

Blessed be the Name of the Savior JESUS, our Strong Tower (Proverbs 18:10).

We have not been called to love only ourselves, or to love only those who share our faith or belong to our families. Instead, we have been called to love even those who are distant from our faith, our culture, and even our ideologies. These are the people the Bible refers to as our “neighbors.”

True Love Transcends Familiar Boundaries

Jesus teaches that love should not be confined to those who already love us. In His Sermon on the Mount, He clearly explains:

“If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”
— Matthew 5:46-48 (NIV)

In the Old Testament, people commonly understood their

“neighbor” to mean someone from their own tribe, religion, or nation. As a result, the Israelites avoided association or fellowship with people from other nations, often viewing them as enemies. At the time, they weren’t necessarily wrong, because they didn’t yet have the full revelation of God’s love.

But when Jesus Christ came — *the Mediator of the New Covenant (Hebrews 12:24)* — He brought the full truth and clarified that our neighbor is not just someone of the same tribe or faith.

Radical Love: Even for Your Enemies

Jesus corrected the limited interpretation of neighborly love and taught a new, radical commandment:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’

But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”

— Matthew 5:43-45 (NIV)

This kind of love reflects the character of our heavenly Father — love that reaches both the just and the unjust, the good and the wicked.

Who Is My Neighbor? — Jesus' Powerful Parable

One day, a lawyer tried to test Jesus by asking how to inherit eternal life. When Jesus told him to love God and love his neighbor, he sought to justify himself by asking:

“And who is my neighbor?”

— Luke 10:29

Jesus answered with the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37), where a man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho was attacked by robbers. A priest and a Levite (both fellow Jews) passed him by. But a Samaritan — considered an outsider and religious enemy by the Jews — stopped, cared for his wounds, and

ensured his recovery.

Jesus then asked:

“Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

The expert in the law replied, ‘The one who had mercy on him.’

Jesus told him, ‘Go and do likewise.’”

— Luke 10:36-37 (NIV)

This parable powerfully illustrates that being a true neighbor means showing mercy, not just to those within our faith or tribe, but to anyone in need, regardless of differences in background or belief.

A Call to Reflect God’s Universal Love

Jesus was teaching the Jews — and us today — that just as God makes the sun rise on the evil and the good, we too must shine the light of love, kindness, and generosity on all people —

whether they are like us or not.

Limiting love based on religion, tribe, political affiliation, or race closes us off from experiencing and reflecting the fullness of God's grace.

"But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back.

*Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High,
because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked."*

— Luke 6:35 (NIV)

We Need the Help of the Holy Spirit

Let's be honest — loving our enemies or people completely different from us is not easy. In our human strength, we can't do it. But God hasn't left us alone.

He has given us the Holy Spirit to empower us and help us overcome our natural limitations.

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

— Philippians 4:13 (NKJV)

Let us, therefore, pray for grace, so that we can love beyond borders, and be perfect just as our Father in heaven is perfect.

Maranatha! (Come, Lord Jesus!)

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