

Huh?

Part Eight: *retaliation & love*

April 30, 2023

In Matt. 5:21-47, Jesus gave six examples to explain internal righteousness to his listeners. We have already examined Jesus' first four examples (Matthew 5:21-37), so today we are going to focus all our time on what Jesus said about retaliation and love.

After he explained God's intention for murder, adultery, divorce, and promises...

5th - Jesus gave us God's intention for retaliation. Matthew 5:38-42

The words "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" come from some Old Testament passages which made up what was called the Law of Retaliation (Ex. 21:24; Lev. 24:20; Deut. 19:21).

The Law of Retaliation had two purposes:

1. It was to reduce future crime. Deuteronomy 19:19-20
2. It was to prevent excessive punishment.

The Law of Retaliation made sure a criminal's punishment was equal to the crime they had committed. In short, the law made sure a criminal only gave up what he took - an eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth. *But...*

- **The Pharisees had twisted the Law of Retaliation to state that each man had the right to be his own judge, jury, and executioner.**

In contrast to the Pharisees' perverted tradition...

- **Jesus said, "Do not resist an evil person."**

Christ was not telling us to just sit on our hands while someone attacks us or steals our possessions (Exodus 22:2). We are to hate and oppose what is wrong and to uphold the laws of the land and insist others do also (Romans 12:9; James 4:7). Christians are allowed to defend themselves and their families.

- **Jesus is telling you to not pay back evil with evil.**

Christ is telling you to not return insult to the person that insults you. To go over and above to show your regret when you have been found guilty of stealing. To show love to your enemies. And to give to the needy. Christians are not to seek revenge; Christians are to resemble Christ when dealing with rude, demanding, needy people (1 Peter 20-23; Romans 12:17-21).

After he explained God's intention for retaliation...

6th – Jesus gave us God's intention for love. Matthew 5:43-48

The Bible – both the Old and New Testaments teaches that you are to love your neighbor in the same way you love yourself (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 19:19; 22:39; Mark 12:31; Luke 10:27; Romans 13:9; Gal. 5:14; James 2:8). *But...*

- **The Pharisees taught you only need to love certain people.**

Not only did the Pharisees teach hate your enemies (See: Psalm 139:19-22), but they said the word “neighbor” in the Great Commandment only applies to Jews you approve of. They also omitted the phrase, “as you love yourself” because they did not want to care for anyone else as they cared for themselves.

In contrast to the Pharisees’ perverted tradition...

- **Jesus said, “Love your enemies.”**

The scribes and Pharisees loved only the people they wanted to love, but God wants us to love and pray for those who persecute us.

Jesus concluded this section of his Sermon on the Mount with a shocking statement. He said, “You are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.” Christ said it is God’s desire that we be perfectly righteous like Him. How is that possible? It is only possible through Christ (Romans 3:19-25)! Only people that receive Jesus as their personal Savior are made right with God and made perfectly righteous like God.

Some Personal Questions...

1. Have you trusted Jesus as your personal Savior?
2. Are you trying to live like Christ?
3. Is there anything in your life holding you back from loving God and others?