

Walking Through the Mount - 7

Jesus on Revenge and Response – Matthew 5:38-42

Introduction: “An Eye for an Eye”

1. Previous “you have heard it said” sections corrected some type of error associated with the Pharisaical interpretation of the Law:
 - a. Do not murder vs do not be angry without cause - 5:21-26
 - b. Do not commit adultery vs guard your heart - 5:27-30
 - c. Do not divorce vs remember God’s plan for marriage - 5:31-32
 - d. Do not swear falsely vs be a person of integrity - 5:33-37
2. The Lord’s discourse of “an eye for an eye” cites an actual principle of the Law with only a contrast to the letter of the law, the permits retribution vs do not seek retribution.
3. One common error regarding the Law is that it was only a religious law. The truth is the Law was both religious and civil, therefore, it contained prescriptions for matters of maintaining societal order and peace, as well as issuing punishments and damages for those who are wronged.
4. “An eye for an eye” made men accountable for their carelessness as well as taking justice out of the individual’s hands and put it into the hands of the judges (Ex 21:22, Deut 19:18)
5. It prevented man’s inclination for revenge, thus contributing to equity (cf Heb 2:2) rather than vigilante-ism (cf Lamech - Gen 4:23-24).

Body: Do Not Resist Evil/an Evil Person.

First, this is not to be understood in the most absolute and literal sense, lest us make us as sheep for shearing or slaughter unto every evil person.

1. “Turn the other cheek” - wrongful treatment of my person.
 - a. Implied is the slap of insult. Christians are not to respond in kind, but rather turn the other cheek. This does not mean to invite further abuse, but rather assume a position of non-retaliation.
 - b. 1 Peter 3:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:15
 - c. In so doing, the Christian imitates his Lord: John 18:22-23; 1 Peter 2:21-23

2. “Let him have thy cloak also” – wrongful treatment of my possessions.
 - a. A man’s cloak was his inalienable right, and if given as pledge was not to be kept overnight (Ex 22:26-27). God was specific in His condemnation of withholding pledges (Eze 18:12, Amos 2:8).
 - b. Christians are not to permit their “rights” to hinder reconciliation with others or the preaching or portrayal of the gospel.
 - c. Paul surrendered many rights for the sake of the gospel.
3. “Go the second mile” - surrender of my rights in principle.
 - a. Roman officials could compel any non-citizen to bear his burden for the distance of one mile.
 - b. Going the second mile is to live and portray grace. It is giving what is neither owed or obligated.
4. “Give to him who asks and to him who wishes to borrow.”
 - a. Like verse 38, there is a qualification here, clarified in Luke 6:35.
 - b. This is the original teaching of Romans 12:17-21.

Application: Let Us Go on to Perfection

Conclusion: There is no efficacy, that is, nothing to be gained in the first cheek, the first garment, or the first mile. It is the second cheek, the second garment, and the second mile that truly represents the life and message of Jesus.