

Sermon Series: Spurred on to Holiness (and Power) by Immersing Ourselves into the Life of Christ Through the Eyes of the Apostles – A Harmony of All Four Gospels

Sermon Title: “Jesus Teaches Radical Restraint and Non-Retaliation.” From Matthew 5:38-48 and Luke 6:27-30; 32-36

February 10, 2019

Theme verse: Acts 4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. (ESV)

Today’s Scripture: ¹ “You have heard how it was said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, resist not the evildoer. Instead, if someone strikes you ³ upon the right cheek, ¹ turn to him the other also. If someone should sue you, and take away your tunic, yield to him your cloak as well; ³ and from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold the tunic also. ¹ And if someone should compel you to go one mile, go with him two.

³ Give to everyone who may ask of you, ¹ and from him who would borrow of you turn not away. ³ And from anyone who may take away what is yours, demand it not back again.

Introduction:

- The story of Julio Diaz
- What a difference between Julio’s story and the rest of society that demand their rights or else. Today we have LGBTQ rights and the rights of students to not hear offensive ideas so are given safe zones to play with silly putty. We hear loudly proclaimed the right to abortion on demand (read your insert) even now to the actual day of birth and beyond.
- In fact, you are looked down on today if you don’t stand up for your rights. You must be a weakling or a coward.
- But when one group gets their “rights” it almost always goes too far and encroaches on the rights of others who are then offended. When a woman says I have a right to my own body then a little body growing inside of her loses its rights, or a Christian doctor loses her rights to say “no” I won’t do it.

Main point: When mistreated for their faith (or even when faith is not involved) true believers will surprise the perpetrators by not retaliating but instead giving even more than demanded.

Context: Jesus is stripping away the Pharisees self-righteous hypocrisy in this sermon and telling them like it is. They are egotistical, self-righteous, narcissistic religious bigots who need

to be confronted with their own obnoxious behavior. Wasn't that unkind? Hardly. How else will a sinner know he's a condemned to hell sinner unless he is made aware of his sin.

Exegesis 3 pieces of clothing in Jesus day: 1) loin cloth, 2) tunic 3) outer cloak. The outer cloak was always to be returned at night (Exodus 22:25-27) since the borrower needed it for covering while he slept. The extra mile was to show Roman soldiers the amazing willingness of Christians to serve even when they were not obliged or forced to do so. The lending of money is covered in Deut. 15:7-10.

1. The Old Testament passages Jesus was quoting (Exodus 21:24; Leviticus 24:20; Deuteronomy 19:21) were about appropriate (not excessive), state-exercised justice, not personal revenge.
 - Fight between men and pregnant woman and baby gets hurt: Exodus 21:23–25 But if there is harm, then you shall pay life for life, [24] eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, [25] burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. (ESV)
 - Leviticus 24:19–20 If anyone injures his neighbor, as he has done it shall be done to him, [20] fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; whatever injury he has given a person shall be given to him. (ESV)
 - False witness gets the same punishment he was asking for. Deuteronomy 19:21 Your eye shall not pity. It shall be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot. (ESV)
 - As to criminal justice reform and sentencing guidelines, the Scripture is very helpful. President Trump mentioned the Criminal Justice Reforms that were just enacted into law. These correct the excessive sentencing done by earthly judges.
 - As to the case for capital punishment, the Scriptures are very clear: you lose your life if you are found guilty of taking another's. (On the basis of 2-3 witnesses of course).
 - It is likely that our system of compensation arose from these laws given by God. For example: Losing vision in one eye as a result of an accident: \$162,000 in DC, \$231,000 in MD, and \$320,000 in VA. An arm USA avg. is \$170,000. Leg \$153,000.
 - And it was Roman law that required compensation for 1) injury, 2) pain, 3) healing, 4) loss of time and income, and 5) for indignity suffered. Injury = what he was worth before the injury as if he were a slave and after, Pain = what an impartial judge would be willing to receive monetarily for enduring the pain, Healing = all medical costs until healed and Indignity = \$ value for suffering humiliation.
2. Personal revenge is forbidden by Jesus.

- Romans 12:17–19 Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. [18] If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. [19] Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” (ESV)
 - Proverbs 24:29 Do not say, “I will do to him as he has done to me; I will pay the man back for what he has done.” (ESV)
3. These are non-believers (members of the kingdom of darkness) doing harm to Christians, not Christians doing harm to one another.
- Believers have options to reconcile their differences and damages outside of the secular legal authorities. Matthew 18 and 1 Corinthians 6:1 When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? (ESV)
 - 1 Corinthians 6:5–8 [5] I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers, [6] but brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers? [7] To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded? [8] But you yourselves wrong and defraud—even your own brothers! (ESV)
4. There is a strong hint that these are taunts to get Christians/Kingdom citizens to lose their temper and retaliate which would cast a bad light on the believer’s witness.
- Turning the left cheek to the aggressor implies the right cheek was slapped in an insulting way. Since most people are right-handed the aggressor would slap his victim with the back of his hand hitting the victim on the right cheek in an attempt to get a negative reaction.
 - Also since Christ is not suggesting we let armed robbers steal all our belongings, he must be referring to someone who is known who is taking something of value from the Christian.
 - Therefore these passages are not about passivism, or not defending your family and belongings from an intruder/thief. Christians are required to protect their families and property because of the 2nd Commandment, Love your neighbor.
5. But when an evil person attempts to take advantage of us, Jesus says “show your light by doing what is totally unexpected.
- If we are insulted (Jewish law had a monetary penalty for just this situation (twice as much for the right cheek as the left) do we turn the other cheek and say do it again (but thinking I’m better than you).
 - If compelled to do something (walk a mile) do we do it grudgingly complaining

the whole time or do we engage the soldier with cheerful talk and say let me carry it the next mile and maybe the next. What a testimony.

- They called Jesus a drunkard and a friend of harlots. They called early Christians cannibals and said they were having orgies at the “Love Feast” *1 Peter 2:23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. And 1 Peter 3:9 Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. (ESV)*

Application

1. **Never retaliate.** We don’t have an occupying army forcing us to carry luggage but we do have non-Christian neighbors who don’t know how to be kind, who often find ways to make life difficult for us. When I first bought my home, one of the reasons it was for sale was because the current owners were having an ongoing feud with the neighbor up on the hill. It had gotten so bad that he would throw his trash on their yard and junk that should have been taken to the dump was also thrown into their yard. They sold to us and he passed away but look what could have been done to heal relationships had they followed Jesus’ commands?
2. **Always give without expecting a return.** This past week your benevolent fund helped a family avoid an empty table by purchasing food vouchers worth \$200 at Aldi. We were so glad to do that because the family had gone through LoveINC. And they called us to ask for help. We knew they needed help.
3. **Do this by dying to self.**