

WORSHIP

SUGGESTED WORSHIP SONGS:

Better Than Life, That's Why We Praise Him, Made Me Glad, Worthy is the Lamb

WELCOME

In Response. Briefly share how you usually respond when someone does something wrong toward you.

WORD

MATTHEW 5:38–48

³⁸“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’³⁹ But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.⁴⁰ If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also.⁴¹ Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two.⁴² Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’⁴⁴ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?⁴⁷ If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?⁴⁸ Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

The practice of eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth is a famous law of retaliation called ‘Lex Talionis.’ It is one of the oldest laws in the world. But in the Old Testament, this law was given a proper context: it was to protect civilization from unrestrained revenge (**Leviticus 24:19-20**). That is, fair justice system demands that penalty must be proportionate to the crime.

Note, however, that the principle of ‘Lex Talionis’ is not to be used for everyday personal retaliation but only in the context of a judicial case. This legal practice is used to keep people from taking justice into their own hands. Furthermore, it is also ensured that this law of retaliation is not abused. The lawcourt requires witnesses who will be subject to a fair investigation by judges. If a witness is found falsely accusing the person under trial, he/she shall also serve the same punishment due to the crime (**Deuteronomy 19:15–21**).

However, Jesus wants His followers to go beyond this fair law of retaliation. At the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gave four instances of unjust acts and abuses and He taught how God’s people should respond.

INSULT “SLAP” (MATTHEW 5:39)

By default, we get slapped on the left cheek. Most people are right handed so to slap one on the right cheek means to slap with the backhand. To be slapped by the backhand was the worst kind of slap. It was so

degrading that one would rather be whipped. Yet, Jesus is saying that when we are insulted at its worst, we should not fight back.

Today, people can insult us in any way and occasion at their whim and pleasure, but the true followers of Christ will respond in Christlike manner, different from normal reactions to insults.

INJUSTICE “SUE” (MATTHEW 5:40)

Some people will use the legal system frivolously just to cause problems or to serve their self-interests. If people falsely accuse you, instead of retaliating, be Christlike in your response. If you keep fighting them, you will only suffer and drain yourself out. However, your Christlike response may yield good results and a favorable outcome in the future.

INCONVENIENCE “SERVICE” (MATTHEW 5:41)

The Roman soldiers are legally allowed to force anybody to carry anything for them one mile. Similarly, today, if for example, we have a boss who demands us to work overtime, Jesus is saying that going an extra mile means we will do what our boss asked us to do although we already had previous plans. This can be inconvenient to us, but it will make our boss curious about our extraordinary kind of response which can draw the boss to Jesus.

WORD (cont'd)

EXTORTION “DEMAND” (MATTHEW 5:42)

If people are in need we are to help generously, but we must be discerning to avoid extortion. Help people but be wise, do not spoil them, help them also to help themselves (2 **Thessalonians 3:10**).

The principle behind Jesus' teaching about the law of non-retaliation shows us the heart of God. God is the God of justice and He will judge according to His terms in His time. Never take your own revenge instead leave room for God's wrath. We do not have to take things into our own hands because vengeance is God's (**Romans 12:19**). It does not mean you become a door mat or a pacifist but be wise and be Christlike. God will repay for the bad things made against you and He shall repay you for following Him in doing good.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. **Be Christlike.** How are we to respond according to Jesus in **Matthew 5:38–48**? Which among these instructions of Jesus is the hardest for you to do?
2. **Greatest Injustice.** What was the worst injustice that you've experienced so far? How did you respond and what did you learn from the experience?
3. **Going the Extra Mile.** In what ways can you apply going the extra mile with your family, workmates and others?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Use the most humbling experience you have encountered in your life as a follower of Jesus to share the gospel with someone today. Share how the amazing grace of God has transformed your life into Christlikeness.

BE TRULY CHRISTLIKE

The secret of being truly Christlike and thus going the extra mile is loving your enemies (**Matthew 5:43–45**). Love is not a feeling or sentimentalism but a commitment toward imperfect people to seek their highest good which often requires sacrifice. Loving people especially the unlovable to us will glorify our Father in heaven (**Matthew 5:16, 45**). Our supernatural responses to unjust acts will tell the world that we truly belong to Christ (**vv.46–47**).

Jesus is our model, if we follow Him seriously we will be radically different from the ways of the world. Being truly Christlike is being able to be what God has designed us as His children (**Matthew 5:48**).

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of Public Servants and a God-centered Philippines
- Repentance and Salvation

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
- Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
- Ministries and Churches worldwide

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living
- Salvation of family and friends