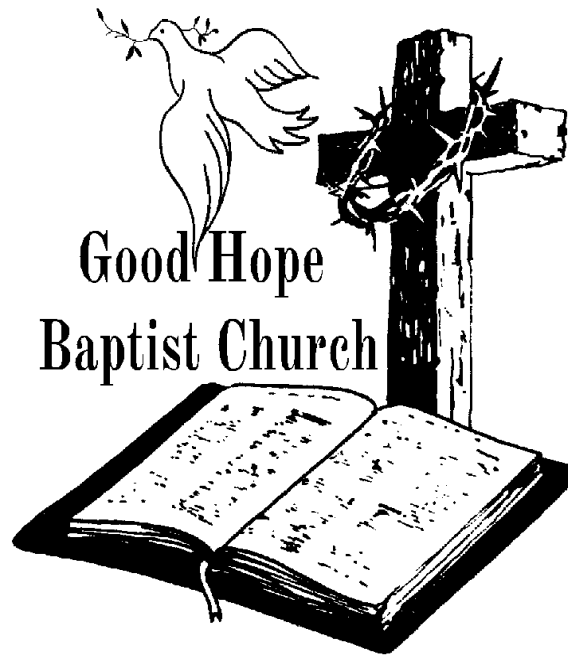


# Be The Children

Matthew 5:43-45



Good Hope  
Baptist Church

Living Together In The Love Of God

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**FOCAL Read Responsively** Matthew 5:43-48 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. (44) But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; **(45) That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.**

**Opening** One of my favorite accounts in the life of Jesus is when Joseph and Mary lost him in Jerusalem. Mary and Joseph - along with several other families - had gone to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover at the Temple. Heading back to Nazareth, they went about a day's journey when they discovered Jesus was missing. Mary and Joseph headed back to Jerusalem, and looked three days until they found Him. Where was He? He was in the Temple "**sitting in the midst of the doctors**" (Luke 2:46), explaining the Word of God to them. The Bible says "**all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers**" (Luke 2:47). Mary asked Jesus "Where have you been, Son? Your father Joseph and I have been seeking you, worried to death as to where you were!" Jesus quickly replied, "**Why did you look for Me? Didn't you know that I must be about my Father's Business?**"

I love this story on several levels. First, how is it that Mary and Joseph could go a *whole day without missing Jesus*? If you were giving awards for "Parent of the Year" I don't think either one would win it. You have

one Son - a miracle Baby, born of the Virgin Mary, and you're more concerned about the journey home than you are Him? Yet truthfully, many people - some professing to be Christian - go many days without even *thinking* about Jesus, much less missing Him. If they love the Lord, how can they do this?

Second, Jesus made it clear that "His Father's business" was *not carpentry*. Mary claimed He was being irresponsible by not being with her and Joseph. Jesus said, in effect, "**My responsibility lies - not with Joseph, good man that he is - but with the Heavenly Father. This is MY Father, and I must be about HIS business.**"

A Child of God **MUST** be about the Father's business.

If you are born again by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, **you must be about your Father's business.** Many people approach salvation as if it were a one trick pony. You are saved when you **REPENT** and turn to the Lord Jesus Christ to be your Savior.

**CONTEXT** Matthew 4:17 {Jesus preached} ....  
**Repent:** for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

**WORD STUDY** Repent. This is the *Present Active Imperative* of the Greek METANOEO (μετανοεω pronounced: *met-an-o-eh'-o*), which means "change your mind". Erwin W. Lutzer said "{we must} admit our helplessness and sinfulness to God, and to acknowledge that we are dependent on His mercy. We must have a complete change of mind about

**whatever we were believing would make us acceptable to God. Instead we must transfer all of our trust to Christ as our Sin Bearer. We must believe in Him as the One Who did all that we will ever need to stand in God's Holy Presence. To "believe in Christ" means that, as best we know, we trust Him alone for all that we need to please God in this life and to live with Him forever in Heaven".**

Does salvation stop there? No! Jesus said to those who believed in Him:

**CONTEXT** Matthew 4:19 ... **Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.**

If you are saved by faith in Christ, you are required to follow the One Who saved you. Listen Beloved:

Every Christian IS a disciple of Christ, but not every disciple is a Christian. God looks at the heart and can tell who is the Christian. God can see the ROOT of the tree. We, however, know the ROOT from the FRUIT produced. If you are saved, the **God has written His Law in your hearts.** You know right from wrong, and are required to do the right *in His power*.

Where is your root?

**ILLUSTRATE** Howard Carter worked in Egypt for 31 years before he found King Tut's tomb on November, 1922. When he found the coffin it was huge. He opened that coffin, and inside was another coffin covered with gold leaf. He opened that coffin,

and inside was a third coffin. He opened the third coffin, inside was a fourth coffin of solid gold. He opened the gold coffin, and inside was King Tut. He was covered with a golden sheet and had a gold mask on his face. When the mask was removed underneath all that beauty was a desiccated, old, dead withered corpse. The outward thing did not change that which was on the inside.

Have you been changed inside? Have you repented and turned to the Lord Jesus Christ to be your Savior? If so, then you are a Child of God with a standard that you *must* follow.

### **1. If God Is My Father He Wants Me To Be Savory**

**CONTEXT** Matthew 4:23-25 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. (24) And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them. (25) And there followed him great multitudes of people ....

Great multitudes of people are following Jesus. Some are following because they believe, and are **Children of the Father which is in Heaven**. Others are following for what they can get out of Christ. Who is a Child of the Father, and who is a Child of this World? They all look

the same, sitting in this Church on the Hill. Who is saved, and who is not? Jesus told those listening:

**CONTEXT** Matthew 5:13-16 **Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. (14) Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. (15) Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. (16) Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.**

Salt and light have one thing in common: they are valuable only when used. Salt today is the cheapest substance on the earth, but there was a time when salt wasn't cheap. Before man discovered how to distill salt from the sea wars were literally fought over salt. Roman soldiers were often paid in salt. This is where we get our phrase, "**He's not worth his salt**". Salt was valuable for it added to the flavor of food, was a preservative, and if rightfully used, brought joy into the lives of others.

If I am a Child of God I am saved to be savory. The Lord put me on this earth, and where I am, to be a blessing to others. Add flavor - do not be a **joy sucker**.

**ILLUSTRATE** Barney Fife was telling Andy Griffith about a girlfriend he had when he was a young boy. He said "**I love grape snow cones. Every time I saw this girl she would take my snow cone, bite the end of it**

off, and suck out all the grape. Then she'd hand me the flavorless cone back."

There are people who are just like that in this world. They bite the tip off of your snow cone and suck the flavor out. There are people who who darken the room just by entering it. They never have a kind word, never are uplifting, always criticizing.

As SALT and LIGHT, Christians should ADD TO and ENHANCE the lives of others - not suck the life out of them!

When I mentioned the **joy sucker** everyone thought of someone who falls into that category, someone who has darkened their lives. **If you can't think of someone who is a joy sucker, then perhaps everyone in the room in the room is thinking of YOU.**

**CONTEXT** Matthew 5:21-24 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: (22) **But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.** (23) Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; (24) Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

**ILLUSTRATE** How can someone be **angry with his brother without a cause**? Someone offends you. They err. Let's say that I hurt your feelings. You never come to me and tell me I offended you, but you nurse a grudge. I'm not a mind reader - no one is. **You are angry at your brother without a cause.** You have a need, and are mad that no one is meeting it. "They ought to know". **You are angry at your brother without a cause.** I realize that I have offended you, and go to you and apologize. You smile, claim to accept the apology, but inwardly are seething. **You are angry at your brother without a cause.**

The Bible tells us that "**For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.**" (Galatians 3:26). We are all equally and undeservedly saved by believing on what the Lord Jesus Christ did for us. He saved us to walk with Him. He saved us to walk in love with one another. That which characterizes the Child of God is **love for God and love for one another.**

I will not be unsavory. If offended, I will forgive. If I am the offender, I will apologize. I will not put unrealistic expectations on others - **not if I am a Child of God! If I do, I am in danger of judgment from God.**

The Apostle told the Church at Ephesus:

Ephesians 4:1-6 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, (2) **With all lowliness and**

meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; (3) Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (4) There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; (5) One Lord, one faith, one baptism, (6) One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Oneness is so beautiful - love is so beautiful! You are saved to be savory. Live for your Lord.

You are called - dear Christian - to be the Light of the world, not a dim bulb. Shine for Jesus! Shine in Love!

## 2. If God Is My Father He Wants Me To Be Selfless Not Selfish

It has been said that **those who are all wrapped up in themselves make very small packages.**

The Child of God is saved so that others can see Christ in him. People cannot see Christ in you if your life is about you. Your lives are supposed to be about Christ.

When the Lord established the nation Israel He gave them a general Law called "**The Law of Tooth and Claw**". In that Law God said:

**Exodus 21:24-25** Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, (25) Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

**ILLUSTRATE** Now this was a national statute, not a command to the Saint. It was a law like "put on your seatbelts" is a law. What God established by this law was this: If you were harmed, you could seek restitution from the person who harmed you - but *not more than what that person took*. The Law of Tooth and Claw established limits on penalties. I wish we had such a common sense Law in America. On **February 27, 1992**, **Stella Liebeck**, a 79-year-old woman from Albuquerque, New Mexico, ordered a 49¢ cup of coffee from the drive-through window of a local McDonald's restaurant. Liebeck was in the passenger's seat of her Ford Probe, and her grandson Chris parked the car so that Liebeck could add cream and sugar to her coffee. *She placed the coffee cup between her knees and pulled the far side of the lid toward her to remove it. In the process, she spilled the entire cup of coffee on her lap.* Liebeck then sat in the puddle of hot liquid *for over 90 seconds*, scalding herself badly. She ended up with a settlement of \$600,000.

God did not want His people involved in frivolous lawsuits, so He established the Law of Tooth and Claw. You could not receive *more* than what you were actually guilty of.

In America today we are "One nation under GREED", not under God. The Father does not want His Children to be that way. We are driven by LOVE.

**CONTEXT** Matthew 5:39 ... **I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.**

**WORD STUDY** Jesus said "resist not evil". The word "resist" is the Greek ANTHISTEMI (ανθιστημι pronounced anth-is'-tay-mee), which means **to stand against**.

Jesus was not saying "**Do not resist or stand against evil**", but He was saying "**do not resist or stand against evil in this way**". There are people who profess to be Christians who are as touchy as *porcupines*. They seem ready at all times to strike back. To the ancient Jew nothing was worst that to be slapped in the face. Jesus said "**if you are offended - struck - slapped - do not be so quick to retaliate. Turn the other cheek**".

Jesus wasn't saying that the Christian should be a whipping post for every person that comes along, but He also doesn't want us to be PORCUPINES. I must be approachable and loving.

**ILLUSTRATE** **If you do not turn the other cheek, you will foul your lives!** Take a glass of clean water. Put a little sewage in it. Does the sewage clean the water? No, absolutely not! The sewage fouls the clean water.

The Child of God must not allow the sewage of vengeance to come into his or her life. Hold on to a grudge, and watch it foul your lives.

**Romans 12:19-21 ... DEARLY BELOVED, **avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the****

**Lord. (20) Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. (21) Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.**

You are **Dearly Beloved** to God, dear Christian. Trust in Him. Trust in His love. **You don't have to be right in someone else's eyes to be righteous in God's eyes! Let love reign!**

**CONTEXT** Matthew 5:40-41 **And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. (41) And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.**

Don't let the Law of man set your love: let the Love of God guide you. Jesus said **whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him two**. What was our Lord talking about?

**ILLUSTRATE** In the ancient world a people were not considered conquered unless they were shamed. Their spirits were to be broken. In order to break the spirits of the Israelite the Romans required the Jew to carry the supplies of any military man for up to a mile. This infuriated as well as shamed the Jew. It was said that every Jew set a signpost one mile from the doorway of his house so that - if he were required - he would not have to carry the enemy's pack more than the required mile.

When Jesus said:

**CONTEXT** Matthew 5:41 ... **whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.**

He was telling the believer, the Child of God to **go beyond what the Law requires**. If a soldier came up and said "Carry my pack for a mile", don't just carry it the mile - go the second mile.

Christianity is not going to make a difference in America by believers doing the *minimum required*. We must *willingly* go the second mile.

**ILLUSTRATE** God calls to His Children to be selfless, loving people who make a difference. Imagine these two different scenes:

A Roman soldier comes and knocks on the door of your house. "**Carry my pack**". You sullenly pick up the pack, and start to carry it, muttering underneath your breath. The soldier says "**What did you say?**" "**Nuthin! I didn't say nuthin!**" You get to the mile marker and throw the pack down. "**There, I've fulfilled the Law**". You stomp off and go home, muttering all the way home. You get home and fuss at your wife and children. "**That miserable soldier! How dare he do this. Boy, I hate the Romans!**" Gloom and pall flood your home.

Now see a different scene.

**ILLUSTRATE** A Roman soldier comes to your home and says "**Carry my pack**". You cheerfully pick it up,

knowing that:

**1 Corinthians 7:22 For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant.**

You're not carrying this pack for the soldier, nor are you carrying it to satisfy the Law. You are carrying this pack *for* the Lord and because you *love* the Lord. Your life is rooted in God, and God is love!

As you carry the pack you pleasantly ask the soldier about his life. You are friendly, Light and Salt for Christ's sake. When you get to the end of the mile the soldier - who had been miles away defending the nation - puts his hands out and says, "**Thanks for carrying my pack - I was so tired**". You say, "**It was not a problem. In fact, I'm enjoying myself - can we walk another mile?**" The soldier is amazed, and you both chat pleasantly until you reach the end of the second mile. As you surrender the pack the soldier asks, "**Why are you so pleasant? Most Jews despise carrying the soldier's load. Why did you do it so willingly?**" A door is opened, and you now talk to this man about the Jesus Who saved you.

When Jesus was beaten ...

**Luke 22:63-64 And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him. (64) And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee?**

... He turned the other cheek. Almighty God in human flesh Jesus could have avenged Himself. Instead

**Hebrews 12:2 ... for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame ....**

Jesus Christ **despised the shame** of the Cross, but not those who crucified Him. Jesus **sought to do His Father's business**. He came to seek and to save that **which was lost (Luke 19:10)**, and He could only do that by ignoring Himself even unto shame and death.

The first slap in the face and the first mile traveled may be forced on you, but you choose the second slap and the second mile. **By living not to avenge yourself but to love as Christ loves you are turned from victim to victor; from being controlled to being in control.**

### **3. If God Is My Father, He Wants Me To Represent Him As A Son**

**FOCAL** Matthew 5:44-45 **But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; (45) That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.**

Why should I be the **Child of my Father which is in Heaven**? Why must I do anything?

**a** First, because God has designed the Christian to do love. You will never be happy as believers until you step outside of yourselves and **"love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you"**.

**b** Second, because what you sow you will reap. If the Christian in America doesn't start living according to the Scripture then this country will fall. Do not believe that you will be spared when the country falls. **Do not be deceived, God is not mocked: whatsoever you sow, you shall reap.** It's time for the Church to stop sowing nothing and start sowing the Love of God.

**ILLUSTRATE** Henry Ford purchased a failing Lincoln factory in Detroit, and wanted to try and find out why it was failing. For had some workmen cut a large log and put it in front of the elevator doors in the first floor lobby. For three weeks employees stepped over this log to get into the elevator. Not one person complained to management, not one person tried to move the log. At the end of three weeks Ford came in, called all the employees down to the lobby, and fired them all.

**C** Third, loving your enemies will show them that your faith is more than show. Those who mock Christ, Christians, and Christianity do so because they do not see Christ in the professing Christian. Let them see

**Christ in you, the hope of glory.**

**d** Fourth, by loving your enemies you may lead them to Christ - and then they will be your brothers, not your enemies. Every person won to Christ is one less lawless person. Every person won to Christ is one more believer that will work with us.

**CONTEXT Matthew 5:46-48** For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? (47) And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? (48) Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

**e** Finally, if your love is not Christlike - then how do you know that you are saved? Children of the Father love one another. The Apostle John said:

**1 John 2:9-11** He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. (10) He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. (11) But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

Walk in the light. **Be the Children of your Father which is in Heaven.** Love, and change the world.

May God touch your hearts with His Word.



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Matthew 4:17; Matthew 4:19; Hebrews 10:16-18

**WORD STUDY** Repent is \_\_\_\_\_

**1. If God Is My Father He Wants Me To Be Savory**

Matthew 4:23-25; Matthew 5:13-16; Matthew 5:21-24; Galatians 3:26; Ephesians 4:1-6

**2. If God Is My Father He Wants Me To Be Selfless Not Selfish**

Exodus 21:24-25; Matthew 5:38-39; James 4:7; Romans 12:17-21; Matthew 5:40-41; Matthew 5:41; 1 Corinthians 7:22-24; Luke 22:63-64; Hebrews 12:2

**WORD STUDY** Jesus said "resist not evil". The word "resist" is the Greek ANTHISTEMI \_\_\_\_\_

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**3. If God Is My Father, He Wants Me To Represent Him As A Son**

Matthew 5:44-45; Matthew 5:46-48; 1 John 2:9-11

**a** Because God has designed the Christian to \_\_\_\_\_

**b** Because what you sow you will \_\_\_\_\_

**c** Loving your enemies will show them that your faith is \_\_\_\_\_

**d** By loving your enemies you may \_\_\_\_\_

**e** If your love is not Christlike \_\_\_\_\_