

## Listening to the Word of God

*For two readers. Reader 2 begins reading at the same time as Reader 1 as Reader 1 comes to place marked by asterisk. Time readings so that two readers end at approximately the same time—if anything, Reader 2 might be the last one reading each time. Based on Matthew 5:43-48.*

### Reader 1

You have heard it said, "Love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I say to you, love your enemies and (\* #2 begins reading simultaneously) pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in Heaven.

Excuse me . . . If I may continue?!

For God makes the sun rise on the evil and on the good, (\*) and sends rain on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

*(To the other reader)* You know, you're really being disruptive.

*(Resigned)* Whatever! . . . And if you greet only your friends and fellow Christians, (\*) what more are you doing than others? Do not even the non-religious people do this? Let your love for others be complete, as God's love is complete.

You know, what if they didn't hear what I was reading? What if they heard only what you had to say!?

### Reader 2

Iraq, Afghanistan, China, North Korea, Russia, Iran, Libya, Cuba, Palestine . . .

Black and white, rich and poor, male and female, Republicans and Democrats, corporations and protesters, patriots and pacifists. . .

These things *are* disruptive. They make it hard to live out the very things you're telling us.

Nuclear weapons, chemical weapons, improvised explosive devices, WMD's. Child abuse, domestic violence, school shootings. Hunger, poverty, illiteracy. Just what are these things that make for peace?

And what if they only listened to you, and didn't listen to the world around them?

*Listening to the Word of God*  
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