

Brandon Phillips / General

The King and His Glory / Kingdom of God; Sin; Righteousness / Matthew 5:21–48

Jesus informs His hearers of six demanding truths that characterize the Kingdom ethic which is the heart of OT law.

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## Pre-Sermon Comments

### Discussion Questions:

How do you interpret Jesus' teaching in [Matthew 5:38-42](#) in the context of our modern society?

What are some common misconceptions about this passage, and how can we address them?

How can you incorporate prayer into your response to societal and personal conflicts?

In what ways can you pray for wisdom and discernment in dealing with threats to your freedoms?

What does it mean to you to rely on God's protection rather than taking matters into your own hands?

How can you cultivate a mindset of trust in God's sovereignty over your personal and national security?

## Sermon Text

[Matthew 5:38–42](#) (LSB) <sup>38</sup> “You have heard that it was said, ‘AN EYE FOR AN EYE, AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH.’ <sup>39</sup> “But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. <sup>40</sup> “And if anyone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your garment also.

<sup>41</sup> “And whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. <sup>42</sup> “Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.

## Introduction

[Matthew 16:24](#) (LSB) <sup>24</sup> Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.

[Hebrews 12:2](#) (LSB) <sup>2</sup> fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

[2 Timothy 3:12](#) (LSB) <sup>12</sup> Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

## Discussion Questions

## Matthew Review

[Matthew 5:20](#) (LSB) <sup>20</sup> “For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses *that* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

## Discussion Questions

What does Jesus mean by saying our righteousness must surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees ([Matthew 5:20](#))?

How have these teachings from the Sermon on the Mount challenged you personally?

Can you share a specific instance where you applied one of these demanding truths in your life?

What aspects of these teachings do you find most difficult to understand or apply?

# Proposition and Outline

## Section Outline

In [Matthew 5:21-48](#), Jesus informs His hearers of six demanding truths that characterize the Kingdom way, which is the heart of OT law. Jesus teaches:

- Thou Shalt Not Get Angry! ([Matt 5:21-26](#))
- Thou Shalt Not Lust! ([Matt 5:27-30](#))
- Thou Shalt Not Get a Divorce (in most circumstances)! ([Matt 5:31-32](#))
- Thou Shalt Tell the Truth At All Times ([Matt 5:33-37](#))
- **Thou Shalt Not Retaliate** ([Matt 5:38-42](#))
- **Thou Shalt Love Your Enemies** ([Matt 5:43-48](#))

## Today's Sermon

In [Matthew 5:38-42](#), Jesus teaches the fifth of six demanding truths that characterize the Kingdom way, which is the heart of OT law. Jesus teaches -

### **Thou Shalt Not Retaliate** ([Matt 5:38-42](#))

1. Jesus gives the letter of the command ([Matt 5:38](#))
2. Jesus gives the spirit of the command ([Matt 5:39](#))
3. Jesus illustrates how to live out the heart of the command ([Matt 5:39-42](#))

## Thou Shalt Not Retaliate ([Matt 5:38-42](#))

Jesus gives the letter of the command ([Matt 5:38](#))

[Matthew 5:38](#) (LSB) <sup>38</sup> “You have heard that it was said, ‘AN EYE FOR AN EYE, AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH.’

## The Old Testament teaching

### [Exodus 21:22-25](#)

[Exodus 21:22–25](#) (LSB) <sup>22</sup> “And if men struggle with each other and strike a woman with child so that she gives birth prematurely, yet there is no injury, he shall surely be fined as the woman’s husband will set for him, and he shall pay as the judges decide.

<sup>23</sup> “But if there is *any further* injury, then you shall pay life for life, <sup>24</sup> eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, <sup>25</sup> burn for burn, bruise for bruise, wound for wound.

### [Leviticus 24:19-20](#)

[Leviticus 24:19–20](#) (LSB) <sup>19</sup> ‘If a man injures his neighbor, just as he has done, so it shall be done to him: <sup>20</sup> fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; just as he has injured a man, so it shall be inflicted on him.

[Leviticus 24:16](#) (LSB) <sup>16</sup> ‘Moreover, the one who blasphemes the name of Yahweh shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall certainly stone him. The sojourner as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death.

### [Deuteronomy 19:15-21](#)

[Deuteronomy 19:15](#) (LSB) <sup>15</sup> “A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; at the mouth of two or three witnesses a matter shall be established.

[Matthew 18:16](#) (LSB) <sup>16</sup> “But if he does not listen *to you*, take one or two more with you, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED.

[1 Timothy 5:19](#) (LSB) <sup>19</sup> Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses.

<sup>16</sup> “If a malicious witness rises up against a man to accuse him of wrongdoing, <sup>17</sup> then both the men who have the dispute shall stand before Yahweh, before the priests and the judges who will be *in office* in those days. <sup>18</sup> “And the judges

shall inquire thoroughly, and behold, *if* the witness is a false witness *and* he has accused his brother falsely, <sup>19</sup> then you shall do to him just as he had intended to do to his brother. Thus you shall purge the evil from among you.

<sup>20</sup> “And the rest will hear and be afraid and will never again do such an evil thing among you. <sup>21</sup> “Thus your eye shall not show pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

### Cain and Lamech: hearts filled with vengeance

[Genesis 4:1](#) (LSB) <sup>1</sup> Now the man knew his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, “I have gotten a man with *the help of Yahweh*.”

[Genesis 4:5](#) (LSB) <sup>5</sup> but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry, and his countenance fell.

[Genesis 4:15](#) (LSB) <sup>15</sup> So Yahweh said to him, “Therefore whoever kills Cain, vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold.” And Yahweh appointed a sign for Cain, so that no one who found him would strike him.

<sup>3</sup> And Lamech said to his wives, “Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice, You wives of Lamech, Give ear to my word, For I have killed a man for striking me; And a boy for wounding me; <sup>24</sup> If Cain is avenged sevenfold, Then Lamech seventy-sevenfold.”

[Genesis 6:5](#) (LSB) <sup>5</sup> Then Yahweh saw that the evil of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

### The Jews twisted the OT Law

[James 4:1-4](#) (LSB) <sup>1</sup> What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? <sup>2</sup> You lust and do not have, so you murder. You are envious and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. <sup>3</sup> You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend *it* on your pleasures. <sup>4</sup> You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world

is enmity *toward* God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world sets himself as an enemy of God.

[James 5:4](#) (LSB) <sup>4</sup> Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields—that which has been withheld by you—cries out *against you*; and the outcries of those who did the harvesting have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.

Those who were hurt wanted to strike back, especially when there was no apparent justice to protect them, so personal retaliation through violent resistance was a burning issue among the Jews. ~ **Michael J. Wilkins**

*The Jews need Jesus!*

[Romans 9:4–5](#) (LSB) <sup>4</sup> who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the *temple* service and the promises, <sup>5</sup> whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

[Acts 2:23](#) (LSB) <sup>23</sup> this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of lawless men and put *Him* to death.

[Romans 9:2](#) (LSB) <sup>2</sup> that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart.

[Genesis 12:3](#) (LSB) <sup>3</sup> And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

**We twist the OT Law**

Vengeance is popular today; forgiveness is not. Retaliation is often portrayed as a virtue reflecting healthy self-esteem. ~ **John F. MacArthur**

*We fight like the Hatfield's and McCoy's!*

*Lex talionis*

lex talionis - the law of retaliation whereby the punishment resembles the offense committed in kind and degree.

## Discussion Questions

Read [Exodus 21:22-25](#). What was the purpose of the "eye for an eye" law in this context?

In what ways did the laws in [Leviticus 24:19-20](#) and [Deuteronomy 19:15-21](#) aim to maintain justice within the community?

Why was it important that these laws were administered by judges or the community rather than individuals?

How did the Jews in Jesus' time twist these laws for personal revenge?

Can you think of modern examples where people use laws or rules to justify personal vengeance?

Jesus gives the spirit of the command ([Matt 5:39a](#))

[Matthew 5:39](#) (LSB) <sup>39</sup> "But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.

Do we let evil proliferate?

*Do not resist the evil person*" does not mean that we should let evil triumph throughout our communities. Jesus is referring to private retaliation, not to public order, and he is instructing his followers not to be intent on getting their own back when someone wrongs them. To be the victim of some form of evil does not give us the right to hit back. ~ **Leon Morris**

Principles for understanding Jesus's Teaching

First, we must never regard the Sermon on the Mount as a code of ethics, or a set of rules to cover our conduct in detail. We must not think of it as being a new kind of law to replace the old Mosaic law; it is rather a matter of emphasizing the spirit of the law. ~ Martyn Lloyd-Jones

[Mark 12:30-31](#) (LSB) <sup>30</sup> AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.' <sup>31</sup> "The second is this, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

[Matthew 22:40](#) (LSB) <sup>40</sup> “On these two commandments hang the whole Law and the Prophets.”

[Romans 7:7](#) (LSB) <sup>7</sup> What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! Rather, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law. For I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, “YOU SHALL NOT COVET.”

These teachings are never to be applied mechanically or as a kind of rule of thumb. It is the spirit rather than the letter. Not that we depreciate the letter, but it is the spirit that we must emphasize. ~ Martyn Lloyd-Jones

If our interpretation ever makes the teaching appear to be ridiculous or leads us to a ridiculous position, it is patently a wrong interpretation. ~ Martyn Lloyd-Jones

If our interpretation makes the teaching appear to be impossible it also is wrong. Nothing our Lord teaches is ever impossible. There are people who do interpret certain things in the Sermon on the Mount in such a way and their interpretation must be false. ~ Martyn Lloyd-Jones

We must remember that if our interpretation of any one of these things contradicts the plain and obvious teaching of Scripture at another point, again it is obvious that our interpretation has gone astray. Scripture must be taken and compared with Scripture. There is no contradiction in biblical teaching. ~ Martyn Lloyd-Jones

[Matthew 5:17–18](#) (LSB) <sup>17</sup> “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. <sup>18</sup> “For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

[Exodus 22:2](#) (LSB) <sup>2</sup> “If the thief is caught while breaking in and is struck so that he dies, there will be no bloodguiltiness on his account.

[Nehemiah 4:16–18](#) (LSB) <sup>16</sup> And it happened that from that day on, half of my young men carried on the work while half of them took hold of the spears, the shields, the bows, and the breastplates; and the commanders *were* behind the whole house of Judah. <sup>17</sup> Those who were rebuilding the wall and those who



carried burdens took *their* load with one hand doing the work and the other holding a weapon.<sup>18</sup> As for the builders, each *wore* his sword girded at his side as he built, while the trumpeter *stood* near me.

## Discussion Questions

What is your immediate response to Jesus' command to "not resist an evil person" in [Matthew 5:39a](#)?

How does Jesus's words in [Matt 5:39a](#) relate to the broader context of the Sermon on the Mount?

Some, like Leo Tolstoy, take this teaching literally, advocating for no resistance to any form of evil.

Do you think this is what Jesus intended? Why or why not?

Compare this teaching with the Old Testament (e.g., [Exodus 21:22-25](#), [Leviticus 24:19-20](#), [Deuteronomy 19:15-21](#)). What differences and similarities do you see?

How do Martyn Lloyd-Jones' principles for interpreting the Sermon on the Mount help us understand this command?

## Conclusion

Jesus illustrates how to live out the heart of the command ([Matt 5:39b-42](#))

## The Gospel

[Romans 3:10-20](#) (LSB)<sup>10</sup> as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;<sup>11</sup> THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;<sup>12</sup> ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME WORTHLESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE."<sup>13</sup> "THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN TOMB, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING," "THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS";<sup>14</sup> "WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS";

<sup>15</sup> “THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD, <sup>16</sup> DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS, <sup>17</sup> AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN.” <sup>18</sup> “THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES.”

<sup>19</sup> Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are in the Law, so that every mouth may be shut and all the world may become accountable to God; <sup>20</sup> because by the works of the Law NO FLESH WILL BE JUSTIFIED IN HIS SIGHT, for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin.

[Matthew 5:3-4](#) (LSB) <sup>3</sup> “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. <sup>4</sup> Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

[Matthew 5:6](#) (LSB) <sup>6</sup> Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

[Isaiah 64:6](#) (LSB) <sup>6</sup> For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, carry us away.

[Ephesians 2:8-9](#) (LSB) <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; <sup>9</sup> not of works, so that no one may boast.

[2 Corinthians 5:21](#) (LSB) <sup>21</sup> He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

[1 Corinthians 1:18](#) (LSB) <sup>18</sup> For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God.

## Discussion Questions

Do you see yourself in the description Paul gives? Why or why not?

Why do you think it is difficult (or impossible) to recognize our own sinfulness?

According to [Romans 3:19-20](#), what is the purpose of the Law?

How does the Law make us accountable to God?

What does [Isaiah 64:6](#) tell us about our righteous deeds?

How can this understanding drive us to seek God's grace?

What does it mean to be saved by grace through faith, and not by works?

Why is it important to understand that salvation is a gift from God?

## A Gospel Tract

### **God**

#### **Created and owns everything**

[Gen 1:1](#)—*In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth*

[Psalms 24:1](#)—*The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, the world and those who dwell in it.*

#### **Is Perfectly Holy**

[1 John 1:5](#)—*This is the message we heard from Him and announce to you that God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all.*

[Matt 5:48](#)—*Therefore you are to be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

#### **Requires perfect obedience to His Law**

[James 2:10](#)—*for whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.*

### **Man**

#### **Has broken God's law**

[Rom 3:10,23](#)—*there is none righteous, not even one...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*

#### **Will pay the eternal penalty for his sin**

[Rom. 6:23](#)—*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord*

#### **Cannot save himself by his good works**

[Titus 3:5](#)—He saved us not based on works which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.

## **Christ**

### **Came to earth both as God and sinless man**

[Col 2:9](#)—For in Him the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form

### **Demonstrated God’s love by dying on the cross to pay sin’s penalty**

[Rom 5:8](#)—But God demonstrated His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us

[2 Cor 5:21](#)—He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

### **Rose from the grave and is alive today**

[1 Cor 15:4](#)—And that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures

## **Sinners**

### **Must repent of all that dishonors God**

[Isa 55:7](#)—Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have compassion on him and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.

[Luke 9:23](#)—if anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.

### **Must believe in Christ as Lord and Savior**

[Rom 10:9](#)—that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.

### **Will you repent and believe in Christ?**

[Acts 17:30](#)—therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance God is declaring to men that all everywhere should repent.

Don't hesitate to contact Pastor Brandon or Pastor Keith if you have any questions about this sermon or if you would like to know how to follow Christ.

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## Coming Up!

In [Matthew 5:21-48](#), Jesus informs His hearers of six demanding truths that characterize the Kingdom way which is the heart of OT law. Jesus teaches:

Thou Shalt Not Resist an Evil Person ([Matt 5:38-42](#))

Thou Shalt Love Your Enemies ([Matt 5:43-48](#))

## Additional Quotes

Personal self-sacrifice displaces personal retaliation; for this is the way the Savior himself went, the way of the cross. And the way of the cross, not notions of “right and wrong,” is the Christian’s principle of conduct. ~ **D. A. Carson**

The trouble is that a law designed to limit retaliation and punish fairly could be appealed to as justification for vindictiveness. ~ **D. A. Carson**

Not only must disciples reject all behavior motivated only by a desire for retaliation, but they also must positively work for the good of those with whom they would otherwise be at odds. ~ **Craig Blomberg**

It is important to note that retaliation belongs to God alone. ~ **John F. MacArthur**

These are to be based on love, not justice. Our duty to individuals who wrong us is not retaliation, but the acceptance of injustice without revenge or redress: *do not resist an evil person* (39). ~ **John Stott**

Retaliation, usually with interest, is a natural extension of selfishness. ~ **John F. MacArthur**

Again, He was forbidding personal retaliation, revenge, spite, resentment, or a combative response in the face of a personal or petty injury. ~ **John F. MacArthur**

Lamech was the first proponent of massive retaliation. ~ **John Goldingay**

The context suggests Jesus is prohibiting retaliation for wrongs experienced. ~ **D. A. Carson**

*Eye for eye, tooth for tooth*' in [Exodus 21:24](#) was designed not to justify retaliation but to limit it. ~ **Michael Green**

There is absolutely no place among Christians for retaliation or personal vengeance ([Rom. 12:19](#)) ~ **John F. MacArthur**

When someone attacks our right to dignity, we too are not to defend that right by retaliation. We are to leave the protection and defense of our dignity in God's hands, knowing that one day we will live and reign with him in His kingdom in great glory. ~ **John F. MacArthur**

Like v. 38, this deals only with matters of personal retaliation, not criminal offenses or acts of military aggression. Jesus applied this principle of non-retaliation to affronts against one's dignity (v. 39), lawsuits to gain one's personal assets (v. 40), infringements on one's liberty (v. 41), and violations of property rights (v. 42). He was calling for a full surrender of all personal rights. ~ **John F. MacArthur**

These verses teach that a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ has no right to retaliation, no right to things, no right to his own time, and no right to his money. In other words, he holds all his possessions in trust from the Lord, and

he is obliged to use them as Jesus did, to help others. ~ **James Montgomery Boice**

In the command **do not resist him who is evil** Jesus rebuts the Pharisees' misinterpretation and forbids retaliation in personal relationships. He does not teach, as many have claimed, that no stand is to be taken against evil and that it should simply be allowed to take its course. Jesus and the apostles continually opposed evil with every means and resource. ~ **John F. MacArthur**

What Jesus counteracts in the fifth antithesis is the way that the law of retaliation was used to excuse *personal* retribution. ~ **Michael J. Wilkins**

When you retaliate, you forfeit the blessing and reward that suffering is meant to bring. Retaliation shows you lack the confidence you ought to have in God's ability to make things right in His own time, which will include punishing the unjust and rewarding those who are faithful in suffering. ~ **John F. MacArthur**

The one who is meek has a gentle spirit because he trusts God. Indeed, there is a caress about his presence. At the same time the meek person possesses immense strength and self-control, which he exhibits in extending love rather than retaliation against those who do him evil. He stands up fearlessly in defense of others or of the truth as the occasion arises. ~ **R. Kent Hughes**

We are to bear much, and to put up with much, rather than quarrel; we are to overlook much, and submit to much, rather than have any strife; we are to lay aside everything like malice, strife, revenge and retaliation. ~ **J. C. Ryle**