

GOD'S GREAT PLAN
LOVE YOUR ENEMIES SERIES - Part 4
Ben Rudolph

Good morning Life Fellowship. It is good to see you here this morning. Turn in your Bibles to Jonah Chapter 3, and this will be the final week in our Jonah series. I am a little bummed out, and sad about it as it has been such a fun series for me, and I have learned so much about God and about Jonah. I hope it has been an encouragement and a benefit to you as well.

It has been interesting to think about how to close this book of Jonah. And there is a reason that I want us to look at it the book of Jonah in a different way this morning. And it is not to look at it through the lens of man, but to look at it through the lens of God. One of the things that I think is really important for us to understand is that when we read stories in the Bible, whether it is about Joseph, or Moses, or Ruth, that many times what we do is we read these narratives and we try to pick out things about the person in the stories and we try to think about how we can be more like them. How can I be more like Moses? How can I be more like Ruth? How can I be more like Daniel? Or how do I not be like Jonah?

And I think that for most of us there is a level of interpretative application of God's Word that we can do that. But I think we also would be doing ourselves a disservice if we only read the Bible in the way that God never intended us to read it and that is to read the stories and just put God in the background. One of the key components of Bible study when we read and study God's Word is we must remember that God is the main character of the story. It is God; He is the one who is acting and moving. Even though it is a story about human beings, what we are supposed to do is draw our attention to God. God is not merely to be in the background; He is to be at the forefront.

And what I want us to do today is really look at how God worked out His plan through this story. The first week we looked at Jonah's struggles, then we looked at Jonah's resistance, and last week we looked at Jonah's complaints. But this whole idea is that Jonah was wrestling with God about this idea of loving his enemies. So all along there is this back and forth between Jonah and God.

And what I want us to do today is look at God's Great Plan. Yes, this is a story about Jonah, and yes, he was called by God to go and preach to the Ninevites. And as we read the story we see that Jonah rejected that notion and he gets in a boat, God sends a storm, the sailors throw Jonah overboard and he is swallowed by a great fish. He is in the belly of the fish for three days and then he is spit out on land. Finally Jonah obeys God and goes to preach to the Ninevites. Then the Ninevites repent, but Jonah doesn't like that, as we learned last week.

And where is God in all of this? Is God reacting to Jonah or is Jonah reacting to God? And for us if God is the main character in this story what we have to understand is that God is the main character of our story as well. We have to see God as the main character of our story. Is God just kind of off in the distance, or is He literally the one who is moving and making all things happen in our lives? So as we look at God's Great

GOD'S GREAT PLAN

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES SERIES - Part 4

Ben Rudolph

Plan this morning, let's look at Chapter 3 because there are some things in here that explain God's plan. The reason I want to start with Chapter 3 is it makes us ask some questions. Let's begin reading in Chapter 3 verse 1:

“Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you.” So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey in breadth. Jonah began to go into the city, going a days' journey. And he called out, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.” And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest of them to the least of them.

The word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes. And he issued a proclamation and published throughout Nineveh, “By the decree of the king and his nobles: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not feed or drink water, but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them call out mightily to God. Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish.” When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that He had said He would do to them, and He did not do it.”

So we have shared the background about how the Ninevites were some of the most cruel, wicked people on the face of the planet. And yet when we read Chapter 3 it just seems like the Ninevites just lay down. It is like they just say, ‘Okay, whatever you say Jonah.’ But here is what we have to do, we have to kind of look at the human side of this as well as the divine side and then ask, ‘what is going on here?’ We have to ask ourselves the question, ‘How in the world did a Hebrew, an Israelite prophet, who doesn't believe in the same God that the Ninevites did, walk into one of the most cruel, wicked, brutal, oppressive societies in the world, walk dead center into their city and say, ‘You all are going to be judged by my God unless you repent?’

How did that happen? Why did they even listen to Jonah? And this is what makes God's plan so great. What makes God's plan so great? Number one was the weaving of all things together, the weaving of all things together. There is something going on here that we would not realize unless we understand the history of Nineveh, and the history of the Assyrian people, and kind of the culture by which they lived in. So we need to understand how God is putting these pieces together.

Now I am a bit of a nerd when it comes to the ‘Lord of the Rings.’ I love the book, ‘Lord of the Rings,’ and I have watched all the movies. I am such a nerd, or maybe you want to say I am a geek that I even bought the extended version of these movies. I am not just talking about the three hour versions; these are three and a half hour versions

GOD'S GREAT PLAN
LOVE YOUR ENEMIES SERIES - Part 4
Ben Rudolph

of the movies. And I like them so much that I have watched the appendices, which is on the DVD that shows how they made the movies. And I have watched like nine hours of that. That is the kind of dork that I am.

And the reason that I love that kind of things is I love understanding not just the movie but how it is put together and the behind the scenes happenings. And when I was reading and studying Jonah for the last month, I tried to understand some of the behind the scene stuff that we don't necessarily get being a 21st century American. And there are things that if you were a 8th century Hebrew, or an 8th century Assyrian and you read this it would make sense to you.

So how did God weave this together? How did God display His glory by orchestrating these things? Here is what I wrote down. We can see how God used the right person at the right time with even the wrong choices to orchestrate a plan that gave God glory. I am going to say that again. God used the right person at the right time with even the wrong choices to orchestrate and bring about a plan that was for His glory.

Now what do I mean by that? Well, first of all we need to understand how in the world these Ninevites were ready to hear this kind of message? If you study the history of the Assyrian people, right before Jonah comes which was around 745 B.C. to deliver this message, there were some things going on in their kingdom that was humbling to the Ninevite people, the Assyrian people. What was going on was a downward spiral in their empire. Because of their brutal regime there were all these pockets of rebellion. There were city states that were overthrowing their kingdom because they were so brutal. So they were losing territory and that was number one.

Number two they had suffered some major defeats. They had never lost battles before and now all of a sudden they had suffered two massive military defeats which was the first time this had happened in the history of their nation. And when this is happening you wonder what you are doing wrong, and you think the gods must be angry at you. Right around that time also there was a solar eclipse. We as Americans in the 21st century understand how the earth rotates around the sun and the moon. None of those things are surprising to us today, nor would they seem apocalyptic to us, but in their culture it would for them. With their beliefs whenever they saw a solar eclipse it meant that the gods were not happy with them.

So you have the fact that they were losing territory, they were losing battles, and there were signs in the sky that they believed were telling them something. And not only that but there was a massive civil war among the leadership, between some of the people who wanted to be king because of what was going on. So there were four factors here. And the people of Assyria were being greatly humbled. What they were thinking was they were going to be destroyed, and they needed to figure out what was going on. So that was how God was preparing the people of Nineveh to hear a message of judgment and warning. That was number one.

GOD'S GREAT PLAN LOVE YOUR ENEMIES SERIES - Part 4 Ben Rudolph

Number two God was using the right person with Jonah. Now let's think about Jonah. If we look at the ancient religions of the Mesopotamian people we know that they were a polytheistic religion that they believed in many gods. They had a god of the sky, a god of this and a god of that. We know this from a Babylonian historian named Berosus. Berosus was from the third century B.C. and he wrote a lot about the history and about the culture of the Mesopotamian people.

So in Berosus' writings he writes about a god that the people of Assyria would have worshipped. And this god's name was Oannes. I want to give you a picture of this god Oannes. Oannes was a god that was part man and part fish that would come out of the sea and they believed he would teach things to the people. This is what Berosus' wrote about Oannes. It was a custom to pass the day among men who took no food at that season and they believed Oannes would give them an insight into letters, sciences and arts of every kind. He taught them to construct cities, to found temples, to compile laws. He explained to them the principles of geometrical knowledge. He made them distinguish the seeds of the earth and showed them how to collect the fruit. In short he instructed them in everything which could tend to soften manners and humanize their lives.

Now here is what is so fascinating. There was this god in their false religious system named Oannes. And knowing that the Assyrians had this belief system, God in His sovereignty sends them a man named Jonah, which in the Hebrew is pronounced *dzouna*. Do you see how similar *dzouna* is to Oannes? Isn't that fascinating?

And not only did God give Jonah the right name, He gave him the right experience. Jonah in his rebellion ran away from God. He ran away from God and said, '*I don't want to do this job.*' He rebels and he goes into a ship thinking he is doing what he wants to do. He gets on the ship and God sends a storm and Jonah tells them to throw him overboard. They throw him overboard and what happens? He gets swallowed by a fish. Do you see what God is doing? Do you see how God is orchestrating all of these things? He is using human events, He is using names, and He is using the rebellion of Jonah all to orchestrate this story.

Think about this, Jonah gets vomited up on land and here is what we know - word travels fast, doesn't it? Now when we hear this story about this guy being swallowed by a whale we just have to chuckle. I thank God for this illustration because sometimes we wonder how we are going to illustrate something. But think about this, a guy gets swallowed by a whale and the news spreads like crazy. Think about how in those days there were always fishing villages. And if a fisherman sees this big fish come up out of the sea onto the land and vomit out a human being. And then this man starts walking away, what do you think is going to happen?

Do you think people are not going to talk about that? Do you realize how news of this is going to travel around after seeing that? News travels fast. News spreads through

GOD'S GREAT PLAN
LOVE YOUR ENEMIES SERIES - Part 4
Ben Rudolph

people. And I am sure that through these villages as Jonah is making his way to Nineveh, the story of a man who was vomited out by a great fish was coming their way. God has prepared the hearts of the Ninevites. And when I was reading and studying this, I had to put down my computer and just sit there and think about it. Wow, isn't God great? Isn't He amazing? Isn't it awesome how He can weave and orchestrate all of these things to bring about a story, to bring about something that will bring Him glory?

Now I know that I love to plan things. My favorite thing to plan is trips. I love planning family vacations. And one of my favorite things we have done was about five years ago when we planned this big trip to the west coast. My wife is from Arizona and we were going to go out and see her family. And I wanted to take our kids to see some of the national parks so we were going to go to Yosemite, Zion and then the Grand Canyon.

I planned it all out, I mapped it all out and cars were rented and hotels were reserved. So we are on our way to Yosemite and the day before my daughter gets sick. And then my son gets sick, and then my next son gets sick, and then I get sick. This entire trip has been planned out and here I am lying in this tent in Yosemite just trying to lie still because of this flu that is going on in our family. We had to cancel hotels, we couldn't go to Zion, and we just decided to go somewhere to get through it. So we found a hotel in Kingman, Arizona. Do you know where Kingman, Arizona is? It is on the back side of nowhere. It is two hours from anything.

But here is what Kingman, Arizona had. It had a Hampton Inn and it had a Walmart and that is what we needed. We stayed there for a few days just to get well again. And then after that we went to the Grand Canyon. But can you imagine hiking down the Grand Canyon with kids that are just coming off of the flu? It was not fun. We had all these plans of what we were going to do and what it was going to look like and then all of a sudden this virus disrupted everything. We still talk about it as a family like, '*Remember when we were vomiting everywhere?*' We talk about this trip of what it could have been, but instead this is what happened.

And here is what I know; we missed out on some really amazing things. We had to stay in Kingman, Arizona. I paid for a hotel in Kingman, Arizona, people. Do you know how painful that was? But this is what is so great about God, we can look at the virus and remember how we didn't have the trip we could have had, or should have had, but what God does is He takes the virus, He takes our rebellion, He takes everything that goes wrong and He finds a way to weave it into His story to make it good. That is what God does. He took Jonah's rebellion and used it for His glory.

So here is one of the things we need to understand. Jonah didn't want his story woven into the Ninevites' story. He didn't want that. He said, '*I don't want that, God. I don't want to be a part of that story.*' But God was like, '*No, this is what is going to happen.*' And many times when we think about loving our enemies, most of us would have never chosen our life being woven into another person's life after that person had

GOD'S GREAT PLAN
LOVE YOUR ENEMIES SERIES - Part 4
Ben Rudolph

treated us like that. But God has a way; He has a plan of what He is doing. He is working something out for His glory, and it is better than we could ever imagine.

Here is the question I want to ask you – how is God working in your life? How is God working in your life right now? What we have doing this entire series is challenging us to see how we love our enemies. Jesus has commanded us to do this. And this is how I believe we can set ourselves apart as followers of Jesus today. Instead of when you are someone's enemy and they disagree with us making us want to ignore them or maybe even want to kill them, or whatever it may be. We live in a culture by which if you are our enemy we want to get rid of you. And yet God wants us to love our neighbors and to love our enemies.

So this entire time we have been talking about how we are doing at loving our enemies. And the thing I want to ask you this morning is maybe the challenge for us is not to just love our enemies, but maybe this morning to realize that we are the enemy. Maybe this morning we need to identify with the Ninevites. Maybe what God is doing in our lives is to humble us. Maybe God has brought storms into our lives to humble us, to prepare us to receive a word from Him to tell us we have been living life the wrong way, we have been living for ourselves. And through this path of living for ourselves we have created harm, a wake of damage and harm through our lives, and He is calling us to repent.

Yes, for a lot of us it is about loving our enemies, but maybe for others of us in this room it is about repenting being other people's enemies, and then asking God what He wants us to do. God is working in our lives either to love the unlovable, or He is working in our lives for us to repent of the way we have been unlovable. Every single part of our lives whether it is the people that come into our lives that we would not want, or the things that happen to us, or the things that we do, God has a beautiful way of bringing everything together if we let Him, and as we allow Him to do it.

And we need faith to see it. We have to believe that God is able to do this, that He is able to orchestrate some things so that He can work all things together for good to those that love Him. It takes faith to believe that. And the story of Jonah is the story of how to increase our faith and to make us realize if it happened to Jonah, if it happened to the Ninevites, it could happen to us.

God's plan is great not just because He weaves all things together, but number two He works outcomes that truly matter. So when it comes to this story it is easy for us to read this and to just think of a couple of things. Here is what we don't want to do. If we think if we just love our neighbor then everything is going to work out great, is that what is going to happen? No, there is no guarantee of that. Just because the Ninevites repented does not mean that everything worked out. Some people have asked me the question, '*What do you think happened to Jonah after this?*' The answer is – I don't know. He is not mentioned again in the Bible. We don't know if he went home really

GOD'S GREAT PLAN
LOVE YOUR ENEMIES SERIES - Part 4
Ben Rudolph

grumpy. We don't know if he went back a changed person. We don't know anything more about Jonah.

But here is what we do know. There are two outcomes I think we need to resolve in our hearts if we are going to trust God through loving our enemies. The first one is we have to trust God with performing justice in His timing and in His way. We have to trust God to perform justice in His timing and in His way. See Jonah wanted God to bring justice and judgment to the Ninevites. He didn't want repentance. He didn't want them to be let off the hook. He wanted these people judged. And God said He would judge them, and He will judge all evil in His time.

See God's timing was first. He told Jonah He had to take care of some other evil before this evil. Before He would take care of the evil of the Ninevites He needed to take care of the evil of the Israelites. The reason why God turned the fortunes of the Assyrian people around is because He wanted to use the nation of Assyria to capture and destroy the nation of Israel. So what you have here is the elevation once again of Assyria after their downward spiral. The historians tell us that around 745 B.C. there was a turning point. We don't know what happened, but something did. All of a sudden they became a great nation again. And God used this nation, the Assyrian people, to go and take into captivity the ten northern tribes of Israel.

Now why in the world would God bring judgment first on the Israelites before the Ninevites? The answer is this; God always brings greater judgment on those who are more aware of His revelation. See the Israelites had the Law, they had Moses, and they had the prophets like Elijah and Elisha. They had all of the benefits that you could possibly imagine for them to turn and obey God. They had heard prophet after prophet, they had all of these things, and yet time after time, decade after decade, generation after generation for over 200 plus years these people turned their backs on God and worshipped other gods.

I am not just talking about gods that weren't that bad; these were wicked, wicked gods. These were gods that they sacrificed their firstborn children to. They would literally sacrifice their children by putting them in the fire. These were people that would worship Baal and Asherah performing every kind of demonic and perverted sexual acts you could possibly imagine. This is what the people of God did. And God was going to judge the Ninevites but He needed to judge the Israelites first.

So what happened was around 722 B.C. the king of Assyria came and brought the Israelites into captivity. And then about a hundred years later, God is finally going to bring judgment on Nineveh. If you go over a couple of books after Jonah in the Bible you have the book of Nahum the prophet. Nahum's entire job was to prophesy the destruction of Assyria and that is exactly what happened. God's judgment will occur but it will occur in His timing and in His way.

GOD'S GREAT PLAN
LOVE YOUR ENEMIES SERIES - Part 4
Ben Rudolph

What we need to understand is that judgment from God will come in two ways. It will either come at the final day of human history in the great white throne of judgment that we read about in Revelations Chapter 20, or it has already happened on the cross. But punishment has been, or will be, declared. And that is really hard for us to understand.

I have been to Germany a number of times taking walking tours to places that were significant in World War II. And someone in the group always wants to know where Hitler's bunker was. And usually the tour guide will take us to a parking lot in Berlin and say, *'Somewhere around here is the bunker where Hitler killed himself.'*

And it is hard when we study the history of mankind and know there were dictators who were responsible for killing millions of people, whether they were Stalin or Hitler or others. We read about them and wonder when or if the justice was done to them. They committed suicide or they died in peace and we wonder, *'God, why didn't you bring justice on them?'* Well, one day there will be a day that they stand before God. No one escapes justice from God. Justice will either be taken from us through Jesus or we will receive it all from God almighty. We have to understand that justice will be served.

The second thing we need to understand is if we love our neighbors then what will happen is they will change and all of a sudden they will be really nice to us and everything is going to be alright. Is that what is going to happen? No, there are no guarantees. Listen, you could do everything right, you could be the most saintly neighbor, you could be Mother Teresa or even Jesus Himself to this person that you think is your enemy. And if they still reject you, if they are still mean to you, it doesn't mean that you did a bad job, or that God didn't know what to do.

We need to understand that we are called to love our enemies, not so that they will change; we are called to love our enemies so that we will change. We are not called to say, *'Hey, I am going to love you so hopefully one day you will be open to receiving Jesus and change because you are such a rotten person.'* That is not what we are to do. We are to love our enemies because in loving our enemies our hearts are changed.

And there is something that happens when we love our enemies, something that words cannot describe, something that I can't explain, but here is what I know because I have seen it. Here is what I believe happens, that the joy that comes from loving our enemies is greater than the satisfaction of seeing our enemies find Jesus. I want to say that again. I believe if we love our enemies like Jesus, what God will produce in us is a greater joy, a joy that is greater than the satisfaction of seeing our enemies find Jesus.

We talked about this last week. There is something inside of us that when we see our enemies punished we have a certain level of satisfaction. After the first Sunday of this series there was someone from our church that talked to me about their story and how

GOD'S GREAT PLAN
LOVE YOUR ENEMIES SERIES - Part 4
Ben Rudolph

God had worked in their heart to love someone who was their enemy. And I don't want to give you all the details of this story but I will tell you this. This person explained what God had done in their life over the years and there was this enemy that God had called this person to love even though this person had done some brutally wicked things to them. And as this person was explaining to me how God had been working in their heart and how they were reaching out to this individual to show love, they had a smile on their face and they had a joy radiating from them that was truly supernatural.

I saw that and I observed that in this person and I knew that God was working in them. And we all need to understand that the most important thing that God is interested in is turning us, changing us, and transforming us to be like Jesus. That is the outcome that God wants. The reason why God wants us to love our neighbor, or our enemy, is so that we will become like Jesus.

I want us to look again at four verses really quickly from the book of Jonah to see how God was working toward this end. In Chapter 1 and verse 17 there is a singular word that is used over and over again in the book of Jonah. Verse 17 says: "***And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah.***" Circle that word 'appointed.' God appointed this fish.

Now look at Chapter 4 and verse 6 where it says: "***Now the Lord God appointed a plant and made it come up over Jonah.***" Circle that word 'appointed' again. Look at verse 7 and it says: "***And when dawn came up the next day God appointed a worm that attacked the plant.***" Circle that word 'appointed' again.

Lastly look at verse 8 and it says: "***When the sun rose God appointed a scorching east wind and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah.***" Circle the word 'appointed' again. What is God doing? He is interjecting Himself into Jonah's life. He is trying to save Jonah because He didn't want Jonah to just do what He wanted. He didn't want Jonah to just go through the motions. He wasn't calling Jonah to just be a prophet and to proclaim something. God was calling Jonah to become like Him.

And there is a reason why we know God is doing this. Turn in your Bibles to II Corinthians. II Corinthians is one of my favorite passages of Scripture. And II Corinthians Chapters 2 through 5 really talks about the heartbeat or the bulk of what God is always doing in our lives. Over and over again in these chapters Paul is writing to the church of Corinth and he is telling them that God is interested in making them like Jesus. And he says it over and over again.

Look at Chapter 3 and verses 17 and 18 where it says this: "***Now the Lord is a Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.***"

GOD'S GREAT PLAN
LOVE YOUR ENEMIES SERIES - Part 4
Ben Rudolph

Do you see what God is doing? God in every single way is orchestrating these events to happen in our lives. The reason why you have an enemy today is because God wants you to have an enemy today. And the reason why you have an enemy today, and God hasn't taken them out of your life is because God is trying to conform you into the image of Jesus. And He uses our enemies to get us there.

Isn't that amazing? Maybe you are thinking, *'Well, not really. I want to do a Bible study instead.'* Guess what; sometimes God does something bigger than a Bible study. He will give us someone in our life and we may pray for Him to take this person away from us. We may want them removed from our life. How many times have we tried praying people out of our lives? But God has them there to teach us to love them so we can look like Jesus. So He uses them to get us to look more like Jesus.

That is powerful. And do you know what that means? It means it takes faith. The main idea I want to leave us with this morning is it takes faith to love our enemies. It takes great faith. As much as Jonah had a great struggle, as much as Jonah had a great resistance, as much as Jonah had a great complaint and as much as God had a great plan, it takes us to have great faith to love our enemies. We have to believe that God can use the messes of our lives. We have to believe that God can use our enemies. We have to believe that God is working something greater than we can work. We have to trust God that justice will happen whether it is in our lifetimes or at the judgment seat. We have to trust God that He is working all things for our good and His glory.

We have to trust God every single day to walk this path that we have. We may not know why this person is in our lives, or why these people still exist on this planet, or why God doesn't judge this nation, or why God doesn't do something about this evil. And I may not understand everything, but I know that I need faith. I need to trust Him with things I don't understand. I need to trust Him with things in my life that are a mess. I need to trust Him to help me have the great faith to love my enemies. What kind of faith do you have to move forward and do this?

I have a few questions and then we are done. Number one – how is God weaving all things together in your story? There is a right time and a right place and all the wrong things that God may be weaving into your life to start obeying Him in this way. It may not be easy to love our neighbor. It may be one of the hardest things we ever do. But can you see how God is working, how God is orchestrating things in your life? And if you don't then maybe you need to ask God to show you how He is working in your life. Ask Him to give you the heart and the faith to believe.

Number two – is the outcome you are working toward different than God's? Listen, after this series of 'Love Your Enemies' and being told to love your enemy, love your enemy, love your enemy, I am surprised to see there are still people here today. For four weeks we have been teaching we need to love our enemies. And I think for most of us we still think we are going to love our enemy just so this person won't continue to be a

GOD'S GREAT PLAN
LOVE YOUR ENEMIES SERIES - Part 4
Ben Rudolph

jerk to us. But God is not calling us to love our enemy so that they will change; He has called us to love our enemy so that we will change. And if you are trying really hard to love this enemy so that you will get the outcome that you want, you need to check your heart; you need to check your motivation.

Number three – how is God asking you to trust Him with this responsibility? I really wondered if I shouldn't make a list of ways in which we should love our enemies. I thought about ending it that way but then I didn't think that was the way God would have us to do that. The very first Sunday we began this series I asked everyone to bow their heads and close their eyes and I asked everyone to name their enemy that came to mind, the person that they were having the hardest time with. And I am going to ask you to do something like that again today.

I want you to bow your heads and close your eyes and I just want you to spend some time with God. Here is a simple question I want you to ask God: '*God, what do you want me to do? What do you want me to do, God? How do you want me to love my enemies?*' If I gave you a list of fifteen things of ways to love your enemies my fear is that you would look at that list and if one of those fifteen things wasn't really what you thought God wanted you to do, you would just let yourself off of the hook. So what I do know is that when God tells you to do something that is between you and God.

How is God working in your heart this morning? What is He telling you to do to help you to love that person or those people that He wants you to love?

The preceding transcript was completed using raw audio recordings. As much as possible, it includes the actual words of the message with minor grammatical changes and editorial clarifications to provide context. Hebrew and Greek words are spelled using Google Translator and the actual spelling may be different in some cases.