

Sermon on the Mount Part 12
“Vengeance is Mine saith the Lord”
Matthew 5:38-42

Introduction:

- Read Matthew 5:38-44
 - The overarching principle that I see in these verses of scripture is the following “Vengeance is Mine Saith the Lord”
 - Romans 12:19 “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.”
 - **Revenge** (also known as **vengeance**) is a harmful action against a person or group as a response to a real or perceived grievance. Although many aspects of revenge resemble the concept of justice, revenge connotes a more injurious and punitive focus as opposed to a harmonious and restorative one.

I. What did the OT say? (Verse 38)

- What we have read in Matthew 5:38 is a brief summation of what was taught in the OT.
 - Exodus 21:24-25, Leviticus 24:19-20, and Deuteronomy 19:21
 - All of these teachings of the law have the following principle at the core. Equal punishment for equal crime.
 - God was setting the limits and giving application to the judges of how to meet out punishment for various crimes.

II. What the Pharisees taught in reference to these Laws

- The Pharisees like in many cases began to use the law as a license for vengeance
- Instead of allowing the judges to merit out judgment according to the law the Pharisees were taking matters into their own hands.

III. What did Jesus teach about Vengeance? (Verse 39-42)

- In short Jesus teaches that our natural tendency when we are wronged should not be vengeance. This is indicated by the phrase “resist not evil”
- Jesus did not teach though that we are not allowed to defend ourselves nor did the early apostles.
 - Examples where Jesus challenged evil
 - Matthew 21:12 and Mark 11:15 (Jesus over turns the tables of the money changers)
 - We know that Jesus resisted the punishment of the high priest John 18:22-23
 - Examples where the Apostle Paul resisted evil
 - Acts 16:35-37, Acts 22:25, Acts 23:1-5, Acts 25:9-10

IV. Jesus gives four examples to help us understand the principle of non-vengeance

- **Example One- A slap to the face (Verse 39)**
 - Turning the other cheek would literally be one of the hardest things we could do. By turning the other cheek we are simply saying that we trust the Lord. We are not going to strike back, or seek vengeance or retaliate.
- **Example Two- Be willing to accept loss of personal property (Verse 40)**
 - In this passage of scripture Jesus begins to speak about the coat
 - The word coat in this verse is translated tunic
 - The tunic was the inner garment that a man would wear. A Hebrew or Jewish man would have many tunics or inner garments.
 - In this passage of scripture the word cloak refers to the outer garment
 - A Hebrew or Jewish man would only have one cloak and Jesus is saying that the only outer garment should be given to those who would desire to sue for a tunic.
 - The overarching theme of this verse of scripture is simply that we are not to be so attached to personal property or possessions that we are going to court over them even if we may have the right to.
 - I Corinthians 6:1-8 gives guidance to two believers in reference to the court of law.
- **Example Three- Be willing to accept a forced burden (Verse 41)**
 - In the culture of Jesus’ day it was acceptable for a Roman soldier to require a civilian to carry their packs and gear for a distance of up to one mile.
 - We see this in practice in Matthew 27:32 when Simon of Cyrene was required to carry the cross of Jesus the rest of the way up Calvary’s Hill. This was commanded by the Roman soldier.
 - Jesus is simply saying be willing to carry the burden even further than what is simply required by the law.
- **Example Four- Be willing to give to those in need (Verse 42)**
 - In our culture today we know that there are those who have true needs. Sometimes these needs are driven by choice and lifestyle other times they are driven by unfortunate circumstances.
 - Jesus is simply compelling us to give to those in need and not to expect anything in return.

V. Application for us today in 2010

- The question I must ask each of you today is one that is personal and extremely important in the life of the believer.
 - When you have been wronged or perceived that you have been wronged what is your first reaction?
 - Are you a person that is bent on vengeance and retaliation against the offending party?
 - Do you always lean towards justice always having to be merited out versus a good healthy dose of mercy?
 - In these cases are you more concerned about your rights than the advancement of the gospel?
 - Do you typically hold grudges for long un- healthy periods of time?
- If you answered yes to any of these questions I would like to say the following
 - First- Welcome to the club you are not the only person fighting this very real battle.
 - Secondly- I would like to say that in certain cases you are in violation of God's word.
 - Thirdly- You will be in great danger of growing cold, bitter, frustrated, and hard hearted.
 - Fourth- Ultimately you will be eaten up and consumed by your vengeance leading to a loss in the true joy that comes with serving Christ!
 - Fifth- This attitude hinders the role you play in the great commission.