

## **Opening Prayer:**

Well, Good Morning...My name is Byron Bradshaw..Someone in my family told me, “Now, one correction from your sermon last week... Your name is not Pastor Byron Bradshaw... Your name is Byron Bradshaw...But people around here can call me Pastor Byron...Today is a great day here at Calvary... It is such an honor and privilege to be here this morning...I am so honored to be here this morning...

I'd like to open our time of the Word with Prayer...Let us pray  
Let us pray...

## **Scripture Reading:**

Thank you Frank and Barry for leading us into worship... Thank you also Dwight, Jerry, Drew, Bruce and the whole team that make Sunday mornings work...I appreciate your faithfulness...

Please go ahead and turn in your Bibles to Matthew 5:38-48 for our scripture reading today...Matthew 5:38-48...And I will ask you to please stand if you are able to do so for the reading of God's Word...

Matthew 5:38-48 states, “<sup>38</sup> You have heard that it was said, ‘AN EYE FOR AN EYE, AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH.’ <sup>39</sup> But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. <sup>40</sup> If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. <sup>41</sup> Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. <sup>42</sup> Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.

<sup>43</sup> “You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.’

<sup>44</sup> But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup> so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *the* good, and sends rain on *the* righteous and *the* unrighteous. <sup>46</sup> For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? <sup>47</sup> If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing *than others*? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

<sup>48</sup> Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

“May God bless the reading of His Word”...Children are dismissed to children's church...Please be seated...

## **Introduction:**

Introduce Myself: Well, Good Morning... It's a great day here at Calvary... We as a leadership team are all praying and anticipating the work of God here this morning and through this church and to reach the community around us...

I'd like to share something this morning...Calvary is a unique church...It truly is...Because here at Calvary we are not so much concerned for the show... We are not concerned for the horse and pony show...One of the reasons I was so excited to come back to my home church is because we are far less concerned for the entertainment of the crowds and more concerned for the preaching

and teaching of the Scripture...

If you came this morning hoping to be entertained then I am apologize...I and we do want to serve and worship with excellence...to engage the congregation into worshipping the Lord our God ...To worship, conduct scripture reading, give, reach, preach and teach the scripture and ultimately make disciples with excellence but we seek not to entertain...

It is my hope that each of us walk away from this morning not necessarily with an emotional high...But to walk away encountering the scriptures...To look at the scriptures so intently that it forces you and I to look in the mirror and be doers of the Word and not hearers...It is my hope this morning to present the scripture with excellence...with clarity, depth and practicality to help us grow in our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ...

As we begin, I always find it helpful to take one step back and two steps forward...As my father in law likes to say, "Repetition is theological glue..." This morning we are continuing our discussion through the Sermon on the Mount...The Sermon on the Mount is one of Jesus' longest discourses in all the Gospels and it discusses practical spirituality...Many of us know the Beatitudes... "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. <sup>4</sup>" "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. <sup>5</sup>" "Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth. <sup>6</sup>" "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied to name a few

And many of us are familiar with the other various contents...Last week, I took up the mantle of the Sermon and discussed the next passage which was on keeping ones word...My point and the principle in the passage is to "Let your Yes be Yes and Let your No be No..." I then shared three practical insights to apply it... Insight #1: Let Your Yes be Yes and Let your No be No...When you say you will be somewhere then be there... Insight #2: Be Slow to Respond...be slow to give your word that you will do something then Insight #3: Be Slow to Ask...especially as a church leader be slow to ask the same person over and over for help...Rather, think and pray before asking...

Well, this morning we are continuing on with Matthew 5:38-48...and this morning we are talking about Revenge...Revenge...One of the greatest evidences for our fallen nature is that all of us secretly love revenge...We all Love a Good Story on Revenge...

We love, I mean we love watching the bad guy get what's coming to him...We love watching the nerdy kid in class get back at the bully...Like the end of Back to the Future Part 1- where George McFly sock Biff the bully right in the nose...We stand up and cheer...Then we laugh when George McFly tells Biff the bully to shine his car, we love watching the super hero teeter on the edge of complete failure then only to miraculously get his revenge by putting the enemy to its doomThat glorify someone getting even that has been wronged...

And listen, this idea of loving revenge...of us loving getting revenge is not an American idea nor a 21<sup>st</sup> century idea...In fact, mankind has loved revenge since it beginning...

Stories like the Iliad...Hamlet or even more modern stories such as the Princess Bride display our human bent on revenge...

When I think about stories of revenge...When I think of a character that we glorify based on his bent for revenge, I think of the character...Edmond Dantes...

In the Book turned movie the Count of the Monte Cristo...You find a young naïve character named Edmund Dantest that is madly in love with his fiancé Mercedes...In a rage of jealousy, his best friend...A person Edmund Dontes trusted to the utmost betrays him throwing him into prison to steal the woman he loved...

The rest of the movie Edmund Dantes is seen bent upon revenge...Edmund sneaks out of prison...finds a treasure gains wealth steals back his woman and finishes off his betrayer...And the human in us cheers with great applause...

**Transition:** Because the bad guy...The betrayer gets what is coming to him...And there is something so gratifying about this...But why?

**WE:**

Let's be honest for a second, we all love a good story on revenge...We all love hearing stories of someone getting even...Someone overcoming obstacles to face their deponents...

But my question is not so much if we love revenge...But why? It seems as simple that we are sinful and broken but it also seems deeper than that...On a personal note, we not only like hearing a good story on revenge, but we oftentimes seek it out ourselves...

When a co-worker throws you under the bus embarrassing you before a boss there is this sense of rage and a plan to get even...When a classmate calls you a name, the shame and frustration can quickly overshadow our Christian ideals...When a loved hurts us not wishing to ask for forgiveness...then bitterness and a cold chill can sweep over our hearts...

Well, this morning we are continuing on in our series on the sermon on the mount...Last week we looked at Matthew 5:33-37 and this morning we are look at Matthew 5:38-48...with us specifically answering the question, "How do I or how to we treat those who wrong me...?" "How do I treat someone who has wronged me..."

**Transition:** Let us begin our discussion of God's Word this morning with Part 1 5:38-42 and then we will talk about Part 2 in verses 43-48

**GOD:**

**Read 5:38-42**, "You have heard that it was said "You have heard that it was said, 'AN EYE FOR AN EYE, AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH.' <sup>39</sup> But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. <sup>40</sup> If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. <sup>41</sup> Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. <sup>42</sup> Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you."

In Verses 38-42 Jesus is talking about not retaliating with our external behaviors...But look back at verse 38

It says, “You have heard that it was said, “AN EYE FOR AN EYE, AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH...”

By Jesus saying “You have heard it said” this implies that someone is saying it...Right? Who is saying it? If you notice in your Bible, that parts of verse 38 are capitalized...What does that tell you? That it is an Old Testament quotation...That Jesus goes back to Exodus 21:24 and gives the OT verse as a reference...

So, on the surface, what is this Old Testament verse implying?

That you can get even right? That you have the power to seek your own revenge...That you can take what someone else has taken...That you can plot, steal and manipulate someone who has wronged you and you can receive exactly what they took...If someone steal an eye from you steal an eye back...If someone steals back a tooth then get your tooth back...

But there is still a problem...In fact there are two problems with this interpretation of the law...

The first problem is the biggest problem...Taking revenge into your own hands is not the context of the verse...The Pharisees misinterpreted this verse...The Pharisees interpreted it to mean that one can take the law into their own hands...But if you actually look back at Exodus 21:24...it does not give permission...

Rather, God’s law implemented a restraint called judges...The law actually implements judges to rule for someone’s wrong...But there is a second problem with this interpretation...Personal revenge does not guarantee personal restoration...Personal revenge does not guarantee personal restoration...

**To tell you a quick story...**As part of staff meeting this week, I invited the staff in on this passage to gain their insight ...I wanted to hear what they observed in the scriptures...There were many great observations...And one of them really jogged my thought process...

Problem #2 was actually on the staff’s observations...Problem #2 is that Revenge doesn’t fix your problem...it still doesn’t fix your problem...In this context, You are still missing an eye and still missing a tooth...

Can I dig down for a moment? Friends, getting even does not fix anything... In fact, it typically makes things worse...Getting back at a spouse never fixes anything it just damages your relationship even further...Getting back at a church member or giving the cold shoulder does not bring healing or resolution...

But What fixes the problem? What truly fixes the problem of revenge?  
Forgiveness...Forgiveness that’s it...Listen friends...Forgiveness cures revenge...

**Transition:** But if you notice with me...Forgiveness is emulated into 4 actions...Only through an attitude of forgiveness can someone actually do what is in verses 39-42...Let's read it...

**Read vs 39-42,** <sup>39</sup> But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. <sup>40</sup> If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. <sup>41</sup> Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. <sup>42</sup> Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you."

**How do I treat those who wrong me?**

**Point #1:** Put Away Revenge through forgiveness...Put away revenge through forgiveness...

**Look back at verse 39 & 40...** <sup>39</sup> But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. <sup>40</sup> If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also..."

Many of us have heard these verses...If someone came up to me right now...Ran up hear and slapped right across the face...What would really hurt? My face obviously...But a slap in the face is much deeper than skin, right?

If someone slaps, you it hurts your pride or dignity... In other words, Jesus is saying first to not seek revenge when someone hurts your dignity...

Then, what else? Look at verse 40..."If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also..."

Now, when we see in this text...If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also....Let's be honest, this doesn't seem like a big deal...We Americans probably have a closet full of cloths so giving up a shirt or even a coat isn't a big deal...

**But let me ask you a question...**If you only had one shirt and one jacket, how big of a deal would it this be? If you've even visited a poor country...then you know that gravity of this command...In this culture, a word "coat" here is the Greek word "ἱμάτιον" which literally an outer garment...it was common to have only one or two outer garments...And if you only had one outer garment then this outer garment was a sense of security, warmth, comfort...

Jesus is commanding for His followers to Put Away their Revenge and be willing to give up even the very thing that provides you a sense of security...

**Transition:** Jesus doesn't stop just with the right to pride and security but He continues in verse 41 and 42...

**Read 5:41-42,** <sup>41</sup> Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. <sup>42</sup> Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you."

Now, what right does verse 41 challenge? When someone wrongs you...Forgive and forgo your right to pride, security and #3 your liberty...

Now, some of you may say, “How in the world do I get our right to liberty from verse 41?”

**Background:** I personally have heard this verse quoted maybe a 1000 times but I truly never knew what it meant until I understood the background...

In Biblical times...A Roman soldier had the right by law to force anyone into carrying his pack for one mile...

**Think about it:** Now, before you write this off as no big deal...I want you to think about something...If were a Jew...You first disdained...I mean you hated the Romans...They controlled your country and restricted your freedom....

But not only that but a Roman could walk up to you in the middle of having dinner with your family...Or in the middle of putting your child down to bed and grab you and force you into service...

So think about it...Jesus’ command is completely earth shattering to a Jew...Because not only should they put away their right to liberty by carrying it one mile...but in fact they should put it away further by going two miles...That they should Forgive and forgo their right to liberty so much that they exceed what was required...

So, Jesus not only tells His followers to put away their rights to dignity, security and liberty but also to property...Look back at verse 42 , “Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.”

Anyone who wishes to borrow from you, do not expect return or revenge...Do not expect payment in return...

Transition: How are we to treat someone who harms us? Point #1: Put away revenge through forgiveness...put away the right to pride, security, property or even our liberty for the sake of forgiveness...

But Jesus does not just leave forgiveness as an external behavior...No no no...Forgiveness is not just about what you do...But forgiveness even deeper than that....

But before I dive into verses 43-47...I’d like to make an observation about life...

Let’s say you apply and obey these first verses...Let’s say someone after church today hears this message and wants to take advantage of you...They want to take all the money in your wallet...or perhaps after church today in the parking lot someone comes up to you and slaps you in the face right but then you hopefully listened in church and do not retaliate...

Let’s say you control your external behavior...But what is so easy to happen on the internal world? IT is easy to put on a good face for others externally while internally be cold as ice...It is easy when you feel taken advantaged of to hold a grudge or to feel bitter...”Bitterness is like

drinking poison wishing someone else to be harmed...

**Transition:** Jesus in verses 38-42 is commanding our external behavior but then takes it to our internal world in verses 43-47...Let us look at how we should behave on the inside...

**Read verses 43-47,** <sup>43</sup> “You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.’ <sup>44</sup> But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup> so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *the* good, and sends rain on *the* righteous and *the* unrighteous. <sup>46</sup> For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? <sup>47</sup> If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing *than others*? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?”

What does Jesus tell us to do on the internal world? When someone wrongs you not only are you to

**Point #1: Put away revenge through forgiveness...but**

**Point #2: Pray for them**

**Look back at verse 44,** <sup>44</sup> “But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you”

We are to pray for those who wrong us...Pray for those who tease you about your faith, pray for those who “take advantage of you”, pray for those who hurt your pride or even your liberty...

And What is the result? What is the result of not seeking revenge and praying for those who harm you?

**Look back at verse 45,** Notice with me the key words, “so that” in Greek it is the word “ὅπως” the “so that” telling me the result...The result of praying is to become, <sup>45</sup> “so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven;”

Now this phrase on the surface seems to be saying that if I pray for those persecute me then I become saved...I become a Son of the Father...” But this phrase is not referring to salvation but rather sanctification...Sanctification is the process of becoming holy or perfect...This is confirmed by this Greek verb’s middle voice...which tells me it is an action that I do to myself...That as I forgive and pray for those who wrong me that I cause myself to become like Jesus Christ...That I am growing in the process of becoming holy...

Or, another way to put it...If you want to grow spiritually, forgive and pray for others...

Story: A number of years ago, I remember approaching Pastor Garry with a question I will never forget...I remember I was on a bit of a spiritual plateau...I didn’t feel like I was growing in my faith so I went up to him and asked what I could do to grow...He said, “Serve others...”...What did he mean by that? Put action to your faith, right? That intentional action brings intentional growth... I believe this verse confirms this...if we want to grow in our faith...if we want to

become like God then we must actually forgive and pray...

That if you Put aside your revenge and Pray for enemies then you will slowly become like verse 48,

**Read verse 48**, “Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” The word perfect is literally complete or mature...It is the same word when Jesus says...Tetelestai...”It is finished...”

**Point #3:** Put Aside Revenge, Pray for Enemies to Achieve Perfection...

**Transition:** Some of you may be saying **So what?** What difference does this passage make in my life? How can I use this in my life tomorrow?

I'd like to slow down for a minute and give us 4 key practical insights to truly apply it to our lives...

**YOU:**

When someone mistreats you...

**Action #1: Focus on Christ**

- If you are a Christian, then you are Christ's representatives...2 Cor. 5:20 tells us that we are Christ's ambassadors...You are no longer meant to serve yourself...But God...You no longer carry the flag for yourself but you carry the flag of Christ...And as Christ's representatives, what should we be doing? We should be emulating Christ, right?

If you are struggling to emulate Christ when wrong...then I ask of you to meditate on this verse... Hebrews 12:2-3 states. “<sup>2</sup>fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

<sup>3</sup>For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”

Remember if Christ endured much wrongdoing then I then we can endure as well...

**Action #2: Forgo Revenge...Forgo Revenge...**

- Seek not to get even or even hold onto bitterness...Forgo your “right” to revenge...

**Action #3: Forgive them-**

Forgive those who wrong you in corporate life...

Forgive those who take advantage of you in your everyday life

But's let's be honest it isn't the people in the corporate world that are the hardest to forgive...

But the hardest group to forgive are oftentimes those who are closest to you...

It is easy for the shadow of bitterness and anger to creep in toward a spouse or a child...Listen

friends, if you are holding onto a grudge or bitterness, anger or jealous...Release the grip of bitterness through forgiveness...

**Action #4: Focus on Eternity:**

Just like verse 48 states...focus on the perfection of your Father and use that as your goal to achieve...

WE:

Because listen friends, lets us focus on eternity...This world...This America we live in is our temporary home...Let us focus on eternity...And let us use eternity as motivation to forgive now...

**Story:** This week, I had a dear friend come up to me at a funeral that I was conduct a committal service for...This dear friend came up to me and told me that "Let us not forget that this is our temporary home..." WE must remember that our permanent home is waiting for us...Let your permanent home of eternity motivate you to serve God and others well now...

**Before I close...**The permanent home of heaven is not waiting for all of us in this room...We gain heaven not by works...Not by doing enough good deeds...We gain heaven through the sacrifice of someone who laid aside His rights...We gain heaven, eternal life, through faith in Jesus Christ...And if you have questions about this feel free to reach me after church today...

Friends...When someone wrongs you, let us put aside revenge and pray for them...by focusing on Christ, forgoing revenge, forgiving others and focusing on eternity...

Let us Pray