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Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

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“What Are You Doing More Than Others?”: The Supernatural Life of the Christian... Matthew 5:38-48

I. Overview: Life in the Kingdom of Heaven

Fighting self: This life is to be a supernatural life for the honor of God

II. Dealing with Evil People Selflessly

vs. 38 “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ But I tell you, do not resist an evil person.”

“Surely here Jesus is contradicting the Law of Moses”

A. Intent of Law of Moses

Deuteronomy 19:21 “The judges must make a thorough investigation... you must purge the evil from among you; Show no pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.”

1. Command given to Judges of Israel
2. They must not show pity, or evil will become prevalent
3. Purpose was to stop principle of escalation
 - a. you take my eye, I take your life
 - b. you took my brother’s life, I will kill your whole family

Illus. Hatfields & McCoys

B. Pharisees’ false teaching

1. Made it a matter of PERSONAL application

2. They became the judges who brought this law to every matter of personal injury

C. Jesus speaks to the Christian person

1. In effect says “DON’T PRESS CHARGES”
2. If someone hurts you, don’t hurt back...
3. In no way does Jesus overturn the Law of Moses

D. Doctrinal controversy

1. Some say must NEVER resist an evil person

Illus. Russian novelist Tolstoy said because of this verse, we must have no police officers, no soldiers, no judges, no lawmakers... we must not resist an evil person in any way

2. Others are moderate pacifists... yes, we need police and courts, but we must never kill or go to war, have no capital punishment, etc.
3. Some also want to ask, “What are Christians supposed to be total doormats... giving to everyone, to any beggar that comes our way?”

E. Context is King

1. Jesus is teaching about life in the Kingdom of Heaven
 - a. it is not for the governance of nations or court systems
 - b. it had absolutely nothing to do with non-Christian people!!
 - c. it is for those who meet criteria of Beatitudes
 - d. it is HERESY to think you can live out the Sermon on the Mount in the natural strength of a natural man
2. Law restrains evil... for NON-CHRISTIANS, it’s still a matter of “Eye for eye, tooth for tooth...” LAW FOR UNBELIEVER, GRACE FOR BELIEVER
3. This teaching only has to do with Christians in their PERSONAL dealings

If someone strikes YOU on the right cheek, turn to him to other also

If someone wants to sue YOU and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well

If someone forces YOU to go one mile, go with him two miles

Give to the one who asks YOU, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you

-It is not about whether a Christian should be a judge

-It is not about whether a Christian should enter the military

F. The MAIN Issue: A Christian's attitude toward SELF

1. Natural man makes "SELF" a god... anything that wrongs self must be punished with wrath
2. To be truly Christian, one must be dead to SELF

Matthew 16:24 "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me."

3. Jesus takes us through three examples of what He means
 - dead to self concerning one's body
 - dead to self concerning one's possessions
 - dead to self concerning one's time

G. Dead to Self Concerning One's Body (vs. 39)

vs. 39 "Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also."

[that is... refuse to press charges!!]

Illus. Billy Bray, champion boxer in England & a coal miner... converted; a former enemy who had been afraid of him, now hearing that he was a Christian approached him boldly and smashed him in the mouth... Billy could have knocked him to the ground unconscious... instead he said **"May God forgive you, even as I forgive you."**

Hudson Taylor, missionary in China... wearing native clothes, summoned ferry boatman to take him across the river; knocked to the ground by wealthy Chinese... shared boat and Christ with him

1. My body is not my own... it is Christ's

1 Corinthians 6:19 "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit...? You are not your own, you were bought at a price."

2. Physical sufferings on this earth were part of Christ's life... why shouldn't they be part of ours?
3. Make your body a sacrifice for purposes of Christ

Romans 12:1 "I urge you, therefore, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to present your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to him."

4. Becoming indifferent to worldly criticism

1 Corinthians 4:3 "I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court."

5. Ultimately, refuse to fight for your honor... lay down your body for the honor of Christ and of His gospel... if you do, GREAT WILL BE YOUR REWARD IN HEAVEN!

H. Dead to Self Concerning One's Possessions (vs. 40-42)

vs. 40, 42 "And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well... (42) Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you."

Illus. "MY TOYS!!" Knowledge of possessions comes very early... children have to be taught to share; my things are my things—and you can't have them!

1. Jesus' Lordship extends to our things; He gave them to us for a purpose, and we are to use them to build His Kingdom
2. What we do with our possessions says a great deal about our faith
3. America... lawsuit after lawsuit, much of it over possessions
4. A Christian would rather be wronged and cheated than go to court with a brother in Christ

1 Corinthians 6:7 “Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?”

5. But here, Jesus is even talking about a non-Christian... if someone wanted to sue a Jewish man in Jesus' day, they could sue for the inner garment (tunic) but legally not for the external cloak... Jesus says “Give it to him anyway!”
6. REMEMBER THE BEATITUDES:

5:5 “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth!”

[It's all going to be yours anyway!!]

“Go ahead... take my cloak, too... perhaps you need it more than I do; but someday that cloak is going to wear out, just like everything in this physical world... let me tell you of an eternal home that will never wear out”

7. What about the beggars? Give to absolutely everyone?
 - a. difficult problem... some beggars simply use what they get to further their addictions
 - b. Paul gives principle for some professional beggars:

2 Thessalonians 3:10 “If a man will not work, neither shall he eat.”

- c. also was a list of widows... some genuinely needy of weekly support, others could have been working but were idle busybodies... 1 Timothy 5:16 says some widows are genuinely in need and some are not
8. YET too many use these guidelines never to help a single needy person... The idea is not that, because there are some fakes out there, we are now allowed to disregard Jesus' teaching!! NO... we just need to be wise in who we give it to; Jesus gave the general principle here

“Keep your heart soft and your possessions ready to give away... don't hold on to wealth in this world, but be wise about how you do give it away.”

- I. Dead to Self Concerning One's Time (vs. 41)

vs. 41 “If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.”

1. Roman law... any native in an occupied territory could be pressed into service to carry military baggage for one mile... 1000 paces

2. Jews chafed under this burden and sometimes had to be whipped to comply
3. Jesus calls on His followers to do it cheerfully, not under compulsion, then at the 1000 pace mark, to say to the astonishment of the soldiers, "May I please take it another 1000 paces as well?"
4. WHAT FREEDOM THERE IS IN THIS CHEERFUL OPEN SERVICE!! After it is over, you will have a free opportunity to share the gospel... to give an answer to anyone who asks you to give a reason for the hope that gives you such strength!!
5. My time is not my own... my labor is not my own... it belongs to Jesus who bought it... we are to give it freely even to surly and demanding Roman soldiers so that we may win some of them to Christ

Summary:

- dead to self concerning one's body
- dead to self concerning one's possessions
- dead to self concerning one's time

George Muller: "There was a day when I died, utterly died to George Muller and his opinions, preferences, tastes, and will; died to the world, its approval or censure; died to the approval or blame even of my brethren and friends; and since then, I have studied only to show myself approved unto God."

III. Loving Enemies Selflessly (vs. 43-45)

vs. 43-45 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."

A. Pharisees total false teaching: This is nowhere found in the Law

B. Christ totally opposes them: LOVE your enemies!!

1. Perhaps one of the most unique teachings in the Christian religion
2. Also one of the most difficult to carry out in the flesh

C. Love here is not a matter of warm emotional attachment

1. Acts of service to bring them benefit and joy

2. Sun rises and warms the face of a blasphemer
3. Rain falls on his fields & gives him a harvest which he will use for his selfish ends
4. God serves the needs of his enemies everyday... so should we
5. Determination to bless when we are cursed, to pray for the persecutor

Jesus said “Father, forgive them; they don’t know what they’re doing!”

Stephen fell to his knees under the shower of stones and said “Lord, don’t hold this sin against them.”

William Tyndale, translator of Bible into English, as he was being burned at the stake by tyrant King Henry VIII prayed, “Lord, open the King of England’s eyes.”

D. Motive... not their conversion, but our imitation!!!

“... that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.”

1. God created us to be like Him and to imitate Him
2. As we bless our persecutors, we are most like our Father, who is constantly gracious to sinner and to blasphemers, though they never acknowledge His goodness
3. Our personal joy and peace is safe within us, and NO PERSECUTOR CAN EVER TAKE IT AWAY

IV. The Supernatural Life: “What are you doing more than others?” (vs. 46-48)

Vs. 46 “If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? BE PERFECT, THEREFORE, AS YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER IS PERFECT.”

A. It’s natural to be friendly to those who’ll be friendly to you... it’s supernatural to love and greet those who scorn, ignore and hate you

Illus. Tom never greeted me at work!

B. Central issue... the Christian life is a supernatural life!!

1. All flows from Christ’s statement:

5:17 “Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the Kingdom of heaven.”

2. The whole issue with this powerful application of the law is “Only those born again by the Spirit of God can live this kind of life...”
3. A pure life, free from anger, lust, divorce, and oath-breaking
4. A selfless life which gives freely of everything that self has to offer: one’s body, one’s possessions, one’s time, one’s work... and all of it even given to evil people who will never fully appreciate it
5. A life in imitation of God, which even loves enemies while they put you to death

C. Christ’s question therefore is a KEY DIAGNOSTIC:

WHAT ARE YOU DOING MORE THAN OTHERS?

1. NOT salvation by works... that’s a heresy; no one can live this life by their own strength
2. NO, but these issues are firstfruits of the powerful working of the Holy Spirit inside your heart
3. Your righteousness MUST be a supernatural righteousness, not like the prideful selfish external work of the Pharisees

WHAT ARE YOU DOING MORE THAN OTHERS? Means

What about your life is supernatural and can’t be explained by anything other than the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life because you believed in Christ?

D. Ultimately... total conformity to the Father is the destiny of every member of the Kingdom of Heaven

“You must be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

V. Application: Examine Your Life

A. When someone strikes you on the right cheek, do you strike back?

1. Is pride so strong in you that you must lash out in retaliation? Or do you feel the work of the Holy Spirit within you, giving you a gracious spirit when wronged?

2. BE A SPIRITUAL BEGGAR AND ASK GOD FOR THIS SPIRIT

- B. When someone wants your possessions, do your fingers become white in their grip around them, or are you open-handed, giving freely and trusting God to meet your needs?
1. Do an inventory of your possessions and say, “This is God’s, for He made it... This is God’s, too... this belongs to Christ... everything I have is yours”
 2. Be prepared to give freely, but be wise in those to whom you give... there are too many genuinely needy people for us to waste our giving on fakes
 3. Distrust your heart even in this, though... keep close tabs on whether you actually are being generous... it’s too easy to be selfish
- C. When someone forces you to go one mile, do you complain the whole way, or do you cheerfully go the second mile?
- D. How do you handle your enemies? Do you hate and fight them the way pagans do, or are you living supernaturally?

WHAT ARE YOU DOING MORE THAN OTHERS? Means

What about your life is supernatural and can’t be explained by anything other than the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life because you believed in Christ?