

# Bona Fide- Justice prevails over Retaliation.

## Sermon Notes

March 28, 2021

### Triumphal Entry

- Crowds gather as they hear the “teacher” the “healer” the one who raised a man from the dead is entering the city on a donkey and its colt. Fulfilling **Zechariah 9:9**.
- Laying their cloaks, their outer coats, and palm branches on the road. A tribute to a conquering king.
- Shouting “hosanna” SAVE! Yahweh saves.
- Finally, the tyranny of Rome will fail and we will be liberated.
- This is what happens when we read and listen in part. We find ourselves far from the truth of the moment.
- The law was much like that. The letter of the law was understood, but the spirit of the law was completely lost upon them.

### Justice prevails over retaliation. **Matthew 5:38-42**

- Jesus confronts our tendency to leverage the law to feed our vengeful spirit.
- The laws were written to protect both the victim and violator from disproportionate revenge.  
*“Law intended to limit retaliation and punish fairly could be appealed to as justification for vindictiveness.”* EBC
- True justice seeks making all things right including the relationship.
  - Laws do not bring full justice in restored relationship.
- Laws can protect us from the extremes, but it does not solve the problem of the heart. Brokenness remains.

### Going where the law cannot reach: our attitude.

*“Jesus replaced a law with an attitude; be willing to suffer loss yourself rather than cause another to suffer...It is the strong man who can love and suffer hurt; it is the weak man who thinks only of himself and hurts others to protect himself.”* Wiersbe

### If you have been physically harmed by another. **Matthew 5:38-39**

- You have been physically harmed.
- The Law limited you to seeking equal retribution as to the level you were harmed—“eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.
- **BUT** Jesus says if slapped turn the other cheek.
  - Even if the harm stung, do not return the sting.
  - Even if the harm is an insult do not exchange it for an insult.
  - Even if the harm demeaned you publicly, do not retaliate even if the law allows.

- Why?
  - Your heart and spirit at stake.
  - Your attitude becomes vengeful.
  - Full justice will not be accomplished in relationship.
- What this is not saying—stay and be victimized, harmed, or get the snot beat out of you, or that the third slap opens the door to begin retaliation.
- What this is saying--The context clearly declares we are to avoid a revengeful spirit that becomes consumed with retaliation.

### **If you have wronged another. Matthew 5:40**

- The law allowed for the shirt to be taken, but your cloak (outer coat) was untouchable.
  - The coat was often associated to your identity, sonship, tribe, and faith.
  - The coat was also an essential for blanket, traveling, and shielding from sun. **Exodus 22:26; Deuteronomy 24:13**
- BUT Jesus says if they ask for the shirt give them your coat as well.
- Why?
  - Your heart and spirit are at stake.
  - Your attitude can be simply aloof or even spiteful just giving the shirt.
  - Giving the coat is good for your soul to acknowledge you are wrong and convey repentance.
  - Giving the coat communicates that you want to make things truly right between you and them.

### **If your personal liberty is being infringed upon. Matthew 5:41**

- The Roman occupiers could force a Hebrew to carry their gear one mile at a moments notice.
- BUT Jesus says go with them a second mile.
- Why?
  - Your heart and attitude are at stake.
  - You can become embittered and angry.
  - Your primary mission on earth to bring glory to God in making disciples can become hijacked by a political mission. *"This illustration is implicitly anti-zealot."* EBC Ironically, Jesus was exchanged for the zealot Barabbus!

### **If someone is desperate enough to ask of you. Matthew 5:42**

- Are you open handed with those you around you?
- If they ask, what is the spirit you feel in response?
- Is it an issue of wisdom in this moment or your lack of generosity?

### **As one being on mission with Christ...**

1. When we have been wronged it is not about justice for ourselves, it is about leading the relationship with forgiveness.

*“We may avoid evil, and resist it so far as is necessary for our own security...We must not render evil for evil, must not bear a grudge nor avenge ourselves, nor seek to get even with those who have treated us unkindly, but we must go beyond them by forgiving them.”* Matthew Henry

2. When we have wronged someone, it is not just paying up, it is about restoring peace between both of you.
3. When your liberties are threatened, protect your heart by going the extra mile of grace, lest you become incapable to serve due to bitterness.
4. Welcome the opportunity to be generous to those in need.

## **Pray**

## **Song**

## **Benediction**

### **Group Discussion Guide** of **Matthew 5:38-42**.

1. When someone has harmed you...How would you explain the “eye for eye” rule and Jesus’ directive to turn the other cheek? What makes it difficult to follow the heart of what Jesus is saying? Why do you think he is guiding us this way?
2. When you owe or have harmed someone...Why do you think Jesus is telling you to give back more than what you owe? How does this benefit both you and the other person?
3. When your personal liberties are threatened...Jesus is telling us to go the extra mile. How might this apply today in our current context during a pandemic? Why would Jesus be directing us in this manner when there might be clear infringement upon you? What is the outcome he is looking for from your actions?
4. When someone asks you for something...why does this statement connect to the previous three? What makes generosity so difficult with other people, especially one who is bold enough to ask? What outcome is Jesus looking for in you and for the other person?