

Matthew 5: 33-42

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Preacher: Michael Loosa

[0 : 00] Amen.

Amen. Please pray with me. Heavenly Father, we come before you right now, God, and in desperation, because your word is hard sometimes to understand.

And, Lord, we recognize the total inadequacy of our own hearts. And so, Father, we ask that you, by your Spirit this morning, would teach us from your word, and, God, that you would bring transformation at the level of our hearts, Father God.

That's something that only you can do. We can't conjure it up. We can't work harder for it. It's something that only happens out of the grace and love of our kind Father and the power of the Holy Spirit.

So, God, open up your word to us today, Lord. I pray that my words would fade and your words would just impact our hearts, Lord, for your glory and for the building of your kingdom.

[1 : 16] Father, we pray all this in your matchless name. Amen. Well, good morning. For those that don't know me, my name is Mike Lusa, and I'm now one of the elders here at Shoreline as of, like, three weeks ago.

Yeah, thanks a lot. So, we've been in Matthew for, well, I guess since the beginning of the year. And so, if you've been with us, you've been going through and seeing the things that we've been learning about Christ and about ourselves.

And I just want to take us through as a recap because I feel like it's been a while. Sometimes we get lost in details and we kind of miss the big picture of where we are.

So, we're going to just run through. So, you can actually turn back with me to Matthew 1. You can be checking what I'm saying as I go through here. Look at the words yourselves. And, Matt, we do have a PowerPoint here.

He's working on it. So, Matthew opened up his book showing us through what we might call a boring genealogy that Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah, the rightful heir to the throne of David.

[2 : 21] Right? And so, Matthew sets the scene by proclaiming Jesus as both Savior and as King. I'll probably just give you, like, a little head nod every time. Yeah. He then takes us through five distinct narratives in which we see over and over again how Jesus is the fulfillment of the covenant promises made to Israel.

We see that he's conceived by the Holy Spirit. He's born of a virgin. He's adopted into the royal line. He's worshipped by Gentile wise men from the east. He's called out of Egypt and a native to the town of Nazareth.

These are all things that point back to the Old Testament and how Christ was fulfilling the promises of the Old Testament. Next, we see in chapter 3, John the Baptist preparing the way for Christ. Yet another fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. And he's calling the nation of Israel to repentance from their self-sufficiency and presumed right standing with God. And John the Baptist proclaims the imminent coming of the Messiah.

And then adult Jesus enters the scene, right? And we see that the Father declares and the Spirit confirms that Jesus is the pleasing Son of God.

[3 : 29] In the beginning of chapter 4, Jordan showed us how we see Jesus as the true representative of Israel, choosing obedience to the Father in the face of temptation, which, if you've read the Old Testament, you saw that over and over again, Israel failed at this, and they failed at this, and now Christ comes, and he triumphs over the schemes of Satan, right?

And this is a precursor of a greater victory to come. See, true light has dawned on the world, and his name is Jesus. Amen? Next, we see Jesus call the first of his disciples and begin this prominent, head-turning ministry that involves teaching and proclaiming and healing.

And so then, at the end of chapter 4, as one commentator put it, we see the first members of the new messianic Israel following the king, submitted to his kingly rule, and the true sons of Abraham following the seed of Abraham.

That's a reference to the Messiah in the Old Testament, so it's talking about Christ. Following the seed of Abraham through whom all peoples on earth will be blessed. And so now we've been in the Sermon on the Mount for a few weeks, and this is perhaps the best known of Jesus' teachings. And so I want us to actually just imagine ourselves there listening to Christ, sitting on this picturesque mountainside that was most likely on a mountain overlooking a lake, and listening intently to the words of Jesus.

[4 : 55] And think about this. This is God himself in human form, right? Now, when God gave the law to Moses and to Israel, how did he do it? He spoke in thunder and in lightning, and the people were afraid.

And yet here, Jesus invites people to draw near, speaking in a soft voice. Now, remember, Jesus is speaking primarily to his disciples, and in this sermon, he is laying out for them the Christian counterculture, as John Stott puts it.

He's laying out the patterns and the lifestyle and the characteristics of the citizens in this new kingdom. So as you imagine yourself there, question, would you be one of those disciples, listening intently to the authoritative and illuminating teacher of your master?

If so, this message today is for you. Now, no doubt, a large portion of curious and interested people pressed in as well, listening intently to this rabbi, this teacher, wondering what all the commotion was about.

Now, maybe this would be you today, not committed, just curious, just listening in. And if that's you, this message is for you too. And I hope and I pray that the Holy Spirit would stir you to faith in Christ.

[6 : 11] See, he longs to give you his righteousness and to have a living, dynamic relationship with you. In fact, he died, so that would be possible. So what has the Sermon on the Mount actually revealed to us so far?

Well, on the one hand, it's revealed an impossible ideal that only Jesus can fulfill. He's the only one who can fulfill the ideal of the Beatitudes person that we talked about.

He's the only one who can perfectly keep the law. So we need Jesus to be our righteousness. And that's the only way that our righteousness will then surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees, which Jesus said was required in order to gain entrance into his kingdom.

So we need Christ for salvation, for righteousness. Now, at the same time, the Sermon on the Mount has revealed not just an impossible ideal, but also a practical guideline for his disciples for citizens of this new kingdom to actually live out in the power of the Spirit.

See, the key here is contrast. Kingdom disciples are called to live lives radically different than the world around them. The Beatitudes and then the salt and light analogy made that clear, and now Jesus is showing us through six practical examples how the righteousness present in his disciples is one that flows out of the heart.

[7 : 30] The heart righteousness is the kind that exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees. So, again, an impossible ideal only to be fulfilled in Christ and yet a practical guideline for us to actually live out in the power of the Spirit.

And so the last few weeks, we looked at three of these examples, murder, adultery, and divorce, and we saw that not only is murder a sin, but so is our heart hatred towards another, right? Like, regardless of what outward form it takes.

Not only is a physical act of adultery a sin, but so is the lust of our hearts and our minds. And then, not only is divorce without the proper certificate a sin, but the selfishness and the faithlessness and the lack of love that led to it and the flippant view of marriage that followed through with it.

Christ is showing how he demands a righteousness of our hearts. See, he's calling us to a higher standard. He's calling us to the standard that God had actually intended but had been distorted by men when he gave the law to Israel.

And so today, we're going to talk about two more areas, that of oath-taking and retaliation. So flip back in your Bibles now. We're in chapter 5, verses 33 through 37.

[8 : 43] And let me read this for us again. Again, you have heard that it was said to those of old, you shall not swear falsely but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.

But I say to you, do not take an oath at all. Either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great king.

And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let what you say be simply yes or no. Anything more than this comes from evil.

So that formula Jesus has been using, you have heard that it was said, but I say to you. He's using this formula in all these six examples and these six contrasts, and he's bringing to light the true intent of the Old Testament by providing a right interpretation.

And so it's important for us to realize that he's not correcting the Old Testament itself, okay, but rather misunderstandings of the Old Testament that were prevalent in his day.

[9 : 46] So what were the Jews actually believing in regards to oaths? So this, what he says here, you shall not swear falsely but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn. This isn't a direct quotation of the Old Testament, but it's a true statement taken from several laws that we see in Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and then Ecclesiastes.

We're going to read one of them. Deuteronomy 23, 21 to 23. If you make a vow to the Lord your God, you shall not delay fulfilling it, for the Lord your God will surely require it of you, and you will be guilty of sin.

But if you refrain from vowing, you will not be guilty of sin. You shall be careful to do what is past your lips, for you have voluntarily vowed to the Lord your God what you have promised with your mouth.

And so we see that the Pharisees, the Jewish leaders of the day, had moved the emphasis away from the need to fulfill one's vow, and they placed it on the formula used to make the vow.

They argued that the law was not intending to prohibit the taking of the name of the Lord in vain, but rather the taking of the name of the Lord in vain, if you follow. So what they did is the Pharisees established this elaborate system of vow-taking formulas, and only those formulas that included God's divine name were actually binding.

[11 : 07] Now, before we get too upset with them, I think we can see quickly that we do the same thing. So if you think back to your, you know, childhood playground days, sometimes you would try to make a promise to your friends around you, right, and you'd say, I promise X, and then they'd say, are your fingers crossed?

And you'd say no, and you'd show your hands, right, and then you'd say, if they still didn't believe you, cross my heart and hope to die, stick a needle in my eye. I don't know if any of you guys did this. I did. And then if they still didn't believe you, you had to resort to a pinky swear, right?

And so you'd do a pinky swear, and at least where I was growing up, that was like it. You didn't have to do anything else. I know some people did like the, you know, the blood brothers thing. I don't know. But, so we had this series of oaths to prove that we're serious, right, like that we mean it.

And now there is adult versions to this. Sometimes we just simply say, I swear, X, right? And if they don't believe you, you say something like, so help me God. And if they still don't believe you, you might say something, and I hope we don't say this, especially on Mother's Day, but I swear on my mother's grave, right?

It's like we have a series of statements to make. So it's not just the Pharisees, right? But what is Jesus actually teaching here? He says, do not take an oath at all, right?

[12 : 20] Jesus is teaching in the examples he gives that the formula used to make the vow is totally irrelevant, right? Like that's not the point, and it's foolishness to think that the words you use to make a vow somehow alter the necessity of fulfilling that vow.

See, everything belongs to the Lord, and taking any form of oath means you have sworn before God as your witness. And then he takes us through a few examples, right?

So he says, you can follow on the screen, do not take an oath at all either by heaven, for it is the throne of God. So it's foolish to think that if you swear by heaven, you're not swearing by God.

It's where God actually dwells. It's where his glory exists. If you swear by heaven, you're swearing by God himself as well. And then he says, and do not swear by earth, for it is his footstool.

Psalms 24, verse 1 says, the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell within. And Isaiah 66, verse 1, heaven is my throne and earth is my footstool.

[13 : 20] Matthew Henry put it like this, he governs the motions of this lower world as he rules in heaven, so he rules over the earth. And though under his feet, yet it is also under his eye and care and stands in relation to him as his, so that in swearing by it, you swear by its owner.

Then he says not to swear by Jerusalem. Well, first, Jerusalem's part of the earth, right, so that follows that it's the Lord's. But also more specifically, Psalm 46 says, Jerusalem is the city of God. And Psalm 48, again, the city of the great king. And then finally, Jesus says, and do not take an oath by your head. He's saying that even swearing by your own head invokes the Lord, for we don't even have natural power to change the color of our hair.

Now I'm 30, I'm starting to get a little bit of gray hairs, and I can't do anything naturally to make them go backwards. I try plucking them and they just come back. So you might not be able to see them from up there, but down there, but so now swearing by one's head, it actually meant that you would be willing to give your head, that you'd give your life if your word didn't come true.

So what Jesus is saying is you don't even control the color of your hair, let alone your very life. These things belong to the Lord. And so that's the first thing Jesus is teaching here. It's that the words used are just totally irrelevant.

[14:35] That's not the point of the law. Every vow is a binding vow as every vow is made in the sight of God. All right, so if that's not the point, then what is the point? And that's evident when we look back now at verse 37.

He says, let what you say be simply yes or no. Anything more than this comes from evil. See, Jesus is saying that we must be people of our word, people who keep our promises.

And if we are, then taking vows becomes unnecessary, right? And this becomes our first main point today. Disciples in God's kingdom live with such integrity that their simple word can be firmly trusted.

Now, how does anything more than this come from evil, as it says at the end there? One commentator put it, swearing is really a pathetic confession of our own dishonesty.

You see, it's human untruthfulness, it's human dishonesty and human deception that makes swearing and oath-taking a necessity, right? And so human language becomes devalued so much by our deception, and this can include exaggeration, this can include the use of superlatives when they're not called for.

[15:52] And so the human language becomes devalued so much that we have to resort to swearing to actually get people to believe us. Now, do you see how this is based in evil? We just sang a song about God's faithfulness and Him keeping His promises.

So reflecting our God, which we were made to do, being holy for I am holy is what He said. Reflecting God means reflecting His faithfulness and His truthfulness and therefore then His trustworthiness.

So as a side note, does this mean we should never ever under any circumstance take any oaths? No, this is not what Jesus is saying, and just as a general thing, I want us to be careful in everything Jesus says not to take principle and turn it into prescription.

We have to be careful with this. We see in Scripture God, Christ Himself, and Paul, among others, all taking oaths at different times. But again, the point is they didn't do this because of their own sin. They did it because of the unbelief and the dishonesty of men, which made oath-taking an appropriate way to indicate seriousness. Now, without going into more detail, sometimes oaths are necessary, but the principle today is may the honesty and the consistency and the integrity with which we live our lives make our simple words sufficient to be relied upon by others.

[17:11] So Brittany and I moved into our house in October of 2016. And a few months later, a young family moved in next to us and I remember having a casual conversation with them.

And I told the husband that like, hey, we would love to have you guys over for dinner sometime, right? And he said, yeah, that'd be great. And I saw him again like a month later and I said, hey, still want to have you guys over for dinner.

Like, I really want to. And again and again and again until almost a full year had passed before we actually had them over to our house for dinner, right? And so my intentions seemed to be good.

Like, I genuinely wanted to hang out with this family and yet I was cheapening my words because I wasn't following through with them, right? My words becoming devalued because there was no follow through.

So God convicted me that my supposed good intentions were actually resulting in sin and they were damaging my testimony. I have a feeling I'm not the only one in that category.

[18:09] So if you say you're going to hang out with somebody make it happen, right? Like, we have all sorts of tools. I'm using an iPad right here and I've got a smartphone in my pocket with a Google Calendar on it. Like, we have all sorts of ways to make this happen.

Or, sometimes you're just busy, right? Be honest. Say, hey, I have a lot on my plate these next few weeks. I do really value time with you but let's wait to schedule something, right?

And that makes us people of our words but what's the inner struggle going on in our hearts to keep us from actually following through? And that's something I had to work through as I thought about this and I think for me in the example I gave it came down to the fact that for me to follow through in my word it meant rearranging my schedule.

It meant being inconvenienced, right? And what's that called? That's selfishness. It's selfishness. It was a heart of selfishness manifesting itself in cheap words and Jesus here is calling us to lay aside our selfishness and be people of integrity.

Here's a few more examples. How about praying for others? How often do you say, hey, I'm going to pray for you about that and then you guys walk away you don't pray for them you forget about it and you never pray for them until you get a text and you're like, oh shoot, I should pray really quick so I can be like, hey man, I've been praying for you, right?

[19:22] I've done that before. Anybody else? You've done that before? Stop and pray right there. Like why was you, for one, why would you even wait to pray? Just pray with them. It might look silly. You might be in the middle of work. You might be in the middle of the grocery store.

Pray for them. Or again, we have technology. Coleman, where are you? Coleman sent us this app, Echo Prayer, that you can like keep track of prayer requests and say when you're praying for each other and I admit I haven't been using it much yet but I want to so keep me accountable.

Help me be somebody of my word. How about this? Time with the Lord. You make a goal to spend time with God. You want to get up in the morning and spend time in prayer and the word and yet over and over again you don't do it.

In our small group, our men's group, we have this saying, don't be a DSLP and stands for double snooze lunch pack because we talked about how if you hit the snooze button twice in the morning you've already lost 15 minutes and if you pack your lunch in the morning instead of the night before you've lost another 10.

so just that simple practical method gives us more time to spend with the Lord but the point is that if you've committed to spend time with the Lord, make good on your word and we have community groups to help us be accountable to that.

[20:38] So many examples. One more, I think, maybe two. Parenting. How many of you guys sometimes your kid's not doing what you want and so you threaten something like I'm going to take all of your toys and send them across the ocean or something that you're never going to follow through on and we do it because we want our kids to do what we want them to do.

But, well, I mean, my daughter's only three months so I haven't really experienced this yet. But be parents who let your yes be yes and your no be no.

Right? Like you're teaching them then from a young age that, well, you don't always mean what you say and Jesus wants us to mean what we say every time we say something out of our mouths.

Finally, marriage.

And this is a challenge to both married and singles as we look on marriage. And this ties in to last week's passage on divorce. Let your yes be yes.

See, God has a high view of marriage that's far higher than our culture has and when we enter into the marriage covenant we're entering into a lifetime covenant. You're making a promise.

[21:42] See, in a world filled with dishonesty and with deceit for the sake of selfish gain our radical countercultural Christian integrity even when it's inconvenient.

Right? That shines a light on the face of God whose faithfulness never ends. Amen? So that is the first point that we've made. Disciples in God's kingdom live with such integrity that their simple word can be firmly trusted.

And now we'll look at the next passage so go back to the text with me. Verse 38. 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. Now in this example the law is actually quoted from three different places in the Old Testament. We see in Exodus Leviticus and Deuteronomy this idea of retaliation.

We'll read one passage Leviticus 24 17 through 21 Whoever takes a human life shall surely be put to death. Whoever takes an animal's life shall make it good life for life.

[23 : 07] If anyone injures his neighbor as he has done shall be done to him it shall be done to him. Fracture for fracture eye for eye tooth for tooth whatever injury he has given a person shall be given to him.

Now this principle was broadly known not just in Israel but all over the ancient world as what's called the lex talionis or the law of retribution. Now the problem here is that the scribes and Pharisees took a law out of its intended context and they applied it somewhere somewhere that it totally didn't belong.

See this law was meant to be enforced by local government by a judge or a magistrate and so it's intent it had two intents it was to define justice and then also restrain revenge.

So it was supposed to require an exact retribution for the offender no more and no less and so what the Jewish leaders did is they applied this law to personal relationships and they allowed for and even obligated personal vengeance towards an offender.

So they essentially restricted love and mercy and personal relationships in the supposed name of justice. Now this defied the intent of the law and also other passages we see in Old Testament scripture where personal vengeance was condemned.

[24 : 29] Leviticus 19.18 even in the same book you shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your people but you shall love your neighbor as yourself I am the Lord and Proverbs 20.22 do not say I will repay evil wait for the Lord and he will deliver you.

So what is Jesus teaching? Verse 39 but I say to you do not resist the one who is evil. Now it's important to know here Jesus is not saying don't resist evil in some sort of general sense and he's not saying don't resist the capital evil one or the devil and we see in the New Testament the authors make it clear we're to resist both right?

What he's saying is not to resist an evil person or more specifically not to resist one who wrongs you. See in other words in personal relationships when someone commits an offense against you don't retaliate don't seek revenge don't try to get even that's what Jesus is saying.

Now he expounds on this by providing four concrete examples for us and he's showing us that rather than respond with vengeance we ought to respond with sacrificial love.

And this is our second main point today disciples in God's kingdom respond to offense with sacrificial love. So let's look at these examples verse 39b but if anyone slaps you on the right cheek turn to him the other also.

[26 : 00] Now Andrew can you stand real quick for me? So Jesus is saying if anyone slaps you on the right cheek now I'm a right handed person as most people were and for me to slap Andrew on the right cheek was a backhanded slap.

Thanks you can sit down. So really it wasn't so much injury but rather shame or disgrace. It's a shameful thing to be slapped across your face by someone's back of the hand right?

Jesus is saying that that far from seeking vengeance he calls his disciples to accept shame and insult for the sake of sacrificial love. Verse 40 and if anyone would sue you and take your tunic let him have your cloak as well.

Now the tunic was an inner garment it was worn next to the skin and a cloak was an outer garment that was used for warmth and in Old Testament law even if one sued you for your cloak they were actually required to give it back to you before night so that you would have your warmth when you went to sleep that night and so Jesus is saying here that far from seeking satisfaction from somebody that sues you the Christian response is to even give up what legally belongs to you to be willing to suffer injustice for the sake of love.

Verse 41 and if anyone forces you to go one mile go with him two miles. What Jesus probably has in mind here is that in that day Roman soldiers were actually allowed to conscript civilians to carry their stuff so if you were just minding your own business they could grab you and say hey carry my pack for a mile and you would have to go with them for that mile.

[27 : 38] Now that was obviously pretty inconvenient right and add insult to injury those people were the ones already oppressed by the Romans and yet Jesus is saying that far from finding some way to you know stick it to the Romans his disciples are to even go double the distance than what was required see Jesus is calling Christians to give up their rights for the sake of love in verse 42 give to the one who begs from you and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you this one needs little explanation disciples of Christ ought to be willing to part with their possessions for the

sake of love so from these four examples we see that the children of God are willing to give up their dignity and their liberty and their property out of sacrificial love rather than seek revenge John Stott put it this way what Jesus here demands of all his followers is a personal attitude to evildoers which is prompted by mercy not justice which renounces retaliation so completely as to risk further costly suffering which is governed never by the desire to cause them harm but always by the determination to serve their highest good now this this could not run more opposite to our culture right

I mean the mindset of our culture is so against this always responding in defensiveness always responding to seek vengeance right and why I think it's because it runs in opposition to our prideful selfish hearts and I think you and I experience the same thing in our small group a few weeks ago we were talking about how we often play out these scenarios in our head I don't know if you do the same thing a few of us resonated with this that you know maybe your boss has been unfair to you or mistreated you or something like that and so you play out the scenario in your own head where you like totally tell off the boss and you make him look really stupid and everyone's like yeah go Mike he's great and you walk away and you feel really good about yourself maybe it's just me I guess I do it and of course when we play this scenario out in our heads nothing bad ever happens right now in my previous position at work some of you know at Electric Boat I was what's called an engineering coordinator and so I was a liaison to the shipyard on behalf of our waterfront engineering group and so pretty regularly well like three times a day we'd gather in a room and that room had ships management personnel that kind of oversaw the project there were trade general foremen other reps from different organizations and reps from the Navy and as you might be able to imagine the tensions in that room would often get pretty high especially as we approach some sort of deadline and at best it would result in some sort of comedic sarcasm that would make people kind of laugh and ease the tension but many times it wasn't the comedic kind it was the patronizing belittling kind there was often yelling and sometimes just like outright insult and I can't tell you how many times that when I was spoken to with this sort of biting sarcasm that I wanted to respond back with that same sort of sarcasm and I certainly did probably

I don't know 50 times in my head right and again I would say something really funny to ship manager that put him in his place and then walk away like I feel so great about myself and there were certainly a few times that I actually did I responded out of defensiveness and wanting to make myself look better because my natural human tendency just that's what came out of me right and it was never easy to choose a right response but God convicted me of that sin and he showed me that there is a better way it's one of love and respect and submission even in the face of something that seems like mistreatment or injustice and I needed to continually rely on God's spirit to strengthen and empower me to love with the love of Christ it was a good growing time for me now for you aggressive types out there maybe like me because I would kind of put myself in that category your retaliation takes an outward form right so the snare you played out in your head actually becomes a reality or maybe to some lesser degree but for you passive aggressive types this might look a little bit different maybe instead of retaliating you just kind of slack off and you make your boss or the manager look bad because you're missing deadlines and so you kind of get them back that way maybe that's not you maybe you're a passive person and you might not even have any form outwardly of retaliation your retaliation is just that conversation that's going on in your head and harboring this bitterness and let's not think that Jesus is only talking about retaliation that manifests itself in outward forms because then we're missing the point of the Sermon on the Mount that's about the heart his main point so far is showing us that living out his commands requires a heart level obedience so regardless of your personality type and regardless of the way retaliation manifests itself every form of it misses the mark of Christian obedience because our hearts are bent on self-preservation rather than sacrificial selfless love right now this highlights the inner struggle going on when we choose retaliation over love see the root is not

I just didn't try hard enough to love my boss that's not it the root is more like this I'm a selfish prideful human being that hates when my reputation is damaged that hates when I feel like I'm not in control that hates when I'm inconvenienced in a way that affects my agenda or my plan that hates when I'm bumped off the throne of my heart see that's that's the heart struggle going on that causes us to choose retaliation rather than love here's another example besides a work one well this could manifest itself at work do you always like to have the last word you want to have the final say you want to be the guy that like drops the mic and walks away you know spouses in your marriages how

often and what starts as a discussion with your spouse about something simple like what's for dinner or what are we doing Friday night does it end in a heated argument in which you make a bunch of you always do x statements or you walk away and just wondering what just happened like we were just talking about dinner and then we're yelling at each other and have to go our separate ways and spend some time apart it's because neither of you were willing to lay down your rights and model sacrificial love that's what happens it's because neither of you were willing to absorb shame maybe something was said that's not totally true but you couldn't let it go you had to respond back out of retaliation defend yourself rather than respond in the meekness that Christ wants us to respond with be the first to see from the other's point of view to humbly say yes you're right or even I don't quite understand your perspective but I see how it's affected you I've sinned against you will you forgive me but this is so hard right because our sinful nature it's always thinking of comebacks and it's always telling us hey you're not going to take that from her get her back or if you're an engineer your sinful nature might be like you didn't spend a hundred dollars over budget it was only 94.73 and so you respond back because you couldn't just let it go it was just five dollars and twenty seven cents you had to be exact and you defend right and it's sort of retaliation that comes out and our pride is constantly rising up within us and it's making us respond in ways that demean rather than respond with love Jesus is saying here mount an attack against that pride and choose sacrificial love now Christ doesn't say this as like a basketball coach who's never actually played basketball or a commanding officer that's never even served in the field no no

[35 : 50] Jesus says this as one who according to Peter suffered for you leaving you an example so that you might follow in his steps he committed no sin neither was deceit found in his mouth 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 he himself bore our sins in his body on the tree see Jesus fulfilled the requirement Jesus perfectly lived out the principles that he taught he embodied this righteousness that surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees commentator said about Christ first the Jewish police spat on him blindfolded him and struck him in the face and then the Roman soldiers followed suit they crowned him with thorns clothed him in the imperial purple invested him with a scepter of reed jeered at him hail king of the Jews knelt before him in mock homage spat in his face and struck him with their hands and Jesus with the infinite dignity of self-control and love held his peace he demonstrated total refusal to retaliate by allowing them to continue their cruel mockery until they had finished

Jesus did the impossible he did what we could never have done and though he was unmatched in power and he was unmatched in authority the king of kings and the lord of lords he was the creator of the universe and yet he chose to be inconvenienced to an infinite degree that we'll never understand he chose to be disgraced to the greatest extent possible and in the midst of that revilement and that pain he didn't retaliate he humbly endured it even to death on the cross and in this act of ultimate selflessness and love he made good on the promises of God Paul says for all the promises of God find their yes in Jesus Peter said at the end of that statement he himself bore our sins in his body on the tree that we might die to sin and live to righteousness by his wounds you have been healed if there's any unbelievers here this morning do you see how you could never measure up to the standard

God requires of you do you see that what what Jesus is demanding in the sermon on the mount it's an impossible ideal that you could never fulfill and therefore never even enter God's kingdom and family but do you also see how out of the depths of God's love and mercy he made a way through his son Jesus Christ see if you choose to put your faith and trust in Christ today you can receive that love and that mercy you can be forgiven of all your sin and be brought into the family of God believers do you recognize the infinite love and mercy that God has shown you are you daily overcome with joy and thanks that Christ has both taken your sin and then given you his righteousness do you see how Christ is your ultimate example and the motivation that you have to live a righteous life your identity is forever changed you are a child of God and a new creation and you are empowered by the Holy Spirit to live out this new identity you're empowered and to model Christian integrity and to model Christian love even when it's difficult or it's costly but this this is the cost of discipleship this is the cost of following Jesus we're going to see this a little bit later Matthew 16 Jesus says if anyone would come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me see it's not about you or me it's not about self and that must be our prayer every day father this life is yours not mine it's not about me it's about you and your glory help me to believe this and to

live this help me to live like the child of God that I am with the love and integrity that you've demonstrated even when it's costly empower me by your spirit to give everything for the cause of your kingdom now why would we do this well we've already seen we would do this because Christ showered us with his love and his mercy with costly love and also because the reward is so worth it the reward is true life it's true life both now and forevermore it's as Paul says in 2nd Corinthians it's an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison as we experience everlasting joy and everlasting love in the presence of God and with his family forever the beginning of Matthew 5 we've read through all these rewards

I just want to read through them again from the Beatitudes this is the reward it's yours theirs is the kingdom of heaven for they shall be comforted for they shall inherit the earth for they shall be satisfied for they shall receive mercy for they shall see God they shall be called sons of God and again for theirs is the kingdom of heaven these are the rewards for us in Christ and that's why we are willing to endure injustice and give up our possessions and lay down our rights it's this this is why we do that following here is a testimony from an Indian man that Randy Matthews got to encounter on one of his trips his name is Mark Mark from southern India was a radical Hindu his faith taught him to hate those who believed differently than he did and he was ever ready to fight for what he believed he and a gang of friends sought to eliminate a Christian pastor from their area so they beat him almost to death

[42 : 05] I say almost because they thought they had accomplished their goal but some kind person took the pastor to the hospital to save his life Mark even went to the hospital to finish his mission he found the room of the pastor and was ready to finish him off when the pastor greeted him and began talking about Jesus he told his young assailant that Christ died for all his sins and since Jesus died to forgive him he had also forgiven him for the beating stunned by grace Mark's anger seemed to disappear in the presence of love the pastor's absolute refusal to get even or hold a grudge melted Mark's fierce determination to kill the man and instead of hitting him he asked how he could care for one who wanted to kill him that night in the hospital room in southern India Mark turned to trust and follow Jesus and even though this was over 10 to 20 years ago Mark is now telling others of Christ's love with a passion to see all of India follow Jesus talk about sacrificial love huh talk about being salt and light in a dark world here it resulted in the salvation of a sinner and the glory of God so may we be a church that love sacrificially like this

Indian pastor like our savior Jesus Christ may we be a church that's willing to suffer injustice to experience shame to give up our rights and possessions in order to live with Christ-like integrity and Christ-like love and see this compels a broken world to a ready savior please pray with me heavenly father we see God how your son has perfectly modeled this principle Lord we see how he gave up everything he gave up his throne he gave up his dignity he gave up his riches Lord for our sake out of love God he did this for us and God we see how you are a faithful God and you have kept your word and in Christ all of your promises are yes and amen and Lord we respond with worship God the worship that doesn't just happen on Sunday morning when we sing it's worship that gives you our very lives that surrenders everything to you because you are worthy of it Lord God this isn't easy to do it's not easy to respond with offense to offense with love God it's not easy all the time to keep our word and when it's inconvenient or costly our human nature just rides against that Lord and we need your strength to do this Lord would you empower us by your spirit God to go from here and to live lives of integrity so that when we say something Lord people can believe us because they've seen the way we've lived our lives God and when we experience shame or injustice rather than retaliate out of our pride and our selfishness Lord no we we choose sacrificial love that reflects Christ that salt and light to the world around us Lord and God as we do this we pray that you would use those efforts that you would use that love to beckon hearts to you that people might find their joy and their satisfaction in you Lord for that is the only place that we find true joy that's the only place that we find life

Father we thank you that you hear our prayers we thank you that you are a good good father we pray this all in the majesty's name of your son Jesus Christ amen amen Thank you.