



Be Honest With Yourself — Part 3
(The Truth About My Relationships)
(Retaliation & Love)

Monthly Summary:

In Matthew 5, Jesus confronts the **inner life** before outward behavior:

1. **The Truth About My Attitude** (*The Beatitudes — Matthew 5:3–12*)
2. **The Truth About My Private Issues** (*Anger & Lust — Matthew 5:21–30*)
3. **The Truth About My Relationships** (*Retaliation & Love — Matthew 5:38–48*)
4. **The Truth About My Identity** (*Salt & Light — Matthew 5:13–16*)

Text: Matthew 5:44–48, NIV

- 44 But I tell you, **love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you**, 45 that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? 47 And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Big Question: *Who am I still trying to get even with?*

I. Jesus Confronts the Retaliation Reflex

A. The Old Standard — Fair Revenge

- **“Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.”** (*Matthew 5:38*)
- This was originally a **legal limit**, not a personal command.
- It was meant to **restrict revenge**, not encourage it.

But people twisted it into:

- “You hurt me, I hurt you.”
- “You embarrassed me, I embarrass you.”
- “You take something from me, I’ll take something from you.”

Note: Justice became personal. Law became leverage.

B. Jesus Raises the Standard (Matthew 5:39)

“But I tell you, do not resist an evil person...”

Jesus is not teaching passivity.

- He is teaching **refusal to retaliate**.
- Turning the other cheek means:
 - I refuse to let your wrong decide my response.
 - I won’t let bitterness control my behavior.
 - I will not build my future on revenge.



Down-Home Truth:

Retaliation feels powerful—but it keeps you tied to the person who hurt you.

II. The Radical Command Love Your Enemies

A. Matthew 5:43–44 (NIV)

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’
But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”

- Jesus doesn’t deny enemies exist. He just refuses to let them define us.

B. Greek Insight — “Love”

Greek word: **agapaō** (ἀγαπάω)

Meaning:

- To act in another’s best interest
- A choice, not a feeling
- Willful, disciplined love

Note: Important Clarification:

- Jesus does not command affection. He commands a **controlled response**.

Down Home Meaning: “Don’t let hate teach you how to behave.”

III. Why Jesus Takes Relationships So Seriously

A. Relationships Reveal Who’s Leading You

- “That you may be children of your Father in heaven...”
(*Matthew 5:45*)

“that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”

Note: God:

- Sends rain on the just and unjust
- Gives grace even to those who don’t deserve it

When we only love people who love us back:

- We’re not growing
- We’re just reacting



Down-Home Summary:

- Anyone can love people who treat them right.
- Kingdom people are revealed by how they handle conflict.

B. Loving Enemies Breaks Cycles

Retaliation:

- Escalates conflict
- Replays pain
- Hands control to the offender

Love:

- Ends cycles
- Restores clarity
- Protects your future
- You don't love enemies **for them**. You love enemies **so they don't own you**.

IV. A Living Example — David and Saul (Revisited)

David had **multiple chances** to retaliate:

- In the cave at En-gedi (1 Samuel 24)
- In the camp while Saul slept (1 Samuel 26)

David said:

"I will not lay my hand on the Lord's anointed."

David chose:

- Restraint over revenge
- Trust over timing
- Integrity over impulse
- Saul tried to destroy David
- David refused to become Saul
- David didn't win by defeating Saul
- He won by refusing to become like him

V. The Cost of Unresolved Relationship Conflict

When we refuse to be honest about our relationships:

- We rehearse offenses
- We justify bitterness
- We normalize distance
- We spiritualize avoidanc

Note: You cannot build a strong future while carrying old grudges.



Closing Truth:

- Jesus doesn't just care **who hurt you**. He cares **who you're becoming** because of it.
- Honesty in relationships means:
 - Letting go of revenge
 - Choosing growth over grudges
 - Trusting God with justice

Closing Declaration:

**“Lord, help me release what I can't fix
so I don't poison what You're building.”**

Next Time: January 25, 2026

Be Honest With Yourself — Part 4

“The Truth About My Identity” (*Salt & Light — Matthew 5:13–16*)

“You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world.”



OVERCOMING BY FAITH
PASTOR RICKY TEMPLE

SERMON NOTES