

SERMON ON MOUNT- THE CHRISTIAN AND RELATIONSHIPS

Matthew 5:38-42

Today in the sermon on the mount

Jesus is talking about the DNA of Christian relationships.

He is reminding us of the 6th and 8th commandments

“You shall not murder, and You shall not steal”

How many times have you had a relationship gone sour

Either in your love life, marriage, work, or play?

Look at the Female bumper sticker

They tell the story:

-If you want breakfast in bed, sleep in the kitchen!

- Dinner is ready when the smoke alarm goes off!

- Out of estrogen, and I have a gun!

- Guys have feelings too but... who cares?

- Next mood swing: 6 minutes

C.S. Lewis once said that we can bear to be refused but not ignored.

Jesus was moved to change the moods of our relationship

And the nature, and character of his people.

The Bible teaches us that Satan has this world in his grip.

And Satan will use whatever means to start an argument,

Cause a law suit, or escalate a disagreement until we end in violent conflict, schism, divorce, and isolation.

How does a person who is a member of the kingdom of God function in a society manipulated by a ruler in total opposition?

Even our constitution sets us up for conflict,

Because we believe we have the inalienable rights to

Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, to the private ownership of property.

To freedom of worship, the right to privacy.

Whenever we have rights

Someone else can and will violate them.

And so begins the feud.

I just read that last year 4,153,237 people got married. I don't want to start any trouble, but shouldn't that end in an even number?

Our passage today begins with four very well-known sayings

We have all heard or even used before.

An eye for an eye.

Turn the other cheek.

Go the second mile.

Give him the shirt off your back.

Jesus begins by reminding the Pharisees and disciples OF

I. GOD'S MEASURED JUSTICE

"You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' Matthew 5:38

in the OT God allowed retribution for a crime committed.

The retribution seem brutal.

Eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth

That was called the law of retaliation.

And yet even this was a loving thing.

The "eye for an eye and tooth for tooth" policy

Was written in the OT when violence and revenge were so rampant that

A persons life could be forfeited because he broke a tooth,

Or damaged an eye.

Think about the first family when Cain and Abel offered up sacrifices,

Cain was offended by his brother's sacrifice because he was made to look bad before God.

God reprimanded him and he felt it was a grave insult.

He didn't just insult his brother back.

He killed him.

Doesn't that seem an exorbitant punishment for an insult?

But that is just what Satan intends today,

That every argument, every disagreement, every insult,

Every accidental injury escalates toward more violence and bloodshed.

Our natural tendency is payback.

We want other to hurt like we were hurt.

We want to get even and not only settle the score

but add a little more.

Nikita Khrushchev, Soviet statesman, wrote in 1971

"We had no use for the policy of the Gospels: if someone slaps you, turn the other cheek.

We have shown that anyone who slapped us on our cheek would get his head kicked off."

Jesus was reminding the Pharisees that

The Law of Israel kept God's people from going too far in their retaliation.

If somebody blinded an eye, they shouldn't be killed for it.

If someone broke a tooth, they shouldn't have a leg broken in retaliation.

In fact by the Disciple's time in history a person's debts

Could be paid in cash settlement.

The Talmud said: "If anyone *gives him a blow upon the cheek? Let him give him two hundred pence*: if he uses both hands, let him pay four hundred pence.(100 shekels of silver)."

Does he tear his ear, pull out his hair, or spit on him, or take his coat or uncover a woman's head in public, Let him pay four hundred pence.

The Bible supports measured justice, as established in the Old Testament.

BUT JESUS MOVES US FORWARD

I. FROM GOD'S MEASURED JUSTICE.

II. TO GOD'S UNFAILING MERCY

³⁸"You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' ³⁹But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. Matthew 5:38-39

Jesus was saying even if we stay within the bounds of inflicting reciprocal pain, we're still missing the point.

Because our external actions come from an internal anger.
And revenge is sin.
When we are hurt, we want payback.
But Jesus said, "Don't fight back

Now when Jesus said:

³⁹But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person.

The word "resist" means "to be hostile towards, to set one's self against"

The idea is not so much about non-resistance as it is about not facing off.
This is not pacifism (a refusal to meet evil with violence or war).
The Bible has plenty of room for self-defense and a just war.
Sometimes we must stop the violence for the good of humanity.
Here Jesus is concerned about our attitude and our heart
we must be careful our actions are not out of revenge.
Or personal retribution.
Jesus was saying : Don't escalate the situation by "getting even".

SLIDE

Let's say you get an elbow on the basketball court.

It was unjust and a foul.

You immediately say

What's good for the goose is good for the gander and

Watch out what happens at the other end of the court.

Jesus says: de-escalate—diffuse the violence, and

³⁹ Do not resist an evil person.

outplay them at the other end.

Not **outfight** them.

I know that this is not a natural response,

And such selfcontrol must be learned through obedience.

An old Irish preacher who had been a boxer came to hold meetings in a city.

The local toughs came to heckle him and to run him out of town. One of them took a swing at the preacher and hit him solidly on the right cheek, knocking him to the ground. People who knew that the preacher had been a professional boxer expected him to come up swinging, but he didn't. Instead, he got back to his feet, rubbed the right side of his jaw. And walked to the man who had hit him. I'm here to preach the gospel. He pointed to his left cheek and invited the man to hit him again. Which he did. Slowly the ex-boxer rose to his feet, carefully took off his jacket and rolled up his sleeves. Then he clenched his fist saying. "I've turned the other cheek and the Lord gave me no further instructions. Smack, he proceeded to clean up the town."

There is a time when we must speak in the language our hearers understand.
 That old Irish preacher wasn't fighting
 because his cheek had been slapped,
 He was fighting for the souls of that community
 that were hanging in the balance,
 People that had been emasculated by this gang of bullies long enough.
 And his act of courage and strength set them free to
 Hear the word of God preached and accepted.

Jesus calls us to respond counter-intuitively.
 To meet an evil heart with a good heart.
 And to use all our resources to back it up
 With kindness and goodness,

Romans 12:17-21 (NIV) Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.

Don't get involved in the business of trying to get even—
 We must be merciful.
 We must take care of our own hearts first.
 Because we are all sinners and we need God's grace
 And not his retribution.

Forgive one another just as God in Christ Jesus forgave you.

Does this excuse the offender?

No it puts God in charge of our lives and our relationships.

That moves Jesus to ask a hard thing of us.

III. TRUST GOD NOT WORLDLY SECURITIES.

⁴⁰And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. Matthew 5:40

If someone takes your shirt, give him your cloak also.

The cloak was a "security blanket" used by the Jews as a blanket at night.
 The OT law said if you took someone's cloak as trust for payment
 You must give it back before nightfall.
 The Cloak had legal connection to one person.

Jesus was literally suggesting that his Jewish brethren,
 Give up their cloak rather than risk severing a relationship.
 This was a revolutionary idea in that day and our day as well.
 For us our security blanket might be our investments, our savings or checking accounts.

Do we have an inalienable right to feel secure in this world?
 When over half the world lives in insecurity over what the day may bring?
 Do I have a right to hold on to excessive financial gains with which God has blessed me?
 When the world, is in such need of a simply blanket to keep warm and
 A meal to keep alive?

**If someone asks you for your shirt, Jesus says
 Give him your cloak as well.**

Jesus moves this trust issue one step further:

SLIDE -Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you. Matthew 5:42

We also feel we have the right to preserve our own property, to direct our own estates, and inheritances.

Our natural instinct is to protect our wallets, and our financial securities.

But Jesus says: Will you trust me to take care of you.

If someone asks you to give, or borrow from you,

If you have the resources, maybe that is exactly the place God

Has put you to be able to help build up the kingdom,

or build the church,

Or give toward missions.

You may say, well then I won't have enough to live on or pass on to the kids.

Should we not be trusting God to take care of our children, when were gone?

When an American tourist visited Polish Rabbi, he was astonished to see that the rabbi's home was a single room filled with books, a table, a bench, and a bed. The tourist asked, "Rabbi, where is your furniture?"

The Rabbi said: "Where is yours?" .

The puzzled tourist said: "But I'm only a visitor here. I'm only passing through."

The Rabbi replied: "So am I" .

Jesus said: Give up you shirt and your cloak in mercy to another

Give to the one who ask and lend to that one in need when your able.

In other words make sure that our god is not our money.

Then Jesus moves into another area of our rights.

⁴¹If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Matthew 5:41

What Jesus is dealing with here is our right to a secure sense of privacy.

We like to do our own things, go at our own pace, follow plans,

We don't like people interfering and infringing on our time.

Asking us to do things when we have our own plans.

In Jesus day a Roman soldier could demand one's service and compelled him

To carry their pack like an animal, a pack donkey.

That was the law.

Simon of Cyrene was compelled to carry Jesus' cross.

It wasn't his idea, he was drafted.

Jesus was saying,

Do you trust God enough to give up your privacy for awhile?

to help build up the kingdom?

To give up your position of prestige to do a menial task for Rome, or the church or your

SS, or the Salvation Army? So that others might come to know this loving, living God?

Jesus was saying be careful that we don't get so puffed up

We forget about whose we are, and what were called to do.

A pastor was walking through a small town and saw a blackboard that was being cleaned outside the school. There was a piece of chalk on it so,

The **priest** stopped and wrote on the board: "I'm a priest and I pray for you all."
 A **lawyer** happened by next and he added under it, "I'm a lawyer and I defend you all."
 A **doctor** came by and wrote, "I'm a doctor and I cure you all."
 Finally, an **ordinary citizen** stopped, thought for a few seconds and then added to the blackboard: "I am an ordinary citizen and I pay for you all."

Jesus is calling us to radical Christianity.
 To put God first in our lives.
 And in our living.
 Until all that we do,
 Our security, privacy, safety, and wealth
 Is available to his hand.

If you want to pollute a relationship,
 Insist on revenge,
 Make sure no one interferes with your security or your space.
 Protect your privacy at all cost.
 And don't let anyone infringe on your property rights.

Aren't these the four areas where most of our relationship problems occur today.
 Physical assault
 Unfair lawsuits
 Compulsory service
 Exploited generosity

**Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written:
 "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. Romans 12:19**

God will take care of injustice through his perfect justice.
 It may not be when we want it.
 It may not be how we want it.
 But He will make sure that justice is done.

Romans 13: 4 (NIV) [Government] is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.

When you think about it.
 We are all sinful people
 We get out of sync with one another because of our selfishness.
 Our wants, pride, possession, our needs.
 We find our relationship broken, and were lonely,
 Outside, hurt and even wounded by one another.

Like the young mother had just bought a beautiful party dress for a special occasion. She laid it out carefully across her bed before taking her bath that evening. When she reached for her dress, she saw that it was torn and slashed into shreds. Her little son, not wanting his mom to leave the house, had ripped and cut his mother's dress in anger. The young mother fell across the bed and sobbed. The little boy, realizing the

pain of what he had done, tugged at his mother's arm, calling out, Mommy, Mommy. His mother ignored him as she continued to cry. Finally in desperation, the little boy yelled, Mommy, please take me back!

Have we not torn to shreds the garments of our relationships?
Have we not torn to shreds the body of our Lord Christ?
And left him to hang on a cross for us.

Isn't the cry of our hearts the same as that little boy.
Oh God, please take me back.
Take me back.

Will you make a commitment today?
And join me in giving God back our hearts
That we might live a Godly example
of right relationship in our church,
Our community, our workplace and our homes?