
Third Presbyterian Church
Bible Study/Sermon Review
Sermon on the Mount – Lesson 16
“Jesus Talks Revenge, Service, & Lending”

Matthew 5:38-42 (NIV)

³⁸ "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.'

³⁹ But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. ⁴⁰ And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well.

⁴¹ If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. ⁴² Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

Also Read for further support for this passage of scripture: 1 Samuel 24:1-22 (NIV)

1. Where do you stand insofar as the line between our perceived right to revenge and our responsibility to be forgiving and patient? Please defend your position with scripture?
2. The sermon gave an explanation and rationale to the fact that striking on the right cheek was metaphoric and not literal. Do you believe that? How does that change the way you receive this scripture?
3. The context of this passage of scripture is to continue to do good regardless of what you see, feel and experience. Where do you feel you are on a scale of 1-10, 10 being the greatest on responding to evil with good?
4. The sermon gave advice on loaning money to people especially family. The advice was do not loan money....if you don't have it to give then you don't have it to loan. What is your response to this? Do you agree or not agree and why?
5. The sermon spoke about a term injured people have made up to justify revenge called justified retaliation.
 - a. Do you believe in justified retaliation?
 - b. Speak about a time when you have given the spirit of revenge over to God?
6. In what ways have you been seeking vengeance or an opportunity to pay someone back for a wrong done to you?
7. Why do we feel valid in holding grudges? How do holding grudges damage us and our witness? Have you prayed to God to give you the strength to let him handle the vengeance and relive yourself of the burden of holding on to a grudge or trying to avenge a wrong??
8. What are your major takeaways from the sermon and how has it immediately changed your mindset on revenge, giving and service?

I. The Real Meaning of the Law Governing Injury, 5:38-42

(5:38-42) **Introduction**: this law has been used and misused, excused and abused down through the centuries.

Man has often used the law to treat others as he wished. But Christ has changed the law. He says that the Christian is not to render evil for evil; he is not to bear a grudge or seek revenge. He must go beyond and forgive. However, the Christian has the right to avoid and resist evil for security's sake

1. (5:38) **Retaliation— Resistance**: this law is often thought to be justification for retaliation (cp Exodus 21:24; Leviticus 24:20; Deut. 19:21). It has been misused and abused. However, God's purpose for the law was to show mercy and to limit vengeance. In antiquity men killed for the most minor of offenses. For example, if a person was injured accidentally, a whole family or village was subject to be killed in retaliation. Thus, this law was the beginning of mercy in a merciless society. It limited retaliation to an equivalent injury. Several facts show the merciful aspect of the law.

1. The law was not a command that had to be executed. It was a law that *allowed* a person some justice *if he wished*. He did not have to insist upon it.
2. The law was given to the courts to guide the judges in the execution of justice. It was not given to individuals to take vengeance on others.
3. The law could be satisfied with money or some other ransom or payment deemed just (Numbers 35:31). However, no ransom was to "be taken for the life of a murderer." The murderer was to pay with his life.

Thought 1. The law was given to control the irresponsible and unregulated passions of men: to control evil and to limit retaliation and revenge. The law was given as a restraint, as a deterrent (1) to the criminal or person who would do evil; and (2) to the victim, lest he inflict a more terrible vengeance than what the crime deserved.

"Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot" (Exodus 21:24).

"Breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth: as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him again" (Leviticus 24:20).

"And thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot" (Deut. 19:21).

2. (5:39) **Resistance— Revenge— Retaliation**: Christ says this: the law really means that a person is not to retaliate. However, a person must understand what Christ is saying.

1. Christ is not saying "resist not evil"—ever. Christ Himself resisted evil. (1) He drove out the money exchangers from the temple (Matthew 21:12; Mark 11:15), and (2) He resisted the punishment of the High Priest (John 18:22-23). Paul, the apostle, also resisted evil

The point is this: Jesus and Paul followed the new law, "resist not evil." They observed the spirit of the new law, but they were not enslaved by it. There are times when evil should be resisted.

2. Christ is saying "resist not evil," that is, do not seek evil for evil; do not bear a grudge or resent those who have mistreated you. Do not seek revenge or look for a chance to retaliate. But forgive, go out of your way

to help those who do evil against you. Such an attitude is the only way to ever reach them for the Kingdom of Heaven

Thought 1. A Christian is not to be a revengeful person. He is not to be known as a person who holds a grudge.

Thought 2. Revenge consumes. It can *eat up* a person's inner being.

- 1) It can consume a person's mind—be the focus of all his thoughts. A person can be so intent upon revenge that he does nothing but think about retaliation.
- 2) It can consume a person's emotions—cause all kinds of emotional problems. A person can be so engrossed in revenge that he becomes...
 - self-centered (harbors how great a wrong has been done to him)
 - withdrawn
 - self-pitying
 - paranoid
 - destructive (strikes out at other persons and other things)

"But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matthew 5:39).

"Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men" (Romans 12:17).

"See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men" (1 Thes. 5:15).

"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient" (2 Tim. 2:24).

3. (5:39-41) Resistance—Revenge—Retaliation: the ideal behavior. Christ shared three very practical illustrations, teaching the Christian how to treat those who do him wrong.

1. Accept physical injury. It is the right cheek that is slapped. This says something that is often overlooked. The person who slaps with his right hand has to strike with the back of his hand in order to hit someone's right cheek. Hitting someone with the back of the hand has always been considered more insulting. Throughout history it has been used to symbolize a challenge to duel. It showed contempt and bitterness. Christ is clearly making His point: the believer is not to retaliate against the most terrible insults or bitter contempt—not even against threats of bodily harm.

Turning the other cheek is difficult. It means a person does not challenge, resent, avenge, retaliate, or enter a legal action against an attacker; but he prepares for another slap and bears it patiently. He lets it pass and accepts it. He forgives and trusts the matter to God. There is the knowledge that God will work all things out for good as the person goes about his life and service for God.

Thought 1. Many a person has his cheek slapped. A "slap in the face" can come by insult, slight, criticism, rumor, abuse, threat, or physical attack (cp. 2 Cor. 11:20).

Thought 2. Submission is sometimes the way to overcome (Proverbs 25:21-22).

Thought 3. The believer who endures shameful treatment shall reap eternal glory. (See outline—' Matthew 5:10-12 and notes—' Matthew 5:10-12.)

"And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also" (Luke 6:29).

"[Love] beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (1 Cor. 13:7).

"[Walk] with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love" (Ephes. 4:2).

2. Accept property injury. The coat referred to was the tunic (chiton), the inner garment. The cloak was the long robe-like outer garment. William Barclay says that Jewish law allowed a man's tunic to be given as a pledge, but the cloak could never be taken. The reason was simply that a man would have a number of tunics (under clothing), but he might have only one cloak (*The Gospel of Matthew*, Vol.1, p.165) (cp. Exodus 22:26-27).

Christ's point strikes at the heart of the matter. A Christian is not to be consumed with fighting over property and disputing rights. He is not to retaliate just because he has the right. The believer forgets self and forgets property and rights, and he lives for God and for the salvation of others. (See outline—' 1 Cor. 6:1-8 and notes—' 1 Cor. 6:1-8 for more discussion.)

Thought 1. Giving one's cloak is difficult. It means that a believer does not defend, stand up, or dispute the taking of his property. He forgives, and he gives more to the person who takes. He even gives his coat (tunic) if necessary. A believer doesn't get tied up and occupied with his rights and privileges in or out of court. He has time only to go about his duties and responsibilities. He is tied up and engrossed with living to the fullest for Christ and reaching out to a world lost and consumed with *disputes* and *needing the peace* which only God can bring.

Thought 2. The world is full of division and disputes, bitterness and hatred, quarrels and wars. It is a divided world because individuals are self-centered. The Christian must be a person of peace, a person who keeps his mind upon God, not upon self. He must deny the world and the things of the world (see note, Self-denial—' Luke 9:23. Cp. Romans 8:5-6.)

Thought 3. Sometimes recovering or fighting for one's property costs more than giving it up and purchasing more.

Thought 4. When does a person fight for his rights? There are some factors to consider:

- ⇒ the damage being done to himself;
- ⇒ the damage being done to his family;
- ⇒ the factors discussed in Romans 12 (see note—' Romans 12:18).

"Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison" (Matthew 5:25).

"And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also" (Matthew 5:40).

"Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters" (1 Cor. 6:1-2).

Thought 5. Some steal property and some even use the law to do the greatest injustices. They twist the facts, stretch the truth, exaggerate, slander, lie—do anything to justify themselves to get what they want. They injure and take and their conscience bothers them little. Their word and oath matter little.

Thought 6. A believer is not to be tied up and consumed with disputes over property, that is, rights and privileges and possessions. Disputes paint a person as divisive, as a disputer who is worldly-minded.

3. Accept any forced burden. In antiquity the citizens of a conquered country could be enlisted into *forced service* (*aggareusei* ^{PWS: 675}) by the conquerors in any way deemed necessary. A citizen could be compelled to carry water, supplies, anything (cp. Simeon of Cyrene, Matthew 27:32).

Christ is saying that if a believer is forced to go a mile, he should go twice as far. Again, rights—even the rights of liberty—are not the primary concern of the believer. The believer's primary concern is people and their burdens—reaching and relieving their burdens in obedience to God.

Going a second mile is difficult. It means a person does not become bitter and resentful, grumbling and griping, complaining and criticizing, self-pitying and begrudging. It means a person forgives and serves and offers more service. He sets his mind and heart on reaching out to the offender by helping more and more. Such action will more likely reach the offender for the Kingdom of Heaven. It will certainly help bring the Kingdom of Heaven closer to this earth (see Deeper Study #3—Matthew 19:23-24).

Thought 1. Some go well beyond reason in insisting and impressing, in compelling and enforcing their will. Others even enslave. Such exists within families, friendships, businesses, nations—everywhere.

Thought 2. There are times, of course, when a person is not to submit to the will of another. There are definite commands governing morality and injustice in the Bible. (See note—Matthew 5:39; note—Romans 12:18.)

Thought 3. The believer's concern is people and their burdens (Galatians 6:2). The believer is to bear the burdens of people, serving them and helping all he can. His purpose is to fulfill the law of Christ which is the law of love, and thereby to help bring the Kingdom of God to this earth through their conversion.

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34-35).

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).

"Charity [love] suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up" (1 Cor. 13:4).

4. (5:42) Borrowing—Lending: the great Christian ethic is to give. Christ is pointedly clear: a Christian is to help those who have need, and he is to readily help. Christ allows no excuse. The picture is simple: when someone asks, the Christian *gives* and does not *turn away*. However, the Bible does not say to give without discretion. "A good man showeth favor, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion" (Psalms 112:5). Giving is always to be done with discretion (Psalms 112:5). Two things should be looked at and studied to see if a person should or should not give.

First, the effect upon the receiver must be studied. Will it encourage laziness and shiftlessness, idleness and license?

Second, the ability of a person to give must also be studied. He must give and give and learn to give more and more—ever learning to trust God. It is not by chance that people come to the believer for help. They are either aware of the believer's interest and compassion or are brought by God. When brought by God, they are brought both for the growth of the believer and for the benefit of the needful. However, the believer must realistically know his ability to give and how much God wants him to give, and if the person requesting help has a real need.

The point is this: the believer is to live in readiness—a readiness to give and to lend (cp. 2 Cor. 8:11-15 esp. 2 Cor. 8:11). He does not live for this earth and world. He lives for God and for heaven. His citizenship is in heaven, from where he looks for the Savior (Phil. 3:20). Any concern he has for this world and its possessions is only for meeting the necessities of life and for helping others. He exists for ministry, helping and giving to those who have need. In fact, Scripture is clear; the believer is to work for two reasons: to meet his own necessities, and to secure the means to help those in need.

"Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Ephes. 4:28).

Thought 1. A cheerful giver is loved by God in a very special way.

"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (2 Cor. 9:7-8).

Thought 2. Giving should be done personally. Jesus Christ is a Person; He is related to persons. Therefore, He expects every believer to be personally involved in the lives of others just as He Himself is. Too many feel their obligation to give is over when they have given through official channels. But this is not the case with Christ. He demonstrated that the believer is to get personally involved in helping others.

Thought 3. Giving should be handled in such a way that the dignity of the receiver is restored. The humiliation experienced by the needful is often unbearable.

Thought 4. Lending can help the person who borrows. It can teach him (1) to trust God more, and (2) to learn how to be more industrious. The borrower has to *get to it* in order to pay back what is loaned.

Thought 5. It is better to be misled by a *professional beggar* than to miss helping a truly needful person.

"And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then? He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise" (Luke 3:10-11).

"Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth" (Luke 12:33).

Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible - Commentary - The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – Matthew.