul's life in 1 Sam. 24:5-18. In that passage David confirms to Saul that he wouldn't raise his hand against Saul (V10-13). This passage can't be used to support "hate your enemies."

>>3) **Individual Mercy and Kindness**: Lev. 19:34, the command to love the stranger who dwells among them. You would return the animal of your enemy or help with a fallen animal, Ex. 23:4-5. Prov. 25:21 and Rom. 12:20 tell us to love them not hate them.

>>4) **Favored vs Not Favored**: Deut. 21:15, unloved vs loved. Jacob and Esau, one favored one not. It is a mischaracterization that this would allow hatred towards another. **For the church**: A) The church is called to be salt/light in the world, not a nation of new Israel but from all nations people would come to Christ. B) In the church, discipline is not to demonstrate hatred but to remove from the body in the hope of leading them to repentance and a purified church. Being unequally yoked is warned, 2 Cor. 6:14. C) Individual mercy and kindness is demonstrated by Jesus giving the Gospel to the woman at the well in John 4. Many came to Christ because she told the town to come listen. We are to have honorable conduct among the gentiles so that they might see our deeds and glorify God, 1 Pet. 2:12. The church is to be merciful to unbelievers. D) Favored and unfavored for the church is to choose Christ above all else, Matt. 10:37, Luke 14:26. Choosing family over Christ is idolatry. We are to prefer the household of God as well, Gal. 6:10. We show individual love, if we can't or won't, we should not have confidence in our salvation.

- 3) **Destruction of False Confidence:** V46-47, Jews that like others who they like are no better than sinners and tax collectors. In Jesus' parable about the Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37, Jesus answers two questions, 1) Who is my neighbor? V29, the one who showed mercy, V36. But Question 2 was answered as well, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" The lawyer was trying to justify himself (V29). The answer was found in V33. Having compassion on strangers shows a changed heart. A changed heart loves and shows pity to their enemies, (V37). A heart changed by God has compassion to their enemies.
- 4) **Delight of True Confidence:** V45, God shows kindness to the world. Jesus invokes His Father two times in this passage, V45&48. But Jesus calls the Father, "your" Father. We love our enemies because God has bestowed great love upon us. God can take care of His own enemies without us. His children love their enemies in honor to "our" Father in Heaven.

### **Further Discussion and Application**

The example of David in 1 Sam. 24:5-18, the command to the Israelites in Ex. 23:4-5, Lev. 19:34, and Ruth demonstrate a far different perspective on how a Jew should treat others that weren't of their faith or culture. What application do we have as New Testament believers? How should we treat the stranger in our church and in our lives? Why is this an act of faith and obedience to the Lord? Why would an Israel show kindness to their enemy? Why do we show kindness to others?

Considering 1 Pet. 2:12, when persecuted we can reveal the greatness of our God and God can use that suffering to bring Himself glory through salvation. Our hope in Christ will be seen by those who are called to salvation. How does showing love for our brothers and sister demonstrate a changed heart? How is fervent love demonstrated? 2 Pet. 1:1-11, lists brotherly kindness and love as two separate things to pursue. What does fraternal affection add to a relationship? What does affection and benevolence (agapen) bestow upon our brothers and sisters in Christ?

To the falsely confident, the tares grow amongst the wheat. If we claim Christ but can't love our enemies, we can't have confidence in our salvation. For the genuine believer in disobedience, hatred is a poison in the family and church. When we are tempted to cultivate genuine hatred of others we must deal with it quickly. What is the Biblical way to deal with sins or hurts against one another according to Matthew 18:15-20?

Read 2 Sam. 17:24-29. Considering the history of David's treatment of Ammon, why was Ammon's support of David one of true kindness and mercy?