

DISCUSSION GUIDE

The Christian Response to Enemies
The Gospel of Mark — Week 70

ICEBREAKER: What is your favorite poem or saying? Why is it your favorite?

OVERVIEW: How should Christians respond to enemies? If you are familiar with the teachings of Jesus, then you know that we should love our enemies. But what does that look like in real life? Christians in America today definitely have enemies. There are many in our society who view our beliefs as hateful and dangerous, and they are working hard to punish and marginalize us. How should we respond to these people? In this discussion we will go deeper with the Christian response to enemies.

1. **Read Mark 14:43-52.** What insight, principle, or observation from this weekend's message did you find to be the most helpful, eye-opening, or troubling? Explain. (Or what was your key takeaway from Sunday's message?)
2. **Read 1 Peter 3:8-9.**
 - a. The "Trump Response" to enemies (named in honor of our new President) is to return insult for insult. Have you ever done this? If so, how did the situation turn out?
 - b. What does this passage say about the "Trump Response" to enemies? How should we respond when people insult us?
 - c. The "Barbaric Response" to enemies is to shut down offensive speech with physical force/violence. Have you ever done this? If so, how did the situation turn out?
 - d. What is wrong with the "Barbaric Response," and how should we respond to offensive or insulting speech?

3. Some people use Mark 14:43-52 (Sunday's passage) as justification for pacifism (the idea that war is always wrong). For example, Jesus did not resist arrest, and He told Peter, "Sheathe your sword!" Do you agree with this interpretation? Explain.
4. **Read Matthew 5:38-42.** Does this passage mean that Christians should not defend/protect themselves or others from harm (or theft; or lawsuits)? Explain.
5. Christians are facing an increasing and intensifying amount of hostility in the United States today because of our views on abortion, marriage, and sexual morality. How should Christians respond to these enemies, and is it Biblically permissible for Christians to protest, boycott, and work for religious liberty?
6. **Read Romans 12:20-21.** Do you currently have an "enemy" in your life? If so, how can you apply this verse to your situation?
7. **Read Ephesians 4:31-32.** Does this verse apply to how you treat your enemies, or only fellow Christians? Explain. What does it mean to forgive your enemies?

The Last Word: As our culture is becoming more hostile toward Christians, we should work hard in politics to preserve religious freedom for future generations. But in the meantime, we need to love those who hate us, and in so doing hopefully we can lead them to Christ.