

## **Lesson 7**

### **Matthew 5:38-48**

#### ***A Christian's Righteousness – non-retaliation and active love***

#### ***Textbook pages 103-124***

Final two antithetical statements

### ***Love Those Evil Enemies***

#### **1. Eye for an Eye**

- Exodus 21:22-25
- Leviticus 24:17-21
- Deuteronomy 19:21
- Principle of exact retribution
  - Lay foundation of justice
  - Limit compensation
  - Prohibit taking law into own hand
- Purpose of the law – limit and restrain retaliation
- Principle – Do not make your “rights” be the basis for our relationships with others
- Be prepared to take a lowly position; as a humble servant – Be prepared to pay the price of imitating the example of Jesus.
- Pharisees – tried to use to justify personal revenge
- Jesus relationship based upon; love not justice
- Forbidden not to resist evil, but rather to resist evil person
- Jesus does not allow retaliation – four illustrations; in each situation Jesus says that our Christian duty is to forgo revenge that we allow the evil person to double our injury
- State – institution to punish wrong doers and to reward those who do good – Romans 13:1-2, 10

<b>State</b>	<b>Individual Christian</b>
Punish evil doers	Not to repay evil for evil, but to overcome evil with good

- Romans 12:1-2, 9-21
- Christian to be wholly free from revenge:
  - Not only in action
  - But in heart as well
- Jesus
  1. Not prohibiting the administration of justice
  2. Forbids us from taking the law into our own hands
  3. Not used to justify moral compromise or pacifism
- Applies
  1. Not to nations and not for non-Christians
    - Speaking to those described previously in the Sermon of the Mount
    - Meek, merciful, and poor
    - To those who know that they are sinners
    - Jesus will not ask heathen to behave as Christians; he will first seek to save them
  2. To Christian in personal relationships; not to Christian as a citizen of the state
  3. War and capital punishment not addressed in these verses
- We always expect complete mercy in what we say, but we fail to give any mercy in what someone says to us - Matthew 7:5
- If we are truly Christian we must become deaf to self
- Need to have a right attitude towards self and spirit of self-defense that arrives immediately when any wrong is done to us
- Self is the horrible thing that controls natural man - Matthew 16:24
- Die to Self Principles
  1. Rid ourselves of the spirit of retaliation
    - Should not be concerned about personal injuries and insults
    - Tendency of men always to demand and insist upon their legal rights
    - Christian to be concerned when it is a matter of justice, righteousness and truth
  2. Go the second mile
    - Go beyond what is commanded
    - Jesus condemns resentment

### 3. Help those in need

We must always be ready to listen and give a man the benefit of the doubt

1 John 3:17, 18

## 2. Illustrations

### 1. Turn the other cheek

- Right cheek – with the back of the hand
  - Insult – grossly offensive in the Near East; fine – annual salary
  - Insult which only recourse was to take to court
- Show by our response that we have no need for retaliation – Might risk being called chicken, wimp or worse

### 2. Give way your tunic

- Exodus 22:25-27
- Given as a financial pledge; had to be returned by night fall
- Not stand on our legal rights – follow the example of Jesus – Romans 5:20

### 3. Go the extra mile

- Roman subjects
- Example of Simon of Cyrene – Matthew 15:27-32
- Christian does the unexpected because grace makes him or her seek to win others by love rather than by retaliate on the basis of “rights”

### 4. Give to those who beg or borrow

- Not legal duty for the disciples
- A lifestyle of grace
- Contrast works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21) to fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23 )
- Love is the fulfillment of the law – Romans 13:10
- Understand that our citizenship is in heaven.

## 3. Love Your Enemies

- Active love
- Neighbor – who is it?
  - Person who lives next door to you
  - Member at Covenant
  - Presbyterians

- Who is my neighbor?
  1. Any one who is in need;
  2. Any man who is down through sin; and
  3. Whether Jew or Samaritan.
- Pharisees restricted neighbor to Israelite; everyone else was not just an alien, but also an enemy – Much the same today.
- Love Neighbor; therefore hate enemies – No
- **Old Testament Teaching**
  - Exodus 23:4-5
  - Proverbs 25:21
- Truth – evil men should be the object of our love
  - Our love – to desire that they repent, believe and be saved
  - Hate – that they do not repent and then will be the object of God's justice
- Our love for our neighbor will be expressed in our:
  - Deeds – love is not a sentiment so much as a service – practical, humble, and sacrificial service
  - Words – Bless our enemies
- Nine ascending steps to loving our enemies
  1. We are not to take any evil initiatives ourselves.
  2. We are not to avenge another's evil.
  3. We are to be quiet.
  4. We are to suffer wrongly.
  5. We are to surrender to the evildoer more than he demands.
  6. We are to not hate him.
  7. We are to love him.
  8. We are to do good to him.
  9. We are to entreat God Himself on his behalf.
- Only thing that allows us to not strike back is being dead to self.
- Matthew 5:48 – be perfect as I am perfect.
- Lesson - Our treatment of people never depends upon:
  - What they are
  - What they do to us

- Deal with people based upon what they are to God.

- Perfection in the Christian
  - His love is not determined by the loveliness or the attractiveness of his object
  - His love is not conditional upon being loved first
  - His love is not directed only to those whose love he can rely upon in return
  - His love is controlled by the knowledge that when he was God's enemy and a sinner, God loved him first.
  - Go and do likewise – Luke 10:37
- Matthew 5:47 – more than others
- How to manifest this love of God to other people
  1. Reply to bitter words with kind words.
  2. Do good to them that hate you. Benevolent actions for spiteful actions.
  3. Pray for those who persecute us.
- Need to understand the difference between loving and liking
- We are not called to like everyone; rather we are called to love everyone.
- Therefore, we sacrifice for those we love.
- Luke 10:27

