

- I. Set Up:
- A. Happy Father's Day.
  - B. Today we return for a fourth message from the Sermon on the Mount – the greatest sermon ever preached by the greater person who ever lived. The passage is from Matthew 5:43, it is the directive to love our enemies.
  - C. .
- II. Intro: This is a confusing and challenging moment.
- A. On the one hand, many things are going well: life expectancy is up, extreme poverty is down, our rivers are cleaner, the ozone hole is smaller, and Silicon Valley is creating products that make George Jetson look like Fred Flintstone. Everyone listening to this sermon is blessed. Just about everyone who has ever lived would trade places with you.
  - B. On the other hand, many things are falling apart – starting with the family and continuing to include society at large. As you know: Bombs are flying, inflation is surging, trust levels are low, and people are polarized. There is a lot of anger out there. And some panic as well.
  - C. The question is, how do we live? How do we carry ourselves? This series is framed around renewal. What does it look like to be salt and light in the zip codes we occupy?  
This is not a new question.
    - 1. The Jews wrestled with it, especially as they moved into exile. We read about their strategies in Daniel and Jeremiah.
    - 2. We have the writings of Augustine, who touches on this in *The City of God*.
    - 3. Reinhold Niebuhr famously shares his views in his classic: *Christ and Culture*. He offers four:
      - a)
      - b)
      - c)
      - d) .
    - 4. More recently you have Tim Keller – and to a lesser extent David French – offering their views and a lot of people pushing back.
  - D. I think one of the most obvious ways to frame our options is to look at the way the Jews split up during the inter-testamental period.
    - 1. Some became Sadducees – these were the coastal elites of first century Judaism. They went along to get along. They found ways to be accepted by those in power.
    - 2. The Zealots went in the opposite direction – they wanted to start a revolution, and eventually did. Few today want to fight a war with real weapons, but they want to engage in a culture war via the ballot box and the court room.
    - 3. The Essenes withdrew into the desert. I was there last month. It was a hard life, but they saw themselves as getting away from the corruption of the big city. It's not entirely fair to say that this is where Rod Dreher comes down with his Benedict Option. But he's close.

4. The Pharisees are the hardest to peg. They do not perfectly line up with the religious right. But there are overlaps. They did believe that if they worked hard and prayed harder that God would send the Messiah and this Messiah would set up a kingdom that sent the Romans packing.

E. What does Jesus say? What does he suggest? After all:

1. The question is not, what does Tim Keller or *The Wall Street Journal*, or Henri Nouwen or Oprah say, the question is: what does Jesus say?

2. The question is not, how should I live if I am a 3 on the Enneagram or if I am living in a Blue State, or am 35 years old. The question is, what does Jesus say?

III. Here is what he says. Matthew 5:43-48 **“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.**

A. We are approaching the end of the first section in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus is speaking to his disciples. There have already been a few whiplash moments. But this one is among the most unthinkable. It’s a call to treat outsiders like insiders. It’s a call to love those who intend to do us harm.

B. Last week’s message – the call to turn the other cheek, walk the extra mile, give away not just your shirt but your cloak as well - it was all quite unthinkable. And so, I repeated a point that I made in week one: Jesus’ instruction in general - and in the Sermon on the Mount in particular - do not make any sense unless you are living in light of eternity.

1. If what we see is all we get, or if you think our ultimate life-score is established on this side of the grave, then do not follow Christ.

2. Some of what I am expected to do is to explain the Bible in a way you can understand. And a lot of it is understandable and makes good, common sense. The advice is practical, wise and thoughtful. And it seems obvious that if we follow it our life will likely work better.

a) There is a sense that it will help improve – if not next quarter’s earnings – then certainly those for the quarter after that.

b) But not today’s text. If you are paying attention, your response should be something along the lines of, “You’ve got to be kidding me.”

C. About six months ago I got a call from a guy who does not attend this church. He had recently started reading the Bible. And he said, “Hey, I am reading in the Bible. And I came to this place where Jesus tells us to love our enemies,” – he actually said “I’ve come to a part where Jesus tells us to love our ‘blinking’ enemies,” only he didn’t say blinking. He went on, “Are you blinking kidding me? Have you heard any of this before?”

D. And I said, well, I’ve never heard it in exactly those words. But yes, I have heard the idea that we to love our enemies.

IV. **You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’**

- A. This is from Leviticus 19:18. Jesus has dropped, “love our neighbor as ourself,” perhaps to make it parallel with “hate our enemies.”
- B. There are other passages that make related points.
  - 1. In Proverbs 24:17 we’re told not to gloat when our enemy falls; in Proverbs 25:21, we’re told to feed our enemy when he’s hungry; and there are numerous directives in other Old Testament passages instructing us to care for the foreigner.
  - 2. There are passages that instruct us to hate evil.
  - 3. We have New Testament teachings in which Jesus speaks well of the Samaritans, Romans and other Gentiles – that is, of those the Jews thought of as their enemies.
  - 4. And there are some conversations about “who is my neighbor,” such as the one Jesus got into with the rich, young ruler.
- C. There are a number of passages that talk about how we should think about our neighbors and our enemies – or about love and hate - but nothing quite as in your face as what we find here.
  - 1. In Luke’s version – the Sermon on the Plain, Luke 6 – Jesus says: **To you who are listening I say: Love your enemies... God, who is love, has told us to love.**
  - 2. And then in today’s text, Matthew 5:44 we read: **But I tell you, love your enemies** (note the plural) **and pray for those who persecute you,**
    - a) *Have to think of the line in Fiddler on the Roof, where the rabbi prays for the Csar by asking God to keep him.... Far away from us.*

V.

**VI.** We then get something by way of justification for this command – which is a command by the way. It’s in the imperative present tense, which means it’s an order that does not go away. The justification is that we should love because this is what God does: **He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.**

- A. And we need to be like God.
- B. And, V46: If we love those who love us, what reward will we get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?**
  - 1. The tax collectors were about as low as you could go. They were not just bad, they were traitors. They were willing to cooperate with the Romans in oppressing their family and friends.

**VII.** <sup>47</sup> **And if you greet only your own people** – your own tribe, those who look like you, think like you, vote like you, have the same sources of news - **what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?** <sup>4</sup>

- A. Today pagan is a dismissive term.
- B. The point is – doing evil for good is wicked; doing good for good is normal; doing good for bad is what we are being called to.
- C. We are not to return evil for evil, we are to leave vengeance to the Lord.

**VIII.** <sup>8</sup> **Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.**

**IX.** This passage has generated a lot of ink. Those writing about it fall into a handful of camps:

- A. Some people dismiss loving our enemy as foolish and reckless naivety. Full stop. It's religious, ivory tower nonsense. It doesn't work. Nietzsche
  - 1.
  - 2.
- B. Some suggest we are to love our enemy unless – of course – they act like an enemy.
  - 1. I was talking to a business guy a bit ago. He was being forced out of a partnership. He felt it was wrong and he was
  - 2.
  - 3. They make us mad. They do something mean. Then, of course, we need to punch them back.
- C. Some apply it straight away – and adopt a pacifism in which there is no need to protect the vulnerable from evil.
  - 1. They would say that the Ukrainians should not be fighting back.
  - 2. We see this in some anabaptist traditions.
- D. Some assume that loving our enemy means we should work to change them. To do the only reasonable thing, which is to turn them into a friend by helping them learn to think, act and vote like we do.
- E. Some say the Sermon on the Mount does not actually apply.
  - 1. Some say it used to – but no longer. In my world – the blogosphere has a number of people saying, the United States used to be positively inclined towards the church. Between ? and 20? It was neutral. It is now hostile and we have to see our need to fight fire with fire.
  - 2. There are others who say: the Sermon on the Mount is the ethic that will apply once Jesus returns, but not yet.
- F. Are one of these the right path?
- X. If we take it Christ's words at face value, two questions immediately arise:
  - A. What does Jesus mean when he uses the term enemy. Or, to put a sharper point on it, are there enemies I can exclude from this direction?
  - B. And two: what does it mean to love. Exactly what does that look like?
- XI. Let's take these one at a time. First question: who is our enemy?
  - A. The Greek word is ??
  - B. Let me start by noting that we are expected to love one another. There is a lot of talk about unity and love.
  - C.
  - D.
  - E.
- XII. The second question is: what is love. I will not belabor this.
  - A. It is not sentimentality
  - B. It is generous, costly, self-sacrificing action for the other.

1. When we disagree with each other over secondary issues – non Apostle’s Creed issues - we must remain loving and work for peace.
2. In John’s Gospel – in the poignant final words and prayers of Jesus to his disciples before his death on the cross. A section considered by many to be among the most moving sections of the New Testament. In that passage, Jesus prays for the unity of the church. And he goes so far as to say, people will be able to tell that He was from God on the basis of... not the resurrection, but his followers unity. Their (our!) love for each other and unity.
  - a) Note, unity does not mean uniformity – it does not mean we all look and think alike.
  - b) And unity does not mean unanimity - complete agreement about every issue across the board.
  - c) By unity, the Bible means first and foremost a oneness of heart—a relational unity.
3. We are expected to be kind to one another, gracious to one another, forgiving of one another—not assuming the worst, not shooting the wounded or being quick to be suspicious.
4. Biblical unity requires working through conflicts, avoiding slander and gossip, and being generous in spirit.

XIII. What can we do?

- A. Expect this to be hard.
  - 1.
- B. Understand that hatred is a sin.
  1. Memorize passages that celebrate love.
- C. Stop demonizing others.
  1. John Stott’s practice
- D. Pray for your enemies. This can be hard.
- E. Learn to listen.
- F. Learn to disagree agreeably.
- G. Learn from those who are doing this well

1. There are some standard names that get thrown out here:
    - a) *Ronald Reagan and Tip O’Neil*
    - b) *Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Antonin Scalia*
      - (1) You cannot find two people much further apart politically than these two. They were icons of the left and the right – and yet they were extremely close. They went to the opera together. Their families spent New Year’s Eve together. They went on vacations together.
    - c)
    - d) *Martin Luther King, Jr.*
      - (1) His example and teaching here are profound.
      - (2) He was not a saint. .
  2. I learned from two men: John Stott and Hanna Katanacho
  3. .
  4. The first is, we do not know how to disagree with someone agreeably.
    - a) There are some who are good at giving in to anger, demonizing, belittling, cancelling.
    - b) We do not even try to empathize with others, enter into understanding or put love ahead of opinions. We can barely even treat them with basic human dignity.
    - c) In other words, we only know one way to enter into a disagreement: Go to war.
  5. The second reason is: We’ve stopped seeing this behavior as sin.
    - a) Whether in blogs or chat rooms, on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter, we spew out the most caustic, mean-spirited words, actions and attitudes as if they are not reprehensible before heaven. But they are. According to Jesus, and throughout the New Testament, this is likened to second-degree murder (Matt. 5:21–22; James 3:5–10).
    - b) The one thing we must not do as followers of Christ is to give ourselves over to partisan bickering in such a way that we put party before faith. We are not primarily Republicans or Democrats. We are first and foremost followers of Christ. And as followers of Christ, we should bear the mark of our Savior.
  6. And the mark of the Christian is love. That means we see our brothers and sisters in Christ, regardless of party or position, as our brothers and sisters in Christ. And the way we should interact and engage should be the way a healthy, loving, functional family should interact and engage.
  7. If you have not recently read his coaching on
  - 8.
  - 9.
- H. Most powerful for me was a late night conversation with a friend

- 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  4. .
- I.
- XIV. Men and women, please understand:
- A. We should expect tension.
    1. I have made it a point to say, “to the extent that it depends on me, I will not lose any friendships over politics and cultural issues.”
    2. We should not expect everyone to agree with us. We should not expect easy. Jesus told us we should expect hard.
  - B. Martyrdom is a possibility
  - C. How we treat our enemies says more about us than it does about them.
  - D.
  - E.

### Are civility and decency "secondary values"?

Sporting events are obviously competitive and typically "zero-sum" affairs: if one competitor wins, the others lose. Ukraine must obviously defend its country against Putin's immoral invasion or fall to Russia. But how should Christians respond to "culture wars" such as the conflict over abortion? Is it true that "the time for civility is over"?

This is the argument of a [\*First Things\* article](#) by *New York Post* editor Sohrab Ahmari: "Progressives understand that culture war means discrediting their opponents and weakening or destroying their institutions. Conservatives should approach the culture war with a similar realism. Civility and decency are secondary values." Ahmari wrote his article to oppose what he calls "David French-ism," which he criticizes as being too "polite" and not nearly adversarial enough.

French is a Harvard Law School graduate, Iraq veteran, noted religious rights advocate, prolific author, and committed evangelical Christian. Denison Forum Executive Director Dr. Mark Turman and I were honored last week to record a [podcast](#) with him. During our conversation, David made the argument that we must not choose between "Sermon on the Mount" character and a "Romans 13" ruler—followers of Jesus should seek both.

In response to a growing sentiment that "desperate times call for desperate measures," he similarly [noted](#) in yesterday's *French Press* article that "the spirit of fear that grips so much

of the modern American church might be a reason why so many Christians have scorned civility and decency in the public square, but it's not a justification."

How, then, should we respond to the "culture wars"? In his latest book, *Divided We Fall: America's Secession Threat and How to Restore Our Nation*, David eloquently calls for Christians to engage in political conflict in ways that honor our Lord and exemplify the "fruit" of his Spirit.

He observes, "Those who care the most often hate the most, and one of their chief methods of discrediting ideological allies with whom they compete is by portraying them as too tolerant of the hated political enemy. Kindness is perceived as weakness. Decency is treated as if it's cowardice. Acts of grace are an unthinkable concession to evil."

So, who is right?

### **"You also must forgive"**

Paul writes in Colossians 3: "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, *if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive*" (vv. 12–13, my emphasis). Let's focus on the italicized half of this remarkable sentence.

"If" could be translated "whenever," recognizing the reality of what follows. "One has a complaint" refers to a plaintiff's legal allegation against another person.

"Forgiving" could be translated as "pardoning," the gracious decision not to punish. As ethicist Lewis Smedes shows in his classic book *Forgive and Forget*, biblical forgiveness does not mean that we excuse the hurtful behavior, tolerate it, or pretend it did not occur. When a governor pardons a criminal, she does none of these things. Instead, she chooses not to punish the criminal.

This is how "the Lord has forgiven you"—he has "forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross" (Colossians 2:13–14). In light of such forgiveness, Paul tells us, "You also must forgive" (Colossians 3:13; cf. Ephesians 4:32).

### **If not, why not?**

I plan to say more about forgiveness and our "culture wars" tomorrow. For today, let's make this conversation personal.

Do you have a "complaint" against someone? Will you pardon them as your Father has pardoned you?

If not, why not?



Does someone have a "complaint" against you? Will you seek their pardon?

If not, why not?

**Note:** I hope you'll listen to our entire [podcast with David French](#). During our wide-ranging conversation, he reflects on the Supreme Court leak and our larger cultural moment with a depth of wisdom I commend to you with gratitude.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be children of your Father which is in heaven.

—Matthew 5:43–45

Probably no admonition of Jesus has been more difficult to follow than the command to “love your enemies.” Some men have sincerely felt that its actual practice is not possible. It is easy, they say, to love those who love you, but how can one love those who openly and insidiously seek to defeat you? Others, like the philosopher Nietzsche, contend that Jesus’ exhortation to love one’s enemies is testimony to the fact that the Christian ethic is designed for the weak and cowardly, and not for the strong and courageous. Jesus, they say, was an impractical idealist.

In spite of these insistent questions and persistent objections, this command of Jesus challenges us with new urgency. Upheaval after upheaval has reminded us that modern man is traveling along a road called hate, in a journey that will bring us to destruction and damnation. Far from being the pious injunction of a Utopian dreamer, the command to love one’s enemy is an absolute necessity for our survival. Love even for enemies is the key to the solution of the problems of our world. Jesus is not an impractical idealist: he is the practical realist.

I am certain that Jesus understood the difficulty inherent in the act of loving one’s enemy. He never joined the ranks of those who talk glibly about the easiness of the moral life. He realized that every genuine expression of love grows out of a consistent and total surrender to God. So when Jesus said “Love your enemy,” he was not unmindful of its stringent qualities. Yet he meant every word of it. Our responsibility as Christians is to discover the meaning of this command and seek passionately to live it out in our daily lives.

**I**

Let us be practical and ask the question, How do we love our enemies?

First, we must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love. It is impossible even to begin the act of loving

one's enemies without the prior acceptance of the necessity, over and over again, of forgiving those who inflict evil and injury upon us. It is also necessary to realize that the forgiving act must always be initiated by the person who has been wronged, the victim of some great hurt, the recipient of some tortuous injustice, the absorber of some terrible act of oppression. The wrongdoer may request forgiveness. He may come to himself, and, like the prodigal son, move up some dusty road, his heart palpitating with the desire for forgiveness. But only the injured neighbor, the loving father back home, can really pour out the warm waters of forgiveness.

Forgiveness does not mean ignoring what has been done or putting a false label on an evil act. It means, rather, that the evil act no longer remains as a barrier to the relationship. Forgiveness is a catalyst creating the atmosphere necessary for a fresh start and a new beginning. It is the lifting of a burden or the cancelling of a debt. The words "I will forgive you, but I'll never forget what you've done" never explain the real nature of forgiveness. Certainly one can never forget, if that means erasing it totally from his mind. But when we forgive, we forget in the sense that the evil deed is no longer a mental block impeding a new relationship. Likewise, we can never say, "I will forgive you, but I won't have anything further to do with you." Forgiveness means reconciliation, a coming together again. Without this, no man can love his enemies. The degree to which we are able to forgive determines the degree to which we are able to love our enemies.

Second, we must recognize that the evil deed of the enemy-neighbor, the thing that hurts, never quite expresses all that he is. An element of goodness may be found even in our worst enemy. Each of us is something of a schizophrenic personality, tragically divided against ourselves. A persistent civil war rages within all of our lives. Something within us causes us to lament with Ovid, the Latin poet, "I see and approve the better things, but follow worse," or to agree with Plato that human personality is like a charioteer having two headstrong horses, each wanting to go in a different direction, or to repeat with the Apostle Paul, "The good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do."

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This simply means that there is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies. When we look beneath the surface, beneath the impulsive evil deed, we see within our enemy-neighbor a measure of goodness and know that the viciousness and evilness of his acts not quite representative of all that he is. We see him in a new light. We recognize that his hate grows out of fear, pride, ignorance, prejudice, and misunderstanding, but in spite of this, we know God's image is ineffably etched in his being. Then we love our enemies by realizing that they are not totally bad and that they are not beyond the reach of God's redemptive love.

Third, we must not seek to defeat or humiliate the enemy but to win his friendship and understanding. At times we are able to humiliate our worst enemy. Inevitably, his weak moments come and we are able to thrust in his side the spear of defeat. But this we must not

do. Every word and deed must contribute to an understanding with the enemy and release those vast reservoirs of goodwill which have been blocked by impenetrable walls of hate.

The meaning of love is not to be confused with some sentimental outpouring. Love is something much deeper than emotional bosh. Perhaps the Greek language can clear our confusion at this point. In the Greek New Testament are three words for love. The word eros is a sort of aesthetic or romantic love. In the Platonic dialogues eros is a yearning of the soul for the realm of the divine. The second word is philia, a reciprocal love and the intimate affection and friendship between friends. We love those whom we like, and we love because we are loved. The third word is agape understanding and creative, redemptive goodwill for all men. An overflowing love which seeks nothing in return, agape is the love of God operating in the human heart. At this level, we love men not because we like them, nor because their ways appeal to us, nor even because they possess some type of divine spark; we love every man because God loves him. At this level, we love the person who does an evil deed, although we hate the deed that he does.

Now we can see what Jesus meant when he said, “Love your enemies.” We should be happy that he did not say, “Like your enemies.” It is almost impossible to like some people. “Like” is a sentimental and affectionate word. How can we be affectionate toward a person whose avowed aim is to crush our very being and place innumerable stumbling blocks in our path? How can we like a person who is threatening our children and bombing our homes? That is impossible. But Jesus recognized that love is greater than like. When Jesus bids us to love our enemies, he is speaking neither of eros nor philia; he is speaking of agape understanding and creative, redemptive goodwill for all men. Only by following this way and responding with this type of love are we able to be children of our Father who is in heaven.

## II

Let us move now from the practical how to the theoretical why: Why should we love our enemies? The first reason is fairly obvious. Returning hate for hate multiplies hate, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. Hate multiplies hate, violence multiplies violence, and toughness multiplies toughness in a descending spiral of destruction. So when Jesus says “Love your enemies,” he is setting forth a profound and ultimately inescapable admonition. Have we not come to such an impasse in the modern world that we must love our

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enemies—or else? The chain reaction of evil—hate begetting hate, wars producing more wars— must be broken, or we shall be plunged into the dark abyss of annihilation.

Another reason why we must love our enemies is that hate scars the soul and distorts the personality. Mindful that hate is an evil and dangerous force, we too often think of what it does to the person hated. This is understandable, for hate brings irreparable damage to its victims. We have seen its ugly consequences in the ignominious deaths brought to six

million Jews by a hate- obsessed madman named Hitler, in the unspeakable violence inflicted upon Negroes by bloodthirsty mobs, in the dark horrors of war, and in the terrible indignities and injustices perpetrated against millions of God’s children by unconscionable oppressors.

But there is another side which we must never overlook. Hate is just as injurious to the person who hates. Like an unchecked cancer, hate corrodes the personality and eats away its vital unity. Hate destroys a man’s sense of values and his objectivity. It causes him to describe the beautiful as ugly and the ugly as beautiful, and to confuse the true with the false and the false with the true.

Dr. E. Franklin Frazier, in an interesting essay entitled “The Pathology of Race Prejudice,” included several examples of white persons who were normal, amiable, and congenial in their day-to-day relationships with other white persons but when they were challenged to think of Negroes as equals or even to discuss the question of racial injustice, they reacted with unbelievable irrationality and an abnormal unbalance. This happens when hate lingers in our minds. Psychiatrists report that many of the strange things that happen in the subconscious, many of our inner conflicts, are rooted in hate. They say, “Love or perish.” Modern psychology recognizes what Jesus taught centuries ago: hate divides the personality and love in an amazing and inexorable way unites it.

A third reason why we should love our enemies is that love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend. We never get rid of an enemy by meeting hate with hate; we get rid of an enemy by getting rid of enmity. By its very nature, hate destroys and tears down; by its very nature, love creates and builds up. Love transforms with redemptive power.

Lincoln tried love and left for all history a magnificent drama of reconciliation. When he was campaigning for the presidency one of his arch-enemies was a man named Stanton. For some reason Stanton hated Lincoln. He used every ounce of his energy to degrade him in the eyes of the public. So deep rooted was Stanton’s hate for Lincoln that he uttered unkind words about his physical appearance, and sought to embarrass him at every point with the bitterest diatribes. But in spite of this Lincoln was elected President of the United States. Then came the period when he had to select his cabinet, which would consist of the persons who would be his most intimate associates in implementing his program. He started choosing men here and there for the various secretaryships. The day finally came for Lincoln to select a man to fill the all-important post of Secretary of War. Can you imagine whom Lincoln chose to fill this post? None other than the man named Stanton. There was an immediate uproar in the inner circle when the news began to spread. Adviser after adviser was heard saying, “Mr. President, you are making a mistake. Do you know this man Stanton? Are you familiar with all of the ugly things he said about you? He is your enemy. He will seek to sabotage your program. Have you thought this through, Mr.

President?” Mr. Lincoln’s answer was terse and to the point: “Yes, I know Mr. Stanton. I am aware of all the terrible things he has said about me. But after looking over the nation, I find he is the best man for the job.” So Stanton became Abraham Lincoln’s Secretary of War and rendered an invaluable service to his nation and his President. Not many years later Lincoln was assassinated. Many laudable things were said about him. Even today millions of people still adore him as the greatest of all Americans. H. G. Wells selected him as one of the six great men of history. But of all the great statements made about Abraham Lincoln, the words of Stanton remain among the greatest. Standing near the dead body of the man he once hated, Stanton referred to him as one of the greatest men that ever lived and said “he now belongs to the ages.” If Lincoln had hated Stanton both men would have gone to their graves as bitter enemies. But through the power of love Lincoln transformed an enemy into a friend. It was this same attitude that made it possible for Lincoln to speak a kind word about the South during the Civil War when feeling was most bitter. Asked by a shocked bystander how he could do this, Lincoln said, “Madam, do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my friends?” This is the power of redemptive love.

We must hasten to say that these are not the ultimate reasons why we should love our enemies. An even more basic reason why we are commanded to love is expressed explicitly in Jesus’ words, “Love your enemies . . . that ye may be children of your Father which is in heaven.” We are called to this difficult task in order to realize a unique relationship with God. We are potential sons of God. Through love that potentiality becomes actuality. We must love our enemies, because only by loving them can we know God and experience the beauty of his holiness.

The relevance of what I have said to the crisis in race relations should be readily apparent. There will be no permanent solution to the race problem until oppressed men develop the capacity to love their enemies. The darkness of racial injustice will be dispelled only by the light of forgiving love. For more than three centuries American Negroes have been battered by the iron rod of oppression, frustrated by day and bewildered by night by unbearable injustice, and burdened with the ugly weight of discrimination. Forced to live with these shameful conditions, we are tempted to become bitter and to retaliate with a corresponding hate. But if this happens, the new order we seek will be little more than a duplicate of the old order. We must in strength and humility meet hate with love.

Of course, this is not practical. Life is a matter of getting even, of hitting back, of dog eat dog. Am I saying that Jesus commands us to love those who hurt and oppress us? Do I sound like most preachers — idealistic and impractical? Maybe in some distant Utopia, you say, that idea will work, but not in the hard, cold world in which we live.

My friends, we have followed the so-called practical way for too long a time now, and it has led inexorably to deeper confusion and chaos. Time is cluttered with the wreckage of communities which surrendered to hatred and violence. For the salvation of our nation and the salvation of mankind, we must follow another way. This does not mean that we abandon our righteous efforts. With every ounce of our energy we must continue to rid this nation of the incubus of segregation. But we shall not in the process relinquish our privilege and our

obligation to love. While abhorring segregation, we shall love the segregationist. This is the only way to create the beloved community.

5

To our most bitter opponents we say: “We shall match your capacity to inflict suffering by our capacity to endure suffering. We shall meet your physical force with soul force. Do to us what you will, and we shall continue to love you. We cannot in all good conscience obey your unjust laws, because noncooperation with evil is as much a moral obligation as is cooperation with good. Throw us in jail, and we shall still love you. Send your hooded perpetrators of violence into our community at the midnight hour and beat us and leave us half dead, and we shall still love you. But be ye assured that we will wear you down by our capacity to suffer. One day we shall win freedom, but not only for ourselves. We shall so appeal to your heart and conscience that we shall win you in the process, and our victory will be a double victory.”

Love is the most durable power in the world. This creative force, so beautifully exemplified in the life of our Christ, is the most potent instrument available in mankind’s quest for peace and security. Napoleon Bonaparte, the great military genius, looking back over his years of conquest, is reported to have said: “Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne and I have built great empires. But upon what did they depend? They depended on force. But centuries ago Jesus started an empire that was built on love, and even to this day millions will die for him.” Who can doubt the veracity of these words? The great military leaders of the past have gone, and their empires have crumbled and burned to ashes. But the empire of Jesus, built solidly and majestically on the foundation of love, is still growing. It started with a small group of dedicated men, who, through the inspiration of their Lord, were able to shake the hinges from the gates of the Roman Empire, and carry the gospel into all the world. Today the vast earthly kingdom of Christ numbers more than 900,000,000 and covers every land and tribe. Today we hear again the promise of victory:

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun  
Does his successive journeys run;  
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,  
Till moon shall wax and wane no more.

Another choir joyously responds:

In Christ there is no East or West, In Him no South or North,  
But one great Fellowship of Love Throughout the whole wide earth.

Jesus is eternally right. History is replete with the bleached bones of nations that refused to listen to him. May we in the twentieth century hear and follow his words — before it is too late. May we solemnly realize that we shall never be true sons of our heavenly Father until we love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us.

# XV. What Does it Mean to 'Love Your Enemies'?

*Loving our enemies is a foreign concept. Love and enemies are words that seem mutually exclusive. Putting the two together raises questions. When the Bible tells us to love our enemies what does that mean? Who said it? Why? How?*

- **Danielle Bernock** Crosswalk.com Contributing Writer

*"But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil." ~ [Luke 6:35](#)*

We'll look at what it means to love our enemies, why we would, and how it works, but first, we'll start with who told us to do so.

## A. Who Told Us to 'Love Our Enemies'?

But the direct instruction to love our enemies came from Jesus in His [sermon on the mount](#).

In Matthew chapter 5, Christ says:

*You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies...*

In Luke chapter 6:

## B. How To 'Love Our Enemies'

"How" is of the utmost importance. We aren't able to love our enemies without the help of God. Hating an enemy is what comes naturally. We need supernatural help. If we try and love our enemies apart from the help of God it will not be true love.

It's only by the [grace](#) of God, and the power of the Holy Spirit at work in us, that we can love our enemies.

We can only love our enemies by trusting God to help us.

### C. Why Should We Love Enemies?

There are two reasons for us to love our enemies. One is simply because God said to, but the other is because God loved us first.

It was when we were still God's enemies ([Colossians 1:21](#) and [Romans 5:10](#)) that He demonstrated His love for us. Through Jesus ([Romans 5:8](#)) God's love brought salvation to us. Love is what makes all the difference.

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. [1 John 4:10-11](#)

Loving others, even enemies, flows out of knowing love.

### D. What Does it Mean to Love Our Enemies?

In the two portions of scripture where Jesus elaborates on what He means by loving our enemies, He draws it to a conclusion.

*"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 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. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."* [Matthew 5:43-48](#) NIV



*"But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful."* [Luke 6:27-36](#) NIV

The conclusion Jesus brings it to is for us to be *like our Heavenly Father* who is perfect and merciful. The word perfect can make us cringe due to our humanity. Only God is perfect. But the word *perfect* in the original Greek means *complete*. It comes from a primary word meaning *to set out for a definite point or goal*. Jesus is saying for us to make it our goal to *love as our Heavenly Father loves*.

Jesus brought up the issue of mercy repeatedly. Everyone wants mercy. The Bible tells us that *mercy triumphs over judgment*. Of course, we want it. Giving mercy requires us to give up revenge and hand the judgment part to God. Loving our enemies doesn't mean allowing them to continue to hurt us. That would be a failure of loving ourselves as God loves us. We can do what is in our control to protect ourselves while trusting God to step in.

We can always pray for our enemies. Praying is an act of mercy. Praying is loving like our Heavenly Father. Praying changes our hearts.

I remember when the Lord directed me to speak a blessing over an enemy who brought harm to a family member. With tears streaming down my face, and pain in my soul, I did. The person continued acting as an enemy, but it broke the chain off my heart. The love of God saved me from bitterness and unforgiveness. Loving our enemies means seeing them as human beings in need of the Father's love.

## **Compassion is Always a Virtue, Never a Vice**

May 11, 2022 04:00 am

Both of my maternal grandparents were World War II veterans. My grandfather flew B-17 bombers over Europe and North Africa, and my grandmother was an Army nurse and among the first medical units to land on the beaches of Normandy after D-Day. She marched with General Patton across Europe, treated soldiers wounded in the Battle of the Bulge, and helped liberate the Buchenwald concentration camp. All of her life, she kept her Army footlocker but forbid anyone from opening it until after she died. When she passed away in 2003, we finally got to see what she'd been hiding for nearly 60 years.

The footlocker contained hundreds of love letters between my grandparents from the war that revealed both the trauma and transformation they experienced. Family secrets were uncovered—like my grandfather's bad knee, which he said was from playing volleyball, but was actually a combat injury for which he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. He never told us—a mark of both his humility and that of his

generation. The footlocker also contained another surprise—a swastika armband worn by Nazi soldiers.

It turns out, my grandmother didn't just care for wounded Allied troops, but wounded Nazis as well. One German was so grateful for her kindness that he gave her his armband. Still, I had to wonder why she kept it all those years. Were my grandparents secret Nazi sympathizers? Of course not. In fact, they were so progressive on matters of race that all three of their children married immigrants. Two of them, including my mother, married a person of color—which was still uncommon in the early 1970s. Instead, I like to believe my grandmother, who was a woman of deep faith, kept the armband not as a symbol of Nazi evil, but rather as a sign of her commitment to Christian kindness. After all, Jesus commanded us to love our enemies and to be like our Father in heaven who shows kindness to both the righteous and the unrighteous (Matthew 5:44-45). Maybe she kept it as a reminder that there are no limits to God's compassion.

In our age of social tribalism, political divisions, and culture warring, that's a reminder we still need. The mark of true devotion to God isn't who we reject, but who we embrace. It's not who we condemn to hell, but who we are committed to heal. And real faith in Christ isn't defined by an unquestioning commitment to a position, but by unlimited compassion toward all people—even our enemies. Sadly, too many Christians now believe God is most honored when we erect strict boundaries around our compassion; when we clearly define who is worthy of our love, care, and empathy and who is not. And, in a shocking perversion of Christ's teachings, they condemn fellow believers who dare to transgress these boundaries. For example, a politician recently said Christians providing food, shelter, medicine, and clothing to undocumented immigrants was proof of "Satan controlling the church."

Indifference toward suffering and injustice is terrible enough, but when people claiming to represent God are actively *outraged* by compassion it's a sign that something truly wicked has taken hold. That's exactly what we see when Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath. Luke tells us "the Pharisees and the teachers of the law were furious and began to discuss with one another what they might do to Jesus" (Luke 6:11). Rather than celebrating that a suffering man was healed, rather than marveling at the miraculous power of God, the religious leaders were "furious" that Jesus had transgressed *their* perfectly constructed theological box. In their twisted minds, they were honoring God by condemning Jesus. Whenever anger is made into a virtue and compassion into a vice, we can know the spirit of anti-Christ is at work. That was true 2,000 years ago, and it remains true today.

Like my grandmother's Army footlocker, when we open the Bible we will be surprised, challenged, and definitely made uncomfortable. We'll discover things that don't fit our expectations, and we'll encounter a divine love that refuses to fit our preferred boundaries. The compassion of God displayed by Jesus won't be contained by our traditions or theology. It won't be limited by our imaginations or party politics. If that makes you angry, then be warned—you're on the path of those who rejected and killed Jesus rather than the path of those who walked with him.

Jesus didn't set us free so that we can fight for "our rights". He set us free so that we could lay down our lives (and rights) so that others may flourish. We know this to be true because this is what Jesus modeled for us.

Her framing of the biblical world view as being called to love God and love people (amidst their brokenness and our own) vs. today's woke / Marxist world view that calls us to \*hate\* people (and ultimately God) because they are oppressing us and keeping us from Utopia. But this latter framing and language of division / resentment are means to empower those who seek to control us, while the former promotes healing, unity, personal responsibility, freedom and agency. A bit later she ties in the meaning of

fatherhood as the willingness to voluntarily suffer for the benefit of those entrusted to his care (wife, children, community, etc). It is really rich. She says so much, so clearly and succinctly, in a short period of time.

## **XVI. A Commitment to Kindness Does Not Mean Surrendering Your Convictions**

### 1. What civility is and is not.



David French

May 22



The hearing was set for Friday, October 13, 2000, and I was not optimistic. My client was the Tufts Christian Fellowship (TCF), a Christian student group affiliated with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, a national Christian student ministry. The issue was whether TCF could stay on the Tufts University campus. The previous semester the Tufts student judiciary had expelled it from campus in a late-night “emergency” meeting without providing TCF with notice or an opportunity to be heard.

What campus crime did TCF commit that required an emergency expulsion? It had applied its statement of faith to exclude a gay student from leadership because she did not agree with the group’s traditional Christian stance on sexual morality. They didn’t exclude her from leadership because she was lesbian—they’d known about her sexual orientation and included her in the group from the first days of her freshman year—but because she did not share the group’s theological views about sex.

To put it plainly, TCF—like any expressive organization—wished to be led by people who shared its values. This is a fundamental, bedrock principle of expressive association. Should

campus regulations require an LGBT group to be open to leaders who, for example, *oppose* gay marriage? That would be absurd.

But if I was defending a bedrock principle of expressive association, why was I pessimistic about the hearing? Tufts is a private university. The First Amendment did not protect TCF. Our task was to persuade a student judiciary that TCF had not violated the university's rules and to appeal to the university's commitments to diversity and academic freedom to convince them to keep TCF on campus.

Even worse, the student judiciary was an elected body, and many of the candidates had run on the platform of tossing TCF off campus. Tensions were high, hateful anti-Christian "chalkings" had covered the sidewalks, and we knew that we were walking into a protest outside the hearing room doors.

I was not, however, prepared for what happened next. TCF had dozens of members, but the group's student leaders asked them to stay at a house off campus and pray rather than walk with them to the hearing. We didn't want to exacerbate tensions. Instead, I led a small band of students—four leaders and one witness—into the student center and towards the hearing room.

Everything was dark. Protesters had turned out the lights. They filled the halls. Some had candles, some just stood in the darkness. Several walked up menacingly to the TCF student leaders and glared at them, their faces inches away. We tried to hurry through the crowd to get to the hearing room, but when we tried to enter, we were told to leave. The student judges weren't ready yet.

So we stood outside the room, huddled in a corner, in the dark, surrounded by a wall of angry protesters. I tried to act unconcerned, but it was a deeply intimidating moment. One of the young TCF leaders started visibly shaking.

When we were finally allowed in the hearing room, the proceedings immediately felt like a kangaroo court. The case against TCF was full of falsehoods. The judiciary broke its own rules to permit activists to speak against the group (only actual witnesses were supposed to testify). By the time Jonathan, TCF's student leader, stood up to speak, he'd been through

an ordeal. He'd walked to class through anti-Christian chalkings, he'd just endured physical intimidation, and now he'd heard an avalanche of false claims.

How did he respond? I'll never forget the moment. He turned to the student who brought the claims against TCF and said that TCF would not say one word against her. He said that the leaders loved her and mourned their lost friendship. They harbored no bitterness against her. He then turned to the student judiciary and in a quiet but firm voice said that TCF had *not* violated university policy, and that he would defend TCF's place on campus—that if Tufts' commitments to academic freedom and diversity meant anything, they meant including a group committed to the principles of the historic, orthodox Christian faith.

Now, let's talk about civility. Again.

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Two weeks ago I wrote a Sunday newsletter defending my friend Tim Keller from the charge that the time for his “winsome, missional, gospel-centered approach” had passed. The culture had changed too much. It was too hostile. Now, in the words of one of his critics, “offense is unavoidable, and sides will need to be taken on very important issues.”

I called this attack on Keller part of “The Great Rationalization,” the Christian right's effort to excuse and justify its inarguably dramatic turn away from valuing personal character in political leaders and towards supporting (or at least permitting) cruelty and malice as instruments of political and cultural conflict.

The conversation hasn't stopped. Indeed, it's only accelerated. My friend Rod Dreher has written piece after piece after piece after piece over at *The American Conservative* opposing Keller's approach (and mine) to the present cultural moment. The conversation has continued at *First Things*, on *Substack*, in *The American Reformer*, and all over Twitter. These links capture only a fraction of the debate.

Time and again I read about how bad things are now, how vile the left has become, and how a commitment to “winsomeness” or kindness is simply inadequate to the moment. Even worse, it's sometimes seen as evidence of weakness or fear—an effort curry favor with people who hate you.

But the conversation consistently misconstrues what commitments to civility and decency do and don't mean—that civility is somehow a shorthand for surrender on matters of deep conviction. It is not. Or that a commitment to civility implies an aversion to conflict and a timidity in the face of opposition. It does not.

I worked on my first religious liberty case all the way back in 1993, when I was still a law student. I volunteered as a student researcher in a lawsuit challenging a school's refusal to allow religious students to opt out of a remarkably sexually explicit public-school "safe sex" program. (Read the facts of the case. The conduct was *outrageous*.)

By the time I hung up my litigation spurs, I think I may have sued more colleges and universities for violating the free speech rights of students and professors than any other lawyer in the United States. (Although I'm sure my record has been passed by now.) Shortly after I returned from Iraq, I was a keynote speaker at the Students for Life Conference, where my legal team and I pledged to represent—for free—any pro-life student anywhere in the country who faced a violation of their First Amendment rights. We kept that promise.

And—by God's grace—we were remarkably successful. American law and policy has measurably changed as a result of our legal efforts. To take just one example, tens of millions of students have passed through universities more free from state censorship because we substantially diminished the speech code regime that previously dominated American campuses.

Throughout this entire period, our intentions were clear. We attack positions, not people. We speak the truth. We seek legal *equality*, not legal superiority. And we never, ever forget the humanity of our opponents. As best we could, this was how we tried to navigate the triple interlocking commands of Micah 6:8—to act justly, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God.

By defending our liberty, we attempted to imitate the Apostle Paul, who asserted his rights as a Roman citizen to stop a brutal beating and initiated a series of legal appeals that ultimately took him to Rome. By refusing to demonize our opponents, we attempted to imitate Christ, who told us to bless even those who curse us. And by defending the First Amendment for all people, we preserved the essential humility of our classical liberal



system, a system that recognizes that truth can be found in many voices, and those voices should be heard.

I can't say we did all those things perfectly. I know I failed in my own commitments more than once. Yet even when I failed, I was aware of two fundamental truths.

*First, a commitment to kindness does not require surrender on matters of conviction.* Look back at the Tufts case. I'm sure the students could have ended the conflict on campus merely by surrendering. They could have quietly left campus or they could have relented to the university's demands and changed their statement of faith. There are some who would have even called such surrender "civil." But that misunderstands what kindness is, and it is not a synonym for harmony.

This is particularly true when your convictions relate to matters of fundamental justice. The nonviolent civil rights movement dramatically disrupted life in the South, but life in the South needed to be disrupted. The clear and present injustice of Jim Crow should have been *intolerable* to every Christian in America. The beauty of the movement is that it looked injustice in the face, declared "Here we stand; we can do no other" and did so without malice and with an overwhelming amount of forbearance and forgiveness.

*Second, a defense of your convictions should never require or permit cruelty.* Can we please be honest about the circumstances surrounding the debates about civility? They're taking place against the backdrop of a right-wing Christian political movement that was intensely devoted to one of the most cruel and dishonest men ever to sit in the Oval Office. It's taking place within a larger right-wing media culture that *delights* in personal insults.

Every day and night Christians by the millions listen to pugilists who stoke rage and hate, and who delight in calling opponents "morons," "groomers," and worse. We are not talking about a Christian political culture where the fight is over whose essay is too sharply worded. The present alarm over Christian cruelty has little to do with *First Things*, and a lot to do with Fox News. It has little to do with *The American Conservative* and a lot to do with Breitbart, Gateway Pundit, Alex Jones, and the angry, vicious mouthpieces who reach (and teach) American Christians by the millions.

My friend Tim Keller is immensely influential in the church. So is my friend Russell Moore—who is also constantly attacked for being too “winsome” for the moment. Did you know their combined social media followings are dwarfed by the man below, a man who screams that Democrats are “demons” and a “bunch of devils” who are not welcome at his church? Who says “you ain’t seen an insurrection yet”?

This is terrible stuff. And Christian public intellectuals are spending their time and space engaging the threat of . . . kindness?

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Let’s finish the Tufts story. After Jonathan's brief presentation, a TCF student leader named Nicole spoke next. She fought back tears and, like Jonathan, she first addressed the complaining students. She expressed deep regret for the division and pain. But she also turned to the student judiciary and expressed deep convictions that the university should respect her faith and her freedom. Every student leader did this. Every TCF witness did this. There was never a syllable of malice or anger addressed at the student who was attempting to toss them off campus.

The hearing lasted almost eight full hours, and as the hours passed by, I could see a visible change in the student judges. They went from stone-faced or scowling at the TCF students, to confused, and then somewhat irritated at the activists opposing TCF.

Not everyone softened. As the campus activists watched the case slip away, they got more angry. Some shouted. Their closing arguments were angry and contemptuous. The Tufts Evangelicals were bigots, and bigots had no place on campus.

The student judges rendered their decision on Monday. I had left Tufts and was back home in Ithaca, New York (I taught at Cornell Law School at the time.) I’ll never forget Jonathan’s phone call. He read the decision to me on the phone. We won. The judiciary convicted the

group of a minor, technical violation of campus rules but then voted unanimously to keep TCF on campus. It even said that TCF offered a “valuable” campus voice.

I’m not telling this story to make the case that kindness always “works.” Indeed, it didn’t “work” to win over TCF’s opponents. Moreover, it would have been imperative for TCF to treat its opponents with respect and decency even if it had lost. Kindness isn’t a tactic. It’s a command.

But I tell this story to demonstrate that civility and decency aren’t incompatible with “taking sides.” It doesn’t require anyone to whither in the face of angry opposition. Kindness doesn’t conflict with conviction, and our commitments to kindness are biblically inseparable from our commitments to justice. We aren’t to choose between them, we’re to embrace them both.

## **Ilya Shapiro shares his top takeaways from Georgetown cancel culture experience**

COREY KENDIG - GROVE CITY COLLEGE JUNE 13, 2022

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***‘Even in the face of adversity, you do not lie down, but you stand up for your beliefs’***

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Ilya Shapiro was the target of a campus cancel culture attack, and he’s lived to tell the tale, but it’s come at a price.

In an interview with *The College Fix* on Wednesday at a Washington, D.C. coffee shop, the constitutional law scholar said the last four months of his life have been difficult but enlightening.

“It hurt, and you truly find out who your friends are,” he said.

Shapiro was set to become the executive director of the Georgetown Center for the Constitution when his life abruptly changed Feb. 1 after administrators suspended him for tweets criticizing President Joe Biden’s “affirmative action” Supreme Court nomination pick.

“It was four days of hell, followed by four months of purgatory,” Shapiro told *The Fix*. “I felt like I let everyone down. My friends, colleagues ... my kids, my family, and my wife. I felt like I made a horrible mistake.”

Shapiro said that the night of his controversial late-January tweets, people were asking for his opinion as a commentator. So he gave it.

“Objectively best pick for Biden is Sri Srinivasan, who is solid prog & v smart,” Shapiro had tweeted, referring to President Biden’s qualifications for a Supreme Court nominee to replace longtime Justice Stephen Breyer.

“Even has identity politics benefit of being first Asian (Indian) American. But alas doesn’t fit into the latest intersectionality hierarchy so we’ll get lesser black woman. Thank heaven for small favors?”

“Because Biden said he’s only consider[ing] black women for SCOTUS, his nominee will always have an asterisk attached. Fitting that the Court takes up affirmative action next term.”

The series of tweets effectively defended meritocracy over affirmative action, but the “lesser black woman” wording was taken widely out of context. In retrospect, Shapiro said he had been emotional during the debate leading up to his tweets.

“My advice,” he said, “is to never scroll on Twitter while angry.”

Shapiro has since deleted the tweets and apologized. He described the four months he was under investigation as one of the most difficult times of his life.

It includes a March 1 experience at UC Hastings law school in which he was aggressively **shouted down** with profanity, insults, chants, desk banging and other measures at a Federalist Society chapter event.

“They screamed obscenities and physically confronted me, several times getting in my face or blocking my access to the lectern, and they shouted down a dean,” Shapiro **wrote** in *The Wall Street Journal*.

In his interview with *The College Fix*, he said he had never been protested before, “not just during this entire controversy, but in my life.”

He said it’s during this time he found out who his true friends really are, as some people he counted as friends criticized and turned their backs on him during his suspension.

For those who find themselves in the center of a cancel culture firestorm, Shapiro advises to stay calm and always be preparing for how best to respond.

Georgetown reinstated him earlier this month, announcing that since Shapiro’s controversial tweets occurred before he started his job, he could not be disciplined for it.

Shapiro said he felt officials dragged their feet on reinstating him to avoid campus protests during the semester and to keep backlash to a minimum.

What’s more, the victory came at too high a cost.

According to Shapiro, the law school dean and the Institutional Diversity Equity and Affirmative Action division at Georgetown were “setting him up to fail and be fired in the future.” Any minor offensive comment or any action considered “out of line” — even if it was unintentional — could lead to his termination under the school’s policies, he told *The Fix*.

Writing in *The Wall Street Journal*, Shapiro **pointed out** that “IDEAA makes clear there is nothing objective about its standard: ‘The University’s anti-harassment policy does not require that a respondent intend to denigrate.’”

With these parameters in place, Shapiro said he saw no way of being able to fulfill his duties at Georgetown. After several long and hard conversations with both his wife and Randy Barnett, the faculty director of the Georgetown Center for the Constitution, he said he decided to resign shortly after he was reinstated.

“I had talked to my closest advisors, Randy Barnett, my lawyer, my wife, and they all agreed. The relationship between me and Georgetown was untenable,” he told *The Fix*. “There was no way around it. I felt like they had put me into a position where I could not fulfill the duties that I was hired to do.”

Shapiro said he heard nothing from Georgetown in response except that the dean had accepted his resignation.

More recently, Shapiro **announced** he would be joining the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research as a senior fellow and director of constitutional studies.

He told *The Fix* that he has no ill wishes toward Georgetown and is excited to begin this new chapter with the Manhattan Institute to defend America’s legal and intellectual traditions.

“Even in the face of adversity you do not lie down, but you stand up for your beliefs,” he said.