

## Love Your Enemies

Jesus Says: A Series on the Sermon on the Mount Part 7

*Matthew 5:38-48*

Hilltoppers for Christ | Worship Wednesday | 10.18.17

### **A guy who drove me crazy.**

- There was once a guy who followed me around everywhere. I had to clean the HFC house and he was on top of me the whole time.
  - He'd step in my dust piles
  - And he wouldn't even help at all
- I had all I could take, so I decided I had to take a break so I decided to go to the bathroom. I didn't really have to go; I just wanted to get away from him!
- He followed me to the bathroom while I sat there and did not stop talking to me the whole time.

### **What are we supposed to do with people who drive us crazy?**

- We all have people that drive us crazy. Even the most holiest of you have one or two people that you want to avoid when you see them in public.
- There are some irritants out there.
- For many of you, there are people who have done much worse things to you than simply annoy you. They have been mean to you and have legitimately hurt you.
- What are we to do with these types of people?
- Jesus addresses this in tonight's text.
- When we started our series on the Sermon on the Mount earlier this semester we said that some of these teachings of Jesus will be the hardest things you will ever do. And tonight's text is so difficult.

### **Review of the Sermon on the Mount**

- Jesus gives the Law. Like Moses gave the Old Law, Jesus goes up on the mountain and gives his followers the Law from God, but Jesus is God and has the authority of God.
- In the Beatitudes we see those who are truly blessed. The Kingdom of God is for everyone, not just the spiritual elites.
- Jesus' disciples are called to be salt and light. We're to be cities on a hill that are good for the world and make Jesus unignorable.
- We also saw that Jesus is the interpreter of the Law. Some folks (mainly the Pharisees) said that Jesus wanted to do away with the Law. Jesus did not have a problem with the Law, but he did have a problem with the Pharisees' interpretation of the Law.
- Jesus then clears up the Law for us. He says six times, "You have heard that it was said" and, "but I say to you." Jesus doesn't merely expect us to not commit the act of murder or adultery, but he cuts us to the heart. We're not to lust and not be angry with our brothers and sisters.

## Matthew 5:38-48

### Retaliation (5:38-42)

- Jesus is telling his followers to not retaliate.
- *Lex talionis* - “eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth”
  - Exodus 21:24, Leviticus 24:20, Deuteronomy 19:21
  - This law was put into place to place limits on revenge<sup>1</sup>
  - Most of the time when someone is wronged, they try to get the other person back, but do to them much worse than they received.
  - For example, if you slam my finger into a car door, I can't slam your head into a door.<sup>2</sup>
  - *Lex talionis* was established so that violence would stop.
- Jesus raises the bar. In the same way that Jesus raises the bar and tells us it's not enough to not murder or not commit adultery; he wants us to not be angry and hate others and to not lust.
- He gives three illustrations of people you might have to deal with:
  - **People who humiliate you** - Those who slap you
    - Slapping someone was more of a way to humiliate a person than physically hurting them.<sup>3</sup>
    - This is a tough one. We hate it when we get embarrassed (some of us have a different threshold of embarrassment than others)
    - Jesus tells us to turn the other cheek.
    - The revenge stops with you. Don't try to out embarrass them.
  - **People who take advantage of you** - Those who sue you for your tunic
    - Today we have a ton of clothes
    - In Jesus' day, people typically only had one tunic and cloak. When someone sued you for your tunic, you were literally getting the clothes take off of your back.
    - We hate it when people take advantage of us
    - Jesus says to give them your cloak as well (you'd be naked)
    - The revenge stops with you. Don't go try to take his clothes.
  - **People who use their authority against you** - those who make you go a mile
    - Roman soldiers had the authority to tell someone to carry their load one mile. You would have to drop everything that you're doing to help this Roman soldier.
    - We've all had bosses who made you do all the work. Or teachers that used their position for their benefit and to humiliate you.

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<sup>1</sup> Randy Harris, *Living Jesus: Doing What Jesus Says in the Sermon on the Mount* (Abilene, TX: Leafwood Publishers, 2012), 96.

<sup>2</sup> Harris, *Living Jesus*, 96.

<sup>3</sup> Charles H. Talbert, *Reading the Sermon on the Mount: Character Formation and Decision Making in Matthew 5-7* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 89.

- The point Jesus makes here is that revenge stops with us. Do not return violence with violence. We don't return humiliation with humiliation. We don't return the abuse of one's power with the abuse of our own power.
- This goes to the heart. As people of God, we are to not retaliate or seek revenge. We're to love, live a holy life, and show grace.
- God will judge people's sins. We're not in God's judgement seat. Their sins have either been dealt with by Jesus at the cross, or God will judge them on judgement day. Either way, God will take care of it.

**Love your enemies. (Matthew 5:43-48)**

- It comes natural to love our neighbor and hate our enemies. But Jesus corrects our way of thinking. Jesus says to love our enemies and to pray for them.
- It's so easy to hate those who are irritable, annoying, mean, and evil.
- It's human nature to love our neighbor and hate our enemies.
- But that's what everyone does, even tax collectors and gentiles. (5:46-47)
  - Tax collectors and gentiles were both in Jesus' culture seen to have the least morals.
- Jesus raises the bar when it comes to our enemies and those who do evil to us. It's not good enough just to love those who love us. He calls us to love our enemies.
  - Notice it says "so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven." Where else in the Sermon on the Mount does Jesus talk about being sons of God? 5:9
- **How to love our enemies:**
  - Pray for them. (5:44)
    - It's hard to hate someone that you hate.
  - Be aware of your own sin.
    - When we become aware of the sin in our own life and realize the logs in our own eyes we stop noticing the specs in others' eyes.
  - Look at them like God looks at them.
    - See them as a person made in the image of God.
    - God desperately wants to be reconciled to himself so much that he sent Jesus to die on the cross for that purpose (2 Corinthians 5:18-20)
- Don't miss this: Jesus doesn't say that those you dislike aren't actually evil. In 5:39 he says that there are evil people.
  - Jesus does not minimize your pain or the evil that has been done to you.
  - Jesus cares and wants to redeem your pain.
- It is so hard to love our enemies, but God calls us to this kind of love. How in the world does he expect us to do this?

**God loved us when we were his enemies.**

- It is so hard to love our enemies, but God calls us to this kind of love. How in the world does he expect us to do this?
- Ultimately, the reason we can love our enemies is because God loved his enemies.
  - Romans 5:10 - “while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.”
- While we lived as enemies of the cross and enemies of God, Christ died for us and God wants to be reconciled to us.