*When the liturgist reads the scripture, please read along.*

**Matthew 5:43-48 (New Revised Standard Version)**

**Love for Enemies**

**43**“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ **44**But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, **45**so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. **46**For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? **47**And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? **48**Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

**Matthew 5:43-48 (New Living Translation)**

**Teaching about Love for Enemies**

**43**“You have heard the law that says, ‘Love your neighbor’ and hate your enemy. **44**But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! **45**In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For He gives His sunlight to both the evil and the good, and He sends rain on the just and the unjust alike. **46**If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. **47**If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that. **48**But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.”

Both of the above scriptures are the same passage of the Bible; one may just be easier to understand than the other. What is important to know is that both are stating the same thing. You are to love everyone, whether the person is someone you love or someone you do not love, someone who is nice to you or someone who is mean to you. In the eyes of the Lord, both individuals are equal, and both are deserving of love.

It does not mean that it is an easy thing to do. It is easy to love someone who loves you but try loving someone who does not love you or try being nice to someone who is mean to you. It is not easy, but it is what God wants us to do.

When you show love to your enemy, others will notice. Likewise, if you show kindness to someone who is mean to you, people will take note of how you react to that person. This kind of love takes God’s help, and when people see how you act towards those who do not love you or are mean to you, they will know God is helping you.

The next time you are with someone who does not love you, find a way to show them love. Be nice to someone who is mean to you. It will really surprise them and make them think about how you have acted toward them. God will help you to love others; all you have to do is ask Him.