

# Don't retaliate! Instead.....

Matthew 5:38-48

WEEK 5



Your  
**Will**  
Be  
**Done**

## OPEN

Whatever our ideas of repentance used to be, the deep dive into Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in recent weeks has certainly expanded its scope. Every week we have been faced with a fresh call to change our minds: first about the many aspects of a truly blessed life and then about what true righteous looks like in practice. Rather than a mechanical following of rules, this kind of righteousness flows from a heart that longs for His kingdom to come on earth by transforming us from the inside out. Today we will face "head on" the rather formidable challenge to show love to "evil doers" and "enemies" who have treated us unjustly when we would much rather retaliate or seek revenge

## SHARE & RECONNECT

- We have covered Matthew Ch. 5. — about 44% of Jesus' Sermon on the mount IN 11 sermons. What stands out so far? Are you ready to move on to something else or stick with it?
- Individual rights is a high value in North American culture. What 3 or 4 would you include in your personal "charter of rights"?

## READING

Read Matthew 5:38-48

- Remembering Jesus' opening call to repent (Matthew 4. 17), list all the specific areas in which this passage is asking for a radical change of mind
- Which would have been most jarring/unthinkable/ impossible for His original audience ?
- What about for us today?

## REFLECT

- V 38-42 spells out a non-retaliatory response to “evil” people who violate our rights— using *dignity, legal, personal* and *property* rights as examples.
  - Share about when you/others you know have experienced one of more of these “rights violations” and how you / they responded?
  - Which” right violation” would be hardest for you to not retaliate? Why?
- The sermon talked about waiting for the right time to confront the violator so the Spirit can do his work in us?
  - Have you seen this play out in any situation?
  - Why do so many of us find it hard to wait to discern the right time or what Gods agenda in us might be before we confront the violator?
- V 43-48 deals with our responses to enemies (ROME! for His audience)
  - Commentators have pointed out that “hate your enemies” is not found anywhere in the Hebrew Scriptures. But can that not be reasonably inferred from Psalm 109 ( one of many so called “imprecatory” Psalms)
  - The sermon suggested that while such hate filled prayers are not where we stop, they might be a necessary place to start. Hatred, if not prayed, makes us like the ones we hate. If prayed, we can move beyond that to suffering, lament and eventually prayers for their forgiveness and blessing. Have you seen this process at work in you /others?
  - Why does Jesus so closely link loving our enemies to praying for them?

## PRAY

- Prayer for yourselves
  - Reflect on how Jesus modelled what he teaches in His own life?
  - Ask the Spirit to form this aspect of the mind of Christ in you
  - Pray for yourself and the “perpetrator” in any situation of violated rights or any “enemies” that come to mind
- Prayer for persecuted believers
  - Use the insights gained from your tidy Jesus words in
- Prayer for the persecutors (use John Piper’s comments as a guideline)
  - It may be for their *conversion*. their *repentance*, that they would be *awakened* to the enmity in their hearts, that they will be *stopped* in their downwards spiral of sin, even if it takes disease or calamity to do it. But the kind of prayer Jesus has in mind here is always for their good , not for their punishment and our vindication