

Grace, not Vengeance

Matthew 5:38-42

Big Idea: God built his kingdom on grace; so, as kingdom citizens we extend grace to people who don't deserve it.

³⁸ "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'³⁹ 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.⁴⁰ And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well.⁴¹ And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.⁴² Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you. (Mat 5:38-42 ESV)

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1. Focus on love (v. 38).
2. Extend grace to the offender (vv. 39-40).

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“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,’” (Mat 5:38; *cf.* Duet 19:16-21).

Two Pharisaical mistakes:

- i. Retribution is an entitlement.
- ii. Justice should be personally executed.

God's Law Promotes:

- i. Love, by protecting people.
- ii. Righteous living, by teaching us how to live (Gal 3:24).
- iii. Justice by keeping us from going too far in judgment.

At the cross, God shows perfect love
and justice (Rom 3:21-26).

2. Extend grace to the offender (vv. 39-42).

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Ignore the cheek-slapper (v. 39b).

- i. In Jesus' time this kind of slap was very insulting.
- ii. This is not act of violence as much as it was an insult.
- iii. Pharisees teach: "return insult for insult."
- iv. Jesus teaches: "ignore the insults."

Pay the tunic-taker (v. 40).

- i. A tunic was something given as collateral for a loan.
- ii. When the loan was repaid the tunic would be returned.
- iii. If there was a disagreement, it would go to court. This is the situation being described here.
- iv. Pharisees teach: "sue him back."
- v. Jesus teaches: do whatever it takes to "make it right."

March the extra mile (v. 41).

- i. A Roman could ask a Jew to carry their stuff for a mile.
- ii. In Matt 27:32 Simon was made to carry Jesus' cross.
- iii. Pharisees teach: "do just enough."
- iv. Jesus teaches: "do more than required."

Give to the beggar (v. 42).

- i. This example presupposes a legitimate need for help.
- ii. Pharisees would loan money to control people.
- iii. Jesus teaches generosity, not extortion.

Live the way of the Kingdom:

- i. Be humble and ignore the insults.
- ii. Keep your commitments/promises.
- iii. Do more than required.
- iv. Live generously.

The world is full of cheek-slapping, tunic-taking, mile-marching, beggars (like us) ...
and Jesus wants us to love them all.