

- PRAY
- READ Matthew 5:13-48

Theme of Matthew: "Behold your King is coming to you" (Zech.9:9; Mt.21:4-5)

Theme of the Beatitudes: Christ's Portrait of His People (John Stott)

Theme of the Sermon on the Mount: Life Styles of the Rich and Famous

CHARTING THE COURSE FOR THIS EVENING:

- Review
- The Law and Revenge (Matthew 5:38-42)

THE LAW AND REVENGE (vv.38-42; Exodus 21:24; Lev.24:20; Deut.19:21; cf. Rom.12:19,21; 2 Cor.11:20; 1 Thess.5:15)

THE OLD TESTAMENT TEACHING ABOUT JUSTICE/REVENGE (Genesis 9:5; Exodus 21:12-14; Numbers 35:9-18; Esther 8:13)

What would happen if someone in your family were murdered in Old Testament times? (Numbers 35:19; 2 Samuel 14:7-8; 2 Chronicles 19:10)

What would happen in the Old Testament if you accidentally killed someone and an avenger had been sent after you? (Numbers 35:9-28)

lex talonis – eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise (Exodus 21:23-25; cf. Lev.24:18).

Lex Talionis is a Principle of God's Justice (Leviticus 10:1-3).

- ❖ "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed..." (Genesis 9:6)
- ❖ Abraham & Sarai afflicted their Egyptian servant Hagar, and years later the Egyptians would enslave and afflict God's people (Gen.15:13 with Exodus 1:11,12).
- ❖ Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire and died by strange fire (Leviticus 10:1-3)
- ❖ The plagues of Egypt reflect the principle of reaping and sowing. The Egyptians were killing the Israelite male children, and the tenth and final plague upon Egypt was the death of the firstborn (Exodus 1-11).
- ❖ "He who sows iniquity will reap vanity..." (Prov.22:8)
- ❖ "For they sow the wind And they reap the whirlwind..." (Hosea 8:7)
- ❖ "Sow with a view to righteousness, Reap in accordance with kindness..."
- ❖ You have plowed wickedness, you have reaped injustice..." (Hosea 10:12-13; cf. Haggai 1:6).

From what we have learned about the scribes and the Pharisees, what do you think they taught about revenge/retribution?

JESUS' TEACHING ABOUT JUSTICE/REVENGE

NOTE: There is an important distinction between my use of justice and revenge:

Justice — the administration and procedure of law. Justice is the quality of being fair. It is the upholding of what is just. Justice is an identity between sin and its punishment (“you reap what you sow” or “eye for an eye”).

Revenge — taking justice into one’s own hands.

1. Jesus is teaching about revenge in vv.38-42. The starting point of His teaching is “eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.”
2. Jesus says that instead of revenge, we are not to resist an evil person. Instead of taking justice into our own hands, we are to take up the cross.

“There was a day when I died, utterly died to George Mueller and his opinions, his preferences, and his tastes and his will. I died to the world, to its approval and its censure. I died to the approval or the blame of even my brethren and friends. And since then I have studied only to show myself approved unto God.”
George Mueller, famous for beginning with a few orphans and eventually housing, educating, and training two thousand boys and girls in five great houses on Ashley Down, near Bristol, England

3. Jesus then gives four illustrations about what He is talking about:
 - a. being slapped
 - b. lawsuits
 - c. going an extra mile
 - d. giving to those who ask

Benedict (Baruch) Spinoza (1632-1677) was the son of a Jewish merchant from Amsterdam. His father and grandfather were originally Spanish crypto-Jews -- that is, Jews who were forced to adopt Christianity in post-Islamic Spain, but secretly remained Jewish. He was educated in traditional Jewish Curriculum. His father died when he was 21, after which he was embroiled in a lawsuit with his stepsister over his father's estate. Spinoza won the suit, but nevertheless handed virtually all of it over to his stepsister.
<http://www.jefallbright.net/taxonomy/page/or/587>

What principle do verses 39-41 not teach?

✓ Do not resist evil. Jesus is not teaching that evil is to be left unchecked! Jesus clearly resisted evil when tempted, in His preaching, and in His miracles.

What is the principle of verses 39-41?

- ✓ How to respond to public humiliation (vv.39,41). The “defense of one’s honor”
- ✓ Our Lord does not allow for His disciples to bear vindictive resentment.
- ✓ Our response to the unbelieving world is to be *supernatural* and not *natural*.
- ✓ I think there is a tad bit of hyperbole as in vv.23-24, 29-30, 34

The meaning of not resisting evil and being slapped on the right cheek (Mt.5:39; cf. **Job 16:10**; Psalm 3:7; Lam.3:30; **Isa.50:6**)

✓ This was an insult and not an attack (**Job 16:10**; Psalm 3:7; Lam.3:30; **Isa.50:6**)

Is the lawsuit Jesus mentions in verse 40 a just one or an unjust one against the disciple of Jesus? (v.40)

“‘Who stands before me?’ is perhaps the first question a Roman magistrate would have asked himself when accuser and accused came to his tribunal” (Rapske; The Book of Acts... III:46).

Social status played a major role in the judicial system in the first century: “‘Judges and juries (where there were juries) were easily impressed by qualities such as social prominence, wealth and good character, and this was thought perfectly proper” (Rapske; The Book of Acts... III:56).

Hebrews 10:32-34 (NASB95)

32 But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings,
33 partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated.

34 For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one.

What is the meaning of being sued and giving your opponent your shirt and coat (Mt.5:40; cf. Ex.22:25-27; Deut.24:12-13).

What does it mean to go the extra mile? (v.41)

Jesus is talking about giving up one's outer and under garment. The picture is of stripping down naked in court. “By standing naked before one's creditor who has both garments in his hand, one shames and dishonors the creditor. Nakedness exposes, among other things, the greed and cruel effect of the creditor's action and the unjust system the creditor represents. Removing clothing, along with all it represents...reveals the basic humanity which should unite the indebted and the creditor. The act protests by unmasking the powerful one's heartless demands as inhuman, and the act offers the possibility of a different relationship, even reconciliation. A changed system is not guaranteed, but God's reign has exposed the nature of the present system and pointed to an alternative” (Warren Carter, *Matthew and the Margins* p.152).

Can you think of any example of the Romans requisitioning someone to service in Matthew's Gospel? (Matthew 27:32)

What does it mean to give to him who asks of you? (v.42)

If we took verse 42 “literally” how long would it take before we went broke?

Should we give money to those who ask even if they are going to use the money for drugs or alcohol? (Matthew 5:42)

Does Jesus' teaching in vv.38-42 have any implications for civil government?

Does Jesus' teaching in vv.38-42 prohibit self-defense?

David Livingstone, pioneer missionary and explorer, who first landed in Africa in 1840, was well equipped with some of the most advanced weapons then available, including a 6-barrelled revolver. On occasion, Livingstone was compelled to use his weapons for protection from wild beasts and to persuade slave traders to set the captives free. At one point, when criticised, Livingstone responded: "I love peace as much as any mortal man. In fact, I go quite beyond you, for I love it so much I would fight for it." Blessed are the peacemakers not the pacifists. To make peace requires resolution, courage and action.

-Dr Peter Hammond

Larger Catechism Question #135

What are the duties required in the sixth commandment?

The duties required in the sixth commandment are all careful studies, and lawful endeavors, to preserve the life of ourselves (Eph. 5:28–29) and others (1 Kings 18:4) by resisting all thoughts and purposes, (Jer. 26:15–16, Acts 23:12,16–17,21,27) subduing all passions, (Eph. 4:26–27) and avoiding all occasions, (2 Sam. 2:22, Deut. 22:8) temptations, (Matt. 4:6–7, Prov. 1:10,11,15–16) and practices, which tend to the unjust taking away the life of any; (1 Sam. 24:12, 1 Sam. 26:9–11, Gen. 37:21–22) by just defence thereof against violence, (Ps. 82:4, Prov. 24:11–12, 1 Sam. 14:45) forbearance, readiness to be reconciled, patient bearing and forgiving of injuries, and requiting good for evil; (Matt. 5:24, Eph. 4:2,32, Rom. 12:17,20)

Larger Catechism Question #136

What are the sins forbidden in the sixth commandment?

The sins forbidden in the sixth commandment are, all taking away the life of ourselves, (Acts 16:28) or of others, (Gen. 9:6) except in case of public justice, (Numb. 35:31,33) lawful war, (Jer. 48:10, Deut. 20:1) or necessary defence; (Exod. 22:2–3)desire of revenge; (Rom. 12:19 ...

Which of the beatitudes does Jesus teaching reflect?

What do you do in nations such as Sudan, and Indonesia where the Muslims are using force to exterminate the Christians?

How does the teaching of Jesus correspond with the Old Testament? Is His teaching contradictory to that of Moses? (Exodus 21:24-25; Leviticus 24:20; Deuteronomy 19:21)

New Testament Examples of "eye for an eye" (Matthew 6:14-15; 10:32-33; 2 Corinthians 9:6; Galatians 6:7-9; Revelation 22:18-19).

The New Testament teaching on revenge is the same as the Old Testament teaching (Leviticus 19:18; Proverbs 20:22; 24:29; Romans 12:17-21).

How does Jesus' teaching about resisting evil challenge our common experience of things?

ILLUSTRATIONS

By MICHAEL GRACZYK

.c The Associated Press

HUNTSVILLE, Texas (Feb. 4, 1998) - As the world agonized about redemption and justice-by-execution, Karla Faye Tucker went to her death with a quiet apology and talk of heaven. She never closed her eyes. Her journey from drug-addicted prostitute to born-again Christian drew support from death penalty opponents across the globe. But it couldn't keep the 38-year-old killer of two from becoming the first woman executed in Texas since the Civil War, and the first in the nation since 1984.

As weeping mixed with gleeful singing among several hundred demonstrators outside the death house, Ms. Tucker was placed on a gurney, her long dark hair stark against the white sheets. Leather belts were pulled snug across her body, legs and arms. She wore a prison-issue white shirt and pants and white running shoes. Ms. Tucker turned her head to the victims' relatives witnessing the execution and apologized.

"I hope God will give you peace with this," she said.

She then turned to the witnesses she had invited, including her husband and sister. Smiling, she declared her love for them:

"I am going to be face to face with Jesus now. I love all of you very much," she said. "I will see you all when you get there. I will wait for you."

Richard Thornton, whose wife was one of those killed by Ms. Tucker in 1983, addressed his wife as he witnessed the execution:

"Here she comes, baby doll. She's all yours. The world's a better place."

Just before the lethal chemicals were injected, she closed her eyes briefly and mouthed a prayer.

As the chemicals entered her body, Ms. Tucker gasped twice and let out a long wheeze before lapsing into unconsciousness. Her dark eyes remained nearly wide open; her mouth was slightly open. She was declared dead at 6:45 p.m.

Thornton said later he couldn't accept Ms. Tucker's apology.

"My religion says to forgive. Turn a cheek. I still cannot do it," he said. "I don't believe her conversion. I don't believe her Christianity."

"(She) has been sent to the place that we're all going to go sometime, someplace my wife already is. She will deal with Karla Faye Tucker. I promise you, it won't be pretty."

FOR NEXT WEEK: READ MATTHEW 6

Prepared by Pastor Aaron Goerner (3/3/2004). See Dt.33:8-10; Ezra 7:10; Malachi 2:7; Acts 17:11; Col.1:28,29; 1 Tim.4:12-16.
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