

THE KING'S SERMON
On Earth as it is in Heaven
The Character of the King's People (Part III)
Matthew 5:38-48

Big Idea: The King's people resemble the King's character.

I. The King's people are characterized by self-sacrifice (5:38-42).

A. The scribes and Pharisees relaxed God's law of retaliation (v. 38).

38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'

Purposes of the law of retaliation:

- (1) Prevent excessive punishment based on personal vengeance and angry retaliation
- (2) Restrain self-appointed vigilante action.

Deuteronomy 19:20-21

20 And the rest shall hear and fear, and shall never again commit any such evil among you.
21 Your eye shall not pity. It shall be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand,
foot for foot.

B. Jesus reinforced God's standard that exceeded the law of retaliation (vv. 39-42).

39 But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil.

> **Four examples that advocate an attitude of self-sacrifice:**

(1) Cheek turning (v. 39b)

39b But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.

Principle: Through self-sacrifice surrender your right to retaliate.

Proverbs 19:11

Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense.

(2) Coat giving (v. 40)

40 And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well.

Principle: Through self-sacrifice surrender your right to possessions.

(3) Mile walking (v. 41)

41 And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.

Principle: Through self-sacrifice surrender your right to time and schedule.

(4) Benevolent giving (v. 42)

42 Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

Principle: Through self-sacrifice surrender your right to money.

> **Paul willingly set aside his rights for the sake of the gospel and the welfare of others (1 Cor. 8:13-9:27).**

1 Cor. 9:12

If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we even more? Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.

The only person who is nondefense, non-vengeful, never bears a grudge, and has no spite in his heart is the person who has died to self. To fight for one's rights is to prove that self is still on the throne of the heart.

John MacArthur

> **How can we live this way?**

(1) You must be empowered by the Spirit.

None of us has the strength of character to live this way.

It takes a new man to live this kind of life.

The Master expects from His disciples such conduct as can be explained only in terms of the supernatural. **J. Oswald Sanders**

(2) You must die to self.

Matthew 16:24-25

24 Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

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 of the blame of even my brethren and friends. And since then I have studied only to show myself approved unto God.

George Mueller

(3) You must trust in God

1 Peter 2:21-23

21 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. 22 He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. 23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

> **Why should we live this way?**

(1) To be a witness for Christ.

Matthew 5:16

16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

(2) To receive a reward in heaven.

Matthew 5:10-12

10 “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

II. The King’s people are characterized by sacrificial love (5:43-48).

A. The scribes and Pharisees relaxed God’s standard of love (v. 43).

43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’

Leviticus 19:18

18 You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord

B. Jesus reinforced God’s standard that exceeded human love (vv. 44-49; Lk. 6:27-28; Rom. 12:14-21).

44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

Luke 6:27-28

27 “But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.

This is the supreme demand. Though the medium of prayer we go to our enemy, stand by his side, and plead for him to God. **Dietrich Bonhoeffer - *The Cost of Discipleship*, p. 166**

> **We reveal who our Father is when we love our enemies.**

45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

Psalms 145:15-16

15 The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. 16 You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing.

> **We are to exceed earthly love with heavenly love.**

46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing

than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

> How can we live this way?

(1) Preach the gospel to yourself.

- Jesus did not retaliate against those who struck Him (Mt. 26:47-68; 27:27-31).

- Jesus willingly set aside his rights to save His enemies (Phil. 2:5-8; Rom. 5:6-11).

Philippians 2:5-8

5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

- Jesus prayed for His enemies as He was being crucified (Lk. 23:24).

Luke 23:24 Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.

Jesus seems to have prayed for his tormentors actually while the iron spikes were being driven through his hands and feet; indeed the imperfect tense suggests that he kept praying, kept repeating his entreaty 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do'. If the cruel torture of crucifixion could not silence our Lord's prayer for his enemies, what pain, pride, prejudice or sloth could justify the silencing of ours?

John R. W. Stott - *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7): Christian Counter-Culture, The Bible Speaks Today*, p. 119.