



“The Heart of Mercy”

September 19, 2021

Matthew 5:38–42

[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.

1 Peter 2:21-25

21 To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. 22 “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.” 23 When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. 24 “He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.” 25 For “you were like sheep going astray,” but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Fun Question:

1. D.A Carson, from his book “Jesus’s Sermon on the Mount and His Confrontation with the World) says this about Matthew 5:38-42:

“The burden of the passage is this: Christ will not tolerate a mercenary, tight-fisted, penny-pinching attitude ... Don’t be asking yourself all the time, “What’s in it for me? What can I get out of it?”

“The legalistic mentality which dwells on retaliation and so-called fairness makes much of one’s rights. What Jesus is saying in these verses, more than anything else, is that his followers have no rights. They do not have the right to retaliate and wreak their vengeance (5:39), they do not have the right to their possessions (5:40), nor to their time and money (5:41f.). Even their legal rights may sometimes be abandoned (5:40)”.

Please share some of your genuine struggles with the commands of Christ in Matthew 5:38-42. Why would we want to move towards a life like this?

2. Living this surrendered life of self-sacrifice means that we leave room for God to work. This is so hard for us because we're always trying to control the situation—control other people, especially when we feel that our rights have been infringed upon. For the Christian every fight is a fight of faith—will or will we not believe the promises of God. We are called to live this surrendered life of mercy and kindness to even those who may take advantage of you.

How can you go about in growing in this direction towards a surrendered life?

3. Read 1 Peter 2:21-25. What was Christ able to do and how does this make possible in having the self-giving love that is called for in Matthew 5:38-42?