

01 September 2020

MATTHEW 5:44

One of the hardest levels of the Christian life that we have to walk through is dealing with people we don't like or who don't like us or have hurt or offended us, etc. etc. etc. Jesus was very clear in His command to us in the Sermon on the Mount when he said, **BUT I TELL YOU, LOVE YOUR ENEMIES AND PRAY FOR THOSE WHO PERSECUTE YOU (Matthew 5:44). The last thing I want to do is love my "enemies" much less pray for them as well.**

We are aware that the Chief Priests and the Pharisees became jealous of Jesus because all the people began to follow Him. The religious leaders were afraid they would lose the power and authority they had over the people. The Book of John tells us that after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead that they plotted from that day on to take his life (John 11:53). The Chief Priests made plans to even kill Lazarus as well, for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and putting their faith in Him (John 12:10-11).

Peter speaking to the Jews on the Day of Pentecost declared, ...AND YOU WITH THE HELP OF WICKED MEN, PUT HIM TO DEATH BY NAILING HIM TO THE CROSS (Acts 2:23-24). Peter again in Acts 3:15 told the Jews that, YOU KILLED THE AUTHOR OF LIFE. In several places it is made clear of course the murder of Jesus was in the hands of the Jews even though the Romans had to physically carry out the deed.

So, what is my point here? Jesus requires no less of us than what He Himself did. He actually gave His own life, and no one took it from Him. Yes, the Chief Priests and Pharisees had it done because of their hatred for Him. Did you ever think that all the people could have said NO to His crucifixion? He still had to die and would have probably called down Angels to nail Him to the cross. Without His death for us, we could never have had the gift of Eternal Life. If there had been no one to put Him on the cross He would have put Himself up there somehow which He did willingly because HE SO LOVED, THE WORLD (John 3:16). Jesus went to the cross and even prayed for God to forgive those who cried out for His crucifixion (Luke 23:34). He did exactly what He requires us to do, He loved and prayed for His enemies.

Just think as well, Jesus only did good and healed and helped folks and they still wanted to kill him. We have folks who don't like us because of things we have done to them that were not so great. Our sins break relationships. We don't have to die for our "enemies" necessarily, but we do have to love and pray for them. Sometimes that is kind of like dying in a way, isn't it? Kind of like dying to self!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

BLESSINGS