

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT  
Mt. 5:43-48  
*“The Question of Ineffable Love”*



Mt. 5:43 **Ye have heard** that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

44 **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;

45 **That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven**: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

47 And if ye salute your brethren only, **what do ye more than others**? do not even the publicans so?

48 **Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.**



## Review

Back in December we began the exegesis of this great sermon preached by the Lord Jesus Christ.

### I. THE DISCIPLE AND HIS BLESSINGS, 5:1-16

A. The Setting, 5:1-2

B. The Sayings, 5:3-12

C. The Sequel, 5:13-16

### II. THE DISCIPLE AND HIS BELIEFS, 5:17-20

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D. The Question of Inappropriate Language, 5:33-37

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1. The Law of Retaliation, 5:38-42

a. The Law's Way, 5:38

b. The Lord's Way, 5:39-42

(1) When People Smite Us, 5:39

(2) When People Sue Us, 5:40

(3) When People Seize Us, 5:41

(4) When People Supplicate Us, 5:42



Early in the “Sermon on the Mount” the Lord Jesus emphasized His concern regarding “righteousness.”

Mt. 5:20 For I say unto you, That **except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.**

- The Lord Jesus is not negating the Law of Moses; He is clarifying the truth of its intent, and correcting the perversion of the Pharisees – “...and hate thine enemy.”
- The intent of this law is to overcome self, loving others at a higher standard...like God.
- The purpose of law is to the focus identifying with the Lord Jesus Christ



## 2. The Law of Reconciliation, 5:43-48

### a. The Rule Explained, 5:43-44

#### (1) What God Commanded, 4:43

Mt. 5:43 **Ye have heard** that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and **hate thine enemy**.

- Jesus quoted the Old Testament again, but this time He added a corollary that the rabbis, **not Moses**, provided.



Lev. 19:18 Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but **thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.**

- Nowhere does the Old Testament advocate hating one's enemies.
- The Jews, contemporary with Jesus, taught that their family and friends were their “neighbors.”
- In the parable about the “good Samaritan,” Jesus clarified the identification of the neighbor.



Luke 10:25 And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

26 He said unto him, **What is written in the law? how readest thou?**

27 And he answering said, **Thou shalt love the Lord thy God** with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; **and thy neighbour as thyself.**

28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

29 But he, **willing to justify himself**, said unto Jesus, And **who is my neighbour?**

36 **Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour** unto him that fell among the thieves?

37 And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. **Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.**



- The Jews were strangers in Egypt and were reminded by God to use the experience as an example of how to treat others.

Lev. 19:33 And **if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land**, ye shall not vex him.

34 *But* **the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.**

- The connection of neighbor and the law is found in Rom. 13:10:

Rom. 13:10 **Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.**



## (2) What God Commends, 5:44

Mt. 5:44 **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;

- Jesus began His clarification of the Pharisees by stating a command for those listening to His sermon:

Mt. 5:44 “**But I say unto you**, Love your enemies...”



Original Word: ἀγαπάω

Part of Speech: Verb – **Pres. Imp. Act.**

Transliteration: agapaó

Definition: to love

Usage: I love, wish well to, take pleasure in, long for; denotes the love of reason, esteem.

**With the believer, *agapáō* ("to love") means actively doing what *the Lord* prefers, *with Him* (by His power and direction). True *agapáō* ("loving") is always *defined by God* – a "*discriminating affection which involves choice and selection*"**

<https://biblehub.com/greek/25.htm>



- The principle of loving enemies is found in the Old Testament:

Ex. 23:4 If thou meet **thine enemy's** ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again.

5 If thou see the ass of **him that hateth thee** lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him.

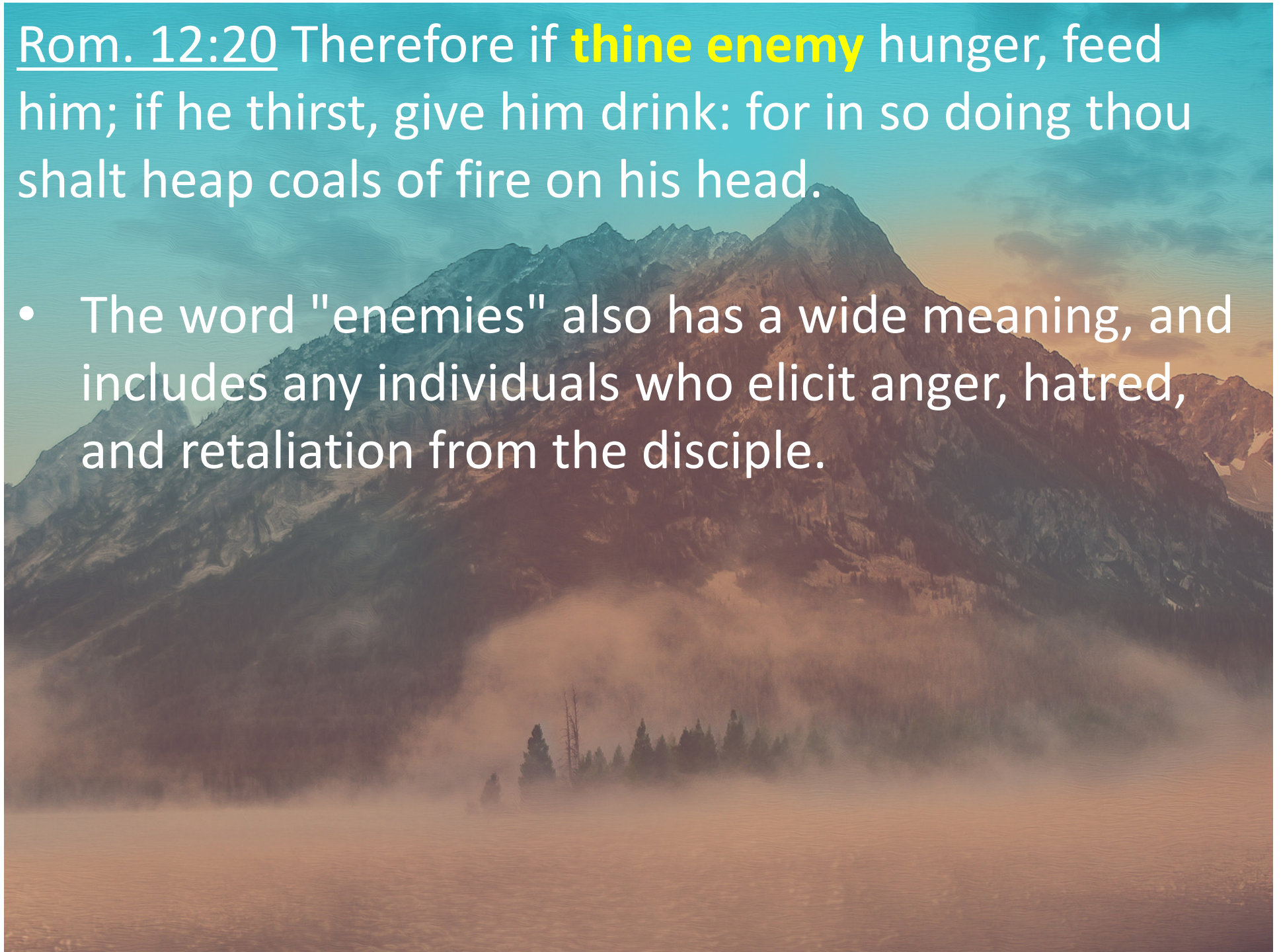
Prov. 25:21 If **thine enemy** be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink:

22 For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee.



Rom. 12:20 Therefore if **thine enemy** hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

- The word "enemies" also has a wide meaning, and includes any individuals who elicit anger, hatred, and retaliation from the disciple.





**Original Word:** ἐχθρός

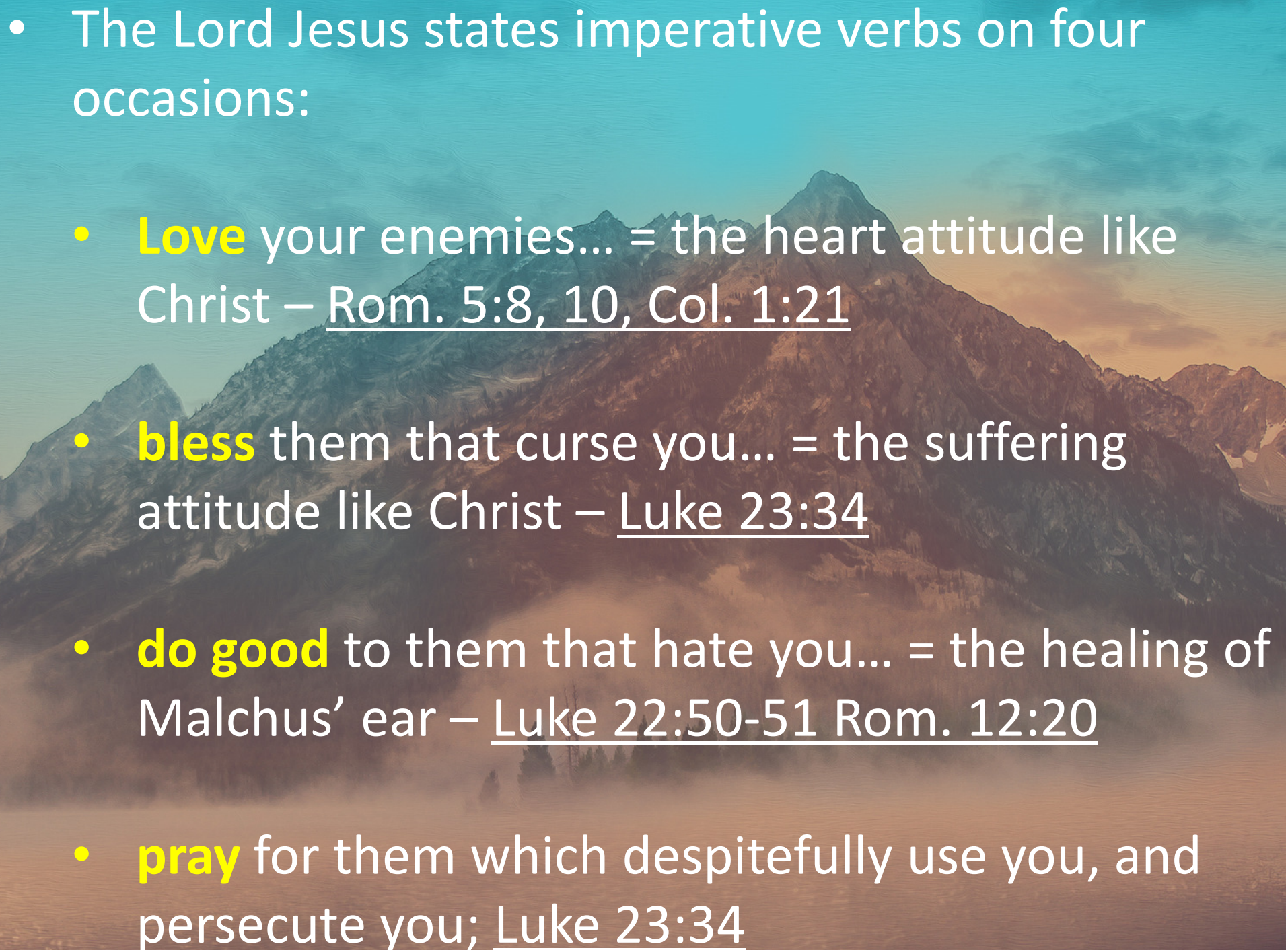
**Transliteration:** echthros

**Definition:** hostile

**Usage:** hated, hostile; subst: an enemy.

*exthrós* – properly, an *enemy*; someone *openly hostile* (at *enmity*), animated by *deep-seated* hatred. *exthros* ("enemy"), implies *irreconcilable hostility*, proceeding out of a "*personal*" hatred *bent on inflicting harm* (*DNTT*). <https://biblehub.com/greek/2190.htm>



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- The Lord Jesus states imperative verbs on four occasions:
    - **Love** your enemies... = the heart attitude like Christ – Rom. 5:8, 10, Col. 1:21
    - **bless** them that curse you... = the suffering attitude like Christ – Luke 23:34
    - **do good** to them that hate you... = the healing of Malchus' ear – Luke 22:50-51 Rom. 12:20
    - **pray** for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; Luke 23:34



- Jesus' harsh statements to the Pharisees and scribes should not be interpreted as Him expressing personal hatred; they were announcements of coming divine judgment on them.

## b. The Rule Exemplified, 5:45-47

### (1) A Comparison, 5:45

Mt. 5:45 **That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven:** for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.



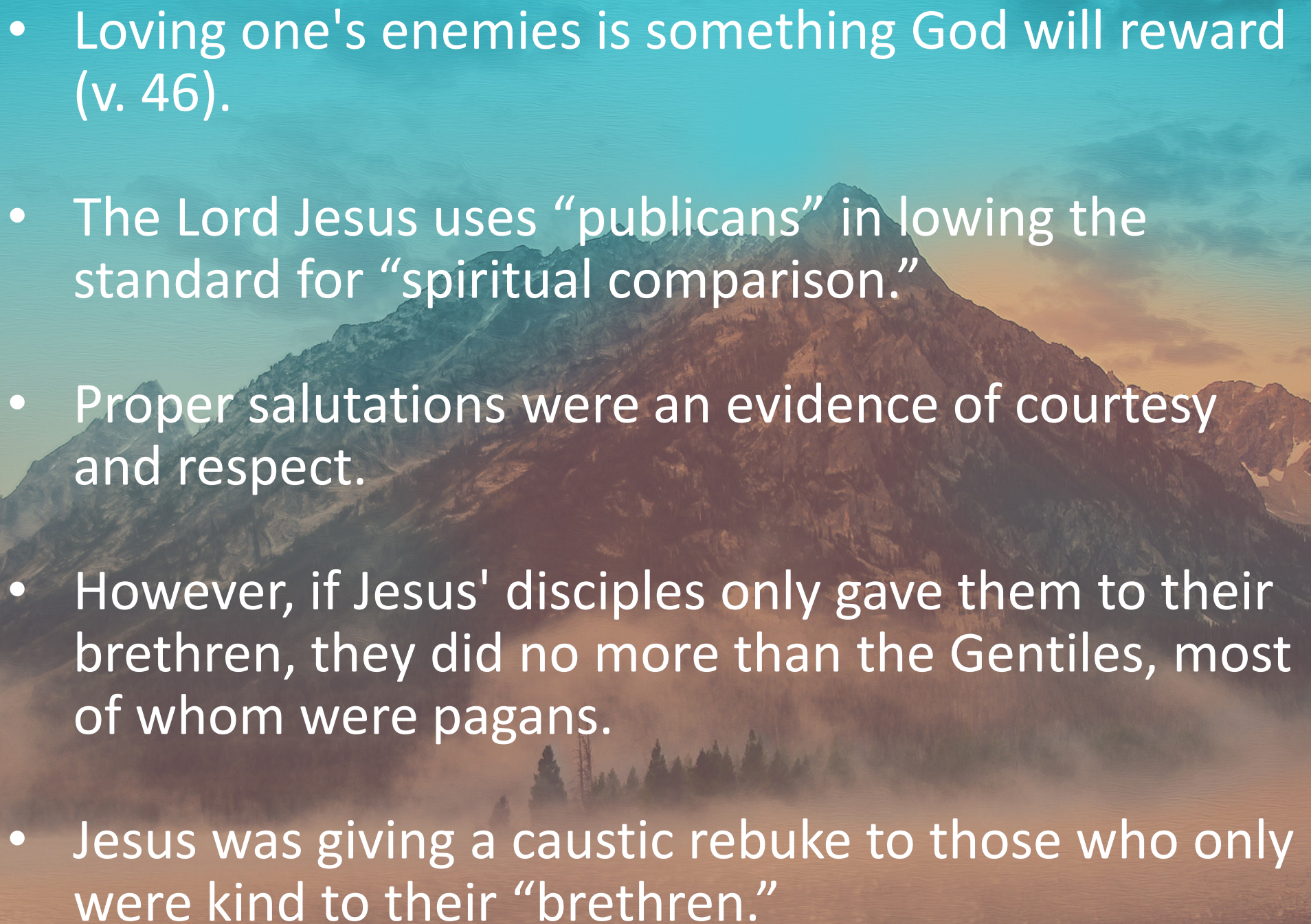
- Some liberal interpreters have concluded that Jesus meant that we become God's sons by loving and praying for friend and foe alike.
- However, consistent with other Scriptural revelation, Jesus did not mean His disciples can earn their salvation. Rather, by loving and praying for our enemies, **we show that we are God's sons because we do what He does.**

(2) A Contrast, 5:46-47

Mt. 5:46 For if ye love them which love you, **what reward have ye?** do not even the publicans the same?

47 And if ye salute your brethren only, **what do ye more than others?** do not even the publicans so?



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- A scenic landscape featuring a range of mountains under a sunset sky. The foreground shows a calm lake reflecting the light, with a line of trees and a utility pole visible. The overall tone is warm and serene, with colors ranging from deep blues and purples to oranges and yellows.
- Loving one's enemies is something God will reward (v. 46).
  - The Lord Jesus uses “publicans” in lowering the standard for “spiritual comparison.”
  - Proper salutations were an evidence of courtesy and respect.
  - However, if Jesus' disciples only gave them to their brethren, they did no more than the Gentiles, most of whom were pagans.
  - Jesus was giving a caustic rebuke to those who only were kind to their “brethren.”



## c. The Rule Expanded, 5:48

Mt. 5:48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

- In 5:48, Jesus' gives a summary of His disciples' duty.
- The standard of behavior is to be as “your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”
- "Therefore" identifies a conclusion of the “righteousness” that God demands.



- "Perfect" (Gr. *teleios*) means entirely perfect. In this context it refers to perfect regarding conformity to God's requirements, which Jesus just clarified.

**Original Word:** τέλειος

**Transliteration:** teleios

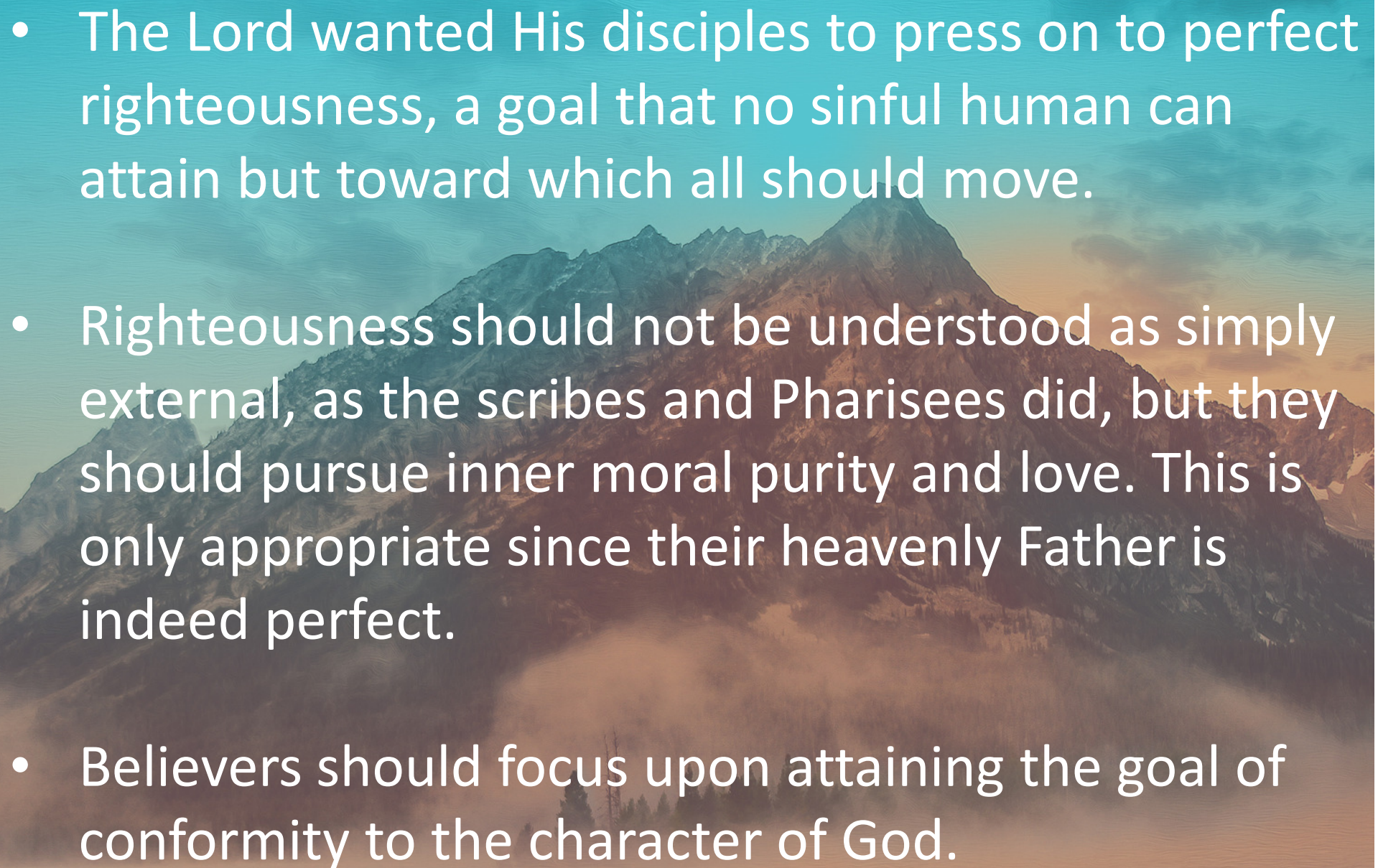
**Definition:** having reached its end, complete, perfect

**Usage:** perfect, (a) complete in all its parts, (b) full grown, of full age, (c) specially of the completeness of Christian character.

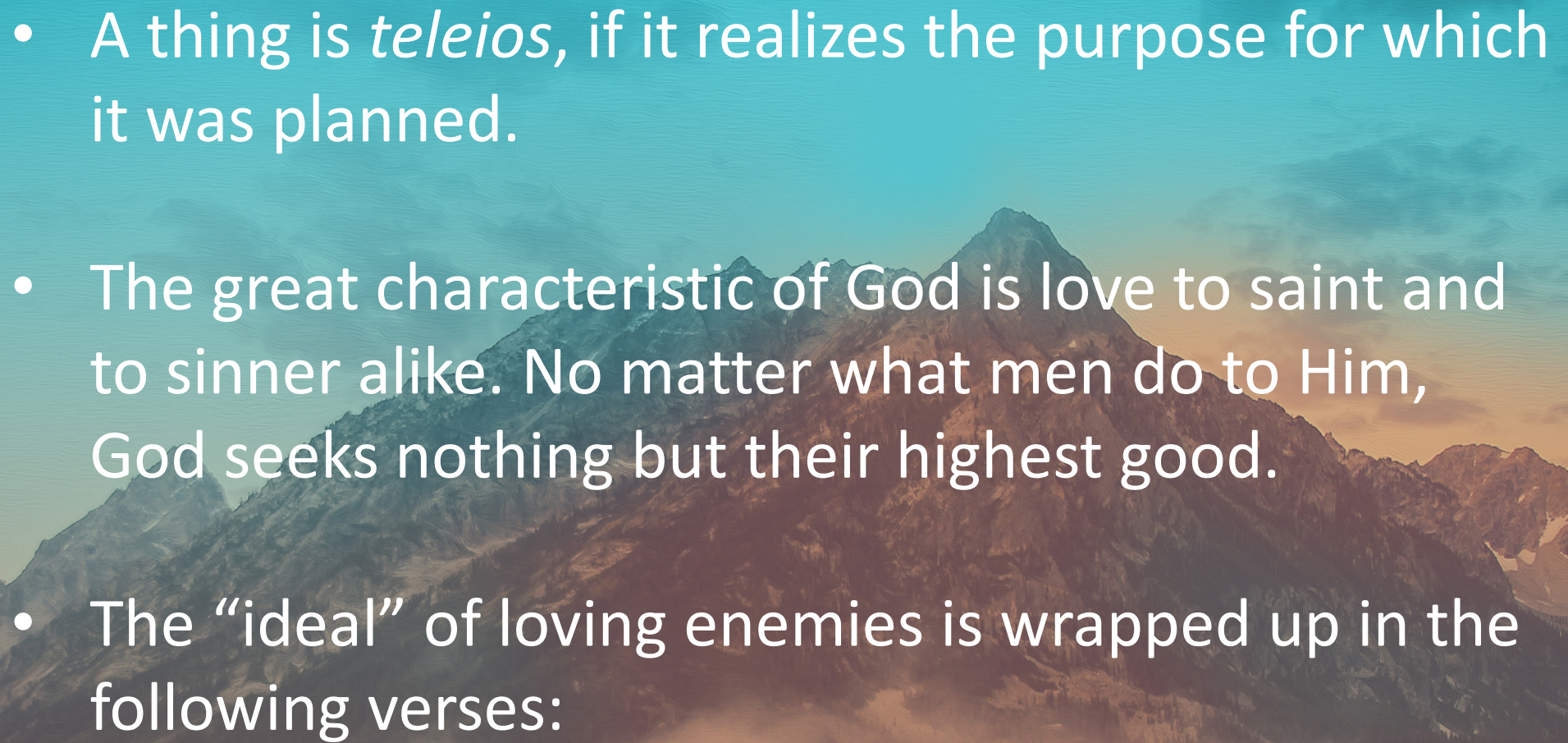
*téleios* (an adjective, derived from *télos*, "consummated goal") – *mature* (consummated) from going through the necessary stages to reach the *end-goal*, i.e. *developed* into a consummating *completion* by fulfilling the necessary *process* (*spiritual journey*). (*telos*).

<https://biblehub.com/greek/5046.htm>



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- A scenic view of a mountain range with a lake in the foreground, overlaid with a teal gradient and white text. The mountains are rugged and partially covered in snow, with a dense forest of evergreen trees at their base. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The text is presented in a clean, white, sans-serif font, with each bullet point starting with a white circular marker.
- The Lord wanted His disciples to press on to perfect righteousness, a goal that no sinful human can attain but toward which all should move.
  - Righteousness should not be understood as simply external, as the scribes and Pharisees did, but they should pursue inner moral purity and love. This is only appropriate since their heavenly Father is indeed perfect.
  - Believers should focus upon attaining the goal of conformity to the character of God.



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- A thing is *teleios*, if it realizes the purpose for which it was planned.
  - The great characteristic of God is love to saint and to sinner alike. No matter what men do to Him, God seeks nothing but their highest good.
  - The “ideal” of loving enemies is wrapped up in the following verses:



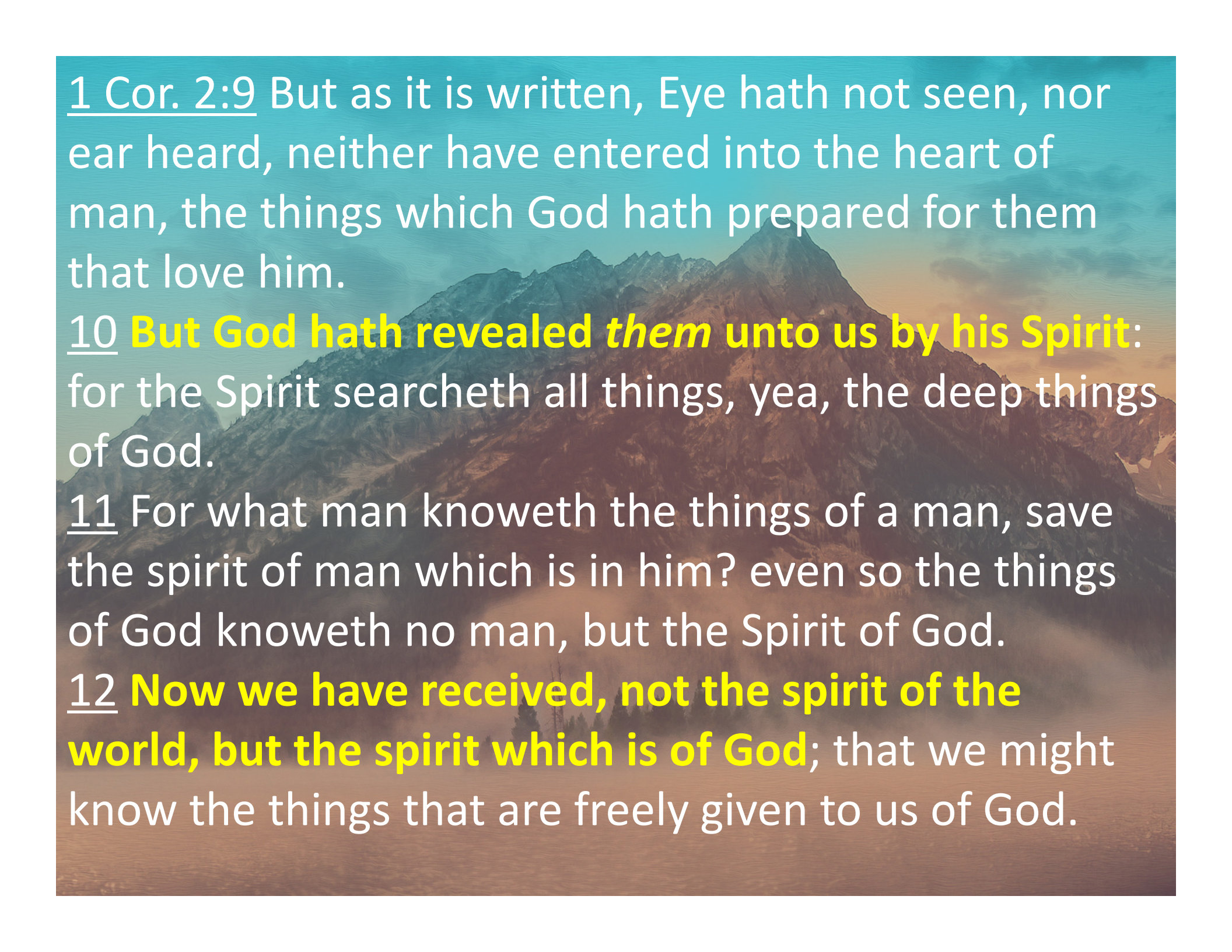
## Conclusion

Rom. 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye **present your bodies a living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable unto God, **which is your reasonable service.**

1 Cor. 15:31 I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, **I die daily.**

Gal. 2:20 **I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live;** yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.





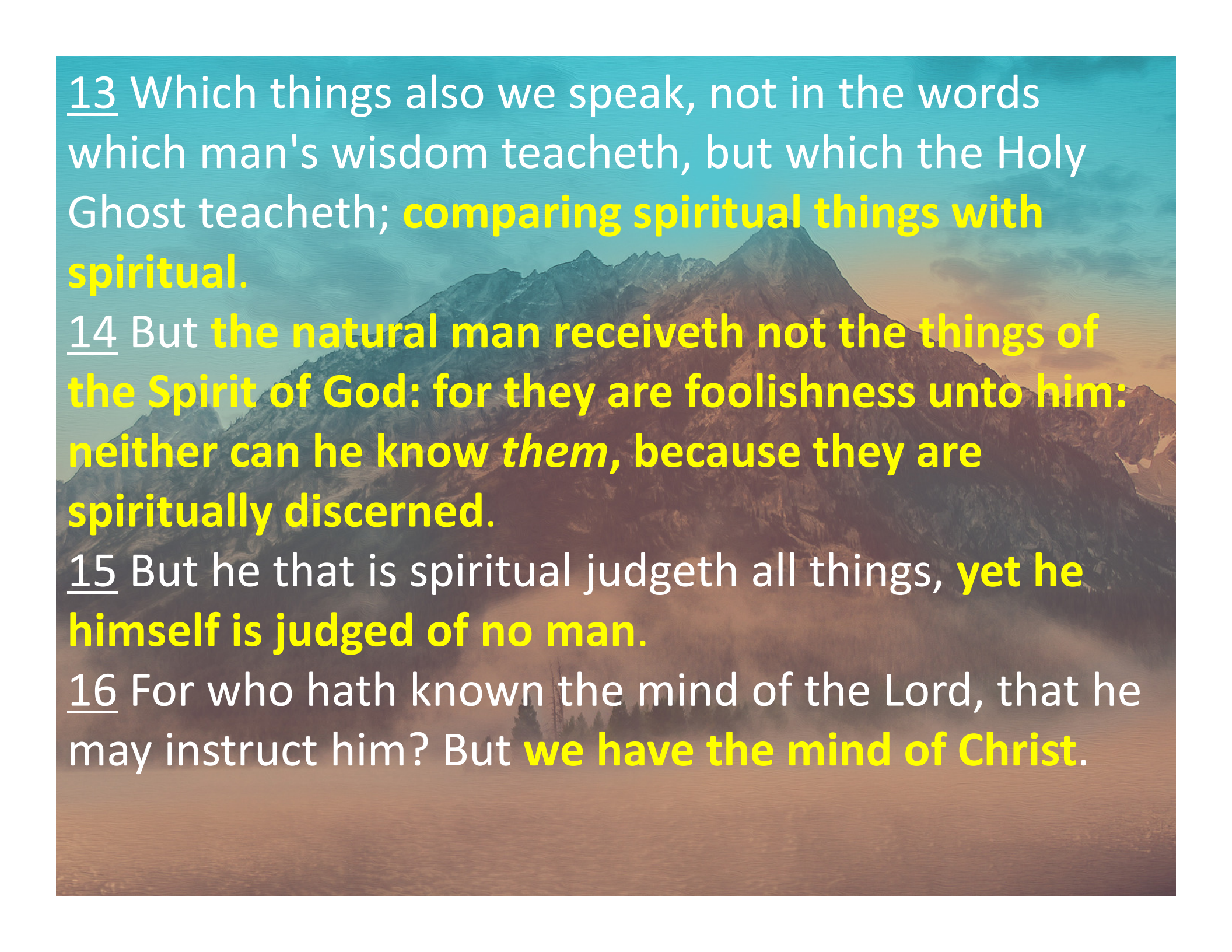
1 Cor. 2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

10 **But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit:** for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

12 **Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God;** that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.





13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; **comparing spiritual things with spiritual.**

14 But **the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.**

15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, **yet he himself is judged of no man.**

16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But **we have the mind of Christ.**





1 Cor. 4:1 Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

2 Moreover **it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.**

3 **But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self.**

4 For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but **he that judgeth me is the Lord.**

5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, **until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.**