

The Be Attitudes

Be The Children of Your Father

Matthew 5:38-48



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FOCAL Read Responsively Matthew 5:38-48 Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: (39) But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. (40) And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have [thy] cloak also. (41) And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. (42) Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. (43) Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. (44) But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; (45) That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. (46) For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? (47) And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more [than others]? do not even the publicans so? (48) Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

As the pastor of our local Church one of my duties is to minister to our elderly members. Many of these dear saints were faithful attenders and supporters of the Church in earlier years, but now are unable to attend services because of sickness. Our Church makes an effort to reach these people by mailing recordings of the Sunday services each and every week. I said all that in order to say this.

I've recently started taking the Church's mailing "business" to another Post Office. Why? Because the Post Office our Church was using *forgot what it was in business for*. When I visited this other Post Office the people behind the counter would weigh two or three packages then push a hand full of stamps my way. They never seemed to appreciate the business we brought them. Get stamps, and get out of the way. After being treated brusquely I began to go to the USPS in Darden, Tennessee. These people seem to be genuinely helpful, friendly, and courteous. In short, since they "know their business" they now "get our business".

When a business *forgets* its business, it's not long before that business *goes out of business*. Not too long ago one of our local "everything costs a dollar" stores went out of business. Why is that? When I go to Jackson, Tennessee, the "everything costs a dollar" stores are booming – you can hardly walk down the aisles. Why did our local store go belly up? They forgot what their business was, and stopped selling things for "only a dollar". Suddenly yellow price stickers were placed on every item on every shelf. Though some items were less than a dollar, other items were priced much higher than a dollar. People stopped coming to the store and the store died. They forgot their business.

Are there other examples? Absolutely! A man I know recently went to his local Bank to make a deposit. The teller spent several minutes talking to her friend in the next booth while ignoring her customer. Ironically the topic of their animated conversation was "rude behavior". Their rudeness may have cost the Bank an

account, maybe even many accounts. It is dangerous to forget what business you're in.

Sometimes local Churches and Christians get on the downgrade and forget what their business is. As a pastor I field many calls from people looking for bus tickets, money for rent, or for food. Churches can and do provide "hand UPS" to those who are genuinely in need, but we always do so with the view of bringing people to a right relationship with God and His Church. A Church is not a lending institution, a food bank, a political headquarters, an entertainment center, a fast food restaurant, a ticket sales provider, nor a Christmas tree. A local Church is a *community of faith, a branch Family of the Children of God*. A local Church is a Body of Christ, believers together serving the Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you know your business?

If you are a Christian then the Lord Jesus Christ has given you a job to do. As a united Body of Christians – the local Church – you have a collective duty before the Lord.

Though the Church may do many things, and have many activities, its primary business is to lovingly serve the Lord Jesus Christ and in so doing be a Light in a dark sin cloaked world. **We are to be the Children of our Heavenly Father, following the pattern that our Savior has placed before us.**

We are the candlestick in Christ's hand. We must serve

Him by loving one another and by telling others about this Glorious Gospel of salvation. The Church that tends to its business will grow in influence and members. The Church that forgets its business in time will dwindle and die.

Love one another. Follow Jesus. Do the things that He commands you to do. Be the Children of your Heavenly Father. Tend to your business, dear Christian, and live for Him.

May God touch your hearts with these words.

**The Child of God Will Rest In God
Even When Attacked**

FOCAL Matthew 5:38-42 Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: (39) But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. (40) And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have [thy] cloak also. (41) And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. (42) Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

Jesus said “Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth”. What our Lord is referring to is the portion of the Mosaic Law that stated:

Exodus 21:24-25 **Eye for eye, tooth for tooth,**

**hand for hand, foot for foot, (25)
Burning for burning, wound for wound,
stripe for stripe.**

When God released Israel from Egyptian bondage and brought her to the foot of Mount Sinai He needed to establish *governmental laws* over His people. The Israelites had repeatedly rejected salvation by faith. Though God proved Himself faithful at the Red Sea:

Exodus 14:13-14 ... **Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day:** for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. (14) **The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.**

the Israelites continued in unbelief. God brought water out of dry rock in **Kadesh Barnea (Numbers 20:8)**, but still those whom He had saved by faith refused to trust Him.

Why did God give the Mosaic Law to Israel?

At **Marah** God turned bitter water sweet (**Exodus 15:23**). God gave **manna** from the sky to feed His people (**Exodus 16:15**), and provided meat in the wilderness – yet still they would not believe. After Israel repeatedly refused to accept salvation by faith the Lord

brought them to **Mount Sinai** and gave them governmental laws. One of those laws was the **Law of Tooth and Claw, or Lexis Talionis**.

The Israelite would not rest in their faith in God. They would not believe in Him, though God had repeatedly proven Himself to be faithful. As the Scripture says:

Deuteronomy 7:9 Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he [is] God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;

God is faithful. All He wanted Israel to do was to love Him and to believe in His faithfulness. But Israel would not believe. What was left to God? He had to establish the **Mosaic Law and the Lexis Talionis, a law of retributive justice**. This law was very simple, simple enough for even hardened unbelievers to understand.

The Lexis Talionis said “whatever evil you are convicted of in a court of law, that same evil will be returned to you”.

Bust a tooth out of a man's head, have a tooth broken out of yours. Poke out a person's eye while committing a crime, have your eye gouged out. Take a life, lose your life. If you're slapped or beaten, then your adversary – if found guilty – will be slapped or beaten. If you violate God's commanded ordinances, if you commit adultery,

kidnapping, or even curse your parents – you could be stoned with stones until you were dead.

There was no “grace” in the Mosaic Law. As the Scripture says:

John 1:17 For the law was given by Moses, [but] grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

You have two things: the Law and Grace. The Law gives *black and white clear statutes for unbelieving people*. Grace, on the other hand, *trusts God to do the right thing at all times – even when you're attacked*. Jesus said:

FOCAL Matthew 5:39 ... But I say unto you, That ye resist¹ not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

Do not stand against evil. Do not retaliate in kind when attacked. Our Lord said “If you're struck on one cheek, turn the other one to him”. Why is that? **Because God is faithful.**

What would you as a parent or grandparent do if you saw someone beating up your child?

Would you stand to the side and watch? Would you

1 G436, ἀνθίστημι, anthistēmi, *anth-is'-tay-mee*, From G473 and G2476; to *stand against*, that is, *oppose*: - resist, withstand.

cheer them on? Or would you – immediately and decisively – intervene to protect your children. If you as a good parent or grandparent would protect your children, don't you think that God our Father will protect us? If someone assaults a Child of God we are called to *lean by faith on the God Who loves us*. If assaulted, we are to turn the other cheek.

FOCAL Matthew 5:40 ... And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have [thy] cloak also.

If **sued at the law** the Christian is called – not to chase about looking for a better lawyer – but to surrender all to our Great Advocate.

God paid a terrible price for your salvation at the Cross of Calvary – He did the greatest good for you when He saved you. Will He not take care of His investment now?

The way of the world is “you sue me, and I'll sue you, and the best lawyer will win”. Yet you have the Greatest Lawyer ever on your defense team, and His Name is Jesus Christ. John wrote:

1 John 2:1-2 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: (2) And he is the

propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for [the sins of] the whole world.

You have a Heavenly Lawyer Who has *paid His own fees*. He purchased you with His Blood, and brought you into the Family of God by faith in Him. He is intimately concerned with your well being – trust Him.

Remember Israel's failure.

God saved Israel with a mighty Hand at the Red Sea. If He did the most for them at the Red Sea, and moved the most water, then He will surely do the lesser thing as they moved through the wilderness. In the same way God did the *most* for you at the point of salvation. He took your sins:

Colossians 1:12-14 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: (13) Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated [us] into the kingdom of his dear Son: (14) In whom we have redemption through his blood, [even] the forgiveness of sins:

a river of sin as large as the Red Sea, and parted that sin with His own dear Hand. God took you from Egypt, from that **power of darkness and idolatry that is the devil's kingdom**, and translated you into the **Kingdom of God**. You are now Kings and Priests before God because

of what God has accomplished. You **have been redeemed from certain judgment and eternal damnation** because of Jesus.

Won't the Lord protect those Whom He has so dearly saved?

The Child Of God Will Love His Enemies

FOCAL Matthew 5:41-42 ... And **whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.** (42) Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

The average Jew despised the fact that they were occupied by the Roman Empire. Roman soldiers were even housed on the Temple grounds in an area called *Antonias Portico* – something the priests particularly despised.

According to Roman Law any soldier could command you to help him carry his burden – be it weapons, pack, or shield, for up to a mile.

When the Jews were asked to carry the soldier's burden they would do so, but often *very begrudgingly and very rudely.*

Jesus tells His listeners “**if you're compelled to carry a burden (such as in the case of the Roman soldier) for**

just a mile – you carry it an extra mile”. Now I'm sure this didn't go over well with His listeners – but again, this is the walk of faith. If you have been placed in a situation where your enemy is ruling over you and if you are a Child of God, *then you need to recognize you are in that situation because God has put you there.* God is in control! We are told in the Scripture:

Proverbs 21:1 The **king's heart [is] in the hand of the LORD, [as] the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.**

And again,

Isaiah 46:9-11 Remember the former things of old: for **I [am] God, and [there is] none else; [I am] God, and [there is] none like me, (10) Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times [the things] that are not [yet] done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: (11) Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken [it], I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed [it], I will also do it.**

What God has ordered will be done. God is in control! The Jews were occupied by Rome *because God ordained it.* Nothing happens to a Child of God without

God's permission. How far does that truth extend?

We serve a Big God. Is Satan bigger than God? Who is more powerful, Satan or God? What you believe will effect what you do.

Do you remember the **Apostle Paul**? Paul was imprisoned and on his way to death by beheading when he wrote:

Romans 13:1-4 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. (2) Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. (3) For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: (4) For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to [execute] wrath upon him that doeth evil.

There is no power but of God. Paul never tried to escape from his Roman captivity, though he did often lead his captors to accept Jesus Christ as Savior. Paul submitted to the authorities over him – and we who are

equally Children of God by faith are to do the same thing. If someone **compels you to go a mile** then God has allowed that person to be in authority over you. **Don't just go the mile, go another mile, go the extra mile.** Now this doesn't mean that you should bow down and worship false gods or commit some sort of sin. God never commands His Children to walk apart from holiness, but commands:

1 Peter 1:16 ... Be ye holy; for I am holy.

Must I obey unlawful and unholy commands from the government?

We are to **serve the Lord in holiness** – but there is nothing unholy in carrying a soldier's pack. God used Rome to protect Israel from greater and more voracious powers. While God allowed Rome to rule Israel then His people should have *worked within the Roman system to serve the Lord their God.*

FOCAL Matthew 5:42 ... **Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.**

The Child of God is a recipient of Grace. You who have received Grace, give Grace. People are won to the Lord when they see Jesus Christ in our lives. Jesus went on to say:

Love – Bless – Do Good – Pray

FOCAL Matthew 5:43-48 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. (44) But I say unto you, **Love your enemies, bless² them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; (45) That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven:** for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. (46) For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

The Christian – a Child of God by faith in Christ – is indwelt by God the Holy Spirit. **God is love (1 John 4:8)**. If you belong to God, then you are called to the high life, not the low road. **Speak well of those who speak poorly of you**. Be graceful to those who are graceless to you. The Scripture says:

Colossians 4:6 Let your speech [be] always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

When people do hateful things to you, you retaliate by doing good things to them. Remember the words of the

2 Present Active Imperative of G2127, εὐλογέω, eulogeō, yoo-log-eh'-o, From a compound of G2095 and G3056; to *speak well of*, that is, (religiously) to *bless* (*thank or invoke a benediction upon, prosper*): - bless, praise.

imprisoned Paul:

How should I retaliate when people abuse me?

Romans 12:19-21 Dearly beloved, **avenge not yourselves, but [rather] give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance [is] mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. (20) Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. (21) Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.**

Trust God. Do good. **Pray for your enemies** that they will be converted. Remember that **while you were yet enemies of God Christ died for you**. Let others see Jesus in you, not Judas but Jesus. Live for Him and change your world one life at a time.