

SERMON ON THE MOUNT: A SERIES IN MATTHEW

**Matthew 5:38-48 — Love Your Enemies & Neighbor****A Note to the Parents/Teachers**

The Sermon on the Mount is a collection of teachings that Jesus gives to a group of people including his disciples. These teachings include the Beatitudes and a variety of teachings on topics that his Jewish hearers and disciples would be familiar with. Jesus consistently goes deeper than just the surface level of keeping the law or obeying the rules. He gets to the heart of the law and what it truly looks like to live in God's good Kingdom in the here and now.

- **Big Idea:** We are able to love our enemy and our neighbor because Jesus first loved us.

Starter

- **Evidences of Grace**
Ask kids to share ways they've seen God at work lately. Anything good, big or small, is from God. Take time to thank God together.
- **Ask:** What is an enemy? Who would you say is an enemy of your favorite super hero?

Sing Together

Story — from Matthew 5:38-48

Jesus continues his teaching on what living in the Kingdom of God looks like. It is different than just obeying all of the many rules that the scribes, Pharisees, Essenes and different religious leaders have put in place. Jesus continues to refer to rules or laws the Jewish people would be familiar with, but he goes deeper than just what is written in the law. He constantly goes to the heart of the law. Jesus is more concerned about the heart because He knows that when the Spirit changes the heart, the motivation to obey God will be right. It won't come from a heart that wants to earn God's favor or a selfish heart that wants all of the glory and honor for ourselves because of how good we are.

In verses 38-48 Jesus finishes his teachings on "You have heard it said, but I tell you." His final two examples are about what love looks like in God's kingdom on earth. Jesus says, "You heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you: don't use violence to resist evil! Instead, when someone hits you on the right cheek, turn the other one toward him. When someone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your jacket too. And when someone forces you to go one mile, go a second one with him. Give to anyone who asks you, and don't refuse someone who wants to borrow from you."

Jesus is saying that God's people shouldn't be known by their violence but by their generous giving. God's kingdom people shouldn't use violence to get even, to get revenge, or to overcome evil. Instead, God's Kingdom people should give sacrificially in a way that people might be surprised because it is not what people might normally do. God's kingdom people know what this looks like because Jesus, instead of using violence to overthrow Rome, or to hurt the people that mocked and beat him, or teach the people who wanted to kill him a lesson, He gave his life as a sacrifice.

Jesus continues and says, "You heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: love your enemies! Pray for people who persecute you! That way, you'll be children of your father in heaven! After all, he makes his sun rise on bad and good alike, and sends rain both on the upright and on the unjust. Look at it like this: if you love those who love you, do you expect a special reward? Even tax-collectors do that, don't they? And if you only love your own family, what's so special about that? Even Gentiles do that, don't they? Well then: you must be perfect, just as your heavenly father is perfect."

Jesus is saying that God's kingdom people will be known and will be set apart by how they love, and particularly how they love people who are different from them, who hate them, who they don't normally get along with. God's kingdom people don't just love their friends and family, they even love the people who are their enemies. Love is the defining fruit and characteristic of God's kingdom people.

Dialogue Questions: *[you may use some or all]*

- ▶ Who is someone in your life that is hard for you to love?
- ▶ What are some ways that you might be able to show them love in a way that might be surprising for them?

- In what ways might you be hard to love sometimes?
- How did Jesus model to us what it looks like to love everyone, both friends and enemies?

Breakout Time

Pray:

God, thank you for sending Jesus to show us what your kingdom is like and to invite us into it. Give us the strength to love our friends, our family, but also those who are our enemy so that everyone would know that we are your kingdom people. May you get the glory and honor for how we love others. Amen.

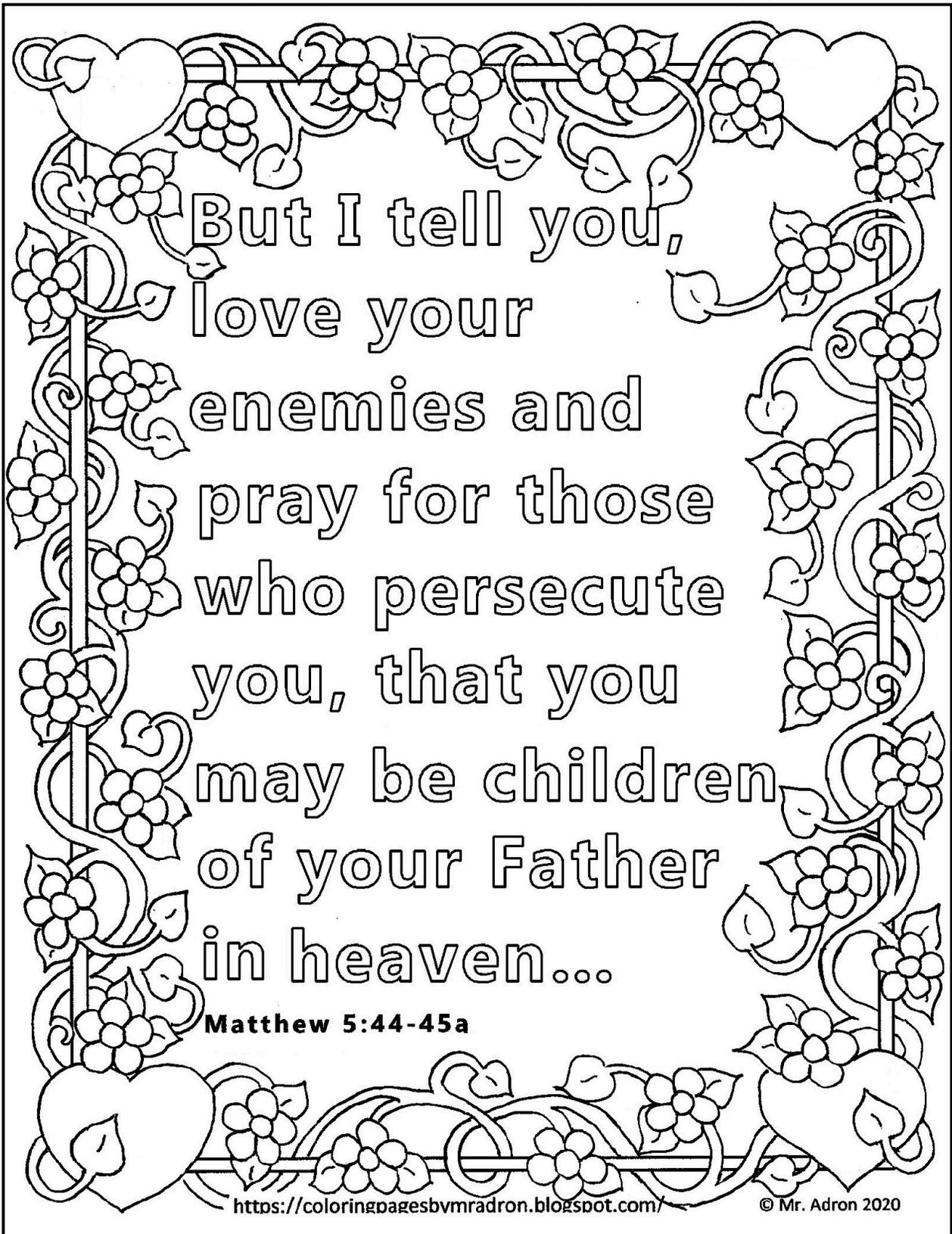
Craft:

- Color the below page

BLESS Activity

This week, ask your family how you can practice the **Bless** rhythm.

You have been blessed by God through Jesus! How can you be a blessing to others this week by showing them the good life in God's kingdom?



But I tell you,
love your
enemies and
pray for those
who persecute
you, that you
may be children
of your Father
in heaven...

Matthew 5:44-45a