

## Flipped: The Upside Down Kingdom (Revenge & Enemies)

Andy Deane · 10/08/2023 · Matthew 5:38-48

Today Jesus shows us how differently His followers should react to difficult people.

### **REVENGE**

Matthew 5:38-42, 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, & do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.*

#### **The Common View:**

Retaliate each and every time (v.38)

- Exodus 21:24 says this to limit retribution by the government, but teachers taught it for personal relationships.
- This is still the common view in our culture, "If they hit (or insult) me, I'll hit back even harder!"

#### **The Kingdom View:**

You don't have to retaliate (v.39)

- Jesus isn't saying don't stand up against evil. He isn't saying the government shouldn't punish people. He isn't saying don't stand up against physical attack. He isn't saying do not protect your family or other people.
- "*Turn the other cheek*" is like saying, "have some self-control." It's ok to walk away. It's ok to let cops handle it.
- Why would we do this? To be a witness that God is a peacemaker, and that God is the judge, not us.

You don't have to return legal threats (v.40)

- The law in Exodus 22:26 stated, "*If you take your neighbor's cloak as a pledge, return it by sunset.*"
- If you're sued for shirt (which legally they could take), you're free to give what you can legally keep (your coat).
- Why would we not fight (or litigate) over every wrong? To show our trust and contentment in what God provides, and our hope in the future that awaits us in heaven. This doesn't mean that lawsuits aren't appropriate at times.

You can bless those who take advantage of you (v.41-42)

- A Roman soldier could command a Jew to carry his pack. Jesus says, give another mile out of a free choice!
- Why? To show people that Christ followers are surprisingly kind and generous.
- Romans 12:21, *Do not be overcome by evil, overcome evil with good.*

### **ENEMIES**

Matthew 5:43-47, 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?*

#### **The Common View:**

Only love who you want to love (v.43)

- Leviticus 19:18 did say the positive part of this verse, but not the, "hate your enemy" part.
- They made that up!

#### **The Kingdom View:**

Love even your enemies (v.44)

- God meant that all people are our neighbors (even our enemies!)
- Jesus is basically promoting the "turn your enemies into your friends" approach.
- When that's not possible, we have the Psalms as an example of how to pray for justice towards the wicked.

### Follow God's lead to love them (v.45)

- Clouds don't follow unrepentant sinners only, and sunshine doesn't just look for the righteous.
- Young children imitate their parents, and we should imitate our heavenly Father.

### Be different than unbelievers (v.46-47)

- Shouldn't our relationship with God cause us to act differently?
- Yes :)

## **THE LAW**

Matthew 5:48, *48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

### **The Common View:**

I follow most of the law so I think I'm ok

### **The Kingdom View:**

Perfection is required by God (v.45)

- This is God's ultimate standard, and we should take it to heart, but the main message is you have to be perfect.
- James 2:10, *For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.*

Only God, and His Son, are perfect, but He made a way!

- What do we do since we aren't perfect? We take Jesus up on His offer of rescue and borrow His righteousness.
- Romans 3:21-22, *But now apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been made known... This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe...*