

**Refuge City Church — April 28, 2024**  
**“Issues of Life: Unwelcome Impositions” (Matthew 5:38-42)**

***Introduction***

- In all these issues, Jesus points us back to the *source* for our consideration...where does our heart trend when these issues arise? [anger, lust, divorce, promises made, etc.]
- **QUESTION:** Has anyone ever imposed circumstances upon you, that you weren't prepared to accept, with or without your approval?
  - In this portion of Jesus' sermon, He gives us one of the most difficult things to do as Christians...exhibit self-control and love in the moment of insult and imposition.
  - **CONSIDER:** Not only do we live through the Holy Spirit's enablement of self-control, but at the same time to unequivocally love those who seek to harm us, impose on us, and take from us.

**Matthew 5:38-42**, “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.”

- The law
  - **Exodus 21:23-25**, “But if there is harm, then you shall pay life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.”
  - This is commonly referred to as “the law of retaliation” [similar to divorce; an allowance, not a command]
  - Somewhere through the years the religious leaders of the day emphasized “vengeance”, as opposed to equitable retaliation that doesn't go any further than the original offense.
  - God has always taught His people to love
    - **Leviticus 19:18**, “You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.”
- What are laws, but the temperance of an overtly sinful humanity, that without the law would fall into the deepest pit of anarchy and evil.
- **{v. 39}** “But I say to you...”
  - The clarity of Jesus' words brings us back to the heart of the matter... the heart of man.
  - Human nature has a propensity is for evil, revenge, hurt, and to a greater degree than the original offense.
  - **“Do not resist the one who is evil.”** = Do not oppose them. Do not take revenge or retaliate against them.
- Jesus gives us 4 ways in which we can learn to show restraint, yet be unrestrained and unrestricted in our love for others.

1. **[vs. 39] “But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.”**
  - The slap of insult [a right-handed backhand on the right cheek]; not to be misconstrued as a violent attack. [we can and should protect ourselves]
  - Knowing this is not a cultural thing for us today, but how often do people hurl insults at others, even those closest to them.
  - Consider one of the greatest advocates of this modern history: Martin Luther King Jr. [Philosophy of non-violence and his commandments of protest]
    - Principle 4: Nonviolence Holds That Unearned, Voluntary Suffering for a Just Cause Can Educate and Transform People and Societies
      - Nonviolence is a willingness to accept suffering without retaliation; to accept blows without striking back.
      - Nonviolence is a willingness to accept violence if necessary but never inflict it.
    - Principle 5: Nonviolence Chooses Love Instead of Hate.
      - Nonviolence resists violence of the spirit as well as the body.
    - 10 Commandments of Civil Disobedience/Non-violent protest
      1. Meditate *daily* on the teachings and life of Jesus.
      2. Remember always that the non-violent movement seeks justice and reconciliation—not victory.
      3. Walk and talk in the manner of love, for God is love.
      4. Pray *daily* to be used by God in order that all men might be free.
      5. Sacrifice personal wishes in order that all men might be free.
      6. Observe with both friend and foe the ordinary rules of courtesy.
      7. Seek to perform regular service for others and for the world.
      8. Refrain from the violence of fist, tongue, or heart.
      9. Strive to be in good spiritual and bodily health.
      10. Follow the directions of the movement and of the captain on a demonstration.
  - **1 Peter 2:23**, “When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.”
2. **[vs. 40] “And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well.”**
  - I don’t think I have to explain that we live in a ‘sue-happy’ society. It seems to be the *only* resolve people fall on nowadays.
  - Have you ever had anyone try and take advantage of you, or threaten such action?
    - Think about your initial response...
  - Have you every had anyone take advantage of your kindness, and take from you repeatedly?
  - What is Jesus asking of us?? A peaceful spirit. A generous response. If we respond in kind, how can we show grace and love to those who may need it most.
    - Jesus will go into further detail on this in the next section.
3. **[vs. 41] “And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.”**
  - Have you ever had anyone impose upon your timetable and/or schedule to suit their needs first?

- Selfish reaction is our nature.
- Jesus calls us to take selflessness another mile down the road.
  - Go further than the individual expected. Double the favor. Double the grace and love.
- 4. **[vs. 42] “Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.”**
  - Has anyone ever ask you to give them something? Have you ever come across someone who is begging from you?
    - What we might call an “imposition of resources”.
  - **Romans 12:9-10, 17, 19-21**, “Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor... Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all... Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’ To the contrary, ‘if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”