



## Mt Sermon Series: Part 13: To Fight or Not To Fight...Is NOT the Question, Matthew 5:38-42 Kent Vincent ~ April 12, 2015

Matthew 5:38-42

<sup>38</sup> “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’ <sup>39</sup> 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. <sup>40</sup> If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. <sup>41</sup> Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. <sup>42</sup> Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.

### I. OT Meaning and Purpose

- A. Limitation- *Lex talionis*- “Eye for eye, tooth for tooth” – a general principle of justice in Exodus 21 and Lev 24.
- B. Retributive Justice / Restorative Justice: VERSUS ~ or ~ AND?
- C. Scope of Application- Who is to judge? Ex 21:22-25 and Dt 19:17-18.

### II. Misapplication of the Scribes and Pharisees:

Despite Lev 19:18 “You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the sons of your own people.”  
They commanded personal revenge.

### III. Purpose and Meaning of Jesus

- A. “Resist not evil.” What does this NOT mean?
  - **Leo Tolstoy** ~ 19th Century Russian novelist (War and Peace) and social reformer. “Christ totally forbids the human institution of any law court.... the so-called criminals and robbers... love good and hate evil as I do” and when Christ’s commands are finally obeyed “all men will be brothers, and everyone will be at peace with others....”
  - **Gandhi of India** ~ No resistance, instead hug the Nazis.
  - **Mother Teresa of Calcutta** ~ “Jesus would forgive”= Get out of jail free.

B. Purpose of government

Romans 13- the state is instituted by God for the purpose of both:

1. to punish or “resist the evil ones” and to make them bear the penalty of that evil; and,
2. to reward those who do good.

C. One problem: Government is made up of people, a/k/a “sinners.”

D. What about war?

1. In the OT, God calls His people to war, giving and withholding his blessing in war, depending on their mission was carried out;
2. Jesus was speaking to individuals; and,
3. Clearly the state or rulers have a different function, including the resistance of evil, which may sometimes include protection against aggression by other nations. Rm 13.

E. Tension: Each of us is a Christian and a citizen of the State. ~

1. Romans 12:17-21: The Christian as a person is to be free from revenge in action as well as in heart.
2. Romans 13:4: As an office-holder, a Christian may find himself entrusted with a duty and authority as a “minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that does evil.”

F. What or who are we not to resist?

1. Above all, we don’t resist God, His will (Rom 9:19), truth (II Tim 3:8; 4:13; Lk 21:15; Acts 6:10; 13:8) or civil authority (Rom 13:12 through the state), except for biblical civil disobedience- when state commands to disobey God.
2. However, we are to “resist the devil.”(Eph 6:13; I Pet 5:9; Jm 4:7)

G. What about getting slapped on the cheek?

1. No Defense of others? Pr 24:10-12.
2. No Defense of Self?

**Summary:**

1. This passage addresses believers and nobody else.
2. This passage is further limited to a believer’s personal relationships with family, friends and others, not his relationships as a citizen or to the state.
3. This passage has nothing to do with the taking of life, capital punishment, war, or pacifism.