

Sermon Date: April 24, 2016

Pastor: Dan Wilvers

# Sierra's Weekly Message Action Plan



## ***Sierra's Weekly Action Plan:***

Use the Message Action Plan below to help put the things you learned this weekend into practice. If you missed last weekend's message, [Click Here](#) to listen to it online.

### **"Love Your Enemies"**

#### ***The King's Speech-Jesus' Sermon on the Mount***

Dan Wilvers-April 24th, 2016

**"You have heard the law that says, 'Love your neighbor' and hate your enemy. 44 But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! Matthew 5:43,44**

I think that if there is one statement made by Jesus that in the eyes of the world sums up what Christianity ought to be like, it's probably, **"Love your enemies."** If love is the greatest thing, then loving your enemies is the greatest thing that love can do.

Face it when it comes to love, the person we enjoy the greatest love relationship with is ourselves. This is why Jesus tells us in the Great Commandment in Matthew Chapter 22; **"You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind." 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."**

That little addendum, **"as yourself"** shows us that we do know how to love and to care for ourselves. God asks us to spread that love to one another. Furthermore God asks his followers to even extend that love to those that we would call enemies.

**Who's your neighbor?** Your neighbor is anybody who needs you. That's it. Anybody in my path with a need constitutes my neighbor. (Just remember we're talking about legitimate needs not enabling other's bad and or addictive behaviors; so be discerning here.)

God doesn't expect you to love them *philia*, like a friend.

He doesn't expect you to love them *storgē*, like your own family.

He doesn't expect you to love them *eros*, affectionate love

But what He does say is to love them *agapaō*, which is a love that seeks their highest good and seeks to serve their needs.

**Paul agreed in his writings:**

Owe nothing to anyone—except for your obligation to love one another. If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill the requirements of God's law. Romans 13:8

“If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads.” Romans 12:20

**Jesus says: Pray for those who persecute you! Matthew 5:44**

*When somebody harms you in word or deed what are you to do? You are to go before the Lord on their behalf and intercede for them. Wouldn't it be great if we just began to pray for the people who are set against us by asking **that they would be saved?** You know what, just that prayer in and of itself will fill your heart with love.*

***Why love your enemies? Why pray for your persecutors?***

Because Jesus says in doing this we are being authentic children of God.

*But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! 45 In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:44,45*

And furthermore **Jesus says:** *If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. 47 If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that. Matthew 5:46,47*

Jesus is saying if you don't exceed the human standard, you're no different. *Why should you be rewarded for being like everybody else?*

**So what makes us different in the world?** *Are we different on the job because our ethics are different, our conversation is different, our attitude is different, our love is different? Are we different in our homes? Are we different in our communities? Because if we're not different, we have nothing to say to this society – that they're going to believe.*

**Jesus says:**

*But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect. Matthew 5:48*

You say, “*Well, that standard is too high.*” You’re right, and that’s exactly what Jesus wanted the Pharisees and everyone else to know. You can’t make it on your own. They’re supposed to say, “*But I can’t be perfect.*” And that’s when He says, “*Right; and that’s why you need a Savior.*”

**Listen:** A Christian is not someone who keeps the Sermon on the Mount. *A Christian is somebody who knows he can’t, and so comes to Jesus Christ for forgiveness for the sin of falling short, and receives from Christ the forgiveness.*

The gospel is very simple. God has seen a lot of things. The things you wouldn’t want anybody else to ever know and the scary part is he saw a thousand things worse than that, worse than you’ve ever seen, or know and he still loves you. He gave himself for you. If you receive him as Savior, all of those things can be wiped away.

**I believe** if you can keep the Gospel truth firmly locked into your psyche, you will begin the amazing journey of turning away from your sin. The forgiveness happens instantly, but the actions are changed as you apply the Gospel to your mind.

**Paul writes:** Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. Romans 12:2

The Bible calls this repentance; turning away first with your mind from the things you used to do because you didn’t know any better, then over time you’ll learn to turn away from the acts themselves. Henceforth the challenge to “*be perfect*”.

**Remember it is Christ who makes us perfect, and then we begin to practice becoming perfect in our lives.**

The Author of the Book of Hebrews in the New Testament writes:

For by one offering He has perfected forever those being made holy. Hebrews 10:14

*Past tense; perfected forever. Future perfect tense; being made holy.*

What an awesome way to see our lives in Christ; being made holy but already perfected in God’s eyes.

**Paul concurs:** I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. 13 No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us. Philippians 3:12-14

This brings God glory, this works to invite others to the table of forgiveness in Christ

and I suspect no change will do it better than *loving your enemies*.  
Dan Wilvers