

## A Study of the Book of Matthew: Chapter 5 v. 38-42

- **A bit of review:**
  - Starting in **verse 21** Jesus begins to discuss five “topics” with the statement **“You have heard that it was said...”**
    - Anger
    - Adultery
    - Divorce
    - Vows
    - Revenge - tonight
    - Vengeance
  - Is Jesus criticizing the Law?
  
- Jesus begins our next section with the statement, **“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’” (v. 38)**
  - This is a quotation from the Law of Moses (**Ex. 21; Lev 24**)
  - What was the original intent of this part of the Law?
    - To cause a person to think seriously about what he did before he did it.
    - If, in a fit of rage, one struck another, damaging his eye, then the attacker would lose his eye. Or if, by throwing a rock which causes another to lose an arm, then that is what will happen to the one who threw the rock.
    - “Look before you leap!”
    - “Think ahead!”
  - The scribes and Pharisees had turned this into a law of revenge.
    - The intent of the original law was for a sentence to be meted out by a recognized court judge, who would listen and determine if the “eye for an eye” was the proper justice.
    - The Pharisees saw this law as a license for personal revenge
      - No court involvement.
    - Are we ever tempted to use a principle like “eye for and eye?”
  
- **“But I say to you, do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.” (v. 39)**
  - We saw this illustrated by Jesus Himself. He was mistreated, but He did not respond with personal revenge, even though He had the power to do so.
    - Before Herod
    - Before Pilate
    - Before the Sanhedrin
  - Does this mean that we should not “resist” someone who attacks us?
    - Resist means “to stand against.” This is not dealing with self-defense; a life-threatening situation.
    - Some things to think about:
      - **Matthew 23** - Jesus denounced the Pharisees who attacked Him
      - **John 18:22-23** - Jesus objected when He was struck by one of the officers of the high priest.

- **Matthew 10:16; Luke 22:36-38** - He advised His disciples to take measures to defend themselves
      - **Luke 21:14-15** - He also said that they shouldn't worry beforehand about how they should respond to their enemies' charges, because He would give them the right words to say so that their adversaries wouldn't be able "to contradict or resist" them.
        - What does Jesus mean here in **verse 39**?
          - We should surrender our right to personal revenge
    - In Christianity there are two responses to have when someone mistreats you:
      - Forgive, and forget
      - Let God take the proper revenge (**Rom 12:17-21**).  
**"Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,"** says the Lord.  
 So, we need to leave justice in the hands of God.
    - How does this fit with **Romans 13**?
- **"And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well." (v. 40)**
  - So, what if someone wants to take virtually everything you own.
    - What does Jesus say to do?
      - Give it to him without thought of revenge.
    - A society that is of the mind-set to seek revenge is one plummeting to self-destruction. That is what is happening in our world today; someone does wrong to another, and he feels he must take revenge into his own hands.
- **"And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles." (v. 41)**
  - This was governmental oppression, because the law of Rome was that the Roman soldier could require a person to carry his baggage or armor one mile.
  - The Jews had mile markers along the roadsides to the inch from their houses. When they reached that inch, they dropped the baggage.
  - What did Jesus say to do?
    - Go TWO miles!
  - The concept of going two miles - that 'extra mile' - provides some tremendous spiritual lessons for us today.
- **Going the EXTRA mile - a closer look. (v. 41)**
  - How do we do this?
    - SOME WALK THE FIRST MILE AND NO MORE.
      - There are those who will do just what God requires - and no more.
      - They want to get by doing the minimum.
    - SOME TRY TO WALK THE SECOND MILE BEFORE THEY FINISH THE FIRST.
      - There are those who want to get the honor of the second mile without walking the first mile of service.
      - We must do all what God asks us to do in that first mile.
    - SOME WALK THE FIRST MILE TWICE.

- Some are so legalistic in their thinking that they do what God demands, but they also try to do what has been done again and again.
  - Once a person does what God requires (e.g. has been baptized), he does not need to do it again and again.
  - **SOME WALK BOTH THE FIRST AND THE SECOND MILES.**
    - There are those who are concerned about what God wants them to do - the **FIRST MILE**.
    - These are the ones who also want to “go above and beyond the call of duty” - - the **SECOND MILE**.
    - They do this because of their love for God  
**(Eph. 4:1; 5:2; 5:15-21)**
  - Which one are we supposed to be?
- **“Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.” (v. 42)**
  - Jesus is talking about the positive side of giving; not giving grudgingly because forced to do so. We are called to be good stewards (**2 Thess. 3:10**) and are to give as we are able to one who is in need, while we have opportunity (**Gal. 6:10**).
    - **Ephesians 4:28** talks about the reason we work - so we have something to share with those who are in need.
  - The Old Testament Law on borrowing was such that there was not supposed to be interest charged when one loaned money to brethren (**Lev. 25:36; Deut. 23:19; Ex. 22:25**).
  - Jesus talks about this same principle in **Luke 6:34**
    - What is Jesus trying to say here?
    - When a principle is established by God in the Old Testament, there should be something to that principle.
  - To apply this today:
    - If I know of a brother in need, and have the money to lend to him, then I should lend it without interest.
    - A genuine need should not be charged interest (**Lev. 25:36**).
    - **Deuteronomy 23:19 & 20** talks about charging a foreigner interest.
    - **Exodus 22:25** is another that deals with this according to the Law.
    - This is what God expected from his people under the Old Law.
    - It was acceptable to charge the foreigner (e.g. non-Christian) interest, but not your brother.
    - So, should Christians help fellow Christians by lending money without interest?
- What’s the take-home message?
  - There is something deep within us that demands justice be served when wrongs are committed. When we have been hurt, insulted, violated, mocked, injured, falsely accused, persecuted, etc., we typically turn inward and focus on the impact suffering has upon us, first and foremost.
  - In **Matthew 5:38-42**, Jesus quickly discredits any rationale we could come up with to justify personal retaliation.

- What is Jesus' solution to evil?
  - Conquer Evil with Good
  - Jesus gives us four examples on how to respond:
    - **“if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.” (v. 39)**
    - **“if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well.” (v. 40)**
    - **“if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.” (v. 41)**
    - **“Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.” (v. 42)**
  - In each of these examples, Jesus not only calls His followers to refuse to retaliate but to give a blessing.
    - When you turn the other cheek, give your coat as well, go the second mile and allow someone to borrow, you are saying: “I love you enough to not respond in kind, but to respond in kindness.”
    - Instead of thinking “What is the appropriate retribution for this offense?” you should think, “How can I show mercy in spite of this offense?”
  
- Other verse:
  - **“Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good” (Rom. 12:21)**
  - The Apostle Peter says we must not pay back **“evil for evil, insult for insult but, on the contrary, giving a blessing, since you were called for this, so that you may inherit a blessing” (1 Peter 3:9).**