**Week of July 21, 2019**

**Matthew 5:38-48**

38 Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: 39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. 41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. 42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. 43 Ye have heard that it hath been said; Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. 44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; 45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? 47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? 48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect

**Understanding the Scriptures**

In today’s lesson is a continued extension of Jesus’ Sermon the Mount can be divided in two parts: 1) how to respond when injured (38-42) and 2) how to treat those who harm us (43-48). These statements are blended in Luke 6:27-36. Jesus began Matthew 5 by sharing the blessings of the Beatitudes and promises to those who follow them. His instructions have gone from letting one’s light shine to allowing people to offend you without trying to get back at them. The phrase “you have heard that it was said” refers to an Old Testament Law found in Leviticus 24:19-20. Jesus is simply teaching the people to do more for God that what they have heard or seen.

Under the Mosaic Law, offenses were to be punished. The phrase “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth” is fond three times in the Mosaic Law. Instead of retaliating, Jesus advocated for submissiveness to the one doing the injuring. Jesus said if someone causes you harm or offends you, be peaceful about it. In other words, believers are to give the offense to God in prayer.

In verse 43, Jesus once again referred to the Old Testament Law called for loving one’s neighbor, but the religious leaders added. “hating one’s enemies.” Jesus flipping this law on its head and instructed that Christ disciples should love their enemies. Love is the Greek word for agape, which is sacrificial love. Calling the people to love their enemies was unheard of among Jesus listeners. Leviticus 19:18 speaks of not doing wrong to your own people, but Jesus expanded this to avoid doing wrong to anyone, including enemies,

Christians are to love their enemies with the same love as a friend. If we, too, only love those who love us, then we are not doing anything differently from pagans and sinners.

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