

“JESUS’ KINGDOM MANIFESTO”

BIG IDEA . . . Part 8: Resisting Revenge (5:38-42)

INTRO: Jesus our King calls His followers to a higher standard, above that of the self-righteous leaders of His day. First in the SOM in Ch. 5 to a higher standard of RIGHTEOUSNESS, that is never earned or deserved, but freely given to all by God’s grace when we trust in Christ’s finished work. We exchange our unrighteousness for His perfect righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21). What does that look like lived out? Jesus provides six examples: avoid wrongful anger, pursue reconciliation (vv.21-26), radical purity (vv. 27-30), honor marriage covenant (vv. 31-32), radical truthfulness (vv. 33-37).

TODAY, Resist Revenge (5:38-42) . . . Another illustration of true righteousness from the heart. All-too-often misinterpreted text – used to promote pacifism, conscientious objection to military service, anarchy lawlessness, etc. – that believers should be passive doormats. From misinterpretation some advocate elimination of police, military, and other forms of authority as a path to utopian society. Scripture must be seen in context – here in a contrast between fake and true righteousness. Jesus is NOT giving a new command, He is raising the standard on an old one they had perverted. His emphasis, as is so throughout Scripture, is on the heart. Similar outline . . .

I. TRADITIONAL TEACHING IN MOSAIC LAW (v. 38)

- A. Excessive Punishment Was Prohibited (v. 38 “eye . . . tooth” found three times in OT – Exo. 21:24-25; Lev. 24:20; Deut. 19:16-21) - Justice
 - 1. Let the punishment fit the crime. All three passages say just punishment should be given by the civil justice system for a crime (do the crime, do the time). Punishment should match crime. The Law was never intended to give permission to take revenge on anyone who hurts us. *ONLY* an eye for an eye, and . . . but nothing more. The Law promoted justice, not revenge (Gen. 4:23).
 - 2. Evil is restrained and further crime is deterred (Deut. 19:21).
- B. Their Perversion? They wrongly extended the law to personal relationships, mandating to take revenge. They superceded civil court and took matters into own hands. Personal revenge was forbidden. Leave repayment to God (Deut. 32:35; Rom. 12:17; Heb. 10:30).

II. JESUS’ TEACHING ON JUSTICE AND REVENGE (vv. 39-42)

Jesus teaches radical love over revenge – “exceeding” righteousness as with murder, adultery, and oaths. The OT Law taught justice (good). Jesus teaches love not revenge (better). See Lev. 19:18 . . .

- A. Do NOT Resist an Evil Person (v. 39 “do not resist an evil person”). Jesus moves from limited retaliation to no retaliation!
 - 1. *Spoken to individuals in their personal relationships.* It is a misinterpretation to make the words say that we shouldn’t resist evil at all. Ex: L. Tolstoy used . . . No place for Christian vigilantes, taking law into own hands, trying to get even when mistreated; instead love them back!
 - 2. *Different set of biblical commands for governments, courts, military, police, etc. (Rom. 13:1-4; 1 Pet. 2:13-14).* It is government job to resist evil in society; courts to administer justice, military to protect, police to arrest criminals. It’s okay to use courts to resist evil and promote justice, as long as not out of personal revenge. Forgive, don’t prosecute.
- B. Four Examples of Radical Love Over Revenge (vv. 39b-42). Jesus words address 4 basic human rights: dignity, security, liberty, and property.
 - 1. *When personally insulted, turn the other cheek (v. 39b).* A back handed slap is a sign of extreme disrespect; instead “Turn the other cheek” – be non-revengeful, humble, and gentle. Ex? Jesus . . . BTW, this verse does not prohibit self-defense or protecting others from harm.
 - 2. *When sued, give your cloak as well (v. 40).* Let them have your shirt (inner garment) and your coat (outer garment). See Exo. 22:25-27 . . . It is better to be defrauded than to be resentful and retaliate.
 - 3. *When taken advantage of, go a second mile (v 41).* The Jews were under Roman occupation. A soldier could force you to carry their belongs for one mile. Jesus says, “Do a second mile!” Show radical love, don’t fuss or fight. Go beyond what is required.
 - 4. *When requested, give (v. 42).* He is not telling us to be easy marks for lazy people (2 Thess. 3:10). If someone has a need and we can meet it, do it (Pro. 3:27; 1 Jn. 3:17). We see needs; we meet needs. As before, the heart is the issue.

III. APPLICATIONS OF JESUS’ RADICAL TEACHING

- A. Practice loving mercy rather than justice (Lev. 19:18; Jam. 2:13; Matt. 5:7).
- B. Do more than required (vv. 39-42). Practice underserved and unnecessary generosity. Go beyond!
- C. Trust God to repay (Rom. 12:17-21; 1 Pet. 2:23). He is just and good.

CONC: As followers of Christ, we are called to a higher standard – always practicing radical love over revenge. What’s the key? G. Mueller . . .