Dear Open Door Family,

Just in case you are interested the score is Monster Shrubs 0 - Mark 4. Yes, they have all been dug up and transplanted. But that is another story. This past week I finished reading a good novel that I had been reading for several weeks a few pages at a time. It was fun reading, the good guys won and the hero was indeed heroic. But as I finished the book and set it aside the first thought that came to my mind was, I wish it was not over. I had been enjoying the characters and the plot so much I wanted the story to go on; I did not want to stop reading. It reminded me of a young Christian I knew many years ago; he started reading the Bible and he just couldn't put it down. Especially when he was reading in the gospel. I wonder how many of us LOVE to read or listen to the Bible so much that we have a hard time stopping? May the Lord Jesus give us a hunger and a thirst for His Word. Let's look at these verses together.

Luke 6:27-29 *(NLT) "But to you who are willing to listen, I say, love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you. [28] Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you.*

Jesus makes it quite clear in these verses. We are to love our enemies, not just the people we like and want to spend time with. We are to do good, NOT evil, to those who hate us. We are supposed to bless those who speak evil of us or who call us names or put us down. Bless means to exalt or approve. So, when someone curses me however they may do that - my response should be somehow to Bless them. Jesus then goes on to remind us that we should pray for those that mistreat us in anyway. Jesus Himself is the greatest example of that. He prayed and forgave those who were nailing Him to a cross. In the same way I am supposed to count on God's help and strength to enable me to pray for those who mistreat me and bless those who curse me.

Life Application Study Bible Note: Jesus wasn't talking about having affection for enemies; he was talking about an act of the will. ...it takes conscious effort. Loving our enemies means acting in their best interests. We can pray for them, and we can think of ways to help them. Jesus loves the world, even though the world is in rebellion against God. Jesus asks us to follow his example by loving our enemies.

PRAYER: Lord, give me the ability to face those who oppose me and to do what is right. Help me to do good in the face of wrong and to imitate You.

Pastor Mark Kieft
**>>>