

World Missions Update

“Love Your Enemies”—Theory or Practice?

By Dr. Gayle Woods

The Cayman Islands’ legislature recently debated whether same-sex couples have the right to enter a union similar to marriage. Dr. Gayle Woods, pastor in Cayman Brac, wrote some thoughts about how Christians should respond in love. Later, this Domestic Partnership Bill was defeated by one vote.

While COVID-19 continues to rage around the world, a battle against Domestic Partnership becoming a legal reality in the Cayman Islands is being fought in our legislative chamber. At times it seems that



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we are being attacked from all sides. We do not despair; instead we remind ourselves that God is on the throne. He reigns as the supreme ruler of the universes. Praise His name forever!

On Sundays I have been preaching through the book of Matthew as well as through 1 Thessalonians. God saw fit to prepare us for the legislative debate this week over Domestic Partnership by bringing us to Matthew 5:44-48.

This is a portion of Scripture that is difficult to swallow. To love our enemies, to do good to those who hate us, and to pray for those who spitefully use us and persecute us is not the humanly natural response.

We say we hate the sin and love the sinner, but I think that the sinner at times may have a different opinion regarding our actions and words. Jesus said the sinners can treat people they like well, but we should be able to do better. We should have love for everyone.

Why? Because God does.

Verse 48 says, “Therefore be perfect just like the Father is perfect.” This verse is totally out of place unless it is understood in its context. Our Father in heaven has a perfect love for mankind. Jesus says it is not only possible for us to have a love for everyone just like that which is demonstrated by God, but He **expects** us to have this kind of love.

As I thought about this I was reminded of something Paul said. Romans 8:5-10 reads:

And hope maketh not ashamed; **because** the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time **Christ died for the ungodly**. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth **his love toward us**, in that, **while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us**. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when **we were enemies, we were reconciled** to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, **we shall be saved by his life**.

God, help us to remember that, just as God loved us when we were His enemies, we must love those who disagree with us, even when our blood boils in revulsion to the sin about us.

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