



# MATTHEW





**Love Your Neighbor**

Do not harbor hatred against your brother. Rebuke your neighbor directly, and you will not incur guilt because of him. Do not take revenge or bear a grudge against members of your community, but love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD.

Leviticus 19:17-18

**Who is My Neighbor?**



OUR BLESSED HOMELAND

THEIR BARBAROUS WASTES

OUR GLORIOUS  
LEADER

THEIR WICKED  
DESPOT

OUR GREAT  
RELIGION

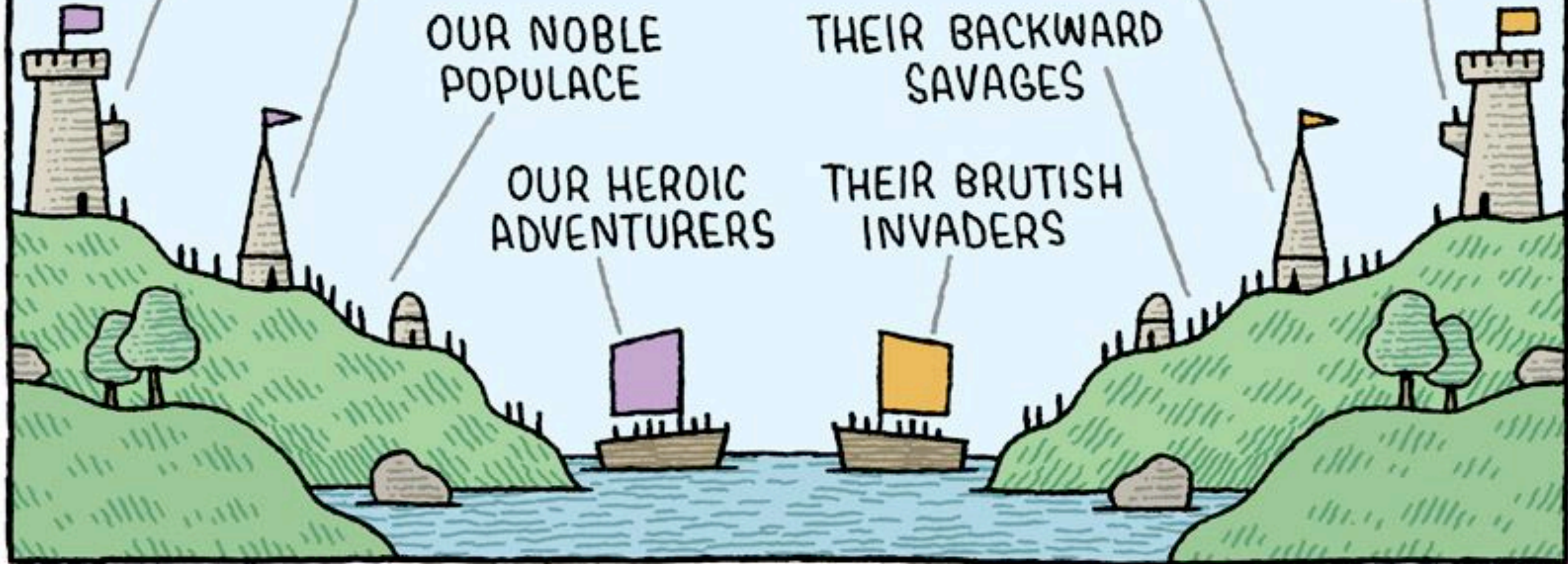
THEIR PRIMITIVE  
SUPERSTITION

OUR NOBLE  
POPULACE

THEIR BACKWARD  
SAVAGES

OUR HEROIC  
ADVENTURERS

THEIR BRUTISH  
INVADERS



TOM GAULD



The more unconditionally, boundlessly, unreservedly, and uncritically we love our neighbor, our family, our class, our nation, the easier it is to justify hating and killing their enemies.

Mark Noll



**Love Your Enemies**



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Leviticus 19:17-18



Love is a rugged commitment to be with someone as someone who is for that person's good and to love them unto God's formative purpose...Jesus commands his followers to commit themselves to be with their enemies, which involves proximity and attentiveness, and to be the sort of person who longs for and works for the good of the enemy. Because love cannot be reduced to toleration, working for the good of another, including one's enemies, means striving for them to become the sort of person God wants them to be.

Scot McKnight



For while we were still helpless, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. For rarely will someone die for a just person—though for a good person perhaps someone might even dare to die. But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. How much more then, since we have now been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from wrath. For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, then how much more, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life.

Romans 5:6-10



Once you were alienated and hostile in your minds as expressed in your evil actions. But now he has reconciled you by his physical body through his death, to present you holy, faultless, and blameless before him.

Colossians 1:21-22

**Intimacy**



If we will live this counter-cultural way we will come to experience God the Father in an especially intimate way - we will become God's close sons and daughters; we will become in personal experience what we are in gracious fact - members of the family of God.

Dale Bruner

**Imitation**



But I say to you who listen: Love your enemies, do what is good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

Luke 6:27-28

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud; instead, associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own estimation. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Give careful thought to do what is honorable in everyone's eyes. If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Friends, do not avenge yourselves; instead, leave room for God's wrath, because it is written, Vengeance belongs to me; I will repay, says the Lord. But if your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him something to drink. For in so doing you will be heaping fiery coals on his head. Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good.

Romans 12:14-20



**Do We Love Differently?**

Loving only those who love you is the in-group selfishness of cliquishness, cronyism, nepotism, racism, and nationalism...If we love only those who love us, we see only an in-group perspective, and become close-minded to how others see things. As a result, we cannot understand our enemies' perspectives enough to deal with them effectively. We are less effective, less powerful, because we do not sufficiently understand enemies who wish us harm and so cannot do what is effective in persuading them to do what we think is right. We grow frustrated and blame them all the more. We transfer our ineffectiveness to other people whom we do not understand.

This is the powerlessness of a culture of blame.

Glenn Stassen



**Be Perfect**

**Do This Really Work?**

For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing,  
but it is the power of God to us who are being saved.

1 Corinthians 1:18



We are fools for Christ, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored! Up to the present hour we are both hungry and thirsty; we are poorly clothed, roughly treated, homeless; we labor, working with our own hands. When we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered, we respond graciously. Even now, we are like the scum of the earth, like everyone's garbage.

1 Corinthians 4:10-12

**What Does This Look Like  
in Real Life?**

Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say, The salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have now come, because the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been thrown down. They conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; for they did not love their lives to the point of death.

Revelation 12:10-11



Jesus's command to "love your enemies" was the most popular verse in the early church. It was quoted in 26 places by 10 different writers in the first 300 years of Christianity, which makes it the most celebrated command among the first Christians. Matthew 5:44 was the so-called John 3:16 of the early church. And enemy-love was the hallmark of the Christian faith. Other religions taught that people should love their neighbors. They even taught forgiveness for those who wronged them. But actually loving your enemy? Only Jesus and his followers took love this far. Because this is how far the love of God extends to us—"while we were God's enemies" Christ loved us.

Preston Sprinkle



SANCTA

PERPETUA









**Faithfulness > Effectiveness**

**Jesus**

Evil will become powerless when it finds no opposing object, no resistance, but, instead, is willingly borne and suffered. Evil meets an opponent for which it is not a match.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer







# Invitation

As disciples, we are invited to  
love our enemies like Jesus

Who is my enemy?

How is God inviting me to  
turn enemies into neighbors?





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