

Christian Living Series 2, sermon # 59 The Fruits of God's Holy Spirit

Goodness #3

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Edited Sermon Transcript

Greetings, brethren. This, now, is the continuation of the "Fruits of God's Holy Spirit," with the special fruit of "Goodness." This is the third tape on this particular subject. By way of synopsis, we have already gone through the initial Greek word which is *agathosune*—the word that is used in Galatians 5:22 for that particular fruit of the Holy Spirit. So we have covered that, with its ramifications, and now we are addressing a word that is used more than one way. It is the basic word that was used for "gentleness"—which we have already covered—but is used rather frequently for the word "goodness." It is the Greek word *chrestos*. So, in beginning last time in covering this particular word *chrestos*, we went through the subtopic of "The Beauty of Christ's Way of Life." It is used in that respect, but it is also a word that is used when referring to the actual maturity, the growth, or the aging of our experience. So age enhances the beautiful characteristic of "goodness."

Now we have come—and I want to move very quickly into it because I would like to complete this word today—to the third subtopic, which is, "The Nature and Character of God." God's nature is the nature of "goodness." It is just a nature of superlative kindness. God is good—He is absolutely, profoundly kind and affectionate, concerned, compassionate and all of the other related characteristics which one could utter. Let's turn to that now in Luke chapter 6 and specifically verse 35. I want to read verse 35, but then we are going to go back and get it in context. So here in Luke 6:35 we read:

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 [*He*, referring to God] unto the unthankful and to the evil.

So God does not differentiate. God is extremely kind and benevolent, compassionate, understanding, and merciful toward all people. If He had not been so, certainly you and I would not have been the recipients of the fabulous knowledge which we are given today—which we know, which we understand. We certainly would not be experiencing the glorious, beautiful, marvelous opportunities which are ours today. But, let's get it in context, now, because there is a great deal implied in this very situation that is being related here in Luke the sixth chapter. So let's go back to verse 27 and we are going to read all the way through verse 38. Luke 6, verses 27 through 38:

"But I say unto you which hear," that is Christ speaking, "Love your enemies . . ." Now, that is an order from Jesus Christ. "Love your enemies." Now, what did Christ mean by loving one's enemies? Is it something we hold within our hearts and minds but we never manifest any physical action? We never manifest any particular traits or characteristics of affinity, affection, understanding, mercy, compassion or tolerance with respect to these people—our enemies—that we might exhibit toward those that we love, that are close friends or associates, or whatever classification we might give to them? No, God does not differentiate with respect to this term. The only time, my dear brethren, that we ourselves live this command of Jesus Christ—which proceeds directly from the Father Himself—is when we manifest the same feelings, the same attitude, the same respect, the same consideration for those we may consider our very enemies, as we do for our closest relatives, our closest friends, or whomever. When we manifest that tolerance, that forbearance, and that kindness toward them, then we are exhibiting the higher trait—quality or characteristic—of God the Father Himself. Indeed, we are beginning to manifest the very nature of God.

Now, we are going to understand, as soon as we go through certain of these principles, the reasons why God expects us to manifest this kind of trait or characteristic, and when we do it, the reason that we are manifesting, then, the trait and character of God. We will come to that as we go along.

"But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you . . ." The one thing that we have to understand is that there is a specific action required. Loving our enemies is not merely an uttering of false words. It is not an act of hypocrisy. It is not an act that is held secret within the heart and mind. It is something that manifests itself. It is aggressive in its thrust or its

purpose. It exhibits certain characteristics. It is manifested in a particular, or peculiar, way. It is aggressive and it is extremely purposeful. So, as He said, "Do good to them which hate you." In other words, if they manifest all kinds of traits and characteristics that rub against our natures—that are upsetting, that are deviant, that are uniquely problematic to us—we should, in turn, go right around, then, and do specific things for them that would be contrary to our own natural natures. In other words, the only way we can ever exhibit the nature of Almighty God, and to exhibit the traits of Jesus Christ as He lived them on this earth, is to do the exact opposite of what our natures—our natural, carnal minds—dictate or indicate. We have to aggressively and purposefully go and do good things for them. He said specifically, not merely to manifest it as a characteristic of the heart or the mind, He said it is a matter of action. "Love your enemies," which is an emotion. It is a trait or a characteristic of the heart or of the mind. But then it is carried out by specific action. "Do good to them which hate you," no matter what they say; no matter how they may respond; no matter how they may create situations for us; or whatever they do, we are obligated—morally and spiritually—to do specific things for them.

"Bless them that curse you . . ." The term "bless," is a matter of graciousness of speech. In other words, it is not a matter of going around, like I have heard people do so many times, and saying, "Bless you," and they don't mean it at all. As a matter of fact, it usually comes with some kind of barb on the end of it, because what they do is to imply, "Well, you so and so," anyway. Now, not always, but I have heard it used in that way very, very frequently. So it doesn't mean merely mouthing the words. It says, "Bless them that curse you." So blessing in this particular situation is a matter of graciousness of speech. In other words, we manifest certain kindnesses or when we speak very kind words toward other people, no matter what they have done to us.

"Bless them that curse you." Let me assure you, that is not an easy task. What I am talking about, brethren, as Jesus Christ said, "With man these things are impossible." What I am talking about is something that is impossible without the help of God. We just simply could not do it. It is not in the makeup of man to turn around when somebody has slapped him in the face, walked on his feet, taken advantage of him, abused him verbally, or done all manner of evil against him, and to say, "You know, I don't feel that way about you at all. I have a respect for you—a high regard for you—because, despite all of the things which you have

said and done, I see good in you." You know, that takes the real character of God. But here is a specific responsibility that Christ imposed upon us. It is an imposition—and I don't mean an imposition in the sense that it is an impediment or a problematic thing. I mean that it is a command—it is a specific responsibility that Jesus Christ and God Himself laid upon us, a specific response, an action, that we must take. "Bless them that curse you." It is aggressive action, and in this case, it is in direct contrast to the point we just read above, where it says we do good to them. That is a form of action in which we go out and we specifically do things to benefit them—to help them: We change the flat tire for them, or we go and get a gallon of gasoline, or five gallons of gasoline, even though they have abused us and done all sorts of things. It is a form of action—it is aggressive action.

But now, the next step is aggressiveness with respect to the tongue—and I don't mean abusiveness, I mean kindness. "Bless them that curse you," and then beyond that we not only go get the gasoline, change the tire, or do some physical, manifested good for somebody, but we also speak very gracious and good words and we are very kind and benevolent. But then right beyond that, we go and pray for them. You bless them that curse you and then the next step is you "pray for them which despitefully use you"—that is, they are extremely contemptuous, they rankle us, they ripple the current, they do all kinds of things that are troubling, problematic, and extremely difficult in our lives. We do the first two things I mentioned, but then we turn around and we go pray for them. Now, you talk about rubbing salt in the wound—if we wanted to view it from a purely carnal vantage point. Oh, how problematic that would be. I'll tell you, brethren, there is no way for anybody to do these things except by the power of God's Holy Spirit—you couldn't possibly do it.

So, brethren, let's stage a set of circumstances, now. When we look at ourselves, whom do we class as an enemy?—whether it is within the church or outside of it, it doesn't matter who it is. An enemy can be someone who agitates you, who brings about situations through family, through children, through other circumstances of life, through a neighbor, a relative, a business associate, whomever it may be. They agitate us. It isn't some classification of an individual based upon geography. The classification is on the basis of lines of demarcation, or barriers, that exist between individuals. And so the enemy can be your very next-door neighbor; it can be somebody within your own family; it can be

children; it can be parents, or it can be whomever. Whatever that situation is, do you have perfect lines of communication between all? If, then, there is an impediment—if there is anything that is troubling you, perplexing you or creating an agitating situation, or that is uniquely problematic in your mind and thinking, or gives you heartburn—then stop, at this very moment. Now, I want you to remember that situation because that is the one we are creating now, and we are bringing it into very sharp focus with the camera of God's Word. Now, that is the individual that you keep in mind as we address this triple responsibility. Now, what are you going to do for that individual? First, in a generalized fashion, you love them. That is, you manifest all the feelings of kindness and regard and affection possible, and you have a very deep feeling for them, a deep compassion which stems from the fact that you understand. You cannot love somebody for which you cannot understand the whys and wherefores of their difficulties. "Do good to them." And it doesn't mean that we cannot see problems. Obviously, I know what wrong is and I know what is agitating me, and I know the unique problems that are going on. I see them—there isn't any question about it. Now, what do I do about them? First I manifest a very deep feeling of sympathy—of empathy, of compassion, of tolerance, of understanding—love, in other words. I am absolutely filled with compassion and understanding for that individual because I grasp what is going on. I see that maybe it is a matter of God having not called, or maybe God has not given the power or the capability at that moment to master a particular situation. So here is somebody who is not only hurting you, but he is more particularly hurting himself. You know, any time it agitates you, it is a situation that is absolutely robbing from the vitality and the life of that individual himself. So, I understand that he cannot be hurting me half as much as he is hurting himself. We understand—we know what is going on—so, therefore, we love those whom we class as our enemies.

Now, remember, as I said, an enemy is not somebody far off in some geographic domain that the press, for example, has caused the populace to think is a key enemy. No, I'm not talking about that at all. An enemy is somebody who tramples on your feet—who distresses you, who creates unique problems for you, who causes stress in your life, one way or the other. That is the enemy. Now, in that particular case, then, you turn right around and manifest all of the tolerance, the affection, the concern and compassion in the world. "Love your enemies." And then next is to aggressively do things for that individual—that is, to go out of your way to do things. I don't care what the cost is, God holds you accountable for

going out of your way to resolve this barrier. Aggressively do the things that you should. You take the brunt of it. Now, if every individual does that, we are not going to have any problems on the face of this earth. But each one is morally obligated to do it regardless of what the other individual does because these are the commands of God the Father and of His Son Jesus Christ. So, we must do them.

Now, next, what you are going to do is to specifically, graciously and kindly speak of them. In other words, you are going to grace your speech with all of the kindness and the benevolence possible. And you are not going to enter into this exchange of diatribes. You are not going to allow the vitriolic nature with which we are all born to surface and to castigate, to rip somebody apart, to manifest their unique problems, to expose their ills—their difficulties, or whatever. Love covers. So you are going to cover those difficulties and you are going to speak only that which is kind and benevolent and good.

Now, I want to assure you, brethren, that there is not one of us that does these things perfectly. I'm not sitting here at this moment telling you that I come even remotely close. But, brethren, it doesn't make any difference whether I have achieved it or not, the command is still there. And it is a command that I—with the help of God—intend to live as time progresses, and as God gives me more of His Spirit and more of the willing determination to live those traits and those characteristics. I will live them, but, brethren, up until that time I still have been called of God to proclaim these things—not because I am perfect. Because I have never even remotely indicated that I have achieved that objective. There is no human being on the face of this earth that I hate as much as I hate the self. I don't even come remotely close to hating even a Hitler like I hate this self. Hitler was only doing what he was motivated and goaded into doing—as bad as it was. But, brethren, Hitler did not know nor understand what you and I understand. We have the Truth of God, yet, look, in many, many ways we do exactly the same things. We are doing exactly the same things because every time we carp away at somebody else and we chip away—and we do this and we do that—that is all Hitler did. He just magnified it many times. And, you know, when we have a relationship with others, the more people with whom we have that relationship, the more magnified the problem is, that's all. But the problem still remains one and the same thing. Then, what God Almighty is trying to change is that very basic, insidious nature that is within us because, otherwise, we can never assume the magnified responsibility that is projected for us. Because what we will do is to

magnify our own defect once again just like every other leader is doing today. But God is going to have that perfection written within us before we are ever going to be given that magnified responsibility of tomorrow—when we will be leading, guiding, motivating, helping, teaching and instructing others.

So, brethren, the generalized principle is to love them, and it will manifest itself in these three categories: 1) You will aggressively do good for them, whoever they are. And you don't have to tell them, "You are an enemy at this moment," because what is the need of agitating a situation? You just simply go out and do good. It is an aggressive responsibility—you take your foot in your hand and you go do it. That is what God requires. And then, 2) you bless them—you speak only gracious, kind words. You will not sink to the same level of that enemy—provided you think he is lower than you are. You will not sink to the level of entering into diatribes, you will not enter into exchanging vitriolic conversation—you will not become involved in that kind of thing—but you will only manifest good, affectionate thoughts, regard and respect. And then, 3) you get on your knees and actually pray for them that spitefully use you. That is, their intent and their purpose is to use the sword—the verbal sword. It is their very intent and purpose—that is what the word "despite" means. Their very intent is to rankle you, to trouble you, to distress you, to create problem areas for you.

"[U]nto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other." Now it is getting more complex. They have taken their broad swipes at us and they have hit the mark because they have actually smitten us—not literally, but I mean verbally—they have, in a verbal sense, hit the mark; they have agitated us; they have done damnable things—and the implication here is that the situation was a reality. "And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other." That is, what you do is turn right around and do good for him again, leaving yourself wide open for another smite or smack. "[A]nd him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also." In other words, you turn right around and you still do good. And I want to tell you, that is difficult—yea, impossible, without the help of God.

So, brethren, we need to pray, and to pray deeply—supplicate the Eternal God for that very nature. Why? Because if we respond in an aggressive, hateful, spiteful, troubled, upset, belligerent attitude—as everybody else does on the face of this earth—all we are doing is manifesting the same nature that they are. We are manifesting the nature of flesh. We are manifesting the carnal nature of

man. And that is the nature, brethren, that God wants us to master. It is the nature that He gave to us to overcome, that we might exhibit the true nature of God.

Look, we have been trampling upon the kindness, the benevolence, the nature of God, from the day we were born. We have done all kinds of despicable things—despicable things—to our God.

Now, I want to get into the point a little later here of why we need to manifest all of this patience, and this kindness, and this concern. But just in a generalized sense—because I think it is necessary, as I indicated right at the beginning of the message, to understand the "whys" of these things—why is patience necessary? There are two basic reasons: The first is the behavior of others. In other words, patience is merely an understanding that other people are going to react in a certain way, and that when they do, we are not entitled to react in a comparable fashion. Patience wouldn't be required if they all did what we wanted them to do, would it? If every mortal did exactly what we wanted him to do, would patience be required? No. Then patience is simply necessary because other people are individuals too. That's the reason for it.

And then the second principle is that we have within our own minds certain expectations of Christ and of God. With respect to the answer to our prayers, for instance—healing, or intervention for a job, or whatever it may be—we have certain expectations. And when we don't get things in the time, the order, or the way we want them, then we become agitated, or we begin to question. So, there are two basic reasons for the necessity of patience. It is due to the fact that other human beings are individuals also, and all they are doing is manifesting the same kind of nature and character that we have—or the lack of it. And when they manifest that, if we manifest love, respect and understanding for them, all we are doing is telling them that it is the very same thing they need to do for us, because we have the same kind of nature. We know that we make certain mistakes and we know we must agitate certain people and create certain problems for others and so on. It requires understanding and it requires a lot of it—a lot of it.

You know, it is interesting that many, many times over my thirty-four years in the ministry—or from the time of the beginning of my training for the work, rather, actually thirty-two years in the ministry—I have had people come to me talking about their problems with others. And you just sit and wait for a short period of time—it doesn't usually take very long—and here comes one person and

he is talking about, "I've got a problem with so and so. This and this and this and this and this." And just a few days later—maybe even hours—the other party will come and talk about the first individual. Now we have a problem. And the problem is nothing more than the fact that there isn't a mutual understanding between the two. That's all it is. And it has happened over and over and over and over. I have been involved in them myself. There is no mortal that hasn't been. That is our nature—that is our problem. And it is a problem that we must overcome. So, I've had people come to me—in fact, it happened just a short time ago—demanding that I do certain things within the church, and I said, "Well, if I act on that and do what you are demanding, it is going to affect you in exactly the same way." And immediately it is, "Oh, no, no"—that individual had never done anything, he had no reason to believe that he should be censured or subjected to certain punishment, or instruction, or whatever. No, he didn't believe that at all. In other words, the individual who comes, believes that he is free of guilt. Every person that comes *believes* that he is free of guilt. When will we learn, brethren, that there is no mortal alive that is free of guilt? Now, the minute we learn that, when another party comes, we can look at it and say, "You know, I've got a problem with myself. I can't stomach this life either. And it troubles and perplexes me and creates great distress. Thank you for reminding me." Now, that doesn't mean that you didn't see the problems in the other individual. But if you come back and say, "Hmm, and to think you were talking to me and telling me what's wrong with me. Wait until I tell you what is wrong with you." Retaliation is all that is—which is human nature. You are exhibiting a very good dosage of human nature. But if you look at it and say, "Well, I understand. I've been fighting this thing for a long time and it has plagued me very deeply. And I'm sorry that it has plagued you, or troubled you, or distressed you, or somehow injured you that you have felt it necessary to come to me. I'll try to do better, and I would appreciate your praying for me. That will do more good than anything. If you will just pray to God and give me your kind attention in that respect because I am really struggling against it." And do you know what that is going to do to the other individual? I know, because I can just sense that if I were to go before somebody and that kind of attitude spilled out from that person, I would want to do what these Jews did at the time they accused this woman found in adultery. You know, I would do the same thing. I'd hang my head and take off so fast it wouldn't be funny. Because there is no mortal that doesn't know his own problems. He's been around long enough. He knows what they are. But when we manifest a certain bad attitude, we then justify him in the venomous attitude he manifests. He feels completely justified. But if we rob him of that by manifesting

an understanding—a compassion for somebody else—then we have absolutely robbed that man of everything that he wanted to do to us. I mean he missed the mark totally because he didn't even get close to you. Now, that is what we have to do, brethren. That's the nature that God expects of us. I am going to read you something about that just a little later.

So, we find, then, continuing here, "And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other." As I said, I don't necessarily think that is literal at all. I think it means that if they take a verbal swipe at us or they do something that is a matter of personal effrontery to us, we don't give up doing good for that individual. We leave ourselves wide open to be smitten on the other cheek.

"[A]nd of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again." Don't go and say, "You *will* return my goods. You *will* return the favor. You *will* be responsive to my love and affection for you." You cannot demand it. If they do not respond, then you have to have even greater empathy for them because imagine what they are going to go up against. You know, when I think of what has happened within the Worldwide Church of God, it is extremely difficult for me to get agitated about it because I see what is going to happen to them. And when I realize what is going to happen to them, it deeply, deeply distresses me. I am not vitriolic in nature in that sense. I don't look at it and say, "I hope you get your just desserts." I cannot feel that. Because if I feel that kind of thing, then all I am asking is that I get exactly the same thing. And I don't want to be judged on the same basis that I judge somebody else because, if I do, then I know that I don't have any hope for tomorrow. And I hope and pray that God is going to be benevolent and kind and that He is going to be merciful and He is going to understand what I have been up against. That's why He sent Jesus Christ down here that He might succor us. Because Christ came that He might actually experience these things that we are going through—so that He can literally listen to us and understand the depth of the physical things that we are going through. Christ experienced all the adversity, all the terrible things that you and I go through—the terrible agitation of mind, of heart and of the flesh—and yet He resisted them perfectly. Now, when you and I go to Him and we cry out in our prayers, "Oh, God, I need your help. Please intervene in my life. Please understand the pulls that are absolutely unbearable in this nature," Christ understands. Well, we then can understand what somebody else is going through—flippancy, arrogancy, whatever it may be—because we have the same nature, if we have mastered it at all as yet, we did have it, or we may still possess it. But even if we still have it and are struggling against it, we

understand what the other party is going through—the fight that exists there—and we know what they are going to be up against. Those people are going to suffer indescribable anguish, and we have a sense of empathy, we have a sense of compassion. That's why God has compassion for us. It is because He knows our frame—He knows our weaknesses. He made us, He knows the things that we are struggling against, and God, therefore, manifests enormous compassion and mercy and understanding. Brethren, that is the goodness of God—that is the goodness of Jesus Christ. Oh, how good they really are is beyond description. I have no such words to describe the character—the nature, the goodness, the perfection—of God. When I realize how bad this nature is—when I have come to understand how deplorable and despicable that nature really is—then how awesome it is to realize that God stays with me and that He is kind and benevolent and merciful, and that He is there day by day, even when I have committed some horrendous thing. I don't mean necessarily going out and physically flaunting the laws of God. Because that is not the real problem. The real problem is what is in that mind and that heart—the blackness of it that we sometimes camouflage with the flesh, and sometimes we camouflage verbally with hypocrisy. And God is not going to honor and respect that. He wants us to be open and candid in what we are. Brethren, we don't deceive anybody who is alerted—who has God's Holy Spirit—because our natures are open. We see them. There are fruits—and fruit is something that is born. So when I see certain reactions, when I see responses on the part of certain people and so on, when people write to me about the difficulties of others, when people are agitating situations, and enemies are created within the very ranks of Almighty God, do you think for one moment that I think that's the fruit of God's Holy Spirit? No, I know what it is: It is the fruit of your natures. And those very natures are going to rip you apart until you finally seize the opportunity and you turn right around and pray for that one—when you actually go out of the way to do good for that individual, when you speak only the kindest possible words. And you don't have words to censure, to ridicule, to correct in any verbal fashion whatsoever—you refuse to do it. Then are you beginning to walk down the right path. That's what we must do, brethren.

"Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again." I'll tell you, it takes the Spirit of God to do these things. "And as ye would that men should do to you . . ." Here's the basis, now. Not what they would do to you—not how they respond to you—"as ye would that men should do to you." What do you want them to do to you? Now, first, let's understand that it is extremely difficult for us to recognize ourselves for what we

are. That is the greatest form of deception there is—the lack of an ability to recognize what we are. Because most men are perfect in their own eyes. I've said so many times that there is no mortal walking on the face of the earth that doesn't know what perfection is, just ask him. "Perfection," of course, is doing what he does. Oh, maybe, occasionally, someone will come along and say, "Well, I've got a little defect here and there, but it is usually very minor." But, if in the overall sense, if everybody just lived up to what that individual feels he or she is doing, they would all be pretty good, because we are good in our own eyes. "All the ways of a man are right in his own eyes." It takes a real powerful dose of God's Holy Spirit to begin to see oneself for what he really is. And then, when we really begin to see ourselves for what we really are, can we even remotely begin to manifest the love, the patience, the forbearance, the kindness, the affection, the goodness of God. To imagine that God could be good to us when we see ourselves as black and as despicable as we really are. You see, this is the most difficult thing on the face of the earth for people. There are many people that have walked out of the very Truth of God because they refuse to recognize themselves for what they are. They would rather have a little whitewash. But whitewash isn't going to help anybody—not at all. All it does is hide the defect.

You know, it is like people who are so crazy about makeup. Do you know why they want makeup? They want to hide the defects. Well, you know the best way to hide defects is to start from within. If you straighten out the system from within, it will take care of the defects. So makeup is exactly what it says—it is a camouflage, and a camouflage is never acceptable to God. So we have unique problems anytime we use makeup—either physically or spiritually. We had better get rid of all of the makeup and we had better come to recognize that what we need to do is exhibit the kind of character that proceeds from God. And then, we don't have to put a mask on, we can live open, honest and candid lives and have tolerance and forbearance for one another because we all understand—we have empathy for one another, we know the struggles of other individuals. And when we see somebody going through certain things, the real manifestation of love is to want to go out and do, to help, to bear that responsibility—bearing the burdens of one another. Why? Because we know what we are going through. You cannot do it until you recognize yourself for what you are. Then there is a real intense empathy for others. That is why Jesus Christ was sent to this world. Jesus Christ came down to experience it so that He could succor us—so that He could help us, so that He could aid us. You and I don't have to come down here to experience it—we were born within it—but we have to come to recognize it. And when we

recognize it, then we are on the way. Let me tell you, ninety-nine percent of the battle is recognition. That's right, it is actually recognition and admission. Then we can begin the final part of it in effecting the necessary mastery.

"And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. For if ye love them which love you [that is, if we show great kindness and benevolence, and we are willing to do things, and pray for them, and we manifest real love and affection for those who turn around and do the same thing for us—because we like one another], what thank have ye?" Why, even sinners do that. You know, it doesn't make any difference, all people love those who love them. We have no trouble loving somebody that praises us and pats us on the back and tells us how good we are, who overlooks everything we do—when we have a real affinity and affection for one another. We think they are wonderful. Well, then, why do we not manifest the same traits and characteristics for somebody else? Because, remember, the other party whom we dearly love makes mistakes too. Now, I won't do the comparing, because when we start comparing mistake with mistake then we are unwise—very unwise. But, for some reason, we are totally willing to overlook it in that family member, that personal friend, or whomever it may be, but we refuse to overlook it in somebody else. No, God said that we manifest the real trait and characteristic—the goodness of God—only when we do good to those that spitefully use us, persecute us and manifest all kinds of contempt toward us, and we respond by doing all forms of good for them in exactly the same way that we would want somebody to do good to us. It is not according to what they do nor how they react, but what we want. If we will do it on the basis of what we expect and what we require of ourselves—the relationship in our own personal lives—then we won't have any problem or trouble with anyone else.

"And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye?" In other words, it is interesting that we are talking about a basic principle of Babylon here. You know, anybody who has money to lend is not unwilling to lend it at a price to somebody from whom he fully expects to receive it again. Anybody will do that. You see, this is a cardinal principle of banking. You give to those from whom you obviously expect to get it back. But so do all people. That is just good human nature. I don't mind giving to anybody if I am going to get a return out of it, for I know I'm going to get it back. ". . . for sinners also lend to sinners . . ." Sure they do, if there is an advantage in it. ". . . to receive as much again"—plus. "But love ye your enemies . . .", which means that you are loving

somebody from whom you don't even expect a return. ". . . and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again." We are now back to the fact that you have given and it makes little difference to you whether or not you ever get it back.

Now, that doesn't mean that we go around indiscriminately giving, because then we have not used the power that God gave to us wisely and discreetly. That is not what He is talking about at all. We still must exercise a certain judgmental responsibility and that judgement is always this: Are we helping the individual? Is it really serving that party? If it is going to serve that individual—if it is going to render a good, above all to the party himself—then go ahead and do it. But if it isn't, then don't add to his woes. If you, by your long experience, believe that you are only injuring or you are enhancing his, "I could care less" attitude—the indifference, the apathy of that individual—then, above all, don't do it, because all you are doing is adding to his woes, his troubles, his difficulties. So, you do have a responsibility. And any abundance is a power—it's a responsibility that we bear—money, possessions or whatever it may be. They are powers that we must exercise wisely and judiciously. But, the exercise of that responsibility is not predicated on return. It's predicated on love and affection and regard for the other individual—which means you ask, "Am I going to really help him? Is it going to render a service?" Oh, I know all people kid themselves. He may say, "Sure, it is going to render a gigantic service to me." Yet, the very party himself may have borrowed five hundred times before, and failed every time. Then what the person needs is some cardinal instruction on assuming responsibility in life. He doesn't need another loan. He needs instruction—he needs some help. Now, above all, that party has to come to recognize that *himself*.

Now, how is he going to recognize it? Just like we are required—on the basis of God's order directly from the Bible—to review the whole history of humankind. That is why the Bible is written. Most of the Bible is an historical pattern of failure. That is why we are reading it. It is a record of men who have come into some form of relationship with God and failed. The whole history of Israel was written—not for their benefit and for their good—but for ours, that we might look back and learn the object lessons. But, you know, human beings are just like teenagers today. They look and they say, "Oh, yeah, I know what they are going to tell me." They never learn by the experiences of others, they learn by their own—when they are ninety years of age. Life is already over and they can never employ the real basic principles of life. Very few people, really, will look

back and learn. Nations, peoples, individuals, families, or whomever, will not look back to the history of humankind and learn object lessons—they won't do it.

That's the value of history. There is no subject written that has greater value than history if we will read it for its purpose—that is, providing you can get true and genuine history instead of somebody's hypocritical deception in which they intend, deliberately, to camouflage the true meaning of history for their own nefarious ends. But true history is the Bible, of course. It had to be written from that vantage point because men couldn't be trusted. And you still cannot trust them. It is amazing how people—historians—will write history from the vantage point of economics, military, political, or whatever it may be. And it is amazing how you can never see the comparison between any two of those particular approaches. Have you ever read the history of the Second World War from the vantage point of the Germans versus history written from the vantage point of the United States? Or, for that matter, read the same incidents written from the vantage point of the English versus the United States. You will hardly recognize them. You see, it is always written from a prejudicial vantage point. But God's Word is not prejudiced. It is written according to a true intent and purpose, if we will read it and believe it. But, you know, human beings will not do that today.

Why all the wretchedness of humanity? Why the horrifying experiences you find recorded in the pages of this Bible? Because they did not trust God—because they would not believe the laws of God, because they would not follow the Eternal God. So they had to pay the horrible price thereof. And yet, today, people will stand up in pulpits all over this country and tell you that you don't have to obey those laws anymore. And those who may accept the Ten Commandments won't accept all of the laws. And Jesus Christ Himself said—amplified also by James—that if you break one, you have broken them all. Now, that doesn't mean one of the ten and then you break the other nine, because the Word is one and the same. If you break one of the commandments of God—the laws of God, and I mean the totality of the Law of God—you have broken every one of them. If you don't keep Passover, the Days of Unleavened Bread, Trumpets, Atonement or any one of the Holy Days, there isn't any need whatsoever in keeping any of the Ten Commandments; you are only kidding yourself. If you don't keep the entirety of God's Law, you are guilty. If you break one of them, you have broken them all. It is men who have carved the Law of God up to satisfy their own interpretations. It isn't done from a Biblical vantage point

whatsoever. God's Law is eternal—it is spiritual. And that Word is *nomos*, and it means all of the Law of God. It means every bit—every law and statute and judgement that God ever gave. You break one of them and you have broken them all. Why? Because they are a spiritual entity—a total value. You cannot do it.

So what did He say here? He said to love our enemies—which is really the fulfilling of the Law of God, the totality of the Law of God. The real essence and purpose of God's Law is to manifest this kind of goodness—this kind of affection and regard. And He gave us those cardinal points that I mentioned to you earlier. That is how you begin to do it.

God didn't merely say, "I love human beings." He did something about it. He sent His only Son down here to die for us. He lived an exemplary life and then made it possible for us to bury the old self. Then, He, through the power of the Holy Spirit will come right down here and live within your life, making it possible for you to live the same thing—something that you couldn't do otherwise. Then, brethren, what we are talking about is aggressive action. It must not be in word only, but we must love in deed—that is, act upon it.

So, "love you your enemies and do good." Then let's do that good—let's be kind and benevolent. "[L]end, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest." Now, how are we going to be God's children? We are going to begin to manifest the very character—the very nature, the very traits—of God. ". . . for he is kind." The word "kind" here is the word *chrestos*. ". . . for he is kind." That is, He is good—just unbelievably good, benevolent, affectionate—filled with compassion and mercy and understanding. "[F]or he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil." He had to be, otherwise how did you and I arrive at this station in life? For we were all sinners.

Now, we must be good and we must be kind, and it must be aggressive; it must be by prayer and it must be verbal. All of those things are required.

Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not [let's not assume a prerogative that is not ours and which we are not even remotely qualified to perform], and ye shall not be judged: condemn not [don't verbalize your carnal feelings], and ye shall not be condemned: forgive [be compassionate, be understanding and

merciful], and ye shall be forgiven: Give, and it shall be given unto you [give of your life, give of your service]; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together [don't stint; go overboard in your love and affection], and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

How do you want to be judged in the day of Jesus Christ? Then exercise that same attitude toward all—even your enemies today.