

# Fight, Flight, Wrong and Right

## Matthew 5:38-48

Slide 1: "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 the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

Slide 2: "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 makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Slide 3: We are not primarily talking about resistance to revenge and retaliation. We are first and foremost talking about **righteousness**.

Slide 4:

Matthew 5:17 - *"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them."*

Matthew 5:20 - *"For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."*

Slide 5: *"You cannot do righteousness. You must be righteousness."* ~ Bob Hay

Slide 6: Don's Rubik's cube of righteousness

- *For them, not murdering is enough. For me, don't even walk toward anger.*
- *For them, not committing adultery is enough. For me, don't flirt with any other passion or hope outside of your true covenant love.*
- *For them, getting the divorce paperwork perfect is enough. For me, keeping the covenant is the only perfection I'm looking for.*
- *For them, following through when they swear to God is enough. For me, every word spoken is in God's presence, so every word is an oath.*

Slide 7:

*The Pharisees standard of righteousness:*

- *How far is too far (with retaliation)?*
- *What can I get away with and still be okay (concerning revenge)?*
- *Show me the boundaries (i.e. “Who exactly is my neighbor...and who is my enemy?”)*

Slide 8:

*Matt. 5:38 “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’*

*Matt. 5:39a But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil.*

Slide 9:

*Genesis 6:5 “The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”*

Slide 10:

*”The problem was that the rabbis of Jesus’ day were misusing this provision of the Law; they had ‘extended this principle of just retribution from the law courts (where it belongs) to the realm of personal relationships (where it does not belong)’. They justified retaliation and the taking of revenge by a law that was designed to prevent just that. There are occasions when we must endure wrongful suffering (1 Peter 2:20). Jesus’ words are not a call to absolute pacifism but to submission to God in every circumstance.” ~ Scholar Iain Campbell*

Slide 11:

*Matt. 5:39b But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.*

*Matt. 5:40 And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well.*

*Matt. 5:41 And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.*

Slide 12:

*“How do the Righteous respond when wronged?”*

Slide 13:

3 Examples:

- Slaps
- Lawsuits
- Forced Labor

Slide 14:

Matt. 5:42 Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

Slide 15:

Two Possibilities:

- Life is all about you.
- Life is not all about you.

Slide 16:

Matt. 5:43 *“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’*

Slide 17:

*Leviticus 19:18 “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.”*

Slide 18:

Not only is “Hate your enemy” nowhere to be found anywhere in the Bible, but in the same chapter of Leviticus, look what we find:

1. *Lev. 19:10 And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner (outsider, non-neighbor): I am the LORD your God.*
2. *Lev. 19:34 You shall treat the stranger (outsider, non-neighbor) who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.*

Slide 19:

*Matt. 5:44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, Matt. 5:45 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.*

Slide 20:

*Matt. 5:46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?*

*Matt. 5:47 And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?*

*Matt. 5:48 You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

Slide 21:

*Isaiah 50:6 “I gave my back to those who strike (slapped), and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard; I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting.”*

# Community Group Discussion Questions

1. What still stands out as you think about the passage and/or the sermon?
2. Slaps, tunics and forced labor. These are three somewhat foreign examples of righteous response to wrongdoing.  
How have you understood them?  
How have you heard these examples explained before?  
How did the explanations today challenge or clarify your understanding?
3. Have you ever been shame-slapped, legally targeted for your faith, or unfairly treated by a supervisor or someone in charge because you were a Christian?  
How did you respond? What do you think a righteous response would look like?
4. What is the relationship to between righteous non-resistance and forgiveness?
5. Is it possible for this kind of radical righteous response that doesn't involve forgiveness? If so, what does that look like?
6. On a scale of 1-10, how righteous do you feel?  
Read 2 Cor. 5:17 and 5:21. Does it matter if you feel or don't feel righteous?  
How can you respond from your righteous identity in Christ, even when you don't feel it?
7. Praise and pray.