

Sermon Study

June 16, 2019

Getting Even
Mathew 5:38-42

vision

Eastview
Christian
Church is a
fearless church
of Christ
followers whose
ridiculous love
and dangerous
witness are
irresistible.



AUTHOR'S NOTES (summary of key points for this study)

This is one of the most controversial teachings of Jesus. Some people see it as a clear call to personal pacifism, that an individual is never supposed to physically 'fight back' against any attacks against him, while others argue that this 'doormat' approach can't possibly be what Jesus is promoting here, but rather that He's again speaking with extreme hyperbole to emphasize the core ideals underpinning the Law (similar to the 'gouge out your eye' verse earlier during the Lust section). This study encourages you to live in that tension, because this teaching has challenged Christians for 2,000 years. It's supposed to.

Gather (your group getting to know each other)

Have you ever gotten back at someone? How did it feel to achieve your revenge and "give them what they deserved" for wronging you?

Go
(your group on
mission)

Living out this teaching of not only non-retaliation but also pairing that with an unexpected response of outsized grace is, arguably, the single best and most noticeable way to witness to your non-believing friends and co-workers. The next time you're wronged, remember that Jesus followers are supposed to react differently, and that our ultimate charge is to remain peaceful, even when it hurts. Especially then.

Grow (your group growing as Christ-followers)

Key Word: "But I say to you, 'Do not resist the one who is evil.'" (Matthew 5:39, ESV)

Discussion

1. Have someone begin the discussion time by leading the group in prayer, then read Matthew 5:38-42 aloud.
2. There's so much packed into these verses. Begin by talking about how you understand what Jesus is teaching here. What does the plain, straightforward sense of it seem to be, in your view?
3. Read Deuteronomy 19:16-21 and Leviticus 24:17-22. What do you think was the purpose of this 'law of retaliation'?
4. Have you ever seen an outsized, disproportionate act of revenge, or a comeback that "went too far"? For example, Frank pokes Jerry in the arm, but in response, Jerry punches Frank in the nose. That response seems a little "uncalled for," "right...like Jerry's response didn't "fit the crime" of what was done to him? Have you seen this, or perhaps seen children do this? Why do you think these disproportionate acts of vengeance happen?

6. If we look at the examples Jesus uses, we could break them into 3 categories: 1) physical violence against you, 2) financial or resource-based threats against you, and 3) threats to your time, choice, and freedom. In which of these would it be hardest for you to exercise restraint if you were wronged in that area? Why?

7. Read Genesis 4:23-24 and compare it with Matthew 18:21-22. If the example of Lamech is outsized, disproportionate revenge, what is the example of Jesus? What is the effect of each approach?

8. Read Deuteronomy 32:41 and Proverbs 25:21-22, then read Romans 12:17-21. What is the takeaway from these verses? What are the obstacles that could prevent you from practicing these teachings?

9. Consider this as you close: how do you want God to react to your offenses against Him: with disproportionate vengeance, with the appropriate justice you deserve, or with outsized grace and forgiveness?

Give

(your group
serving each
other)

Consider serving your group this week by going the extra mile for one of them in some area of their need.