

The Pharisees in Jesus' day hated their enemies, and taught their followers to do the same. But Jesus corrected that erroneous practice in the Sermon On The Mount.

The Pharisees had taken an Old Testament command to love one's neighbour (Leviticus 19:18), and added these words: "and hate your enemy". (Matthew 5:43) The Old Testament does not teach hating one's enemies. In fact, it teaches just the opposite: being kind to your enemies. (Exodus 23:4-5) So Jesus called out the Pharisees and their rewriting of Leviticus 19:18, and corrected it. "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you." (Matthew 5:44) Both Stephen (Acts 7:59-60) and Jesus (Luke 23:34) prayed that God would forgive those who were putting them to death.

Who are our enemies? Anyone with whom we have a strained relationship, or from whom we have received unloving words or deeds. With Christ's help, you *can* love your enemies as He loves you.

Matthew 5:44 "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you."