

Life Church Sermon Scriptures for May 8, 2011

You're Just Like Your Father.....?

Bill

Matthew 5:38-49 (New International Version, ©2011)

Eye for Eye

³⁸ “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ ³⁹ But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. ⁴⁰ And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. ⁴¹ If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. ⁴² Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

Love for Enemies

⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶ If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? ⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Luke 6:27-36 (New International Version, ©2011)

Love for Enemies

²⁷ “But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. ²⁹ If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. ³⁰ Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. ³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you.

³² “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. ³³ And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. ³⁴ And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. ³⁵ But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. ³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Exodus 21:22-25 (New International Version, ©2011)

²² “If people are fighting and hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely^[a] but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman’s husband demands and the court allows. ²³ But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, ²⁴ eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, ²⁵ burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.

Leviticus 24:19-20 (New International Version, ©2011)

¹⁹ Anyone who injures their neighbor is to be injured in the same manner: ²⁰ fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. The one who has inflicted the injury must suffer the same injury.

Leviticus 24:19-20 (New Living Translation)

¹⁹ “Anyone who injures another person must be dealt with according to the injury inflicted—²⁰ a fracture for a fracture, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. Whatever anyone does to injure another person must be paid back in kind.

See also Deuteronomy 19:16-21

Philippians 2:3-8 (New International Version, ©2011)

³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; ⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature^[b] of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

Leviticus 19:18 (New International Version, ©2011)

¹⁸ Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.

Deuteronomy 32:35a, 36a (New International Version, ©2011)

³⁵ It is mine to avenge; I will repay....

³⁶ The LORD will vindicate his people...

Proverbs 20:22 (New International Version, ©2011)

²² Do not say, "I'll pay you back for this wrong!" Wait for the LORD, and he will avenge you.

Proverbs 25:21-22 (New International Version, ©2011)

²¹ If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink.

²² In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the LORD will reward you

See Also Romans 12:14, 17-20 (New International Version, ©2011)

Proverbs 24:17 (New International Version, ©2011)

¹⁷ Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when they stumble, do not let your heart rejoice...

See 1 Samuel 25 (David, Nabal and Abigail)

Leviticus 18:1-4 (New International Version, ©2011)

¹ The LORD said to Moses, ² "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'I am the LORD your God. ³ You must not do as they do in Egypt, where you used to live, and you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. Do not follow their practices. ⁴ You must obey my laws and be careful to follow my decrees. I am the LORD your God.

Understanding the Bible

Scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION (NIV) Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

Here, for your convenience, are the Bible passages that we will be using in today's sermon at Life Church. We use the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible so that you can read it in modern English. You may have been accustomed to reading or hearing the King James Version of the Bible, which uses older English (with words like "thee", "thou", "thine", "believeth", etc.). If so, don't be alarmed - the passages below are really from the Bible even though they are in modern English.

The Bible was originally written in three ancient languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. None of the people in the Bible, and none of the people who God used to write it spoke English. In fact, English did not even exist as a language when the Bible was written. The King James Version, first published in 1611, was a translation of the Bible from its original languages into the every day English that people used back then - almost 400 years ago! They didn't just speak that way in church - they spoke that way with everyone. The King James Version was "modernized" in 1769, but, even so, English has certainly changed a lot since then! Since you probably don't speak Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek, you're going to have to read the Bible in translated form. At Life Church we believe that since you're going to read an English translation of the Bible you might as well use an up to date one - written in the English you speak every day. God wants you to understand his Word so that you can put it into practice!

Life Church Sermon Life Group Questions for week of May 8, 2011

“You’re Just Like Your Father.....?”

Bill

KEY PASSAGE: Matthew 5:38-49

PARELLEL PASSAGE: Luke 6:27-36

Based on OT passages: Exodus 21:22-25, Leviticus 24:19-20 and Deuteronomy 19:16-21

“eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth” A.K.A. Lex Talionis, was a civil guideline, used by judges as a guideline for setting penalties for wrongs sustained. It was probably used to determine monetary or material compensation rather than corporal punishment. Personal revenge is not condoned in the Bible (See Leviticus 19, Deuteronomy 32:35a, 36a, Proverbs 20:22, Proverbs 25:21-22, Romans 12:14, 17-20 and Proverbs 24:17)

Jesus invites us to take justice into our own hands by not demanding what is ours, but by giving/paying more than required. Jesus modeled this: See Philippians 2:3-8. Breaking down the Matthew passage a bit:

- 1) *Slap on right cheek was more of an insult than intent to hurt. Turning the other cheek means don’t slap back (Instead, we trust God to defend us.). Jesus actually did this in His trial.*
- 2) *Tunic/Cloak thing: tunic was allowable penalty, cloak was not; Jesus is inviting us to let go of right to pay minimum when we’ve offended someone but to go beyond that in making amends.*
- 3) *Second mile – thought to be a Roman soldier rule – means do more than you’re asked to. And it’s my choice, not yours, thereby changing the power dynamics and opportunity to witness.*
- 4) *Giving to all means not choosing who I help based on their ability to pay me back or do something for me.*

These are all about relationship. (But they don’t mean that we shouldn’t fight against systemic injustice and oppression, remain in an abusive relationship or give when giving is co-dependent and more harmful than not giving.) They are about freedom for the bondage and oppression of the spirit of retaliation. See I Samuel 25 for a story where a revenge plot was aborted with great results.

Which one of these four examples above is most difficult for you to think about practicing?

The second section of the Matthew passage was from Lev 19:18; Jesus takes thing even further, loving your enemies. The phrase about hating your enemy is not Biblical but apparently was a common expression at that time. Jesus says to wish the best for our enemies – those who persecute us, who make our lives miserable. Haters?

Who are my enemies?

- 1 *People I don’t know personally but have lumped into a negative category (by race, generation, political view, nationality, religion, annoying habits). OR people who have done that to me based on non-personal criteria.*
- 2 *personal grudges: persons with whom I have unresolved conflict, again coming from me or heading at me.*
- 3 *temporary annoyances: (persons who have just upset me, whether strangers or acquaintances). Examples: family member left the light on again, driver just cut me off, so-and-so didn’t thank me for such-and-such.*

In all three cases, it’s hard to want the best for that/those person(s). Jesus insist that we do that.

Try to think of an “enemy” in each category above. Are you willing to pray for them, wish God’s best for them and even treat them as you would a friend?

This passage is about being like God. “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” feels daunting, but perfect is also translated “Mature” in other passage, not so much being flawless as being “grown up”, acting like our Father, treating all the same regardless of how they treat us. In Leviticus 18:1-4, the Israelites are told to be different from other peoples around them.

So... what kinda man/woman are you? Typically immature – seeking your own justice, trying to even the score? Or mature, just like your Father?