



Chapter 5:38-42

- Matt. 5:38 “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’
- Matt. 5:39 But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.
- Matt. 5:40 If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also.
- Matt. 5:41 And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.
- Matt. 5:42 Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.

Context – law vs. grace

Three times in the Law of Moses we read...

“An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.”
Ex. 21:24, Lev. 24:20 & Deut. 19:21.

Part of a larger group of laws known as...

“Lex talionis”, or “Law of Retaliation”

These laws were given by the Lord to protect the innocent and to make sure that retaliation didn’t go beyond the original offence.

That is, the Law didn’t require a person to seek compensation rather, God placed limitations on the extent to which people could be compensated for their loss.

Why? Because our human nature is not satisfied with justice, it wants revenge! However, the Pharisees interpreted these laws as

commandments to be enforced rather than as legal means to seek compensation. Jesus rejected the Pharisees interpretation.

Observations & Discussion

1. If we don't resist evil people then how can we ever hope to right the injustices in the world?

2. Read the examples that Jesus provides of an evil person in verses 39-42; is Jesus talking about murderers, rapists, or terrorists? What then does He mean by an "evil person"?

3. What do you gain (or keep!) by following Jesus' instructions for dealing with an evil person?

4. What are some examples of how Jesus applied His own instructions to His life? (i.e. When Jesus did *not* demand His own rights). Follow up—what did Jesus accomplish by giving up His rights?

5. How can you apply Jesus' instructions to your life in this present season (COVID, divisive election, social justice issues, etc.)?