

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.

Pre-Sermon Comments

[Romans 1:26–32](#) (LSB) ²⁶ For this reason God gave them over to dishonorable passions; for their females exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, ²⁷ and in the same way also the males abandoned the natural function of the female and burned in their desire toward one another, males with males committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. ²⁸ And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them over to an unfit mind, to do those things which are not proper, ²⁹ having been filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, haters of God, violent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, ³¹ without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful;

³² and although they know the righteous requirement of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice *them*.

Discussion Questions:

In what ways do you see similarities between our society and the dystopian world of George Orwell's "1984"?

What stands out to you in [Romans 1:26-32](#)? How do you see these verses relating to our current cultural climate?

How can the church support its members in staying true to their faith amidst cultural pressure?

Have you ever felt pressured to conform to cultural norms that conflict with your faith? How did you handle it?

What are some ways we can stay grounded in our faith while being exposed to opposing cultural views?

Can we lovingly and respectfully share biblical truths with those who don't agree with us? what is the role of the Gospel?

Sermon Text

[Matthew 5:38-42](#) (LSB) ³⁸ “You have heard that it was said, ‘AN EYE FOR AN EYE, AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH.’ ³⁹ “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. ⁴⁰ “And if anyone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your garment also. ⁴¹ “And whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. ⁴² “Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.

Introduction

Discussion Questions

What does the sixth commandment ("You shall not murder") mean to you? How might it apply differently in times of war versus times of peace?

Do you believe there are circumstances under which war is justified according to Christian doctrine? Why or why not?

Is it ever justified to kill to eradicate evil? How do you balance this with the commandment not to murder?

In personal situations, is it justified to retaliate or use force against those who hurt us or our families? How should Christians respond to threats and violence?

Matthew Review

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

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](#))

Review

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

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

[Matthew 5:38](#) (LSB) ³⁸ “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](#) (LSB) ²² “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*. ²³ “But if there is *any further* injury, then you shall pay life for life, ²⁴ eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, ²⁵ burn for burn, bruise for bruise, wound for wound.

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

[Deuteronomy 19:15-21](#) (LSB) ¹⁵ “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. ¹⁶ “If a malicious witness rises up against a man to accuse him of wrongdoing, ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ “And the judges shall inquire thoroughly, and behold, *if* the witness is a false witness *and* he has accused his brother falsely, ¹⁹ 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. ²⁰ “And the rest will hear and be afraid and will never again do such an evil thing among you. ²¹ “Thus your eye shall not show pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

[Romans 3:10](#) (LSB) ¹⁰ as it is written, “THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;

[Romans 3:15](#) (LSB) ¹⁵ “THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD,

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

[Matthew 5:39](#) (LSB) ³⁹ “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.

[Genesis 9:6](#) (LSB) “Whoever sheds man’s blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God , He made man.

[Romans 13:1–5](#) (LSB) ¹ Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist have been appointed by God. ² Therefore whoever resists that authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. ³ For rulers are not *a cause of fear* for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of that authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same; ⁴ for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword in vain, for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil. ⁵ Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of that wrath, but also because of conscience.

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

[Matthew 5:39](#) (LSB) ³⁹ “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.

WWJD? Take your slapping as Jesus did! Turn the other Cheek!

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

[John 15:18](#) (LSB) ¹⁸ “If the world hates you, know that it has hated Me before *it hated you.*

[1 Peter 2:20–21](#) (LSB) ²⁰ For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer *for it*, you endure, this *finds* favor with God. ²¹ For to this you have been called, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in His steps,

[John 18:22-23](#) (LSB) ²² And when He had said this, one of the officers standing nearby gave Jesus a slap, saying, “Is that the way You answer the high priest?”
²³ Jesus answered him, “If I have spoken wrongly, bear witness of the wrong; but if rightly, why do you strike Me?”

What was the Jewish mindset?

Turning the other cheek symbolizes the non-avenging, non-retaliatory, humble, and gentle spirit that is to characterize kingdom citizens. ~ John MacArthur

[Matthew 4:10-11](#) (LSB) ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, “Go, Satan! For it is written, ‘YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.’” ¹¹ Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and *began to* minister to Him.

[Matthew 21:12-13](#) (LSB)¹² And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves. ¹³ And He said to them, “It is written, ‘MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER’; but you are making it a ROBBERS’ DEN.”

[Isaiah 50:6](#) (LSB) ⁶ I gave My back to those who strike Me, And My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not hide My face from dishonor and spitting.

And when He had said this, one of the officers standing nearby gave Jesus a slap, saying, “Is that the way You answer the high priest?” Jesus answered him, “If I have spoken wrongly, bear witness of the wrong; but if rightly, why do you strike Me?”

[Acts 16:22-24](#) (LSB) ²² And the crowd joined together to attack them, and the chief magistrates, tearing their garments off of them, proceeded to order *them* to be beaten with rods. ²³ And when they had inflicted them with many wounds, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely, ²⁴ who, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

[Acts 16:37](#) (LSB) ³⁷ But Paul said to them, “Having beaten us in public without trial, men who are Romans, they have thrown us into prison. And now are they sending us away secretly? No indeed! But let them come themselves and bring us out.”

Discussion Questions

Why do you think the concept of turning the other cheek was so difficult for the Jewish audience to accept?

How does understanding their cultural context help us appreciate the radical nature of Jesus's teaching?

How can we distinguish between Jesus’s teaching on personal non-retaliation and the need to resist evil in broader societal contexts?

What are some of the biggest challenges you face in applying this teaching in your life?

According to [2 Timothy 3:12](#) and [1 Peter 2:20-21](#), how should we view persecution and suffering for living godly lives?

WWJD? Don’t Retaliate When Sued!

[Matthew 5:40](#) (LSB) ⁴⁰ **“And if anyone wants to sue you and take your tunic,** let him have your garment also.

[Exodus 22:26–27](#) (LSB) ²⁶ “If you ever take your neighbor’s cloak as a pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun sets, ²⁷ for that is his only covering; it is his cloak for his body. What else shall he sleep in? And it shall be that when he cries out to Me, I will hear *him*, for I am gracious.

[1 Corinthians 6:7](#) (LSB) ⁷ Actually, then, it is already a failure for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?

Discussion Questions

What was the significance of clothing in Jesus’s time, particularly the tunic and outer garment?

Why does Jesus command his followers also to give their outer garments, even though it was not required by law?

How does the principle of going beyond what is required to make restitution reflect the values of the Kingdom of Heaven?

How can we apply this principle in modern-day situations where we might be wronged or sued?

WWJD? Give up your freedoms!

[Matthew 5:41](#) (LSB) ⁴¹ “And whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

[Matthew 5:10–12](#) (LSB) ¹⁰ Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ “Blessed are you when *people* insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. ¹² “Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

[Matthew 5:41](#) (LSB) ⁴¹ “And whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two.

When we are robbed of some of our cherished liberty, we should surrender even more of it rather than retaliate. In so doing we are obedient to our Lord and testify to His righteousness, knowing that in Him we have a dearer freedom that the world cannot take from us

Discussion Questions

What was the significance of Roman soldiers being able to force civilians to carry their packs for a mile?

How might the Jews have felt about this practice, given their cultural and historical context?

How do Jesus’s words in [Matt 5:41](#) relate to the broader message of the Beatitudes in [Matthew 5:10-12](#)?

What is your reaction to John MacArthur's statement about surrendering more of our liberty rather than retaliating?

How can this teaching be applied in the context of contemporary issues of justice and rights?

How does the promise of a great reward in heaven ([Matthew 5:12](#)) encourage you to persevere through persecution?

WWJD? Willingly give up your possessions!

[Matthew 5:42](#) (LSB) ⁴² "Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.

He is rebuking the wrong spirit of those who are always considering themselves, whether they are being struck on the face, or whether their coat is being taken, or whether they are compelled to carry the baggage or to give of their own goods and wealth to help someone in need. ~ Martyn Lloyd Jones

[Psalm 24:1](#) (LSB) ¹ The earth is Yahweh's, as well as its fullness, The world, and those who dwell in it.

[James 1:27](#) (LSB) ²⁷ Pure and undefiled religion before *our* God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep oneself unstained by the world.

[James 2:15-16](#) (LSB) ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for *their* body, what use is that?

[2 Thessalonians 3:10](#) (LSB) ¹⁰ For even when we were with you, we used to command this to you: if anyone is not willing to work, neither let him eat.

A man comes to you under the influence of drink and asks you to give him some money. Although he says he wants it for a night's lodging you know he will go immediately and spend it upon drink. Our Lord does not tell us to encourage or help such a man. ~ Martyn Lloyd Jones

We are not required to respond to every foolish, selfish request made of us. Sometimes to give a person what he wants but does not need is a disservice, doing him more harm than good. ~ John MacArthur

[James 2:17](#) (LSB) ¹⁷ Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead by itself.

[1 John 3:17-18](#) (LSB) ¹⁷ But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? ¹⁸ Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

[Hebrews 13:1-3](#) (LSB) ¹ Let love of the brothers continue. ² Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it. ³ Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, *and* those who are mistreated, since you yourselves also are in the body.

Discussion Questions

How does understanding that all our possessions belong to the Lord change our perspective on giving?

In what ways can we practice being better stewards of what God has given us?

How can we overcome the mindset of “What is mine is mine” when faced with someone in need?

What criteria can we use to discern genuine need versus enabling unhealthy behaviors?

How can we develop better discernment in knowing when to give and when to withhold?

What practical steps can we take to ensure that our giving is helping rather than harming?

How do the passages from James ([James 1:27](#); [2:15-17](#)) challenge our current approach to helping those in need?

Why is it important to involve other mature believers in discerning genuine needs?

How can our church or small group create a support system for those needing help and those providing help?

How does the attitude of giving reveal the condition of our faith, according to [James 2:17](#)?

How can we cultivate a heart eager to help others without hesitation?

Conclusion

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

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

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

[Ephesians 2:10](#) (LSB) ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

The Gospel

[2 Corinthians 5:21](#) (LSB) 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.

[Ephesians 1:20-21](#) (LSB) ²⁰ which He worked in Christ, by raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

[Ephesians 2:1](#) (LSB) ¹ And you were dead in your transgressions and sins,

[Ephesians 2:4–6](#) (LSB) ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus,

A Gospel Tract

God

Created and owns everything

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

[Psalm 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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Application questions

Next time

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**

*Do not resist the evil person*¹⁴³ 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**

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**

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

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**

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**

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**