

Matthew 5:33-48  
"The Kingdom Way of Life"

I want you to know that I am very aware that many struggle with forgiveness. Some of us have had horrible things done to us by persons we trusted and struggle with how to forgive them. Some of us have been perpetrators of horrible things done to others and struggle with whether we can be forgiven. Forgiveness is hard but like love it is the temperament of the disciple of Jesus Christ. We cannot escape the command that we must forgive, and it is just as important that we believe we are forgiven.

**Matt 6:14-55** <sup>14</sup> "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. <sup>15</sup> But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

**1 John 1:9** <sup>9</sup> "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Forgiveness is hard, but nonetheless we must practice it, as well as believe we are the recipients of it. Now, forgiveness like so many other biblical virtues go against the norms of the culture. They don't lineup with the common practice of today. As a matter of fact, the Kingdom way of life in no way agrees with the world's way of living. The kingdom way of life is in stark contrast to the way of life in the world. It is radical and its underpinnings, when not properly understood, will make us feel that we are being weak. That we are allowing ourselves to be taken advantage of. That we are not doing our part to ensure justice reigns. But when we properly understand this call to radical living, we not only fully embrace all that comes with it, we experience true life; the abundant life promised to us by Christ.

With this said three very important truths regarding the Kingdom way of life, drawn from our text.

**First, the Kingdom way of life requires that we always speak the truth.**

**V33-37** <sup>33</sup> “Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.’ <sup>34</sup> But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne; <sup>35</sup> nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. <sup>36</sup> Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. <sup>37</sup> But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.” Pinkie promise, cross my fingers and hope to die, swearing on your mother should not be necessary for someone to know and believe that our word can be trusted. For the disciple the simple fact that we are followers of Christ should be enough for anyone to know that we speak the truth. That we do what we say, and we say what mean. The reality far too often is we don’t do what we say, and we don’t say what we mean and so we must employ oath and vow taking to get things done. Yes or no will suffice if we make a practice of simply doing what we say we will.

**Proverbs 29:20** “There is more hope for a fool than for someone who speaks without thinking.”

**James 3:2** <sup>2</sup> Indeed, we all make many mistakes. For if we could control our tongues, we would be perfect and could also control ourselves in every other way.

Listen, we do well to think before we speak. Yes and no will suffice if we make it a practice of doing what we say and saying what we mean.

**Second, the Kingdom way of life forbids retaliation. V38-42**

<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 tell you not to 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 away your tunic, let him have *your* cloak also. <sup>41</sup> And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. <sup>42</sup> Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.” There is much speculation as to whether this teaching is to be taken literally (expound). Well, you be the judge, but the principle is clear, disciples don’t practice retaliation. We surrender our right to fight back. Instead, we do what’s not expected. Why? Jesus. He didn’t retaliate. He did not fight back. He did the unexpected. As his disciples, we are called to do the same. It is true Church; you catch more flies with honey than you do with vinegar.

**1 Peter 3:8-12** <sup>8</sup> Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude. <sup>9</sup> Don’t repay evil for evil. Don’t retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and he will grant you his blessing. <sup>10</sup> For the Scriptures say, “If you want to enjoy life and see many happy days, keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies. <sup>11</sup> Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it. <sup>12</sup> The eyes of the Lord watch over those who do right, and his ears are open to their prayers. But the Lord turns his face against those who do evil.”

**1 Cor 6:1-2,6-8** “When one of you has a dispute with another believer, how dare you file a lawsuit and ask a secular court to

decide the matter instead of taking it to other believers! <sup>2</sup> Don't you realize that someday we believers will judge the world? And since you are going to judge the world, can't you decide even these little things among yourselves? <sup>6</sup> But instead, one believer sues another—right in front of unbelievers! <sup>7</sup> Even to have such lawsuits with one another is a defeat for you. Why not just accept the injustice and leave it at that? Why not let yourselves be cheated? <sup>8</sup> Instead, you yourselves are the ones who do wrong and cheat even your fellow believers.

**Phil 2:8** “he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross.”

No question that Jesus turns the other cheek, that he gave away his cloak along with his tunic, that he went two miles not just one. Metaphorically speaking.

**Finally, the Kingdom way life requires that the disciple give unconditional, unbridled love to all. V43-47** <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, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, <sup>45</sup> that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. <sup>46</sup> For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? <sup>47</sup> And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more *than others*? Do not even the tax collectors do so? <sup>48</sup> Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.” How can we possibly do this to people who mistreat us, abuse us, slander us, hurt us, etc.? We can do so by recognizing that we were once

counted among the enemies of God and God extended His unconditional, unbridled love towards us. People of God, the basis for all we are to do is couched in our gratitude for what God has done for us. We are simply to give to others what we have so abundantly and freely received. To not do so makes us like the evil servant of Matt 18. If I can fully accept the truth of what I was prior to God intervening in my life through His Son, Jesus, by the power of his Holy Spirit I am sure do what Christs instructs here, or least make a valiant attempt at doing so. Maybe the opportunity is we have forgotten what we once where. The Kingdom way of life requires we always speak the truth. That we abstain from retaliation, and we give unconditional, unbridled love to all. Let us fully embrace this way of life and all that comes with it. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.