

# Love Your So-Called Enemies

## The Blessed Battle

Ben Deaver at Tallgrass at The Well on November 20, 2022  
Matthew 5:44

**So what?** Fellow humans are NOT our enemies. There's more going on than meets the eye.

**Feel what?** Appropriately directed anger and empathic sadness because of the casualties of the battle, including the casualties of your so-called enemies AND yourself.

**Now what?** Pray and advance!

**VISION CASTING** – Become a church that loves every human and understands the big picture of the spiritual battle.

Invite Jurnee to read the Beatitudes.

# THE BLESSED BATTLE

- Banksy's work of art – *Love is in the Air* or *Flower Thrower*
- Congratulations, church! We've covered all nine of The Beatitudes.
- I've invited a couple people to share reflections on this sermon series.

## Bea Dennis

Bea is fairly new to our community. She's in the drama therapy program at Kansas State. You've seen her up here singing recently.

## Justin Kastner

Justin is a professor in the Department of Diagnostic Medicine/Pathobiology at Kansas State University but more than that he is a friend and has played a significant role in my own spiritual journey even before we planted Tallgrass Church in 2018. He's also an Anglican Priest shepherding the Trinity Canton community here in Manhattan, KS. It's very cool that we have an Anglican Priest in our church family.

## Toughest Teaching in the Sermon on the Mount

**Matthew 5:43-48** <sup>43</sup> "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' <sup>44</sup> But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup> that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. <sup>46</sup> If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? <sup>47</sup> And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? <sup>48</sup> Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

- Be different than those around you. These are upside-down Kingdom values.

## LOVE YOUR SO-CALLED ENEMIES

Who is your enemy?

Context for the Beatitudes from Luke, the Sermon on the Plain.

**Luke 6:17-19** <sup>17</sup> He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coastal region around Tyre (REMEMBER TYRE, WE'LL COME BACK TO IT) and Sidon, <sup>18</sup> who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by impure spirits were cured, <sup>19</sup> and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all.

- Who's there? And why were they there?

The Blessed Battle Revealed—Multi-Tiered Leadership  
We'll turn to the Prophet Ezekiel chapter 28. Here we find a description of the rule of Tyre, the same place we just read about in Luke 6. Now, as I read this, I am not insinuating that the ruler of Tyre is equivalent to any particular political ruler in leadership now or in the past. However, I do want us to consider the influence that power and money tends to have on rulers.

## The Ruler of Tyre

### **Ezekiel 28:1-2, 4-5**

The word of the LORD came to me: <sup>2</sup> "Son of man, say to the ruler of Tyre, (A GUY NAMED ITHOBAAL III)

'This is what the Sovereign LORD says:

"In the pride of your heart you say, "I am a god; I sit on the throne of a god in the heart of the seas."

But you are a mere mortal and not a god, though you think you are as wise as a god.

<sup>4</sup> By your wisdom and understanding you have gained wealth for yourself and amassed gold and silver in your treasuries.

<sup>5</sup> By your great skill in trading you have increased your wealth, and because of your wealth your heart has grown proud.

**Ephesians 5:8, 15-16** <sup>8</sup> For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light... <sup>15</sup> Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, <sup>16</sup> making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

- You were once darkness...but now no more. Live as children of light.
- The days are evil! The days were evil. The days still are evil.

Three 20<sup>th</sup> Century Rulers—About 150 million human deaths.

1. Adolf Hitler, the dictator of Germany from 1934 to 1945, contributed to the deaths of nearly 50 million people worldwide by initiating World War II.

2. Joseph Stalin, the ruler of the Soviet Union from the 1920s to 1953, killed more than 20 million people. Stalin fought Hitler in World War II, being an uncomfortable ally for the West. That is perhaps the sole reason why history has been kinder to him than to Hitler.

3. Mao Zedong, the ruler of the Chinese communist party from 1949 to 1976, contributed to the deaths of about 78 million people, surpassing both Hitler and Stalin.

**Ephesians 6:10-14a** <sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. <sup>11</sup> Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. <sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. <sup>13</sup> Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. <sup>14a</sup> Stand firm then...

- Our enemy IS NOT FLESH AND BLOOD...

- Not your child at bedtime, neighbor who's dog poops in your yard, uncle across the political spectrum across the table at Thanksgiving, not the person behind the screen commenting on your amazing social media Post, not the politician you can't stand, and so on and so forth...

Let's continue to read about the KING of Tyre. As I read, consider that we just learned about the ruler of Tyre. Now we learn about the KING of Tyre. Earthly rulers can be brutal. We might even say evil. But what's going on behind the scenes?!

## The King of Tyre

**Ezekiel 28:11-13** <sup>11</sup> The word of the LORD came to me:

<sup>12</sup> "Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says:

"You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. <sup>13</sup> You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: carnelian, chrysolite and emerald, topaz, onyx and jasper, lapis lazuli, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared.

**Ezekiel 28:14-16** <sup>14</sup> You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. <sup>15</sup> You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. <sup>16</sup> Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from

the mount of God, and I expelled you, guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones.

**Ezekiel 28:17-19** <sup>17</sup> Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings. <sup>18</sup> By your many sins and dishonest trade you have desecrated your sanctuaries. So I made a fire come out from you, and it consumed you, and I reduced you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching. <sup>19</sup> All the nations who knew you are appalled at you; you have come to a horrible end and will be no more.”

**1 Corinthians 2:7-8** <sup>7</sup> No, we declare God’s wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. <sup>8</sup> None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

- “By God’s design, the Scripture presents the messiah in terms of a mosaic *profile* that can only be discerned *after* the pieces are assembled. Paul tells us why in I Corinthians 2:6-8. If the plan of God for the messiah’s mission had been clear, the powers of darkness would never have killed Jesus—they would have known that his death and resurrection were the key to reclaiming nations forever.” –Michael Heiser, *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the supernatural worldview of the Bible*

- Ruler/Prince of Tyre and the King of Tyre
- Pharaoh and the little “g” gods of Egypt
- Jewish Religious Leaders and Satan
- Judas and Satan—**Luke 22:3** Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve.
- Earthly leaders are still culpable for their actions. However, we can battle for empathy towards them, knowing that there are forces at work that are much more powerful than they are and that they also need deliverance from these forces of evil...just like we did and still do.
- Adam was God’s vice-regent, a deputy regent; a person who acts in the place of a ruler, governor, or sovereign.
  - Adam and Eve were made in God’s Image. They looked like Jesus!
  - **Genesis 1:26-28** <sup>26</sup> Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”  
<sup>27</sup> So God created mankind in his own image,  
in the image of God he created them;  
male and female he created them.  
<sup>28</sup> God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

- **Colossians 2:13b-15** <sup>13b</sup> He forgave us all our sins, <sup>14</sup> having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. <sup>15</sup> And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.
- **1 Peter 3:15-16** <sup>15</sup> But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, <sup>16</sup> keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.
  - When I was growing up in the church and at Christian camps and things, this passage was used to emphasize apologetics, giving reasonable and rationale evidence for the faith. That stuff is great. However, these days, I believe people are looking more at the behavior of those who call themselves Christians than the evidence. And this is specifically what Peter is talking about. Be ready to give an answer, WITH GENTLENESS AND RESPECT, when people are speaking bad about your GOOD BEHAVIOR!
- **1 Peter 4:1** Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin.
  - Peter said all this during Nero's brutal reign.

# RESPONSE & ACTION

1. Cultivate and contain the fire in the belly
  - a. Having that table-flippin' fire is good. But like any fire, you've got to have it under control.
  - b. Meekness – strength under control; others-centered and others-serving, not self-centered or self-serving
  
2. Cultivate courageous compassion
  - a. Humanizing Humans—Empathy because each human is made in the Image of God AND is simultaneously depraved at some level.
  - b. **Matthew 9:35-36** <sup>35</sup> Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. <sup>36</sup> When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.
  - c. Jesus following in the footsteps of His Father. Jesus being a child of His Father in heaven.
  - d. **Luke 23:33-34a** <sup>33</sup> When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. <sup>34</sup> Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

### 3. Stand and pray

- a. **Matthew 9:37-38** <sup>37</sup> Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. <sup>38</sup> Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."
- b. **Ephesians 6:18-20** <sup>18</sup> And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. <sup>19</sup> Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup> for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.
- c. Therefore, suit up church! So, when evil comes, and it will come, and evil has come, you can stand your ground. Stand. Stand firm!
- d. Paul is giving these marching orders for the battle FROM CHAINS. And he's not looking to get out of those chains. He's not saying, suit up for battle and come free me from prison...as if he's being freed like Klaue was by Erik Killmonger and friends in Black Panther.

### 4. Advance

- a. In Matthew 10 Jesus sends out the Twelve
- b. Jesus equips us in His Way to send us back out into the world to love all humanity, even our so-called enemies.

Invite the Worship Team up

# INSPIRATION & PRAYER

- **2 Kings 6:15-17** <sup>15</sup> When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. "Oh no, my lord! What shall we do?" the servant asked. <sup>16</sup> "Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." <sup>17</sup> And Elisha prayed, "Open his eyes, LORD, so that he may see." Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.
- It may look like we're surrounded but we're surrounded by you.
- **Ephesians 1:18-23** <sup>18</sup> I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, <sup>19</sup> and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength <sup>20</sup> he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, <sup>21</sup> far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. <sup>22</sup> And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, <sup>23</sup> which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

# Chopping Block:

## Sermon Structure (according to Andy Stanley):

1. **ME** (Orientation) – Introduce yourself and your topic – find common ground with your audience.
2. **WE** (Identification) – Build an emotional common ground with your audience – build as many bridges emotionally as possible.
3. **GOD** (Illumination) – God has a solution for us today – engage your audience with the text – Don't just read it. Don't explain it to death. Make it fascinating!
4. **YOU** (Application) – Find one point of application everyone can embrace. Don't ask them to make a life-altering decision. Give them a measurable or reachable goal. Encourage them to try something for a week, a day, or even a month.
5. **WE** (Inspiration) – cast a vision – prompt a decision by briefly describing what would happen if this group of people would follow what has been taught. Tell them to imagine what WE could do together.

## Notes:

From *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the supernatural worldview of the Bible* by Michael Heiser

- “Even *after* the resurrection the disciples had to have their minds supernaturally opened to see a suffering messiah. The risen Jesus says that explicitly in Luke 24: 44 “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything that is written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and psalms must be fulfilled.” 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures.  
The point is straightforward: *Only someone who knew the outcome of the puzzle, who knew how all the elements of the messianic mosaic would come together, could make sense of the pieces.* Jesus had to enable the disciples to understand what the Old Testament was simultaneously *hiding* and *revealing*. It wasn't a matter of reading a verse here and there.” -p. 242
- “God's plan to redeem humanity, reclaim the nations, and revive Eden depended on the incarnation of the second Yahweh figure and his subsequent death and resurrection. The story of the cross is the biblical-theological catalyst to God's plan for regaining all that was lost in Eden. It couldn't be emblazoned across the Old Testament in transparent statements. *It had to be expressed in sophisticated and cryptic ways to ensure that the powers of darkness would be misled.* And it was. Even the angels didn't know the plan (1 Pet 1:12).” -p. 243
  - 1 Peter 1:12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

## Passages:

- **Ephesians 5:8-10, 13-16** <sup>8</sup> For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light <sup>9</sup> (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) <sup>10</sup> and find out what pleases the Lord. <sup>13</sup> But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. <sup>14</sup> This is why it is said:  
 “Wake up, sleeper,  
 rise from the dead,  
 and Christ will shine on you.”  
<sup>15</sup> Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, <sup>16</sup> making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.
- **Ephesians 6:14b-17** <sup>14b</sup> ...with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, <sup>15</sup> and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup> In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup> Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.
- **Ezekiel 28:1-10** The word of the LORD came to me: <sup>2</sup> “Son of man, say to the ruler of Tyre, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says:  
 “In the pride of your heart  
     you say, “I am a god;  
 I sit on the throne of a god  
     in the heart of the seas.”  
 But you are a mere mortal and not a god,  
     though you think you are as wise as a god.  
<sup>3</sup> Are you wiser than Daniel?  
     Is no secret hidden from you?  
<sup>4</sup> By your wisdom and understanding  
     you have gained wealth for yourself  
 and amassed gold and silver  
     in your treasuries.  
<sup>5</sup> By your great skill in trading  
     you have increased your wealth,  
 and because of your wealth  
     your heart has grown proud.  
<sup>6</sup> “Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says:  
 “Because you think you are wise,  
     as wise as a god,  
<sup>7</sup> I am going to bring foreigners against you,  
     the most ruthless of nations;  
 they will draw their swords against your beauty and wisdom  
     and pierce your shining splendor.  
<sup>8</sup> They will bring you down to the pit,  
     and you will die a violent death  
     in the heart of the seas.  
<sup>9</sup> Will you then say, “I am a god,”

in the presence of those who kill you?  
 You will be but a mortal, not a god,  
 in the hands of those who slay you.  
<sup>10</sup>You will die the death of the uncircumcised  
 at the hands of foreigners.

I have spoken, declares the Sovereign LORD.”

- **1 Corinthians 2:9-10** <sup>9</sup> However, as it is written:  
 “What no eye has seen,  
 what no ear has heard,  
 and what no human mind has conceived”—  
 the things God has prepared for those who love him—  
<sup>10</sup> these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit.  
 The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.
- **1 John 4:4-6** <sup>4</sup> You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. <sup>5</sup> They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. <sup>6</sup> We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.
- **Psalm 23:1-6** <sup>1</sup> The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.  
<sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green pastures,  
 he leads me beside quiet waters,  
<sup>3</sup> he refreshes my soul.  
 He guides me along the right paths  
 for his name’s sake.  
<sup>4</sup> Even though I walk  
 through the darkest valley,  
 I will fear no evil,  
 for you are with me;  
 your rod and your staff,  
 they comfort me.  
<sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me  
 in the presence of my enemies.  
 You anoint my head with oil;  
 my cup overflows.  
<sup>6</sup> Surely your goodness and love will follow me  
 all the days of my life,  
 and I will dwell in the house of the LORD  
 forever.