

Main Idea: According to Jesus in Matthew 5:38-42, there are two approaches to take when we have been wronged, and the approach we take is a revealer of our hearts.

- I. The Law says, “You have rights, so insist on them.” (38)
 - A. When God said, “Eye for an eye,” He intended to limit vengeance.
 - B. When a sinner hears, “Eye for an eye,” he sees an opportunity to retaliate.
- II. Jesus says, “You have an opportunity, so be like Me.” (39-42)
 - A. He shows us how to overcome evil with good (39-41).
 1. Turn the other cheek.
 2. Throw in the cloak.
 3. Go the extra mile.
 - B. He says we are to be givers (42).

Take Inventory: Are we giving the world a good picture of Jesus?

1. To be like Jesus, we must die to self.
2. To be like Jesus, we must receive from Jesus.
3. To be like Jesus, we must view every situation as an opportunity to walk in His steps.

This morning it’s our privilege to return to Jesus’ sermon on the mount. As we saw several weeks ago, Jesus made it clear He had not come to abolish the Law, but fulfill it. He said in 5:19, “Whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven.” He said that because that’s exactly what some had been doing, minimalizing the Law of God.

Then He said, “But whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” We’re about to see true greatness in the kingdom. In today’s passage Jesus continues to show us what the meaning of God’s Law really looks like, and how He came to fulfill it for us and through us.

Scripture Reading: Matthew 5:38-42

As we live in a sin-cursed world, we will be wronged at times. People will take advantage of us, or even hurt us. The question is, then what? What are we going to do in response?

In *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, by Mark Twain, there’s a conversation between Huck Finn and Buck regarding this question. Huck begins:²

“Did you want to kill him, Buck?”

“Well, I bet I did.”

“What did he do to you?”

“Him? He never done nothing to me.”

“Well, then, what did you want to kill him for?”

“Why, nothing—only it’s on account of the feud.”

“What’s a feud?”

“Why, where was you raised? Don’t you know what a feud is?”

“Never heard of it before—tell me about it.”

“Well,” says Buck, “a feud is this way: A man has a quarrel with another man, and kills him; then that other man’s brother kills HIM; then the other brothers, on both sides, goes for one another; then the COUSINS chip in—and by and by

** Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

¹ For a previous look at this passage, see the series preached at WBC in 1988.

² https://www.sparknotes.com/nofear/lit/huckleberryfinn/chapter-18/page_2/

everybody's killed off, and there ain't no more feud. But it's kind of slow, and takes a long time."

"Has this one been going on long, Buck?"

"Well, I should RECKON! It started thirty year ago, or som'ers along there. There was trouble 'bout something, and then a lawsuit to settle it; and the suit went agin one of the men, and so he up and shot the man that won the suit—which he would naturally do, of course. Anybody would."

"What was the trouble about, Buck?—land?"

"I reckon maybe—I don't know."

"Well, who done the shooting? Was it a Grangerford or a Shepherdson?"

"Laws, how do I know? It was so long ago."

"Don't anybody know?"

"Oh, yes, pa knows, I reckon, and some of the other old people; but they don't know now what the row was about in the first place."

"Has there been many killed, Buck?"

"Yes; right smart chance of funerals. But they don't always kill. Pa's got a few buckshot in him; but he don't mind it 'cuz he don't weigh much, anyway. Bob's been carved up some with a bowie, and Tom's been hurt once or twice."

So there's one approach to mistreatment. It's the world's approach, and it comes naturally. Get even. Make them pay. And better yet, get others to join you. In today's world, recruit your Facebook friends. Start a feud.

Of course, God's way is so much better. According to Jesus in Matthew 5:38-42, there are two approaches to take when we have been wronged, and the approach we take is actually a revealer of the condition of our hearts.

In reality, many people call themselves a Christian. Statistics show that over half of all Americans consider themselves to be Christians. But the problem is that many today who claim to be Christ-followers don't seem to know what Christ actually said.

Eye for an eye? No, turn the other cheek. That's what Jesus said.

Friends, this is a difficult text, difficult to understand, and apply. Let's start with a basic question. Why did Jesus say those words in the first place? It's vital to keep in mind who was listening. According to 5:1 and 7:28, there were two groups listening. There were *crowds*, and there were *disciples*. For the crowds, the purpose was to convict. For the disciples, the purpose was to equip. We might say, to evangelize, and then to edify.

Both were needed because Jesus was facing a fundamental problem, and it's still around. He had come to save sinners. That's why He will eventually die on the cross as an atoning sacrifice for sinners. But to benefit from the gift of salvation that He offers, a person must admit they need it, that they are lost.

And that's something good people have a hard time doing. Admitting their lostness. Oh, they might admit that they're sinners ("We're all sinners, sure"), but not their utter, hell-deserving sinfulness.

Jesus loves the down-and-outer. But He also loves the up-and-outer. He came to die for both types of sinners, and in this sermon He's helping both, and specifically the self-righteous up-and-outer see the true condition of their hearts.

If you want to know the condition of your heart, just watch what happens when someone wrongs you. When that happens, there are two approaches to take, and Jesus puts them both on the table for us to consider.

First, there's the natural approach. We might call it the *legal* approach.

I. The Law says, “You have rights, so insist on them.” (38)

Jesus begins verse 38, “You have heard that it has been said.” He repeats this phrase six times in Matthew 5. He gives six examples that contrast surface righteousness with heart righteousness. He wants us to know that an external act is not good enough. A person can do good things, and have a corrupt heart.

So you’ve never killed anybody? Okay, then answer this. Have you ever been so angry that you called someone a fool? If you have, you’re liable to the hell of fire, says Jesus in verse 22. It’s not very loving to talk about hell, is it? Yes, if you’re talking to people who are heading there, but don’t know it.

Maybe anger is not where you struggle. Maybe it’s sex. “But I’ve never committed adultery,” you insist. But then Jesus says, “If you have lusted after a woman, you have committed adultery with her in your heart.” So even though others might think I’m a good person, Jesus says I have broken God’s law and therefore am guilty.

It’s so easy just to look at the surface of things, and miss the real problem beneath the surface. To illustrate that, Jesus next uses the example of divorce. I may never commit adultery, but He says that if I divorce my spouse without biblical grounds, I am putting her in a situation where she needs to remarry to survive. And this means I have become the cause of two adulteries, my ex-spouse’s, and the person who marries my ex-spouse. Again, though I’m telling myself I’m a good person, in God’s eyes I’m a law-breaker.

Then Jesus talks about oaths. The legalist says, “Don’t swear falsely in a court of law. That’s what the Good Book says. And I’ve never done that, so I’m a good person.” Not so fast, says Jesus. I say to you, don’t swear falsely *anywhere*. In fact, you don’t need oaths. Let your Yes be Yes. Anything more than that comes from an evil heart.

At this point, if you’re in the crowd, Jesus’ words are convicting you, and that’s a good thing, for you’re starting to see how much you need a Savior. And if you’re a disciple, His words are equipping you to live the kind of life that pleases God, which is your heart’s desire, which He makes possible.

But Jesus has more to say. He gives a fifth example in verse 38. “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’” Jesus again quotes from the Torah. He cites another stipulation that God had given to the nation of Israel to prepare them for life in the promised land.³ It’s one of the most well known phrases in the Bible.⁴

An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. It sounds so harsh, doesn’t it? Actually, it’s actually an expression of divine mercy. How so?

A. When God said, “Eye for an eye,” He intended to limit vengeance. It’s true. Let’s look back and see the fuller context of the instruction.

Exodus 21:22-25 “When men strive together and hit a pregnant woman, so that her children come out, but there is no harm, the one who hit her shall surely be fined, as the woman’s husband shall impose on him, and he shall pay as the judges determine.²³ 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.*”

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.”

³ Exodus 21:24; Lev 24:20; Deut 19:21

⁴ It’s also found in the Code of Hammurabi, king of Babylon (18th Cent B.C.).

So, *eye for eye* was designed to limit retaliation and curb the evil inclinations of the hearts of men. How did it work? This law says, "If a man strikes you so that you lose an eye, you may require the retribution of that man's eye. But no more! You can't take both his eyes. And you certainly can't kill him."

The purpose of this law was to prevent unending bloodbaths and feuds. It established a limit. So someone takes your eye. A terrible thing, yes. Okay, then his eye may be taken (with the emphasis on *may*, since it didn't have to happen). But this must be *just* retribution, not vengeance. One eye lost, one eye taken, no more than that.

And keep something else in mind. Notice the phrase in Exodus 21:22, "*as the judges determine.*" Who decided whether there would be eye for eye and tooth for tooth? Not the person who lost the eye, but the judges. This law never gave an individual the right to extract vengeance. This was a matter for the judges in the court system.⁵

At times you'll hear people say, "The God of the Old Testament was so harsh and unloving." Not at all. He's the same God, yesterday, today, and forever. But the Old Testament does have a different tone to it. It's full of *laws*. Why is that? It's because God is doing something different in the Old Testament than in the New Testament.

In the New Testament, of course, He removes sin. That's what the cross does. But in the Old Testament, He reveals the sin that needs to be removed, in black and white. He shows why the cross is necessary.

But He does something else. He *controls* sin. That's what the Law does, and this too is an expression of God's love for His wayward world. The Law actually limits the spread of sin. Martyn Lloyd-Jones explains, "The main intent of the Mosaic legislation was to control excesses. In this case in particular, it was to control anger and violence and the desire for revenge."⁶

We understand this. We've inherited from Adam a sinful nature that, instead of trusting God, wants to take matters into our own hands. So if someone harms us, we not only want to harm them back, but see them hurt even worse. "From our earliest days," says Lloyd-Jones, "we have this desire for revenge; it is one of the most hideous and ugly results of the fall of man, and of original sin."⁷

In the lunchroom at school or work, we call it "drama". "Did you hear what So-and-so did to me?! Well, let me tell you what I'm going to do to her!"

This is human nature. So God gave this law (and others like it). Why? Because He's harsh? No. But He knows we sinners are harsh. So He graciously put some boundaries in place to keep His image-bearers from destroying each other.

That's what His Law does. It reveals sin. It curbs sin by saying there will be consequences if you do this. Ultimately, His Law exposes us and sinners and shows us how much we need a Savior.

If you want to see a clear example of this, look at Leviticus 19:18, "You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord." That's God's law. It prohibits revenge, but it also commands us to love our neighbor. And that convicts us, doesn't it?

Yes, unless we do what self-righteous sinners always do.

B. When a sinner hears, "Eye for an eye," he sees an opportunity to retaliate. This is what was happening in Jesus' day, and it still happens today. When

⁵ There is little evidence that the law was carried out literally by God's people. By the time Jesus lived in Israel, it was seldom imposed. It was replaced by money penalties.

⁶ Lloyd-Jones, p. 271.

⁷ Lloyd-Jones, p. 271.

God said, “Eye for an eye,” He meant to limit sin, to curb sin, to control sin. But the Pharisees turned this negative restraint into a positive expectation.

“Hey, that guy just hit you in the eye! Are you just going to stand there? No! Hit *him* in the eye. Make him pay. This is what you *must* do. This is what God says you must do in His Law. Eye for eye, tooth for tooth.”

A self-righteous sinner can make God’s Law say whatever he wants it to say. And that’s precisely what he does. So he gets hurt by someone, and he immediately wants revenge. Initially, he feels guilty about that desire, and rightly so, for retribution is something God alone has the right to give. His conscience is telling him that he needs help, just like the guy who hurt him. In fact, this churning in his soul tells him that he needs the same thing the other guy needs, a new heart, one that refuses to seek revenge, but instead loves that sinner, and trusts God to make things right with that sinner.

That’s what he may feel *initially*. But then he does something to make all this inner turmoil go away. He stops looking at God’s intent for the Law, which is to show him how much he needs a Savior, and starts using God’s law to bolster the fallacy of his own self-righteousness.

This is the first approach to take when you’ve been wronged, the legal approach. The Law says, “You have rights, so insist on them.” What is Jesus’ assessment of this approach?

II. Jesus says, “You have an opportunity, so be like Me.” (39-42)

“But I say to you.” Stop and look carefully at those pronouns. **I** say—that’s Jesus speaking. He is the king. This is His kingdom manifesto. He’s explaining how things work in His kingdom.

Are these instructions for everyone? No, for not everyone is in His kingdom. Who is? I say to **you**—He’s talking directly to His disciples, to the poor in spirit, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, and then find their hunger satisfied by putting their total trust in Him.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones has said, “There is possibly no passage in Scripture which has produced as much heat and disputation as this very teaching which tells us not to resist evil and to be loving and forgiving.”

He said that because people constantly turn to this passage to teach that all forms of resistance are wrong. Verse 39, “Do not resist the one who is evil.” So there’s no need for military. No need for police. No grounds to protect yourself from a burglar if he breaks into your house. Count Tolstoy said that to have soldiers, or police, or even magistrates, is unchristian. He said that evil is not to be resisted, citing Jesus’ teaching here.

But it comes back to the question. Who is the “you” here, when Jesus says “But I say to *you*.” To whom is Jesus giving this standard?

Again, I find Lloyd-Jones’ insights to be very helpful. He says, “We must never regard the Sermon on the Mount as a code of ethics...We must not think of it as being a new kind of law to replace the old Mosaic law...This teaching is not for nations or for the world. Indeed we can go further and say that this teaching has nothing to do with a man who is not a Christian... We must be new men and born again before we can live such a life...Until a man comes under grace, he must be kept under the law...It is ‘an eye for an

eye, and a tooth for a tooth' until the spirit of Christ enters into us. Then something higher is expected of us, but not until then."⁸

So if you're not a Christian, you're reading someone else's mail at this point. This is not how you become a Christian. These instructions are for those in whom Christ lives. These are for born-again people who have the ability, *His* ability, to put them into practice, and thus, be like Him.

Brothers and sisters, Jesus gives us two instructions.

A. He shows us how to overcome evil with good (39-41). "But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. ⁴⁰ And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. ⁴¹ And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles."

Retaliation is to have no place in the life of the Jesus-follower. The Law of "an eye for an eye" was given in the OT as a concession. It put a limit on retaliation because of the sinfulness of man's heart. But even the OT tells us that Jesus came to give men new hearts (see Jeremiah 31:31-33). When Jesus comes into a person's life, a change of heart occurs. And along with the change of heart comes a new responsibility.

"Resist not evil," says Jesus (in the AV). The verb "resist" means "to oppose, to withstand, to set oneself against something."

But wait a minute. Paul, Peter, and James each tell us "to resist the evil one". Do they contradict Jesus? No. Jesus is not referring to evil in the sense of sinfulness. Nor is He telling us not to resist "the evil one" (the devil), for He tells us to pray for deliverance from the evil one in Matthew 6:13. Rather, Jesus says that we are not to resist "the one who is evil," that is, an evil person, the man who wrongs you. The GNB paraphrases verse 39, "Do not take revenge on someone who wrongs you."

And to make that clear, Jesus proceeds to give us three examples of "evil" people who seek to do us harm. The one who slaps us in verse 39. The one who sues us in verse 40. The one who commandeers our service in verse 42. Jesus says that we are not to resist these individuals. Rather, He calls for three rather shocking responses to the evil.

1. Turn the other cheek. Verse 39 again in the KJV, "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."

Notice something very important. Which cheek is hit first? The right cheek. Since most people in the world are right-handed, which hand landed the blow? The right hand. So if a right handed man hit you on your right cheek, which part of his hand did he use? He slapped you with the back of his hand.

Rabbinic law said that it was twice as insulting to be hit with the back of the hand. The issue at hand in verse 39 is not so much physical violence as it is insult, a gross insult. How are Christians to respond when they are viciously insulted?

Are we to retaliate? Are we to wait for just the right moment to get even? What answer does Jesus give? *Turn to him the other cheek also.* Jesus says we are to endure the insult, which means we must willingly surrender our personal rights.

Jesus later practiced what He here preached. Remember His trial? He was brutally mistreated by the hostile Jewish police. They beat Him. They pulled out His beard. They insulted the innocent Son of God.⁹ But He did not retaliate. He turned the other cheek, and was handed over to the Romans. Then the Roman soldiers took up where the Jewish police stopped. More beatings. More insults. But still no retaliation on

⁸ Lloyd-Jones, pp. 273, 275, 276, 277.

⁹ Matthew 26:67 "Then they spat in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands."

Jesus' part. He could have called 10,000 angels, but He willingly endured the cross.

Isaiah 50:6 "I gave my back to those who strike, and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard; I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting."

Most of us will likely never be slapped on the face. But all of us will be mistreated, by people at work, or at school, maybe by a neighbor, perhaps even by a relative that mocks us for believing in Christ. How are we to respond? As did our Savior. No resentment. No retaliation. We extend the other cheek.

What does it mean, practically speaking, to extend the other cheek? Romans 12:17-21 gives us the answer: "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." ²⁰ To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

During the second world war, some American soldiers living in the far east had an oriental servant boy caring for their needs. They constantly mistreated him with practical jokes. But he never became angry. He just kept smiling. Finally, they felt guilty and apologized. He surprised them with his reply, "That's okay. I apologize too for spitting in your soup."

This is *eye-for-an-eye*, isn't it? You insult me, I spit in your soup. But not for Jesus-followers. Retaliation is not Christlike. Indeed, it displeases our Lord, for it sends the world the wrong message about Him.

It was Spurgeon who said, "Christians are to be as the anvil when bad men are the hammers." Peter tells us in 1 Peter 2:21-23, "Christ suffered for us leaving us an example...When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judges righteously."

Next, Jesus gives a second shocking example of how we are to respond to evil.

2. *Throw in the cloak.* Verse 40, "And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well."¹⁰

Every Jewish man had a tunic. In fact, even poor people would have more than one tunic. The tunic was the undergarment. Jesus describes a lawsuit where a person's tunic is being sought. The accuser wants the tunic.

But notice what Jesus says. *Let him have your cloak too.* The cloak was the blanket-like outer-garment. It was more valuable than the tunic. The cloak was used as a robe during the day, and as a blanket at night. And what's more, though a man had a change of tunics, he often had only one cloak.

Under OT Law, the outer cloak was a protected possession. Exodus 22:26 says that if someone took another person's cloak, he had to return it by nightfall. That was the law. A person's cloak was protected by the law.

But what does Jesus say? He says that His disciples are to willingly part with what they may legally keep. The issue of verse 40 is not lawsuits. The issue is our attitude towards our possessions, our property, our rights. Jesus expects Christians to not always be demanding their rights. They are to be just as concerned about their responsibilities, their duties. And what is our duty? To love. To love God, and to love our neighbors, even those who mistreat us.

¹⁰ KJV "And if a man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also."

Shocking? Yes, but Jesus isn't done. He gives a third example of how we are to respond to the "evil" man who wants to take advantage of us.

3. *Go the extra mile.* Verse 41, "And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles."

The Romans ruled the world of Jesus' day. Roman soldiers were stationed everywhere to keep peace by force. The Jews despised the presence of the Roman soldiers in the land of Israel. And they hated even more one particular Roman policy.

Suppose a Roman soldier was walking down the road in an occupied country. If he passed you, he had the right to require you to drop whatever you were doing, and help him. He had the authority to commandeer civilian labor. He could force you to carry his backpack up to one Roman mile (1000 paces).

Remember Simon of Cyrene? He was forced to carry Jesus' cross, and had no choice in the matter. That kind of policy infuriated the Jews.

So what did Jesus say we should do if a soldier does that to us? He says we are to do as asked (go the one mile) and then *volunteer* to carry the pack the second mile.

Again, this is shocking. Who does such a thing? This is not natural. In fact, it goes against every instinct in our being. That is, until Jesus enters our lives. And He gives us new instincts.

Is there ever a limit to this cheek-turning and cloak-giving and going the second mile? The answer is, yes, for there are other passages that address mistreatment. Sometimes just taking it isn't the correct response. Remember at Jesus' trial when one of the officers struck Him with his hand? What did Jesus do? He didn't turn the other cheek, but said, "If what I said is wrong, bear witness about the wrong; but if what I said is right, why do you strike me (John 18:23)?" When it was merely a matter of personal insult, Jesus took it. But this was a violation of justice, and Jesus pointed it out.

It's a limit imposed by love. I'm willing to take the insult, but if it's in your best interest, or others', I may not. For example, in Galatians 2:11-14 we're told that Paul withstood ("resisted") Peter. Why? Because Peter was not doing the loving thing. He was discriminating against the Gentile believers. So Paul confronted him. He challenged him, because of love.

Lloyd-Jones shares a couple of examples of people who put Jesus' teaching into practice. The first is Billy Bray. Before his conversion Billy Bray was a fighter, and people were afraid of him. Then Christ saved him. One day, down in the mine, a man who previously was fearful of Bray, who had heard of his conversion, decided to take advantage of the situation. So without any provocation, he approach Bray and hit him. Bray could easily have decked the fellow, but instead said, "May God forgive you, as I forgive you," and did no more. As a result, the man endured several days of turmoil in his soul, and this led eventually to his conversion.

The other example is Hudson Taylor, the now famous missionary to China. One evening Hudson Taylor hired a boat to take him to the other side of a river, but before he could get on the boat, a wealthy Chinese man, who didn't recognize Taylor, struck him with such force that he fell in the mud. Then he took his spot on the boat. Taylor said nothing, but the boatman said, "No, that foreigner called me, and the boat is his, and he will go first." Then the wealthy man realized the blunder he had committed. Taylor proceeded to get in the boat, and invited the other man to join, and began to share with

the man about the grace of God.¹¹

But Jesus isn't finished yet. First, He shows us how to overcome evil with good.

B. He says we are to be givers (42). "Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you." Three things stand out from this verse. First, it's an imperative. *Give*. What Jesus says is a command, not an option.

Second, it's an emphatic command. *YOU* give. The second person pronoun highlights the responsibility of every disciple of His. This isn't for the crowd, but it is for you and me if we are His disciples.

Third, notice the object. As Augustine pointed out, Jesus did not say, "give whatever you're asked", but "give to whomever asks." We must not be tight-fisted with our possessions. Rather we are to give to those in need. We may not always give what a person asks, but we ought to attempt to do what's best for the person in need.

For instance, it would be foolish to give a man with alcohol on his breath the money he requests. He'd likely squander it on more alcohol. What would be best for that man? Certainly, some genuine concern. Perhaps a good meal, and counsel and accountability to help set him free from his bondage.

Nonetheless, Jesus says we're to be givers. Again, are there other factors to consider? Yes. Proverbs 17:18 warns us about loaning money indiscriminately. That would be foolish, and not in the best interest even of the person asking. Yet Jesus is clear. If the need is real, we are to give.

"Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it's in the power of your hand to do it (Proverbs 3:27)."

And here's our greatest motivation for doing so. God Himself. God is the greatest giver, and if Jesus is our Savior, it's our privileged calling to be like our Father.

Jesus makes this connection in Luke 6:35-36, "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil."³⁶ Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful."

Take Inventory: Are we giving the world a good picture of Jesus?

To be like Jesus, three things need to happen.

1. *To be like Jesus, we must die to self.* George Muller was an incredible giver, and this was the key to his life. He provided care for thousands of orphans, but here's where it started. George Muller said, "There was a day when I died; died to self, my opinions, preferences, tastes and will; died to the world, its approval or censure; died to the approval or blame even of my brethren or friends; and since then I have studied only to show myself approved unto God."¹²

To be like Jesus, we must die to self. Have you died to yourself? Have you ever surrendered your heart to God?

2. *To be like Jesus, we must receive from Jesus.* This is the beauty of the gospel of grace. Jesus doesn't simply say, "Be like me," or we'd be in big trouble since that's our problem. We are *not* like Him. We're self-focused sinners. But He graciously says, "Come to me. Believe in me. Receive from me. And I will enter your life and transform you so you begin to look like me."

¹¹ Lloyd-Jones, pp. 281-2.

¹² <https://www.georgemuller.org/quotes/category/worldliness>

3. *To be like Jesus, we must view every situation as an opportunity to walk in His steps. Including, and perhaps especially, when we have been wronged.*

*Earthly pleasures vainly call me;
I would be like Jesus;
Nothing worldly shall enthrall me,
I would be like Jesus.*

*Be like Jesus - this my song,
In the home and in the throng;
Be like Jesus, all day long,
I would be like Jesus.*

Closing Hymn: #388 “I Would Be Like Jesus” (all four verses)

Community Group Discussion:

1. This morning’s message was entitled, “*When We Have Been Wronged.*” Take time as a group to re-read this section from the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew 5:38-42. What’s your first impression when you hear these words from Jesus?
2. In this passage Jesus is talking about how to respond when people treat us wrongly. How do we feel when someone wrongs us? What do we want to see happen?
3. In verse 38, Jesus refers to the standard, “Eye for an eye.” Where does that phrase come from, and what does it really mean? What does Jesus have to say about “eye for an eye”?
4. In verses 39-41, Jesus presents a very shocking standard for His followers. What is His standard? What effect does He intend these words to have on us?
5. In verse 42, Jesus gives us another shocking command. What is it? Are there ever exceptions, and if so, when? Use Scripture to support your answer.
6. This teaching of Jesus prepares us for the gospel. How so? After discussing, spend time as a group praying for the grace that’s needed to apply it to our lives this week.