



Mid-Week

Bible Study and Prayer
Wednesdays 6:45pm – 8pm



led by: Pastor Josh Franklin, Good Hope Baptist Church (www.goodhopechurch.org and www.joshfranklin.org)

Should Christians Retaliate?

(Exposing Selfishness in the Heart)

Jesus' advice is not a set of mechanical rules, but principles for meeting the personal wrongs that come to those who follow him. **A person must have the new life of Christ in order to show this kind of love.** This passage shows: **1) How to respond to insult (39); a rip-off (40); forced labor (41); borrowing (42)**

Matthew 5:38-42 (NKJV) [with explanatory notes]

- ³⁸ "You have heard that it was said, '*An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth*' [If a man knocked another man's eye out, the tendency was for that man to seek to kill the man. This law was placed to restrain. They could only seek to take the other man's eye. The Law of retaliation puts a limit on revenge, saying, "*The ONLY THING I can do is take an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.*"].'
- ³⁹ **But I tell you not to resist an evil person** [He's talking about individuals, not police or army or official judicial law – they must resist evil people all the time – Romans 13:1-4]. **But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.** [If a right-handed person was going to strike another individual, he would strike their left cheek. To strike him on his right cheek would mean you are giving him the back of your hand (an insult). In olden days when someone would want to duel they would take their gloves and slap a person. It's saying "you good-for-nothing, low-down person." What our Lord is teaching here is when someone insults us or degrades us, we are to go the second mile.]
- ⁴⁰ **If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic** [inner coat], **let him have your cloak** [outer coat] also. [Principle: we are not to demand our legal rights. You cannot press this too literally because it would mean that the man would be left naked, because you would have given him your inner coat and your outer coat.]
- ⁴¹ **And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.** [The Roman army was in control of Palestine, and the Roman soldier carrying his pack would be weary, and the law stated that he could ask someone to carry it a mile, and they had to carry it. The Principle: Go the second and third mile. Don't do the minimum that is required. Go the next mile!!]
- ⁴² **Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.** [You must relate all of the Bible to bear on this verse. Principle: the Christian must be generous and not selfish. You can give to a point where you are hurting the individual. Suppose someone comes to the church asking for money, and yet he's been drinking... You cannot give to this person, because you would be hurting them if they go out and purchase more alcohol. If we have to say no, it should not be because of our own stinginess]

A Little Humor:

Jack's mother ran into the bedroom when she heard him scream and found his two-year-old sister pulling his hair. She gently released the little girl's grip and said comfortingly to Jack, "There, there. She didn't mean it. She doesn't know that hurts." Mom was barely out of the room when the little girl screamed. Rushing back in, she said, "What happened?" "She knows now," little Jack explained.

Abe Lemmons was asked if he was bitter at Texas Athletic Director Deloss Dodds who fired him as the Longhorn's basketball coach. He replied, "Not at all, but I plan to buy a glass-bottomed car so I can watch the look on his face when I run over him."

Three burly fellows on huge motorcycles pulled up to a highway cafe where a truck driver, just a little guy, was perched on a stool quietly eating his lunch. As the three fellows came in, they spotted him, grabbed his food away from him and laughed in his face. The truck driver said nothing. He got up, paid for his food, and walked out. One of the three cyclists, unhappy that they hadn't succeeded in provoking the little man into a fight, commented to the waitress: "Boy, he sure wasn't much of a man, was he?" The waitress replied, "Well, I guess not." Then, looking out the window, she added, "I guess he's not much of a truck driver, either. He just ran over three motorcycles."

If thine enemy wrong thee, buy each of his children a drum. - Old Chinese proverb

***Eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth, tit for tat.
You killed my dog, I'll kill your cat!***

Kent Hughes - That is an exact quotation from three Old Testament passages (Exodus 21:24; Leviticus 24:20; Deuteronomy 19:21) and represents the oldest law in the world—the law of retaliation, technically known as **Lex (Law) Talionis (retaliation)**. The earliest reference to Lex Talionis comes from the Code of Hammurabi in the second millennium b.c. **Far from being savage legislation, it was intrinsically merciful because it limited vengeance. The typical primitive blood feud knew nothing of equity. A small infraction by one tribe against another—for instance, trespassing—was met with a beating, which was returned by homicide, which was then countered by genocide.** Lex Talionis did away with this—on paper at least.

I am not to strike him out of vengeance. I am to try to restrain him, and to teach him that he should not strike me, but I should not seek to abuse him back. We cannot always fight our battles. If I were to do this in my own life, I would spend all of my time fighting battles. If I get a hate letter, I don't send a hate letter back. If someone insults me, I do not insult them back. Christians are always getting insulted, but "vengeance belongs to the Lord". He will fight your battles for you.

PRINCIPLES TO LIVE BY:

- 1) Don't seek to abuse those who have abused you. Let the Lord fight your battles.**
- 2) When your dignity is degraded, turn the other cheek.**
- 3) Do more than what is legally required. Go the second mile.**
- 4) Be generous to those who need it, and who would use it appropriately. Don't let your stinginess be the reason you won't give.**

Read Romans 12:17-21; 13:1-4 and Matthew 26:67-68

EXTRA TEACHING MATERIAL:

Romans 12:17-21; 13:1-4

¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.

¹⁸ If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

¹⁹ Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but *rather* give place to wrath; for it is written, "*Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,*" says the Lord.

²⁰ Therefore "*If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.*"

²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

¹ Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.

² Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.

³ For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same.

⁴ For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to *execute* wrath on him who practices evil.

Matthew 26:67-68 (NKJV)

⁶⁷ Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck *Him* with the palms of their hands,

⁶⁸ saying, "Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?"

REVENGE ILLUSTRATION: Don't be like the lady that Charles Lowery told about. There was a man reading the newspaper, he loved expensive automobiles, couldn't afford one, but he loved just to read the want ads and he saw that a woman had advertised in the newspaper a Jaguar automobile. Low mileage, mint condition, for two hundred dollars. Oh, he said, This can't be true, but he called the number and he said the lady answered, said, Are you the one put the ad in the paper for a Jaguar, late-model Jaguar for two hundred dollars? What's wrong with it? She said, Nothing's wrong with it. She said, I'm going to sell it to the first person that gets here. He said, I'll be right over. He said, I want to see it, he thought it was worth a chance. He drove over, there it sat in the driveway, absolutely beautiful. He looked it over, he couldn't see anything wrong with it. He said, Lady, are you really going to sell this automobile for two hundred dollars? She said, I was, but I've changed my mind. Now it's \$99.50, I'm gonna cut the price in half. He said, What's wrong with it? She said, Not a thing in the world's wrong with it, said, It's my husband's automobile, he ran off with his secretary to Hawaii, he told me to sell it and send him the money and that's what I'm gonna do. I suppose she felt good for just a little while, but friend, it is forgiveness, it is restitution, it is love that is the second mile. [ADRIAN ROGERS]

Romans would often take a Jewish citizen, a civilian, a Roman soldier would say to a Jewish civilian, Here—carry this backpack for me. Carry my burden. Carry my weapons. You must do it by law. You must carry this burden for a mile. That was the law. And you talk about something that was humiliating to a Jew. Something that he hated with all of the intensity of his soul would be to be forced to carry another man's burden for a mile. Now, it is said that every Jewish boy had marked off a milepost from his house. He knew exactly how far a mile was because he was going to carry that burden a mile, but not one step further. He knew exactly how. And so this is the situation in Jesus' time. And it caused so much resentment; it caused so much rebellion. And the Roman soldiers, according to historians, enjoyed humiliating the Jew by making him carry that burden a mile.

But now, here's another man. He's heard Jesus give the Sermon on the Mount. A Roman soldier comes along and says, hey you. Come over here. You talking to me? Be right there. Carry that burden. Yes sir, be glad to. Come on, let's go. The soldier says, this man, is he sick? What's wrong with this fellow? They begin to walk along and the Jewish man says to the Roman soldier, where you from? Tell me about your family.

How long have you been in the army? And they're walking along and they're getting in a conversation. And then they come finally to the one-mile mark. The Roman soldier says, well, thank you for carrying my burden. You've been different than most people. I appreciate it. And the Jewish boy says, wait a minute. You're tired. This is a heavy load. Right down the road about two miles there's a well of water we can both get a drink, I'm thirsty. I'm sure you must be thirsty. Let me just carry this for you another mile. Tell me some more about your family. Tell me about what it was like back in Rome. Why the second mile is so different from the first mile, they become friends. They begin to talk, they begin to converse. They're sitting there drinking water and the Roman soldier says to the Jewish man. I, you know, I've got to confess something to you. I've had the wrong opinion of you Jews. I really have. I've hated Jews. I have thought you were a squalid race. I thought you had no character. I thought... I've never seen, Listen, just forgive me for the way I've felt about the Jewish people. The Jew says well, listen. You've got a heart just like I do. When you talk about your wife and children, I saw that the heart that beats in your chest is just like the heart that beats in mine. Why did you go two miles? Why? I mean you didn't have to. Why? Well, the Jewish man says, have you ever heard of a man named Jesus? Many of us think He's the Messiah. I heard him preach an incredible message. We were there at the Mount of the Beatitudes and Jesus preached. And Jesus said, when you fellows tell us to go one mile, we're suppose to go two just out of love. He said, Jesus said that? Who is Jesus? I've never heard anything like that. Tell me about this Jesus. I want to learn more about that. I have never in my life heard anything like that. Don't you think that would open a door to witness? Don't you think that would make a difference? Don't you think it would make a difference where you worked tomorrow if you began to live that way? Don't you think it would make a difference in your school, Hey, I know it would make a difference in our homes. I know it'd make a difference on our jobs. I know it would make a difference if we would just simply say, I'm not going to go just one mile and do all that is required. I'll do what Jesus says and I'll go the second mile. When they slap me on one cheek, I'll turn the other. They sue me in law and take my shirt, I'll give 'em my coat. I'll not just give what I owe, but I'll give what they need. Somebody makes me go a mile, I'll go a second mile and I'll do it with a smile on my face.

The POWER OF A CHANGED LIFE: Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, who was for thirty years the great pastor of Westminster Chapel in London. His wife Bethan tells the story of the remarkable conversion of a man named Mark McCann. McCann was the meanest man in town, and he loved to fight. Although he was sixty years old, he was not known to have ever lost a scuffle. When he would go to a fair, he would always take two friends with him because when he got into a fight he would go so out of his mind that he would kill the other person if his friends did not restrain him. One time his wife fixed his dinner, and the dog got into it while McCann was washing his hands. He took a bread knife, took the dog into the kitchen, and cut his head off. Then that man met Jesus. He was barely literate, and as Bethan Lloyd-Jones tells the story, when he first saw the name of Jesus in Welsh in the Bible, he wept and kissed the name. He was completely changed from a vengeful, hateful, "these-are-my-rights," Lex Talionis, law-of-the-jungle sort of man to a man who was loving and kind.

George Mueller wrote, "There was a day when I died, utterly died to George Mueller and his opinions, his preferences, and his tastes and his will. I died to the world, to its approval and its censure. I died to the approval or the blame of even my brethren and friends. And since then I have studied only to show myself approved unto God."

One night after ten o'clock Messineur, the most famous portrait and landscape painter of his time, called one of the most famous physician-surgeons in Paris and said, "Doctor, will you please come over to my house quickly? I have an emergency. I so need you, Doctor, and I don't want anybody but you. Won't you please come? I know you don't make night calls, and I know you have to operate tomorrow morning, but Doctor make this one exception. Please do. I'll see that you are well paid for it."

The doctor hurried, and when Messineur met him at the door, the surgeon said, "Well, I'm glad to see you are not the patient. You are pretty precious to Paris for your paintings." Quickly they went through room after room in the great mansion until they came to a little sun porch where, among the cushions, lay a tiny poodle with a broken leg. The great surgeon almost froze with astonishment. Then he swallowed his pride – for the

time being; opened his bag, set the bone, put the splints on just as carefully and tenderly as if he were ministering to a king. As the doctor prepared to leave, Messineur said, "Doctor, send me a big bill. I don't care how much it is, I'll pay it."

"I'll not send you any bill at all. Come up to my office next week and we'll talk about the payment," the doctor answered. When Messineur arrived the next week the doctor said, "You're a painter; aren't you?"

He answered, "I paint portraits and landscapes."

The surgeon said, "You are a painter, aren't you?"

The artist again answered, "I paint portraits and landscapes."

"But," the doctor persisted, "you are a painter, aren't you?"

"Yes sir, I am a painter. I paint portraits and landscapes."

"Well, come with me," said the doctor. They went through three or four rooms until they came to a little room with nothing in it but a cabinet in the middle of the floor which was covered with newspapers. Near the cabinet there was a can of white paint and a cheap brush. "Paint the cabinet and we'll call the bill for the dog square," said the doctor as he turned, and walked out.

A little while later the artist came back to the doctor's office, and with no resentment in his voice at all asked, "Doctor, are you going to be using that room for the next three or four days?"

"No, take your time. Paint it any time you want to."

"May I have the key to it?" Messineur asked. He locked it up. A few days later the artist came back and smilingly said, "I've finished painting the cabinet. Come and look at it. I hope it suits you." There on the front of that cabinet was what has been called *Messineur's masterpiece*.

The doctor stood with his mouth open a minute and then with his eyes a little bit misty, stuck out his hand and said, "You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din. I'll take that home and put it in my living room, but I won't tell the world how ugly I was to you."

Now, suppose Messineur had just painted that cabinet white as the doctor suggested. They would have squared off at each other and been enemies the rest of their lives. Instead they became the closest of friends. They made each other happy. That's what Jesus is talking about when he said, "Turn the other cheek." [C. Roy Angell, *Shields of Brass*, 17-18]

RETURNING GOOD FOR EVIL ILLUSTRATION: I read years and years ago, maybe thirty, forty years ago, I can't remember when, a story that's always been in my heart about a soldier boy, drafted in the army, who at home, Brother Bob, would get on his knees and pray by his bed before he went to sleep and he thought, Would I, do I have the courage to do this in the barracks. Now you can imagine what it'd be like for a soldier in the modern barracks to get down on his knees and pray beside his bed. He wrestled with his conscience, he said, I'm going to do it. Had all these other guys and the obscene language and the dirty pictures and all that. This boy got down on his knees by his bed by his bunk and prayed and thanked God. Some got quiet and some admired him. Was a big, old rough soldier that saw him and picked up his army boots and threw them at this boy while he was praying, struck him.

The boy finished his prayers, went to sleep. The next morning when that man who threw the boots woke up he found those boots beautifully polished, sitting by his own bed.

That boy had polished his boots. I don't know a better example of that than going the second mile, the second mile. You see, I'm sure that when he polished those boots and gave them back and he returned good for evil, there was something that came over him, the joy of the Lord Jesus Christ that you can get no other way. It's love.