

Providence Reformed Baptist Church - Sunday, May 30, 2021

Sermon Series: The Gospel of the Kingdom – Matthew

Message 34. An Eye for An Eye – Matthew 5:38-42

Pastor Phillip M Way

Introduction: “Righteousness, the one word that sums up Christian living.” (MLJ) In Matthew 5:21-48, Jesus uses 6 illustrations that demonstrate common principles in the midst of particular commandments that prove that He did not come to give a new law, but new life! The contrast in these illustrations is not the Law given by Moses vs. the Law given by Christ. It is a contrast of the Pharisees’ false interpretation of the Law given by Moses and the true interpretation of the Law given by our Lord Himself. Jesus here is saying, “THIS is what I gave Moses.” The fifth contrast between the Pharisees’ false interpretation of the law involves the commandments related to punishing violence that has resulted in injury.

- I. The Law Narrowed – vs. 38
 - A. Laws Related to Retaliation – Exodus 21:22-27; Lev. 24:19-20; Deut. 19:15-21
 1. Instructions to the Judges
 - a. Upholding the law between conflicting parties
 - b. Not taking the law into your own hands – not for individuals, but justice
 - c. The punishment must fit the crime (protection against excess)
 2. Anger, violence, retaliation, revenge – Rom. 12:19
 3. Insult vs. assault
 - B. The Pharisees’ Legalistic Interpretation
 1. Applied to individuals, not judges
 2. This was a right, not a restraint – a right to retaliate and uphold your honor/standing
 3. This was used to justify revenge by making a negative injunction a positive command
- II. The Law Applied – vs. 39-41
 - A. Never Resist an Evil Person? – Pacifism
 1. No police, soldiers, or even government allowed – a ridiculous extreme
 2. Self-denial or self-defense?
 3. The world vs. the individual – MLJ Quote #1
 4. If Jesus is teaching pacifism, then He is teaching mere external legalism and contradicting clear Scripture
 - B. Personal Insult – Turn the Other Cheek
 1. Hurt – Retaliation – Bitterness and Grudges – Hate
 2. Hudson Taylor – boat example
 3. Dealing with Insults – 1 Cor. 4:3
 - C. Personal Rights – Give Your Cloak Also
 1. Personal rights vs. petitioning when the law is broken – Acts 16:35-40
 2. See Exodus 22:26-27
 3. Even if the law protects you, do not be ruled by your right to “things”
 - D. Personal Preferences – Go the Second Mile
 1. Disliking what the Law Demands
 2. Willing obedience to go even beyond what is asked
- III. The Law Obeyed – vs. 42
 - A. Know Your Rights
 1. The Right to Retaliation
 - a. You will be abused for the sake of the gospel – 1 Cor. 9:4-6
 - b. When that happens, don’t fight back – Rom. 12:19-21; 1 Peter 2:22-24

2. The Right to Possessions
 - a. All we have is from the Lord and given to us in trust – stewardship
 - b. Use what you have been given in the best possible ways – Matt. 25:14-30
3. The Right to Time and Money
 - a. Give cheerfully to him who asks – 2 Cor. 9:7
 - b. Give to meet genuine needs – 1 John 3:17-18 – CHS Quote #2
- B. The Main Truth – Your Attitude Toward Self
 1. It takes being a new creation (a new man) to live and think like this (Be-attitudes)
 2. I must die to myself – Luke 9:23
 - a. My immediate feelings of needing revenge when wronged
 - b. My personal possessions that possess me more than I possess them
 - c. My personal preferences that may hinder my gospel witness
 3. Under Christ’s rule, I have no rights other than to be called a son or daughter of God – 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 1 John 3:1

Quotes

MLJ Quote #1 – “For the world, and for the nation, the law still applies, and it is the law which says ‘an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’ These people are still under that justice which restrains and holds man back, preserving law and order and controlling excesses. That is why a Christian must believe in law and order, and why he must never be negligent of his duty as a citizen of a State. He knows that the ‘powers that be are ordained of God’, that lawlessness must be controlled, and vice and crime kept within bounds.”

CHS Quote #2 – “Sometimes a loan may be more useful than a gift. Do not refuse it to those who will make right use of it. These precepts are not meant for fools; they are set before us as our general rule; but each rule is balanced by other Scriptural commands and there is the teaching of a philanthropic common sense to guide us. Our spirit is to be one of readiness to help the needy by gift or loan, and we are not exceedingly likely to err by excess if this direction; hence the baldness of the command.”

Cross References

Exodus 21:22-27

22 “If men fight, and hurt a woman with child, so that she gives birth prematurely, yet no harm follows, he shall surely be punished accordingly as the woman’s husband imposes on him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. 23 But if any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, 24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 25 burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. 26 “If a man strikes the eye of his male or female servant, and destroys it, he shall let him go free for the sake of his eye. 27 And if he knocks out the tooth of his male or female servant, he shall let him go free for the sake of his tooth.

Leviticus 24:19-20

19 ‘If a man causes disfigurement of his neighbor, as he has done, so shall it be done to him— 20 fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he has caused disfigurement of a man, so shall it be done to him.

Deuteronomy 19:15-21

15 “One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established. 16 If a false witness rises against any man to testify against him of wrongdoing, 17 then both men in the controversy shall stand before the Lord, before the priests and the judges who serve in those days. 18 And the judges shall make careful inquiry, and indeed, if the witness is a false witness, who has testified falsely against his brother, 19 then you shall do to him as he thought to have done to his brother; so you shall put away the evil from among you. 20 And those who remain shall hear and fear, and hereafter they shall not again commit such evil among you. 21 Your eye shall not pity: life shall be for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

Romans 12:19

19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord.

1 Corinthians 4:3

3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.

Acts 16:35-40

35 And when it was day, the magistrates sent the officers, saying, “Let those men go.” 36 So the keeper of the prison reported these words to Paul, saying, “The magistrates have sent to let you go. Now therefore depart, and go in peace.” 37 But Paul said to them, “They have beaten us openly, uncondemned Romans, and have thrown us into prison. And now do they put us out secretly? No indeed! Let them come themselves and get us out.” 38 And the officers told these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Romans. 39 Then they came and pleaded with them and brought them out, and asked them to depart from the city. 40 So they went out of the prison and entered the house of Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they encouraged them and departed.

Exodus 22:26-27

26 If you ever take your neighbor's garment as a pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down. 27 For that is his only covering, it is his garment for his skin. What will he sleep in? And it will be that when he cries to Me, I will hear, for I am gracious.

1 Corinthians 9:4-6

4 Do we have no right to eat and drink? 5 Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? 6 Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working?

Romans 12:19-21

19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. 20 Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

1 Peter 2:22-24

22 "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; 23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; 24 who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.

Matthew 25:14-30

14 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. 15 And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. 16 Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. 17 And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. 18 But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. 19 After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. 20 "So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' 21 His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' 22 He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' 23 His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' 24 "Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.' 26 "But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. 27 So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. 28 So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. 29 'For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. 30 And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

2 Corinthians 9:7

7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

1 John 3:17-18

17 But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? 18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

Luke 9:23

23 Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

1 John 3:1

3 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

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