

Bryan Scot

Passage: Matthew 5:38-48

INTRODUCTION:

The Book of Matthew shows Jesus Christ as the King. Talk thru the Bible by Bruce Wilkinson and Kenneth Boa; introduce this book by saying,

“Through a carefully selected series of Old Testament quotations, Matthew documents Jesus Christ’s claim to be Messiah. Jesus possesses the credentials of Messiah, ministers in the predicted pattern of the Messiah, preaches messages only Messiah could preach, and finally dies the death only Messiah could die.”

And Now we come to Matthew 5:38-48 “You have heard that it was said, ‘AN EYE FOR AN EYE, AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH.’ But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you. You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *the* good, and sends rain on *the* righteous and *the* unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing *than others*? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

If you all are looking, hoping, or expecting, me to come up with some truth or insight from this passage that you have never heard of, you may be let down. I can only convey that which the passage says, and I can only claim that which the passage claims. I have tried to gain insight into the passage and yet all seems to miss the point. Let me say this: Jesus Christ is not dealing with political, social, or international level of conflict; he is dealing with the individual. He is not saying that we should never stand for anything nor conflict with someone, but

instead he is dealing the life style of the individual. In Matthew 5:38-47 we can see that it is a building block for Matthew 5:48. In hopes of fully grasping Matthew 5:48, let us look at 38-47.

I. **ALL RIGHTS ASIDE**, “You have heard that it was said, ‘AN EYE FOR AN EYE, AND

A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH.’ But I say to you, do not resist an evil person...” verses 38 – 42

Jesus Christ is about to list of some illustrations that show what he is talking about. He is not giving absolutes, but rather he is giving principle, illustrations, or pictures to display his point

A. **TURN THE OTHER CHEEK** “...but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also...”

Personal offense (**Personal Rights**): This is not physical action but rather dealing with insult. If someone wanted to insult someone else they would strike him or her on the cheek.

B. **GIVE MORE THAN SUED FOR** “...If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also.”

Personal Property (**Property Right/ Possession Rights**): With giving your cloak or coat, depending on your translation, the idea here is that of personal property. The more expensive property, the cloak or coat was a more expensive item than an undershirt or tunic was not to be held in such high esteem.

C. **DO MORE THAN REQUIRED** “...Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two...”

Governmental Rights: The idea here is not a running of a marathon but rather doing more than expected. This illustration was seen in the setting of the military. Christ was saying that they should not revolt against the military nor should then do the bar minimum of what the military expected, but rather do more than that which was required from the military.

Keep in mind that this is an illustration, not an all standing absolute.

D. GIVE THAT WHICH IS ASKED "...Give to him who asks of you..."

E. LEND TO HIM WHO BARROWS

These both deal with **Personal Convenience Rights**. The normal action some take when some one asks for something or wants to barrow something is to tuck tale and run, that is not the case here.

Christ is calling the individual to lay aside all rights, every single right need to be laid aside. Each one should not be esteeming himself/herself in such a high position but rather all that you think you're entitled to should be laid aside. George Muller wrote this, "There was a day when I died, utterly died, died to George Muller and his opinions, preferences, tastes and will; died to the world, its approval or pleasures; died to the approval or blame of even my brethren and friends; and since then I have studied only to show myself approved unto God." Christ gives these illustrations to show that we need to die to our self wants and rights, die to what we think what we are entitled to. Christ is saying to lay aside all rights

II. **ALL FEELINGS ASIDE**, verses 43 - 47 "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ..."

It is not the normal, rational, or human response to love your enemy. No one in there right mind would love their enemy. So, why is it said here to love your enemy and to pray for those who persecute you? Christ is gearing up to call the individual something great. But first he states that all feelings needs to be put aside, that is all rights an individual thinks he or she has needs not to come into consideration. Your rights should not govern the decision one is about to make, it should not be determined by your feelings. Now here is the summarization of it all. Christ now makes the point in why he just listed out:

Murder

Adultery

Divorce

Oaths

An eye for an eye

Love your Enemy

It is now that we can come to verse 48 with understanding

The Amplified Bible puts verse 48 this way: *“You, therefore, must be perfect [growing into complete maturity of godliness in mind and character, having reached the proper height of virtue and integrity], as your heavenly Father is perfect.”*

Oswald Chambers states this: “The expression of Christian character is not good doing, but Godlikeness: If the Spirit of God has transformed you within, you will exhibit Divine characteristics in your life, not good human characteristics. God’s life in us express itself as *God’s* life, not as human life trying to be godly.”

Just read to yourself ↓

Elaborate on how we as Christians have dumbed-down, lowered, watered down what the Christian life is supposed to be.

Christ is calling to action that your life should show God to be true.

Illustration: Mrs. Davis’s statement about her son.

INVITATION

The invitation for today is for those of you who have not allowed your life to exemplify God’s perfectness.