



Sermon on the Mount

# Vengeance

## Vengeance

Welcome to Jesus Time Where we spend time with Jesus in His time and culture.

Jesus continues with His Sermon upon the mount:

✝ Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.

Matthew 5:38 KJV

Here we have a good rule of thumb as in a standing understanding of what was once known in Jesus Time but is now an forgotten unknown today. Whenever we hear Christ say; "It has been known or it has been said" Jesus is referring to a Pharisaical teaching upon GOD'S Law. As in a Pharisee add-on. By Mosaic Law, Israel at this time was under what was known as the law of retaliation. (Vengeance)

Said Mosaic Law:

✝ And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, <sup>24</sup> Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, <sup>25</sup> Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

Exodus 21:23-25 KJV

First things first; did you notice that the word for word exacting King James version declares " If any Mischief, " as in the Sinful purposeful injury of another. Meaning this Law was not placed for an accident or even for unintentional negligence neither of these are the same as malicious intent. These 2 were & are still separate Biblically as in legally pertaining to negligence and or accidents. These type of injuries usually result in each financial or civil not criminal punitive punishments. Yes, an eye for an eye was intended for the willful Sinful direct harm of another.

Heavenly Father Jehovah issued this command unto Moses as each a punitive punishment and as a protection for the guilty offender against any excessive emotional outbursts of unequal retribution. You know; how many times have you heard; " they had it coming" or " you mess with the bull and you get the horns." This usually happens when someone has a mega violent response against a malefactor thusly annihilating them in some fashion for an offense of a far lessor magnitude.

This Commandment from Holy GOD Himself does in fact forbid such unequal retribution.

Why? Because guilty or no they too are a human being created in GOD'S likeness. (valuable to Him)

✝ Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.

Leviticus 19:18 KJV

✝ Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

<sup>20</sup> 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.

<sup>21</sup> Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Romans 12:19-21 KJV

Ok, in Jesus Time Roman Law demanded "one got as good as they gave. " Equal Justice not more. The code of Hammurabi ( 4K year old Babylonian Law) demanded the same. These and above all- GOD'S Law, prescribe equal Justice not the vengeance of calculated revenge.

The Torah being the first five books of Moses that we Christians know as the “Pentateuch” of the Old Testament, gives to us this understanding of vengeance:

Vengeance is the restoration of integrity by using equal avenging Justice.

During the Prophet Ezekiel’s days vengeance was understood as a necessary means of not just a due reckoning, but also for the beginning of the making of amends pertaining to our responsibility of accountability as for ones actions.

Legal Vengeance was also understood as a necessity for the victim or for their surviving loved ones. This relating unto a victims intellectual and or emotional healing & restoration. As in equal Justice granted some peace with a measure of tranquility restored unto the person(s) offended.

Likewise the Websters Legal Dictionary has no definition for “Vengeance” simply because Law in fact pertains to the dispensing of civilized Justice. While “Revenge” is described as “ The inflicting of malicious injury in return for harm done.” This being of course outside the due process of Law.

You know; in the eyes of the Law two wrongs do not make a right.

Whereas secular, social and even popular culture love to promote revenge stories as the very norms of entertainment. Case in point maybe you have heard of this one:

“Revenge is a dish best served cold.” A fictional Star Trek Klingon Proverb.

Continuing

✝ 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.

Matthew 5:39 KJV

What to notice here is: That Christ’s instructions are directly addressed solely unto the individual.

Not against civil or criminal Law enforcement, nor did Jesus speak against police protection or even an armed military intervention if the safety of a people so requires.

What to know here is: Jesus is actually quoting a well known Middle Eastern tradition that carried weight even into Western society up until the last several hundred years.

When someone felt aggrieved or a slight of an offense, a challenge was issued with the striking of the offender by the using of the back of ones open hand across their right cheek.

This challenged individual could then dispute the charges which entailed their right to chose the means of confrontation, or if someone did not resist they could turn to their accusing aggressor their left cheek as well, thusly refusing said challenge. (declining a duel: either legal, physical, or deadly)

Thusly those backing down could literally be perceived as weak or this action could even be considered an admission of guilt. However with that said- the conflict ended there.

No further escalation of hostility was socially acceptable.

The aggrieved was perceived as vindicated & if they continued the pursuit of supposed injury or insult then the supposedly aggrieved person appeared to be unreasonable or to thin skinned so to say thusly exposing an odious weakness within their character.

Unless ample public evidence was suggested challenge was not permissible between social or economic classes as it was supposed those of lessor stature could make it routine to feign an insult and challenge a superior. Furthermore legal proceedings then followed an accepted challenge because this was the norm for Israel in Jesus Time not violence. (sanctuary cities for accidents were in the past)

What to learn here is: That Jesus just set a single preamble condition upon this new Commandment. To resist evil, especially when being directly challenged by something evil.

Not only do two wrongs not make a right, Why? Do not willingly accept a fight that has no reason.

Don’t fight what may be untrue if it has no actual harm upon you.

As in how often it is just more beneficial to simply keep ones silent peaceful dignity and walk away.

Of course Jesus was not speaking against self defense especially when greater harm will occur if our natural self preservation instinct of “fight or flight” is not followed through. What the Lord was talking about is our not escalating a disagreement or misunderstanding beyond the degree which it has already graduated.

Christ’s simple truth is: Seeking or accepting trouble is usually not worth its costs by any means of measure. Be it physical, social interaction, loss of reputation, or any further legal repercussions.

We are to live in peace not just for our own well being but for the reputation of the body of Christ. (Church) Now we will also hear Jesus was not promoting weakness but instructing how to avoid a corrupted Justice system.

Continuing

✝ And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

Matthew 5:40 KJV

The Pharisee’s within their greed while using Theological Lawfare had so distorted the use of GOD’S Law particularly the “eye for an eye” Commandment of equal not punitive Justice, that Israel was in a nearly constant state of litigation amongst families, individuals, business partners and or competitors.

By adding countless twists and loopholes within their added on rules and regulations upon GOD’S Laws, this encouraged endless litigation becoming for the Scribes and Pharisee’s yet another source of immoral but legal income.

Remember any civil dispute was brought, charged, defended, and tried before them- as for both sides of a dispute. Meaning the Pharisee’s were the only real winners regardless of any legal result.

This was additional needless suffering upon the Jewish people already burdened with the excessive inflated required Tithing and hefty imposed Taxes by each the corrupted Temple & blood thirsty Rome.

Jesus knew this, and He was employing sound Divine advise in order to limit all the senseless litigation.

The Pharisee’s were abusing the eye for an eye legal concept to enrich themselves as in Justice perverted. Because in Israel & America today for gain; the process of endless appeals & retrials have become normal.

Further in the original Greek Jesus specified “Tunic & Cloak” by Pharisaical Law when someone lost a legal case and had not the means to repay, then they had to give up their outer garment which served most people as their bed covering making this a most recognizable public example of Justice. (clothes = expensive)

Here are the Pharisee’s 6 legal reasons for bringing a Lawsuit: ( any combination of these were probable)

1. Injury.
2. Damage.
3. Pain.
4. Healing. (medical etc.)
5. Loss. ( including time from labor)
6. Insult. ( Bava Kama 8:1 states; For insult the compensation is determined by the social status of both parties.)

Monetary values were determined by the Pharisee’s using the “eye for an eye” directive.

With punitive fines, fees, liens or levies beyond the actual payout unto the victim placed upon those found guilty payable of course to the Pharisee’s in lieu of any imprisonment or punishment.

This created an almost cynical oppressive social culture of despair amongst the Jewish population.

Yes Roman occupation served the Pharisee’s well because they used each the Temple, Taxes, & Lawfare to crush and control Israel leaving no excuse for the hope of reform, nor for any chance of freedom at all.

Until He- Jesus, as The Messiah Christ as Prophesized has arrived! While working supernatural Miracles!!

Get that?

Now you can understand Why? The Jews were starting to want Jesus as their King right here right now.

Continuing

✝ And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. (two)

Matthew 5:41 KJV

We get Christ's obvious meaning here that when someone asks us for our help, Jesus suggests we should go above and beyond of what was requested.

What might not be so well known here is that Jesus is quoting from an exact bitter requirement placed upon all Jewish men indeed all men subject to Rome in Jesus Time.

Israel in Jesus Time was a conquered occupied nation swarming with Roman Legionaries with any soldier of Rome by Imperial Law having the right to demand of any fit male Jew between the ages of 12-50 to carry their gear pack for the distance of one Roman mile. (5K Pedes/feet)

Being such every Jewish man knew the exact count of steps he needed to take to reach one mile.

Once those steps were complete the Jewish pack bearer would announce "one mile" and sit the Roman gear down upon the ground and legally peacefully be allowed to walk away.

Often it can be easy enough to help someone but to go that extra mile takes patience & love.

Jesus explains doing this is a mercy demonstrated in like character of Him.

Conclusion

✝ Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

Matthew 5:42 KJV

Jesus finishes this portion of His "Sermon upon the Mount" by saying Christians are commanded to be charitable. Hopefully not just because the Lord says so, but because we want to be.

Being truly altruistic is always the right thing to do.

Life- day by day, can and will be the great equalizer.

No matter ones station of power, fame, or wealth there will always be an unforeseen circumstance that nothing within our grasp will be able to fill that lack. Save for another who can help with that.

✝ If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. <sup>33</sup> And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. <sup>34</sup> And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. <sup>35</sup> But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish. <sup>36</sup> Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

(Reward in Heaven)

Dr.Luke 6:32-36 RSV