



LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

Who Is Jesus? | Devan Bumstead
Matthew 5:38-44

REVENGE IS IN THE CULTURE

- I don't get mad, I get even
- Two can play at that game
- Play stupid games, win stupid prizes
- I don't start drama, I finish it
- Revenge is a dish best served cold

MATTHEW 5:38-44 | NIV

YOU HAVE HEARD THAT IT WAS SAID

Jesus hasn't come to bring something new but *deeper*. Surface > Heart.

EYE FOR AN EYE

Two ideas of recompense in the Old Testament

- Exodus 21:23-25 – Offers a ceiling for vengeance by calling for even recompense
- 1 Samuel 24:12-13 – David offers a template for leaving justice to the Lord

“DO NOT RESIST” = DO NOT STAND AGAINST IN KIND

- 1 Thess. 5:15 & Ro. 12:17 – Do not repay evil for evil

3 EXAMPLES:

1. **TURN THE OTHER CHEEK** | Matt. 5:39b
2. **GIVE YOUR COAT** | Matt. 5:40
3. **GO THE EXTRA MILE** | Matt. 5:41

THOSE WE THINK ARE OUR “ENEMIES” AREN'T THE *REAL* ENEMY

EPHESIANS 6:12 – Our fight isn't against *people* but the *powers*

10 COMMANDMENTS OF THE NON-VIOLENT MOVEMENT

WE WERE GOD'S ENEMIES

Yet Jesus displayed perfect enemy love by loving US

- Romans 5:9-10
- Colossians 1:21-22
- Luke 23:34

10 COMMANDMENTS OF THE NON-VIOLENT MOVEMENT

I hereby pledge myself—my person and body—to the nonviolent movement. Therefore, I will keep the following ten commandments:

1. **MEDITATE** daily on the teachings and life of Jesus.
2. **REMEMBER** always that the non-violent movement in Birmingham seeks justice and reconciliation — not victory.
3. **WALK** and **TALK** in the manner of love, for God is love.
4. **PRAY** daily to be used by God in order that all men might be free.
5. **SACRIFICE** personal wishes in order that all men might be free.
6. **OBSERVE** with both friend and foe the ordinary rules of courtesy.
7. **SEEK** to perform regular service for others and for the world.
8. **REFRAIN** from the violence of fist, tongue, or heart.
9. **STRIVE** to be in good spiritual and bodily health.
10. **FOLLOW** the directions of the movement and of the captain on a demonstration.

I sign this pledge, having seriously considered what I do and with the determination and will to persevere.

“Nonviolence is a powerful and just weapon, which cuts without wounding, and ennobles the man who wields it. It's a sword that heals. The ultimate weakness of violent retaliation is that it's a descending spiral, begetting the very thing it seeks to destroy. Instead of diminishing evil, it multiplies it. Through violence you may murder a liar, but you cannot murder the lie, nor establish the truth. Through violence, you may murder the hater, but you do not murder hate. In fact, violence merely increases hate. So it goes, returning evil for evil, multiplies evil, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness. Only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate. Only love can do that. Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. | Strength To Love

SERMON SUMMARY

Feel free to read this message summary to the group before your discussion to refresh their memory on its central themes.

This week we explored one of Jesus' most counter-cultural teachings: loving our enemies. Jesus addresses our natural human instinct for revenge—the "eye for eye, tooth for tooth" mentality—and calls us to something radically different.

Key Points:

- Our culture sends mixed messages about revenge ("I don't get mad, I get even" vs. "Don't fight fire with fire")
- Jesus isn't replacing Old Testament law but revealing its deeper heart-level meaning
- "Do not resist an evil person" doesn't mean being a doormat—it means "do not stand against IN KIND"
- Jesus gives three examples of creative, non-violent resistance:
 - **Turn the other cheek** - Demanding to be treated as an equal, not accepting shame
 - **Give your coat** - Exposing injustice through shocking generosity
 - **Go the extra mile** - Transforming a slave relationship into friendship
- The real enemy isn't people—it's the spiritual forces of darkness (Ephesians 6:12)
- Enemy love begins when we hate the darkness without hating the person trapped inside it
- Jesus modeled this perfectly: while we were still God's enemies, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8-10)

LIFEGROUP QUESTIONS

The Life Group leader is encouraged to read and process these questions ahead of time and edit them to suit your group. Don't feel you have to get through all these questions. Find the ones you feel will be most helpful for your group to process and don't rush it.

1. What's your natural "fight or flight" response when someone wrongs you? Are you more likely to retaliate, withdraw, or something else?
2. The sermon mentioned that revenge "comes naturally" to us—we don't have to teach it to children. Why do you think the desire for revenge is so deeply wired into human nature? What does this reveal about our need for God's transformation?
3. Read Matthew 5:38-42 together. Before hearing this sermon, how did you understand "turn the other cheek"? How does understanding the cultural context (backhanded slap, honor/shame culture) change your perspective on what Jesus is actually calling us to do?
4. Jesus' three examples (cheek, coat, mile) aren't about passivity—they're about creative, non-violent resistance that:
 - Exposes injustice
 - Preserves dignity
 - Opens the door for relationship and change

Can you think of a modern example where someone used this kind of creative resistance effectively?
What made it powerful?

5. The sermon stated: "Perhaps the greatest evidence of a life truly changed by Jesus is one who can distinguish the Enemy in our enemies and refuse to treat them as the powers they're controlled by."
How does Ephesians 6:12 ("our struggle is not against flesh and blood") change how we should view people who oppose us or hurt us?

6. Dr. King's movement was highlighted as a modern example of Jesus' teaching in action. What strikes you most about the "10 Commandments of the Non-Violent Movement"? Which one feels most challenging to you personally?

7. The sermon asked: "Do you want your enemies to know Jesus more than you want them to pay you back?"

How would you honestly answer that question? What would need to change in your heart to genuinely want reconciliation over revenge?

Personal Application

8. Who is someone in your life right now that feels like an "enemy" (or at least someone you're in conflict with, don't like, or disagree with strongly)?

- How have you been responding to them?
- What would "creative, non-violent resistance" look like in that specific relationship?
- What's one practical step you could take this week to love them the way Jesus describes?

9. Romans 5:9-10 and Colossians 1:21-22 remind us that WE were once enemies of God, and He reconciled us through Christ. How does remembering your own story of being reconciled to God affect your ability to love your enemies?

10. The sermon ended with an invitation to surrender bitterness, unforgiveness, or shame to Jesus. Is there someone you need to forgive or release to Jesus? What's holding you back?

Challenge for the Week

Choose one person you're in conflict with and do one of the following:

1. Pray for them daily (even if it feels forced at first)
2. Perform an unexpected act of kindness toward them
3. Reach out to begin a conversation toward reconciliation
4. Carry Dr. King's "10 Commandments" card and review it daily

Remember: Enemy love isn't a warm feeling—it's a choice to reflect God's love even when it costs us something.