



Mail: 18 Loudon Rd #1011 • Concord, NH 03302-1011
CornerstoneNH.org • 603-225-2550
Brian Foreman, Pastor

July 14, 2024

Dear church,

Usually at this time on Sunday morning, I send you a "what to expect" email about today's service and this week at Cornerstone. Today's email will be a little different.

Because I have been studying through Jesus' Sermon on the Mount almost continuously since the beginning of this year, the attempted assassination at Donald Trump's rally yesterday brought Jesus' words in his great sermon to mind.

Jesus' words highlight what is to be different about his followers and his Kingdom, which is not of this world, but is lived out in this world. Here are the words that bubbled to the top of my mind.

"Blessed are the peacemakers." (Matthew 5:9) Peacemakers are who we are as Jesus' followers. The verse continues by noting that peacemakers will be called the children of God; in other words, we are most like God when we work for peace.

These are among the first words in the Sermon on the Mount. They are words Jesus would elaborate upon later in the sermon when he warned against retaliation, leaving vengeance and revenge in the Father's hands. Instead he counsels us...

"But I say love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven." – Jesus in Matthew 5:44 (NLT)

Jesus also warns us how even small slights and an unchecked anger lead us down a path of greater and greater evil. So much so, that speaking of the prohibition

against murder, he encourages us to take these "lesser" sins of expressed contempt with great seriousness...

But I say, if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell. – Jesus in Matthew 5:22 (NLT)

At a time like this, part of my role is to model and remind you that our speech, our behavior, our values are different because we belong to Jesus. We stand out, in a positive, life-giving way. We pray for our enemies rather than cursing them. We bless and serve, rather than retaliating and damning.

Jesus made our role clear: "You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world." (Matthew 5:13-14)

I hope you'll join me in prayers of gratitude that the assassin was unsuccessful in his primary goal and that our former president, and the presumed Republican nominee for president, Donald Trump, survived. Let us pray for him and his family. Let us also pray for the family of the one who lost his life innocently. Let us pray for the speedy and complete recovery of those who were injured. Let us pray for all of us, those there and those who saw and heard through media, who will be working through our anger, our fear, and our grief. May we also pray for the members of the family of the shooter, whom I'm assuming are innocent, and whose grief and trauma will no doubt be uniquely painful, public, and trying.

And may we be who Jesus says we are, do as Jesus says to do, and speak as Jesus would have us speak, at this time and every moment in between this and that moment when we will stand before him.

Brian Foreman
Lead Pastor
CornerstoneNH.org