

“Did Jesus Really Mean That? Go the Extra Mile”

Matthew 5:38-42

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Happy Mother's Day! I don't know if this was reward or punishment but I was asked to bring the message again this Mother's Day. So, depending on your perspective, thank you or I'm sorry. All kidding aside, I do love to teach so I am grateful for the chance to see get to share with you and extra bonus to see how uncomfortable I can make your pastor while doing so. I know this comes as no surprise to you but Dave is very methodical in just about everything including sermon prep. As he has shared with you, the worship planning team works very hard to plan themes and directions of services in advance as they feel the Lord lead. So, on Thursdays with his plan in hand and prayers at his kneeling rail, he begins writing his sermon in the home office with this same shirt on that Michelle Premuto gave him a few years back. (sermonator shirt pic) He says it gives him inspiration. So, as I started to prepare for this message, I thought maybe I should wear the shirt (hey if it works for him) but I decided that wouldn't work for me and to wear something else (ky. Shirt pic). I figured why not wear the shirt where God resides! Ky is God's country. I even wrote this on Derby Day so increase my odds. Maybe we better pray now so I can ask God's forgiveness and His blessing.... let's pray y'all  
Prayer...

As I said, the theme and series of messages were planned a while back and we have been and continue to be in a series entitled “Did Jesus Really Mean That” We have explored when He said, On the 3<sup>rd</sup> day I will arise, love your enemies, and forgive as I have forgiven. Today's lesson is entitled, “Go the Extra Mile”. We hear that saying so often when talking about doing something extra.... how appropriate to have these words of Jesus explored on Mother's Day. Some would say a “mom” epitomizes what it means to go the extra mile. I am absolutely thrilled to be able to have my mom with me today and publicly want to thank her for always going the extra mile for me.... chaperoning those band trips. stinky buses and all... making goodies, and outfits and all the stuff that comes with extracurricular activities. Working tedious jobs and sacrificing her own needs so that I could have what she didn't. Yeah, we can understand the meaning of going the extra mile for people we love.... When you become a grandparent, this concept is magnified. Sure, I'll drive hours to hear your song at school, sure I'll drive all around to find the toy at McDonalds you are missing and eat all the cheeseburgers along the way, sure I will climb in that tunnel on the playground and get stuck just to say peek a boo. You get the idea. So, thank you Moms and those who have served as moms to other children for going the extra mile.

We also hear the term “go the extra mile” when it comes to job or school performance. When this is usually said, it is the context of “if you want to stand out, go the extra mile” People will notice and you may make better grades, get a promotion, etc. Those all seem to come from a self-serving purpose. Would Jesus really mean that? What does he Mean when He says “go the extra mile”? I asked some experts this question...my 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 grandkids. (video) Ok so they may be a little young to have any theological knowledge to impart but aren't they too cute! Showing them off was a perk trade off for doing this lesson.

I think we better get to our Scripture text to see what Jesus was talking about. For any time, we study a passage in the Bible, we are always best served to get the context of the passage. Today's passage is found in the Gospel of Matthew. This is one of the 4 books of the Bible that deals with the life of Jesus. His words are printed in red and are to be read and understood by us. Matthew's gospel was directed to Greek speaking, Jewish believers in Christ and his whole theme is to present Jesus as the Jewish messiah sent by God to fulfill prophecy. Matthew starts with the birth of Jesus, the magi, and then in chapt. 4, the baptism of Jesus, the 40 days in the wilderness, and his selection of the 12 disciples who are to leave everything and follow him on his mission. Chapt. 4 ends with seeing Jesus preaching and healing and crowds were gathering to see all they had heard about. Chapt. 4, vs. 29 even says large crowd from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and region across the Jordan were following him.... Now remember this is early in His ministry....and remember these disciples are new to this whole thing too.... they see Jesus as the Way but the way to what? This brings us to Chapt. 5 and our lesson.

**Let's look at Matthew 5:1-2** **Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them.** These 2 verses tell us so much. Jesus went away from the crowds, the popularity, and went up a mountain and it said his disciples also went up and he sat down and began to teach them. It was customary for the rabbi or teacher to sit as he taught and Jesus had some mighty teaching for these followers. This was the foundation of how they were to live, lead, and teach. There were some mighty times ahead and they needed to be taught this whole new radical way of thought and life. In every word Jesus spoke, he taught and had reasons for that teaching that would not only be for our own good but to bring His father glory....so He said, "sit down boys....we got some learnin' to do" and thus begins what we know as the greatest sermon of Jesus' life recorded known as the "sermon on the mount" Jesus' words on that mountainside take up 3 chapters(5-7) of Matthew. It's all in red letters cause that's what happened when Jesus talked. Think about it...we are getting to read exactly what was being said to Jesus classroom, the things He thought most important to teach the disciples on how to live out his mission. Remember I said that Matthew was writing for the Jewish believer in Christ. Jesus was trying to parallel the way of Law they all knew to live from Mt. Sinai to this new way of living which was so radical in their way of thinking. I wonder if when the disciples sat down, they were first patting each other on back and saying "hey this first tour brought out the crowds and now He is going to tell us how much more popular we'll be and how he is going to become Ruler of all". Imagine their surprise when he did just the opposite. He started with "the beatitudes which is the blessed are the poor, etc. which turned living upside down and then he began to tell for their light to shine they had to be different. He began teaching about how they were to react to everyday behaviors like anger and lust. How to treat your enemies and those who do you wrong. Dave has taught these in the last 2 previous sermons but today's is in the section which is about retribution or revenge. **Let's now look at our passage again.**

<sup>38</sup> **"You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.'** <sup>39</sup> **But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. <sup>40</sup> And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. <sup>41</sup> If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. <sup>42</sup> Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.**

These disciples knew the way of Law. They had been taught that unlike those who did not follow Yahweh, that they need not give unjust or extra punishment out of revenge...the right thing was equal punishment for the deed. But then Jesus added on the extra...about turning the check and giving the extra coat. Oh man, I wish I had time to teach just on those two passages. If I did, I could tell you about my friend in grade school who went to the catholic church down the street and right before mass she slapped me so she would have something to confess...I digress but today I am supposed to center on vs. 41. Ironically, I get the one about going the extra mile when my dr. said to me this very week.... you need to walk more. Great.

Let's look about why he would use the words in vs. 41 if any one force you, go 2 miles.... this doesn't sound like the mom going extra mile or me doing it for my own reward. What did Jesus mean. Jesus was a master teacher and he always used everyday objects, ideas, situations to illustrate his point. In 1st century Palestine, the Romans had conquered most of Mediterranean world. One of their biggest claims to fame was their vast system of super highways that they had built for travel and conquests. There was more the 50,000 miles throughout empire. At each single mile was a stone marker which would direct to next town as also to Rome. (all roads lead to Rome) Think of our mile markers on our highways. Do you do what I do and, in your head, do the math of what mile marker you are at and subtract to exit mile marker you're going to see how many miles left? Since the people of Palestine lived under roman rule., by law if a Roman citizen or soldier could stop anyone from their conquered lands and make them carry their load, backpack, etc. for one mile and one mile only. So, you could be on your journey, counting your mile markers and how long you think it would take you to get to your destination and boom, a roman soldier says, stop and carry my stuff for one mile. I have wanted to do this to strangers at so many theme parks, airports, etc. These disciples knew this rule, but now Jesus was asking them to take that load an extra mile? Why would they do that? I don't love them, heck I don't even know them. It's not going to help me in the long run, just make me more tired and mad. What could this Jesus be thinking? As I said earlier, none of his words were without meaning.

I love what Dr. O. S. Hawkins had to say about this passage. He wrote about the **mandated mile vs miracle mile**. (slide) The last mile was the mandated mile...it was motivated by law. They knew it. They did it out of duty. It's required. It's always hard to get started with the 1<sup>st</sup> mile. It's hard to do the things we are supposed to do because we want to do other things. Getting my walking program means I have to do the 1<sup>st</sup> mile. As Christians, there is mandated law of things we should do ...how hard is it to start in our disciplines...Bible reading, prayer, worship...reach out. The 1<sup>st</sup> mile interrupts our freedom. We have to lay down our agenda and pick up what seems to be an extra burden.

But the 2<sup>nd</sup> mile, Dr. Hawkins calls the miracle mile. (if there is a 2<sup>nd</sup> mile for me it would be called a miracle) This one is not motivated by law but by love. It's this mile that separates an individual from the others. You can only experience this mile if you are obedient and go the 1st mile. Think about that roman soldier. He stops a young man to carry his load a mile. When over, the young man volunteers to go the next mile rather than laying down the burden. What do you think the soldier thought? What do you think they thought about? Could maybe the question come up "why would you do this?" Could a possible answer be "because of this man called Jesus." His Father told him so. What light might be brought to a dark day? What light might be brought to the young man? Because we have walked the 1st mile with Christ, it would be hard

not to walk in love the 2<sup>nd</sup> and realize that the glory is all His and we can't take credit for it. What would be different in our world if we did more than just what was required? Would it be noticed? Could conversations that wouldn't take place otherwise be started?

Last year when I spoke, I had on my grandmother's watch that my mom had given me and is special treasure to me. Today I felt compelled to wear a completely different kind of watch...a Fitbit. Most of you know for years now, Fitbits have been a way for people to keep track of how many steps in a day you take and you can calculate it for miles, pace, etc. They also have time and all kinds of other features depending on the model. Dave is a walker. He walks for health, relieve stress (ha) and enjoyment (I don't understand). He is pretty committed to getting his 10,000 steps in everyday and more steps most days. I admire him for this and I thought, hey if I get one of those Fitbits, I will start walking. So, 2 Christmas', I asked for one for and he got me one. I was so excited. I even got bands to exchange for sport or dress so I could always wear it all the time. I knew that was to be the answer to my laziness and would motivate me. You know, it's a funny thing.... just like wearing his sermonator shirt didn't inspire me, the Fitbit didn't do all that I thought it would. Don't get me wrong.... I love it and I do wear it every day...I love the feature where it tells me who's calling or scrolls a text message for me. It makes my life easier...hmmm. I also learned it sends me messages on its own like.... haven't seen you in a while or reminders to get moving. It also has celebratory fireworks go off when I do meet a goal. Don't see those too often ...When I do make the steps, I expect the message to come up "is that you, Sarah or is someone wearing your watch. I also learned you can fake steps by moving arms up and down.

What if my spiritual walk was recorded on my Fitbit? Would it say," Sarah time to get started on the first mile? Are you faking it by going through the motions?" How will I ever see the fireworks or His handiworks if I don't put in the mandated mile. We all know walking or exercise has benefits but so does our Spiritual miles. How can we make a difference in the world if we don't even start fitness with the mandated mile? How will we be able to share in the miracle mile of love that is not required of us if we are not in spiritual shape to do so? I can't skip the mandated mile because it gets my heart ready to love for the right reasons...not to glorify myself but to point to the Father.

As I mentioned before, Jesus has a reason for everything he requires of us in this new radical way of life. All of His teachings are for our good and His glory. I know as I started, I wished everyone a Happy Mother's Day. I am very cognizant of the fact that it may not be a "happy" Mother's Day for many here. This may be a day that brings to mind loss, change, or heartache. I know in our own family; this is our first Mother's Day without Dave's mom. My daughter in law, Joanna and family are experiencing a different kind of Mother's Day this year as their mom is physically battling and winning, I might add an unexpected debilitating disease. I find it pretty neat that on June 1 the friends and family of Jo's mom, Vickie are holding a marathon (going the extra mile literally) to honor Vickie and help out the family. Vickie has been known to everyone in her sphere to go the extra mile. At present her legs don't allow her to move, others are going the extra mile on her behalf and to His glory. No matter what your situation this day, I desire for you to know the miracle mile. I am at the age that many of my adult friends are losing their parents. Even though I didn't have the pleasure of meeting them, I know what they must have

been like because I know their son or daughter. I can see in action what they were taught. Oh, my friends, this can be a happy day for all of us as we think of moms and all of those who have gone the extra mile in love for us. Today I think of women in my life who went the extra mile...Bridgie who opened her home to us when we were in need, my daughter investing into the life and death of someone the world saw as undesirable and my mom who was always going the extra mile for our family and others. Heck, she was a regular volunteer with the local help office and soup kitchen feeding the hungry.(all this in her 80's and 90's) This sign hangs in my house (mirror mirror) Oh Lord , let it be .All of these women's' footsteps and many others pointed me to the road of the Father. Jesus never asked us to do anything he wouldn't do himself. He walked the ultimate extra miracle mile in love when He went to Calvary. He showed us who His Father was by being obedient and then walked that extra miracle mile in love. Did Jesus really say, "Go the extra mile" Yeah, He did.... time to go and recalibrate and get fit. God is on the move all around us and I for one don't want to be left behind. May God bless you on your journey with him.