

Do We Deserve Justice

Matthew 5, 38 to 42. You have heard that it is said, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other also.

If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him also have your cloak. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him too. Give to him who asks you.

And from him who wants to borrow from you, do not turn away. I titled this my Do You Deserve Justice? Most of the time, most people title this as Going the Extra Mile, which is still a proper title. This is one of those, these verses that if you just read it for what it is, it doesn't quite make sense.

We all want justice. When someone harms us, we want to not necessarily strike back, but we're going to protect ourselves. We're not going to turn the other cheek.

Someone steals from us, we want it returned. And maybe some punitive damages and things like that. A flat tire that a car has and it hits another car because of it, I think we want justice, right? Now maybe that's different than the person who's just a bad driver and they ran into us.

One makes me a little more angry. I don't know about the rest of you, but one makes me a little more angry than the other. One was an accident, the other was still an accident, but bad driving.

How about the person who spills hot coffee on themselves? They've got the right to sue McDonald's for millions. They want justice. That's obviously a little ridiculous, but it happens.

How about here in Colorado? We had a forest ranger that decided to burn a letter. Started a fire, Hayman fire. Destroyed over 138,000 acres of forest and property.

133 homes destroyed. People want justice, and they deserve justice. They had things taken from them.

So do we expect that one person to pay back millions and millions, I mean literally millions of dollars? That's hard. We still want justice. Justice comes in different ways.

Justice is the fair and impartial treatment of individuals based on the principles of equity and righteousness. We want justice. We want what's fair.

Someone hits me, it might be fair to hit them back.

Eye for Eye

My first point here, Eye for Eye. This passage was taken out of Exodus 21, actually the first line was taken out of Exodus 21-22-24.

And it says, if men fight and hurt a woman with child so that she gives birth prematurely, yet no harm follows, he shall surely be punished accordingly as the woman's husband imposes on him, and he shall pay as the judges determine. But if any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for an eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, and stripe for stripe. This was a principle of proportional retribution, proportional judgment.

The Israelites needed that. They needed to know, not personal vengeance, but what is the right thing. A judicial safeguard to prevent revenge or excessive punishment to ensure justice was measured and equable.

That's what God was laying out in the Israelites back in Exodus. If two men are fighting and they say they bump a pregnant woman, and she loses the baby, it's an accident. But there's still consequences.

She lost the baby. That's not good. That's not right.

The husband can't say, I want their lives. My baby's life, I want their lives. It was an accident.

Unless it was an accident. If these two men were fighting purposely or somehow did something, now it's saying, hey, a bit of harm follows. Eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth.

There are a couple of things we want to take notice of. It is to be fair. Justice is to be fair.

Equal to the crime and done with impartial treatment. Hopefully both parties can work together. The goal of every disagreement, argument, injustice, and so on, car accident, whatever it is, maybe the two parties can work together.

Now, some things you can't work together. Murder is murder. Right? That's not something you just work out.

Are you sorry you did that? No. You get police involved. You get the government involved.

That's what they're there for. Judges. There are judges out there.

Hopefully both parties can do that. If not, there's things that they have to go through, a process. We have a biblical process of how we deal with one another, for instance.

Luke 17, 3-5 says, Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him. And if he repents, forgive him.

And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you saying, I repent, you forgive him. We are to learn how to forgive. Now, that doesn't mean if he steps on your foot and that hurts, he apologizes.

But after two or three times, you're going to be standing a little bit further from him. All right? I mean, we're not going to just purposely keep putting that foot there to get stepped on. You're going to pull it back.

You're going to pull back. You're going to learn. Hopefully they're going to learn too.

Our goal is to work it out with brothers and sisters. Forgive him or her. I would suggest we can do that with all people.

This verse is pointed towards Christians, to brothers and sisters. But our next-door neighbor who's not a Christian, things happen. We can still do that.

But there's only so far we can take things. In Matthew 18, verses 15 through 17, we read, Moreover, if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.

But if he will not hear you, take with you one or two more. And by the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word will be established. And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church.

But if he refuses even to the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. Your next-door neighbor we can only take so far. I can bring things to the church and say, My next-door neighbor knocked down my fence.

And the church is going to say, Sorry. Not much we can do about that. Because it's a non-Christian.

But with Christians, there are times we can do that. What are Christians not to do with other Christians? Well, in 1 Corinthians 6.1, it says, Dare any of you having a matter against another go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints? We are not to sue one another. We are not to take one another before the courts.

We're not to embarrass the church of Christ by taking it outside of the church with another believer. And I would suggest even a believer in another church. Christians.

So as Christians, we're to determine if the problem is serious enough to even bring it up. Not all issues are something we have to go and talk to them about. We need to go to church about some issues.

Sometimes, you know, for us, it feels like it's a big issue. That's what the church is for. The elders are for, to say, You might need to learn a little bit forgiveness.

That's not an issue. Really. We're going to work with you guys.

We're going to see what we can do. We need to talk to the person first. We need to determine, even after that, does it need to go further? Do I need to take it to church? If I've talked to them, do I need to take it further? All these steps in between.

Bring along somebody else or a couple other people. Matthew 18, if that doesn't work, then we take it to the church. The church, the elders, are there to judge and determine what's going on, and if needed, exercise judgment up to excommunication.

And again, the non-Christians, we need to determine if the problem is serious enough to bring it up with them. So a non-Christian, we need to take it to the person first, if we need to. And if possible, maybe we do need to bring somebody else in.

But that's about as far as we can go, as far as Matthew 18 tells us. At that point, now, if it's serious, we need to take it to the courts. Understand, we are not Roman Catholic.

The elders do not give absolution to sin. We are not here to forgive sin. We're not going to say, well, you told me that you committed murder.

Use that example again. You committed murder. It was a long time ago.

It's okay. We can't do that. There are times we, as the elders, have to get authorities involved.

There are some things we can't just say, you guys need to work this out, or we're going to excommunicate you because of this, and we leave it at that. Judges are involved for a purpose. Judges are involved to help people when they can't work things out between them.

As parents, we're judges. Only if you have two kids. You have to have two or more.

Maybe one. Maybe between parent and a child. Two kids.

I was a judge. Jerry was a judge. We had three kids.

One would scream louder than the other one, and the one that screamed the loudest, it was obvious he was the offended, so the offender was this one who didn't know anything about what's going on. No, that did happen. Proverbs 22.6. We use God's word to determine as parents how to judge.

Proverbs 22.6 says, train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it. Good wisdom. How do we apply that? Well, Proverbs 13.24 says, he who spares the rod hates the son, but he who loves him disciplines him properly.

Good counsel. How do we apply that? Little Johnny spills his milk. The verse tells us that if we truly love our two-year-old child, we will use the rod.

Or do we? When they make you do that, go an extra mile. They don't want to do the one mile. Why would I want to do the second mile? That's what God's telling us here.

That's what Christ is trying to explain. How to show love, how to show mercy for your enemy. Go that extra mile.

Going the Extra Mile

The person doesn't deserve it. They're trying to abuse you. They don't like you.

They look down on you. Go the extra mile. This is the person Christ is calling us to do the extra mile for, our enemy.

You know, and it's funny, our enemies can be all kinds of people. Sometimes it's family members. Family members can be sometimes the most enemy there is.

We don't like certain people for how they act. Brothers, sisters, kids, whatever it is. Go the extra mile.

Go the extra mile. Verse 42. Give to whom I ask you, and from him who wants to borrow from you, do not turn away.

We are to be charitable. We're to be charitable. If we don't have it, we can't give it.

We're also not talking about giving money to people we shouldn't. Giving money to homeless people is not normally the answer. Each one of us has to make that decision.

Maybe give them a meal. Jerry and I had a few backpacks that we would hand out to homeless people once in a while. I think we still have one.

Just someone who's not out there begging, they're just sitting there by themselves and we just walk up and hand it to them and say this is from the Lord. You don't know what we're doing. I don't know if it's a good thing to do or not.

It just felt like that's what God was calling us to do. Because that's what God wants us to do. To be charitable.

Give to them. Don't turn them away. We can help our brothers and sisters as well as non-Christians in all kinds of ways.

Money. Food. A place to stay maybe.

A brother and sister who needs a place to stay. We would do that for a family probably. But we would do it for somebody else, especially somebody maybe we don't care for.

Giving them more. Why? Why do this? My third point. Showing mercy.

Showing Mercy

All it is is Christ giving us examples on how to show mercy and more. Showing the love of Christ that's in us. Christ has already told us to be poor in spirit, be meek, hunger and thirst for righteousness, be pure in heart, be peacemakers, be merciful.

He's been telling us this stuff here. Here's the examples of how to do that. Proverbs 25.21 says If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat.

If he is thirsty, give him water to drink. Why an enemy? Somebody that we don't necessarily enjoy or like or want to be around, whatever the situation. For doing so you will heap coals of fire on their head and the Lord will reward you.

Now we're not necessarily looking for that reward. We're doing it because that's what God tells us to do. Our reward is in heaven.

Our reward is already given to us. God has already said well done. Just keep doing it.

Keep doing it. Here's the examples of how to do it. This is also quoted in Romans 12.19-20 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather than get placed to wrath.

For it is written Vengeance is mine, I will repay you, says the Lord. Therefore, if your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him a drink.

And again, if you're doing so, heaping coals. This is in the Old Testament and it's repeated in the New Testament. Keeping coals on the fire is a figurative expression obviously.

Burning coals symbolizes conviction or shame or hopefully repentance. They recognize that hey, there's something different about us. We talked about how the fool sees us and says what a coward.

What about the person that says wow, there's something different about them. And what about the very enemy that you're helping? Maybe they're saying wow, this guy's not so bad after all. I shouldn't have sued him.

I shouldn't have done this. Maybe I should have talked to him. They're talking to me.

This is what God uses. Not us. This is what God uses.

We're just told to do it this way. We may want someone to change, we may pray and fast for someone or some group or something to change, but it's God that's changing hearts, not us. We're just obeying God.

Jeremiah 24.7 says, Then I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. For they shall return to me with their whole heart. Ezekiel 36.

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you. I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you will keep my judgments and do them.

God is doing this. This is not us. Only God can change hearts.

We are there just to serve God in whatever way he wants us to. 2 Corinthians 5.17-18 says, Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things have passed away.

Behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. We're not the ones doing it.

It's God. But we need to be ready to do God's will. We don't know how God is going to use us to do that.

When the times come, it can be easy, and it can be hard to walk that extra mile. This is not easy to do. We've heard our pastor tell us, being a Christian is not easy.

Becoming a Christian, going from going to hell to going to heaven as Christians doesn't make life easier. But this is what God commands us. This is what God is telling us to do.

This is how we are to serve God. We want justice. We want what is fair.

We want, we want, we want. What does God want us to do? What is expected of us? Obedience to God's word. To act, say, and do what Christ tells us to do.

What we should want to do is to love our Lord and Savior with everything we have. I'll end with Matthew 22, 37 to 40. We all know this, but it says, Jesus said to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.

This is the first and great commandment, and the second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

You need to strive to serve God and God alone. Amen. Let us pray.

Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you, Lord, for your word. We thank you, Lord, for helping us to understand it, hopefully better, what it means to walk the extra mile or turn the other cheek. Lord, how we are to treat others, how we are to show love and mercy.

We don't deserve it. We don't deserve what you have done for us. It's because of what you did, Lord, that we are called your children.

So, Lord, thank you for doing all that you've done, for dying on the cross and rising from the dead. Thank you, Lord, for calling us to you. So, Lord, help us as we start the new week to glorify your name and to enjoy you forever.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.