



World Christian Fellowship

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Slap on right cheek show left.

Matthew 5:38-42

Matthew 5:38-42, *“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’³⁹ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.⁴⁰ If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also.⁴¹ And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.⁴² Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.*

The Sermon on the Mount preached by our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a sermon designed to show men that they fall short of the standard for entrance into God's kingdom.

Now as Jesus confronts the society of his day and as he confronts the religion of his religion people, first he wants to knock the props out from under this system. Before they can be desperate enough to see the need of a Saviour, they must see the inadequacy of their system.

All through **Matthew 5:21-48**, compares their system with God's truth.

Jesus uses a little code: “You have heard it said, that’s your system, but I say unto you that’s God's.”

- You think it’s enough not to kill.
- God says don’t even get angry.

- You think it’s enough not to commit adultery.
- God says you shouldn’t even think it in your heart.

- You think it’s enough to do the paperwork when you get a divorce.
- God says you shouldn’t even get a divorce, except for fornication.

- You think it’s enough that you put an oath behind your word.
- God says everything you say ought to be true so you wouldn’t even need an oath.”

- You think that it’s enough to give equal vengeance.
- God says you shouldn’t be giving vengeance at all.

- You think it's enough to love your neighbour and hate your enemy.
- God says love your enemy.

Their system is substandard.

Their system that only deals with externals, outside and never deals with the heart attitude.

The Sermon on the Mount is a sermon on sin. It is to show us that we are sinners.

We are in the 5th illustrations of Jesus.

V 38, *“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’*

It was their traditional teaching, but it did come from the Mosaic Law.

It is recorded 3 times in the Old Testament in **Exodus 21, Leviticus 24, and Deuteronomy 19.**

This was a stipulation for the law courts according to the scriptures. This was for the legal system, not a mandate for personal vengeance in human relationships.

This is not an issue of personal vendetta.

It is not to take revenge and vindication out of personal action.
God designed law courts, judges, and rulers gave the laws.

The law means equal punishment for the crime.

The punishment never exceeds the crime.

It is to control justice, so justice is fair and equal.

All human justice is based upon the fact that the punishment must never exceed the crime. It also is a law given by God to restrain vengeance, to take vengeance out of human relationships and put it within dually constituted authority so that it can be dealt with properly.

We don't want a court to act like a human relationship.

We are not looking for mercy in a court.

We are looking for justice to preserve society.

But nor do we want a human relationship to act like a court.

If somebody wrongs you, your neighbour borrows something of yours and breaks it, you don't go over and say, "what do you want me to break?"

You don't operate a relationship like that. We must keep a distinction between the law court and the area of human relationships.

In the law court, justice operates on an eye and a tooth for a tooth basis.

In human relationships, love and forgiveness operates.

- In law, we are dealing with crime.
- In personal level, we are dealing with human relationship.

Last study we saw how the religious leaders changed the purpose of the law and twisted to justify their personal vendetta.

V 39, But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.

not to resist an evil person.

Just go ahead, walk all over me, abuse me, use me, steal all I own?

No!

Go ahead sin, we don't care. Are we not going to resist evil?

No!

People who take that approach really miss the whole point.

The Bible talks about resisting some evil.

James 4:7, *Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*

1 Peter 5:9, *Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.*

We must resist evil when it comes in a Satanic form.
Resist the devil.

When Peter sinned in **Galatians chapter 2**, Paul didn't say, "Oh Peter, Poor fellow, sins got him." Paul said, "Peter, you are out of line and cut it out," and he withstood him to the face.

1 Corinthians 5:1-2, *It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife!²And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.*

1 Corinthians 5:13, *But those who are outside God judges. Therefore "put away from yourselves the evil person."*

1 Timothy 5:20, *Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.*

Matthew 18:15-17, *“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ ¹⁷And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.*

We are to deal with sin personally. We are to deal with sin in relationships.

We are to deal with sin in the church, and we are also to resist crime.

Romans 13:1, *Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.*

The government is given to us to protect the good and punish the evil. If we don't uphold that, then we don't uphold a God given institution.

If we don't deal with the government properly then we are denying a God ordained institution.

If I see a crime, I ought to report it to the police.

If I know where a criminal is, I must tell the police, not aid in a bet crime within a society, because government and the agents of government are ministers of God who bear not the sword in vain but serve the Lord.

So, we do resist evil in a government by our laws, in a church by our purity, in a relationship by confronting people.

Jesus resisted evil.

In **John 2**, he made a whip and cleaned the temple.

In **Mark 11** he did it again.

He didn't just get doormat by everybody.

There is a certain sense of God-given self-preservation. If somebody comes to do something to me, it's very normal for me to protect myself and my family or my interests and people I love.

Proverbs 22:3, *A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself, But the simple pass on and are punished.*

Jesus is not trying to make us into just people who lie down flat and let everything happen.

What does Jesus mean resist not evil?

Resist means to set against, to set against, *anthistēmi*.

The evil here it has to do with one who opposes you or one who wrongs you.

What Jesus is saying is that you don't set yourself against one who wrongs you.

Don't start a feud.

Don't start a vengeance thing.

Don't get some revenge going.

Jesus is not talking about categorical evil and letting it overrun your life.

Jesus is saying, "The one who wrongs you is not to be resisted or opposed."

Don't fight somebody who violates your rights.

This isn't anything that's isolated to the Sermon on the Mount; this is a general principle in Scripture.

Romans 12:17, *Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.*

Don't pay back anybody evil for evil.

If somebody does something to you, don't do back to them.

Romans 12:18, *If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.*

Be a peacemaker, not a troublemaker.

Romans 12:19, *Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.*

You just take it and give it to the Lord.

Don't be vengeful, give it to the Lord.

What about my enemy?

What do I do my enemy?

Romans 12:20, *Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head."*

What does that mean?

Irish lady story of her drunken husband.

Overcome evil with good!

Now Jesus picks out four little cameo illustrations out of life.

Four basic human rights:

1. Physical Abuse instead of Honour,
2. Civil Suit against Security,
3. Government Oppression, and
4. Personal Possession.

The Constitution of the United States, which guarantees those things to us.

We have the right to dignity.

We have the right to security,

We have the right to liberty, and

We have the right to own property.

1. Physical Abuse instead of Honour.

I have the right to be honoured as a human being.

I am a human being.

I should be dignified.

I should be respected.

I should be treated with kindness.

I am a person made in the image of God.

I should be dealt with so.

I won't be treated like that. I have my rights. I have some dignity. You can't demean me. you can't dishonour me.

Right, you are made in the image of God, and you do have a right to some dignity, but you are not always getting it.

Do you know that? Sometimes you are going to be treated like an animal or like a worm or something.

People are going treat you in a terrible way.

They may treat you that way in a store, or petrol station, or in a restaurant, or your family may treat you that way.

Sometimes the people closest to you treat you in a way.

What did I do to deserve this?

Don't they realize that I'm made in the image of God?

I have some rights to dignity. I shouldn't be so demeaned and dishonoured.

What does Jesus say about that?

V 39, But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.

The Jews said that the most demeaning, contemptuous act was to slap someone in the face. I mean to have a fight you know was to treat somebody as an equal, but to get slapped you, that's demeaning.

The Jews said this, the most demeaning, doubly contemptuous, arrogant man is to slap you with the back of his hand.

You are not even worthy of a shot, you just disdain.

"A slave would rather be thrashed with a whip than slapped with the back of his master's hand." It was just demeaning.

V 39, But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.

Why do you think Jesus used that?

Because a right hand will always smack somebody on the right cheek when it uses the back of its hand.

The right cheek being slapped would mean he was hit, granted that most people are right-handed like that.

In other words, when your dignity is taken away,

- when you are disdained,
- when you are dishonoured,
- when you are demeaned,
- when you are arrogantly humiliated,
- let him do it again before you ever retaliate.

That's what it means. It doesn't mean turn the other cheek. If that's all it meant, two cheeks and you just grind him to a pulp. You know that's not the idea.

People say, "I will hit me on the right cheek, turn the left cheek. Boy, now you are going to get it." That isn't the idea.

Non-retaliating, non-vengeful, forgiving, loving spirit. We don't have enough cheeks to carry on the illustration.

When you are demeaned and dishonoured and your dignity is tread upon, don't retaliate; let it happen again.

John chapter 18 the Lord Jesus before a tribunal.

John 18:22-23, *And when He had said these things, one of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, "Do You answer the high priest like that?"* ²³Jesus answered him, *"If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?"*

The officer just punched Jesus.

The Jewish leaders were breaking their laws for trying a criminal. They arrested and tried Jesus at night and lacked the witnesses needed to effectively corroborate the charges against Him.

Deuteronomy 25:2, *then it shall be, if the wicked man deserves to be beaten, that the judge will cause him to lie down and be beaten in his presence, according to his guilt, with a certain number of blows.*

Jesus has said nothing wrong or disrespectful and yet He is struck. He is an innocent man, without sin.

What did Jesus say?

Jesus answered him, if I have done evil and I deserve this, then tell me. if I have not done evil, why did you do that?

What Jesus was doing?

He was forcing the man to think of his deeds before he did them.

Jesus wasn't thinking of Himself. He was saying in effect to them, "You want to be sure that you have reason to do what you do and that that is valid. There's no retaliation."

Peter said when Jesus was reviled.

1 Peter 2:23, *who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;*

What about us?

How do we react to those kinds of situations?

Are we like Jesus?

Do we say, "You should think about those things before you do them? If I deserve them, fine. If not, why did you do that?"

Or do we lash back?

Jesus presses the Jewish leaders to own the reality. They were about to murder the innocent, perfect Son of God.

Jesus turned His cheek plenty of times because from then on, they just plucked it.

Isaiah 50:6, *I gave My back to those who struck Me, And My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.*

Jesus did turn the other cheek.

- ✓ They spit all over Him.
- ✓ They rammed a crown of thorns on His head.
- ✓ They pulled His beard out.
- ✓ They mocked Him.
- ✓ They beat Him.
- ✓ They whipped Him.
- ✓ They spit all over Him.

That's the attitude.

Finally, Jesus comes to the cross and hanging there suspended while all His organs are being suffocated, He says, *"Father forgive them for they know not what they do."*

- When someone treats you in a way that is less than you deserve,
- When someone takes the right to dignity that you have,

Do not retaliate.

Be slapped again before you would ever think to retaliate.
Take as much as they want to give but don't retaliate.

If you are worried about your dignity, beloved, someday you are going to be a Son of God in the image of Jesus Christ.

You are going to stay that way forever.

God is going to pour out all the goodness of His great grace on you forever and ever and ever.

So, if you are worried about your dignity, just wait!

You will have it!

Don't fight for it here, because if you do, you are going to renounce the fact that you are a Son of God and that you are related to Jesus Christ.

Because your action will not be consistent with what you proclaim.

2. Civil Suit against Security

Sometimes people are going to take advantage of us!

V 40, *If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also.*

I have got a person who is trying to sue me. I am going to get even with him.

Jesus says a big No.

Let him sue you and then give to him.

What is he saying here?

You like my house?

You like my car?

Here is my house or car.

Take anything.

That isn't the idea.

The idea is that there's apparently some justification for this person's suit. He is suing you for your coat.

Now the coat is a word in the Greek that means the tunic. It's the undergarment, the normal cloak that you wore on the inside like a shirt only it was a full-length thing because they didn't wear trousers or pants as men do today.

Women and men wore just an undergarment, long.

Maybe a poor man would only have three or four of those, some people only one of them.

What the idea is here is that you have done something, and you are being sued at court, and there is a place for that.

Courts must decide certain disputes.

You don't have anything to pay except that thing that you are wearing, you are down to nothing.

He is going to get your shirt, when he gets your shirt, just to show how magnanimous your heart is and just to show how sorry you are that you ever did anything to cause his trouble, give him your coat too.

To a Jew this would be absolutely devastating. They would immediately jump up out of their seats and say we know what the word of God says.

Exodus 22:26-27, *If you ever take your neighbour's garment as a pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down. ²⁷For that is his only covering, it is his garment for his skin. What will he sleep in? And it will be that when he cries to Me, I will hear, for I am gracious.*

It can get cold in Jerusalem because it's a mile high. Are you supposed to give your last security? This is all you have got.

The cloak they would wear it in the day to keep them warm and they would cuddle in it at night to keep them warm. It was their blanket and their coat.

But Jesus is saying, if somebody has come to court and you must give him your shirt, don't be grudging. Don't be angry.

Don't be bitter.

Don't be retaliating.

Show him you are truly sorry that it's ever happened.

Show him you are so magnanimous that all you have got left to keep you warm, your last little bit of security is your cloak, but you are willing to give him that too.

That will certainly shock the person who sues you.

That attitude will show him the love of Christ.

That will show them what it means to love your enemies.

Matthew 5:44, *But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.*

If somebody has the nerve and the gall to sue you and take everything you have got, and maybe he has some reason for it, just to show how your heart is right toward him, give him more than he even asked for.

People can't handle that. You know they just don't know how to handle that kind of thing.

Matthew 5:45, *that you may be sons of your Father in heaven;* *for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.*

Don't be in a hurry to sue everybody.

1 Corinthians 6:1, *Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints?*

Recently I heard from someone who is a lawyer, he said to me some Christian preacher sues everyone for defamation.

What kind of a testimony is that?

1 Corinthians 6:7, *Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated?*

Be sure to show that you are the son of your Father and absolutely forgiving.

The assumption here is that the Christian is only involved in a suit as a victim and that there's a reason why he's being sued, and he is supposed to give his shirt.

The assumption here isn't that you are going to sue somebody!

There may be times when the court will have to make a judgment in certain things, I understand that. But our heart

attitude should not be one that goes around seeking to get everything we can get out of everybody.

3. Government Oppression

We have a right to freedom.

We have a right to be free.

God has made us independent.

We all have our own brains. We all have our own feet, our own hands, our own eyes, ears, we can go and do and say.

We have liberty.

God's given us that.

We have the right to speak, to hear, to see, to move about, to accomplish things.

God has even made us so unique and individual that no two of us is alike.

We are like snowflakes.

But you know it is going to be so in the world that people are going to step on your freedom.

V 41, *And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.*

The Persians had a great idea. They marked off their whole county and they had a very sophisticated postal system. They had little weigh stations one day's journey apart all over the area of Persia. it was a big empire in those days.

Men would ride horseback from dawn to sunset. They would stop to refresh horses and provisions for then they would go to the next lag and then the next.

During the time that that was developing, the term came to be used **aggaros**. An aggaros was the one who was the courier, the Persian courier moving along in that kind of a path.

The Romans also picked up the same term and they used it to refer to couriers. Now what was interesting was that in the Persian system if something happened to the guy carrying the mail, if he was ill or if he was injured or something, he could conscript a citizen just along the wayside and force him on the horse to finish the day's journey.

So, the **aggaros** became the courier who was recruited. By the time you get the word down into the Greek in the New Testament, it has to do with somebody conscripted by an official for some public duty.

Illustration:

Jesus taking his cross to Golgotha to be crucified can no longer carry His cross. Immediately the Romans find a man, Simon of Cyrene. They solicit him, he comes out and he must carry the cross. He becomes an **aggaros**.

Matthew 27:32, *Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Him they compelled to bear His cross.* He is compelled to do that by the government.

Now that would be interesting if it was in our society.

Imagine when you are driving down the road and you got a very important meeting and all of a sudden, those lights start flashing in the police car and he pulls you over.

The officer says, "Sir, I don't know what your plans are, but I have got this little package for you to take to Glasgow today."

What?

There is a fuel shortage in UK. I have got things to do. I can't go."

Sorry, you will be going to Glasgow immediately.

That was the way in Persia. I don't suppose people walked on those postal routes very often. That's the way it was in the Roman times because they had to face the fact that they could be conscripted as Simon was.

But there was apparently a little rule that they had in Jesus' time.

When a Roman soldier asked a citizen to carry his pack, he could never ask any one citizen to carry it more than one mile or the equivalent.

Jesus is saying that when somebody infringes on your liberty and asks you to carry his pack one mile. You happened to be a hated Roman, and you are a Jew, and you happen to be going somewhere. You may be heading the opposite direction, and you are forced to carrying the weapons of warfare against your own people. They are the occupied enemy, and he asks you to go one mile," Jesus says, "go two."

That is a very hard!

But that's the Spirit of your Father who is in heaven.

If God only went the first mile with us, we would be in real trouble. But Jesus carried our burden far beyond that.

Don't be concerned with your liberty any more than you are concerned with your security or your dignity.

God will give you the freedom of the sons of God.

God will give you the security of his home in heaven forever.

God will give you the dignity of the image of Jesus Christ.

Don't chase the things here that destroy the testimony that God wants you to bear.

4. Personal Possession

The last thing we hang onto is what we own!

Somebody says, "I need a car, can I borrow your car?"

What happens?

You have a conversation with your wife?

You know and you go through all excuses.

We are possessive about things.

What does Jesus say about your property?

V 42, *Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.*

What do you mean give to him that asks you?

If somebody asks, and I think it implies a real need.

I don't think you ought to help beggars along because you just make beggars out of them.

Little kids in Israel and other parts of the world have learned they can make a better living begging because they play on the sympathy of people than they can working, so you should be aware of that.

But when there is someone who has a need and they ask, you ought to give it to them.

God is saying that this is the kind of heart you ought to have.

When somebody wants to borrow what you have, let him have it. You have here the principle of self-sacrificing generosity. God, help us to be generous.

Deuteronomy 15:7-8, *“If there is among you a poor man of your brethren, within any of the gates in your land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother, ^abut you shall open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs.*

When you give to him, give him all that he needs, not token. Be generous.

2 Thessalonians 3:10, *For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.*

1 John 3:17, *But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?*

Now Jesus isn't prohibiting justice. Justice belongs in the courts. But in human relations, he wants us to be forgiving and loving.

Conclusion:

If our rights are stolen, the right of dignity or the right of security or the right of liberty or the right of property, we don't retaliate.

We just commit it all to the Lord and we act in love.

George Muller, recently we had done the missionary story life.

"There was a day when I died, utterly died to George Muller and his opinions, his preferences, his tastes and his will. I died to the world, its approval and its censure. I died to the approval or blame of even my brethren and friends. And since I have studied only to show myself approved unto God."

It's a biblical spirit.

- ✓ It's the spirit of **Abraham** who rushed to rescue Lot who had so cheated Abraham.
- ✓ It's the spirit of **Joseph** who generously forgave his brothers and tearfully loved him, brothers who had sold him to slavery.
- ✓ It's the spirit of **David** who after being chased all over by an evil, angry Saul to slaughter him, spares his life on two occasions.

- ✓ It's the spirit of **Stephen** who lying and crushed beneath the bloody stones asks that the sin of stoning him not be laid to the charge of those who did it.
- ✓ It's the spirit of **Paul** after his conversion who writes of love and forgiveness in Romans and Corinthians.
- ✓ It's the Spirit of **Jesus** who says, "Father, forgive them."