

- So far in the passages we have covered from Mt. 5 we have looked at:
 - Living Righteous...Life Beyond Anger. Murder vs. Anger
 - Keeping the Command vs. Keeping the Heart - Adultery. Adultery vs. Lust
 - Divorce vs. God's original intention.
 - Oath vs. Integrity. Let your yes be yes and your no be no.
 - In all these passages we finish with these truths: One, God is looking at the heart while man looks at the outside. Two, sin of anger and lust are devaluations of the worth of a person. The devaluing of something God has called precious. Three, **Here is where the value of human life begins – in the heart** – and when human life is devalued in any way it is an affront to the God who created that life. This is what the Pharisees were missing and this is what Jesus wanted the people to "get."
- For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Mt 5:20
 - Jesus then starts these five sayings, "*you have heard but I say*" portions of scripture. By doing so, He is after the heart of the people and not just the behavior. He is after the people to find righteousness that is of the heart and not just of the behavior.
 - I believe Jesus is being intentional with his choice of laws to drive home the point...that a changed heart is way better than a changed behavior. Anger, lust, divorce, and integrity are heart issues.
- Jesus calls us to live above the law...so far that we would never be called into question for breaking it. This section has to do with going further than the law required.
- *"You have heard the law that says the punishment must match the injury: 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say, do not resist an evil person! If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also. If you are sued in court and your shirt is taken from you, give your coat, too. If a soldier demands that you carry his gear for a mile, carry it two miles. Give to those who ask, and don't turn away from those who want to borrow."* (Matthew 5:38-42, NLT)
- So far, what we have seen in this passage of Mt 5, is that the law takes us so far but Jesus takes us further. The law only allows a person to go so far and that is enough but Jesus is call us to go even further than the law. In our passage today we are invited/instructed to go the second mile.

I. The Law Says

- A. The religious teachers of the day were interested in keep the law, not the heart of God. Therefore their righteousness was: *eye for and eye and tooth for tooth*... it demanded that punishments suit rather than exceed the crimes...get even. We find these scriptures that Jesus uses here:
1. *"an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot,"* (Exodus 21:24, NLT)
 2. *"a fracture for a fracture, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. Whatever anyone does to injure another person must be paid back in kind."* (Leviticus 24:20, NLT)

3. *"You must show no pity for the guilty! Your rule should be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot."* (Deuteronomy 19:21, NLT) Showing no pity is a concept foreign to God as He relates to Israel. Time and time again He is demonstrating mercy.

B. Eye for eye, tooth for tooth was about getting even, while limiting revenge.

II. But I Say To You

A. What did Jesus say?

1. *But I say, do not resist an evil person!*

a) "But surely we are called by God, as Christians, to resist evil"! We are called to resist evil. Jesus resisted evil wherever He saw it. He overturned the tables of the money changers at the temple. He cast out devils consistently. He opposed the religious self-righteous crowd at every opportunity. But that doesn't negate his command here to "not resist evil".

2. *If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also.*

a) Matthew inserts a word which implies a backhanded slap. This is what we would call a double insult. A surpassing righteousness would require meekness that goes beyond the worse insult.

b) We are not to retaliate. In the midst of offense.

c) Don't take offense and endure it without retaliation.

3. *If you are sued in court and your shirt is taken from you, give your coat, too.*

a) You were not allowed to take a man's coat because he would die of exposure at night. In the midst of injustice.

b) But Jesus says go further than what the law requires.

4. *If a soldier demands that you carry his gear for a mile, carry it two miles.*

a) A Roman soldier could ask you to carry his gear. He was allowed to have you do that for one mile.

b) Jesus says, go two miles. This is where the phrase comes from...."Go the second mile."

c) This Greek word translated "force or compel" In the verseIf anyone compels you..... Carries with itthe idea of a "readiness and willingness" to submit to An inconvenienceor to an unreasonable demand.

5. *Give to those who ask, and don't turn away from those who want to borrow*

a) Let your heart be generous.

B. Jesus is saying to go farther with your heart than what the Pharisees are doing.

1. In so doing, your righteousness exceeds theirs because yours will be of the heart and the heart and not just the behavior.

2. There are ways that religious people respond and there are ways that godly people respond. Again, Jesus is after the heart not the behavior.

3. Jesus wants meekness to stand out. Meekness is controlled strength, not weakness.

III. It's A Radical Life

- A. What Jesus has to say in this 'hard saying' is that the course of action He prescribes does not come naturally to us. He doesn't just say, "don't retaliate" He even goes so far as to say, "Don't harbor a spirit of resentment."
- B. In essence, Jesus was saying that his disciples need to do more than the legalists who do no more than what is required of them. The law said 'Get even!' But I say, "Don't even think about getting even. Think about blessing!"
 1. To love your neighbor is the first mile - to love your enemy is the second mile
 2. To bless those who bless you is the first mile, - to bless those who curse you is the second mile
 3. To do good to those who do good to you is the first mile - to do good to those who hate you is the second mile.
 4. The religious live in the first mile. The genuine believer lives in the second mile.
- Praying for those who pray for you is the first mile - praying for those who spitefully use you is the second mile

Conclusion:

- It is a call to a higher standard...a kingdom standard.
- We want to live in such a way that when asked, "How are you doing in your Christian walk?" We can answer, "I'm on the second mile!"
- Two mile men grow in some of the most adverse conditions. The pits, the accusations, and the prisons that Joseph came out of seemed only to heighten his commitment and his abilities. Never once in the account in Genesis, will one find Joseph complaining about his lot in life. That was because he had an understanding and trust in his God.

Prov. 3:5-6 *"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding."
"In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."*