**Turn the other cheek**

Mt 5:38-42

**Thesis:** To show how we avoid the spirit of retaliation/ getting even.

1. How often do you think about Jesus as a teacher? Often (and rightly so) we think about Him as the Son of God and our Savior. But Jesus first and foremost in His ministry was a teacher. In fact He was the Master teacher. He had the phenomenal ability to take everyday things people were familiar with and teach great spiritual truths from them.

2. But, some of the things Jesus said were hard to understand (Jn 6:60). One such hard saying of Jesus comes to us in Matthew 5:38-42, turning the other cheek.

3. What Jesus is saying here is that we are to avoid the spirit of retaliation. The “I will get even with you attitude”. Now that is a hard saying.
   
   A. It is almost automatic to want to get even/ retaliate.
   
   B. By not retaliating I am doing what is best for you and in the mean time teaching both of us a lesson on humility, peace, patience, love, etc. . .

4. What are we to do when we are faced with situations in everyday life that call for retaliation/ getting even? Jesus tells us four things to do to avoid this attitude.

**I. We are to turn the other cheek (vs.38-39).**

   A. The law stated.
      
      1. Jesus quoted the law correctly (vs.38).
      
      2. The Law of Moses allowed for such justice (Ex 21:23-25; Lv 24:19-20; Dt 19:21).
         
         a. This was not intended to be used for vengeance (Lv 19:18).
         
         b. This law was given to protect the innocent and to make sure retaliation did not occur beyond the offense.
      
      3. It was not to be carried out by the individual but by the judges and after the offense was investigated (Dt 19:15-21).
      
      4. Instead of allowing this to be carried out by the courts alone, the Jews had perverted this and carried it over into private matters and used it as an excuse for personal revenge.
B. Jesus said.
   1. In sharp contrast, Jesus said do not resist the evil person (vs.39a).
      a. This does not prevent self defense, especially where life is in danger.
      b. If Jesus meant that He would have said so.
      c. We are to resist evil (Jm 4:7).
   2. Jesus explains the extent to what He intended (vs.39b).
      a. A slap on the cheek was the highest possible insult (1 Ki 22:24; Mt 26:67).
      b. This happened to Jesus more than once and each time He sets the example as to how we are to react (Mt 26:67; 27:30; Mk 15:19; Jn18:22; 19:3). What did Jesus do? He did not resist but took it.
   3. When the slap on the cheek comes, Jesus says instead of striking back, we are to turn to them the other cheek. Be ready to patiently endure more of the same treatment.
      a. When we do not, we stoop to their level and become just as evil as they are (Rm 12:17-21).

II. We are to give up our cloak (vs.40).
   A. The law stated.
      1. The cloak was worn as an outer garment. It was often removed during work.
         a. The tunic was similar to a shirt. It was the primary garment and worn close to the skin.
      2. The cloak was of such importance (seeing many poor people had few possessions) the Law of Moses forbade it being taken away as a pledge or repayment (Ex 22:26-27; Dt 23:13).
      3. God was angry with those who would oppress people in that manner (Am 2:8).
   B. Jesus said.
      1. If anyone want to sue you. Jesus is speaking of a matter that has escalated and one wants to pursue the full extent of their rights.
         a. Note: It is common for legal process to be used to inflict the greatest harm upon another.
      2. Jesus says when one wants to pursue/ insists upon the full extent of their rights, in a relatively small matter (suing for a shirt) one is not to resist.
         a. Rather you are to concede to them and more to do what is necessary to keep the peace. We must not retaliate.
      3. Paul addressed the matter of Christians taking each other to court for minor offenses (1 Cor 6:1-8).
a. Christians are capable of handling many of these matters privately (vs.1-3).

b. This causes the churches influence to suffer (vs.4-6).

c. It is actually a defeat for those who are involved (vs.7-8).

4. To give up our cloak means, sometimes we have to suffer personal loss if necessary to do what is right for the other person. Sometimes it must be done to preserve the spirit of brotherly love and peace.

III. We are to go the extra mile (vs.41).

A. The law stated.

1. This was not part of the Law of Moses. In fact it was part of Roman law.

2. The practice originated with the Persians and was later adopted by the Greeks and Romans.

   a. When upon official duty, a relay system was set up. Messages were carried from one post to another.

   b. These messengers had the right to commandeer any horse, ship, or compel any person necessary to ensure the kings message arrived quickly.

3. Under Roman law a soldier had the right to impress the labor, animals or substance from anyone they wished. This was often abused (Mk 15:21).

B. Jesus said.

1. The abuse of this law was obviously despised by the Jews. When faced with being forced to go one mile against your will, it is possible many had the exact distance marked off from their house in each direction.

   a. No doubt this would be a huge inconvenience and a burden upon your time.

2. Jesus tells us when faced with such inconvenience you should actually be willing to go out of our way when necessary to make things right and get along with others. Hence go the extra mile.

3. It is often better to suffer inconvenience and injury than to retaliate (Phi 2:3-5; Rom 14:21; 12:18).

IV. We are to give when asked to (vs.42).

A. The law stated.

1. It was an obligation under the Law of Moses to give to those in need.

2. Giving was to be in the form of interest free loans (Ex 22:25; Lv 25:37).

3. Giving was to be characterized by a generous, willing spirit (Dt 15:7-11).
B. Jesus said.
   1. We are to give to the one who asks. Giving is an obligation (Gal 6:10).
      a. This has its limits. We cannot give or lend what we do not have.
      b. We are not to give to our own hurt, nor our families (1 Tim 5:8).
   2. Jesus is telling us although you have been wronged by someone in the past, through your giving, take the opportunity to help that person in their time of need.
      a. Thus you show you do not hold a grudge.
      b. To withhold from one would indeed be a form of retaliation and thus sin.

Conclusion:
1. Of all the things Jesus tells us here, He wants us to know, those who are a part of His kingdom are not to return evil for evil. By commanding such, Jesus did nothing less than set the perfect example for us and live out His teaching in His own life (1 Pt 2:21-23).

2. So the next time you find yourself in a situation where retaliation/ getting even seems to be the right thing to do, remember the words of Jesus in Mt 5:38-42. Instead we are to. . .
   A. Turn the other cheek. Patiently and humbly endure the insults.
   B. Give up your cloak. Suffer personal loss if necessary by conceding to others especially in small matters. You do not always have to be right or have it your way.
   C. Go the extra mile. Inconvenience yourself by going out of your way.
   D. Give when asked to. Show you do not hold a grudge by seeking the opportunity to help that person/s in their time of need.

3. In doing these things, we will each be one step closer to the goal Jesus set for us of being perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect (Mt 5:48).

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