

The Kingdom of Heaven The Hurdles Of Your Heart Matt 5.38-42

[Six times in Matthew chapter five Jesus says, *Ye have heard that it was said . . .* (vs 21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43) – In saying this Jesus reveals six areas where the heart is more important than the heart:]

- [Murder (vs 21-26) - The Heat of your heart]
- [Adultery (Matt 5.27-30) - The Health of your heart]
- [Divorce (Matt 5.31-32) - The Harnessing of your heart.]
- [Integrity/Honesty (Matt 5.33-37) - The Home of your heart.]
- [Revenge (Matt 5.38-42) - The Hurdles of your heart]
- [Loving your enemies (Matt 5.43-48) The Harbor of your heart]

["Jesus is going to teach us that righteousness begins on the inside of a person."]

[Six times Jesus says, "Ye have heard that is was said. . .," "It hath been said . . .,"]

- [The religious leaders were teaching their interpretation of God's Word. But, their interpretation was wrong.]
- [Jesus is giving the correct meaning of the things that God asks for in His Word.]

[Mark Twain once said this about the Bible: "I have no problem with those parts of the Bible I don't understand. It's those parts of the Bible I do understand that gives me fits."]

[In this section of the Sermon On The Mount Jesus asked those that He was talking to, and you and I as we study through this text, to consider what's in their heart. What do you think? What do you believe is right and wrong? What do you believe ought to guide us in our lives? Just what are you thinking?]

[What you think affects how you feel about things. What you think and feel guide the decisions that you make and is reflected in what you choose to do. So what are you thinking? What's in your heart?]

[Almost everyone here has some of our cultures hurdles in their heart. These hurdles are hindering you from developing the mind of Christ and a heart like God's. Jesus directly confronts some major hurdles in our text today.]

In Our Text Jesus Says,

A. Be Willing To Get Worse Than You Deserve (vs 38-39) [-Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: 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. – **This Deals with the hurdle of Pride.] This verse leads us to think about,**

- 1. The Insult (vs 39, Matt 26.67) [- 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. - **The Insult of all insults.** In the 1st Century a slap on the cheek was a way of insulting someone. A slap on the other cheek was a way of compounding the insult. Today it would be like an insulting comment. We say today, **"That was a backhanded compliment if I've ever heard one."** This refers exactly to what Jesus was talking about. You see, there were two certain things that would make any Jew mad 2,000 years ago; one would be a spit in his face, and the other would be to backhandedly slap him on the cheek.]**

[In fact, that is exactly what they did to the Lord Jesus. The Bible says,]

[Matthew 26:67 Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands,]

[Even a slave would rather be struck on his back by a whip than slapped on his cheek by his master.]

[To be slapped on the cheek was a great insult, but then to be slapped on the other check was unconscionable.]

- 2. The Impulse (vs 38; Exodus 21.22-25; Rom 12.19) [- Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: - When somebody slaps you, what is your natural impulse? Well, it's to slap them back. Someone insults you, the first thought is to insult them back.]**

[A TV host who has interviewed thousands of children and received hilarious responses to his questions. He was talking to a little boy one time named Peter, and he said, "Do you try to do the things Jesus told you to do?" Peter said, "Jesus hadn't told me to do nothing." The Host said, "Well how about if somebody hits you on one cheek, turn the other cheek." Peter said, "What does that mean?" The Host said, "That means if somebody hits you, you don't hit him back." Peter looked at him confused and said, "That don't sound too smart." The Host said, "Well that's the whole point of what Jesus said, Peter. You have to be bigger than the other person." Peter thought for a moment and he said, "Well, that makes sense because if you're bigger then you should hit him back." Peter obviously misunderstood what The Host meant when he said you have to be bigger than the other person.]

[It takes great personal inner fortitude to not strike back when someone strikes or insults you. **I remember my grandfather once saying to me, it takes a big and strong man to walk away from a fight.** Many in our world would call a man weak or a coward if he bore an insult and did not retaliate or fight back. But the truth is, it takes a man of great inner strength to bear up under an insult, know who he really is, and turn the other cheek. This was the example of our Lord Jesus Christ.]

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[**Getting Revenge** - What is our human impulse when we are offended or wronged? It is to get someone back, to get our revenge. If someone offends, embarrasses, or insults you then justice demands that they pay for their offence. Not only is this the natural human response but it is Biblical as well. Jesus said,]

[Matthew 5:38 Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:]

[Jesus is quoting the Hebrew law,]

[Exodus 21:22-25 If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. ²³ And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt

give life for life, ²⁴ Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, ²⁵ Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.]

[Misplaced Personal Judicial Responsibility - Many in Jesus day were taking this command out of its context and were understanding it and teaching it in a mere human context. They were teaching that if someone offended you then you have the right and even the responsibility of being sure that they paid for their offences. People were taking the law into their own hands.]

[The problem with revenge is that it breeds a vengeful spirit, contempt, and a bitter heart. Vengeance will ruin your life. It will grow to consume your every thought and drive you to insidious means and ends.]

[Governmental Responsibility - When God gave the law in Exodus he was not tasking each individual with the enforcement of the law and the execution of justice. **God tasks government with the execution of justice. God tasks each individual with forgiveness healing and restoration.** It is not any individuals place or responsibility to be sure that other people get what they deserve. This is the task of our Government. But what if our government isn't executing justice as we think it should? It is still not your place to execute justice. God says,]

[Romans 12:19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.]

[If government is corrupt and does not do what it is supposed to do then Christians need to know that God will be their sure defense and that our Heavenly Father is absolutely just and never misses a thing. God will execute any justice that needs to be executed in His time and in His way.]

[Look At Your Heart - Jesus in addressing this issue is again tasking all who will walk with God to consider what's in their heart. Are you thinking in mortal worldly ways? Or are you thinking in godly and righteous ways? We must, especially in our day, get our thinking right, so that our

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hearts (feelings) will be right, so that we can live out the kind of life our Lord wishes for us to live. Vengeance is never a mark of godliness.]

3. **The Instruction** (vs 38-39; Rom 12.19-21) [–
*Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:*³⁹ *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.* – We are reminded again of what Paul said in,]

Rom 12.18

*[Romans 12:18-21 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*¹⁹ *Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*²⁰ *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.***²¹ *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.]*

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[In other words, you never get even by trying to get even.]

[Let me give you a simple rule.]

[Be quick to defend others, but be slow to defend yourself.]

[The Door Mat of the World - There is nothing of the world in our Lord's teaching or the New Testament's command. Lost worldly people break down in uncontrollable laughter at the thought of this principle. It is utter foolishness to turn the other cheek. They cannot and will not understand what God is saying or what God's principle is in this text. It makes no worldly sense. The worldly might say, "If you don't stand up for yourself, then no one will. You will be the door mat of the world, and no one likes to be walked on." For a person that does not know our God this may be true.

Psalm 34.15

[Our Defender - But for us as Christians, we have an omnipotent, and sovereign Heavenly Father who reigns on high. And He has said,]

[Isaiah 54: 17 No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt

condemn. **This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.]**

*[Psalms 34:15-19 The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. ¹⁶ The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. ¹⁷ **The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.** ¹⁸ The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. ¹⁹ **Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.]***

Psalm 7.10

[So that the Child of God can say,]

[Psalms 7:10-11 My defence is of God, which saveth the upright in heart. ¹¹ God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day.]

[Have you received the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, then Almighty God has become your Heavenly Father, and He has promised to be your fortress and your defense. Your Heavenly Father has promised to be your strength and your avenger. You do not have to worry about defending yourself or about avenging yourself. Don't be distracted by bitterness and don't destroy your life with a consuming spirit of vengeance. Turn all of that over to your Heavenly Father and know that He will stand for your cause.]

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B. Be Willing To Give More Than You are Asked (vs 40) [- And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. – **This deals with the hurdle of your possessions.]**

1. The Tradition (Exo 22.26-27) [- A Judgment in Court.]

[If one person took another person to court, and the person did not have the money to pay the judgment, the court could order payment of the lawsuit in clothing. **You could take the man's tunic; you could take the man's shirt, but you could not take his coat.** Now the shirt was a type of tunic that was worn as an undergarment. The coat was an outer garment that served as a blanket at night. Most people in those days owned only one coat and perhaps one or two shirts. But the reason the coat is mentioned specifically is that it

was the most valuable garment that people owned. Because it served both as a blanket and, in a sense, a shelter. As a matter of fact, the Mosaic Law required that the coat could not be kept.]

[Exodus 22:26-27 If thou at all take thy neighbour's raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down: ²⁷For that is his covering only, it is his raiment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep? and it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear; for I am gracious.]

2. The Transition (Matt 5.23-24) [- Going the extra mile. Do more than expected.]

[If you lose a lawsuit, but the judgment does not satisfy the plaintiff, and there are still bitter hard feelings, voluntarily give more than the judgment if it will make things right, and thereby you can settle things not only legally, but you can settle things morally.]

*[Matthew 5:23-24 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; ²⁴Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; **first be reconciled to thy brother**, and then come and offer thy gift.]*

[To have an extra mile attitude will help you to excel in your life.]

- [If your boss asks for a certain amount of labor and you do more with a joyful and kind spirit, just because you can, without asking for something in return, then your boss will value you as an employee.]
- [If your parents ask you to do something, and you do a little more than they expected, just because you can and it will help out around the house, you will gain favor with your parents and will find them more willing to help you in the future.]
- [If there is a need in your community and you find a way to help out, without expecting anything in return, you will find that people in your community will take notice of your kindness and will show you respect and regard.]

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C. **Be Willing To Go Farther Than You're Required (vs 41)** [- *And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. – This deals with the hurdle of providence, independence, liberty, or your rights.*]

1. **The Conscription** [- A slave for a mile.]

[Remember that Israel was occupied territory. It was controlled by the Roman Empire. **The Romans had a law that greatly embittered the Jewish people.** By law a Roman soldier could compel a Jew to carry his weapons, or his knapsack, or any burden that he had, one mile. It didn't matter whether the Jewish person was working in his field or on his way to the synagogue to worship, the Roman soldier had the right to conscript this man and force him to carry his burden. Every Jewish boy had marked off one mile from his house and had memorized the exact distance. Whenever a Jewish boy or man was compelled to go that mile, he would walk that mile down to the very foot, put that burden down, and with a bitter look on his face make the point "not one foot more."]

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2. **The Consternation** [- The result of forced labor.]

[Now the Pharisees had all of life boiled down to the **minimum**. They practiced what I call a **"minimum morality."** They boiled life down to just the minimum of what they had to do.]

[I heard about a mother who said to her little boy one time, "I want you to eat a little bit of spinach." The boy said, **"How little can I get by with?"**]

[The Pharisees were always trying to figure out how little they could get by with.]

3. **The Conversion** [- Go the extra mile.]

[But Jesus said, "Don't go just the first mile that you have to go, go the second mile that you don't have to go, because that's where the real blessing of life is found."]

D. **Be Willing To Grant All That Is Needed (vs 42)** [- Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. **This deals with the hurdle of your purpose.**]

1. **Your Prosperity** [- Who's is it?]

[Now the implication here is that the person doing the asking has a real genuine need. If it is a real need, you should meet that need. Now that does not mean that you are required to respond to every foolish or every selfish request.]

[**For example: A fellow preacher once said, "My son, Joshua, turns 16 this year. He asked me if I would buy him a BMW? I said, 'Son, it would be most deleterious for your spiritual fortitude if I were to provide you with automated transportation that could be damaging to your health, welfare, and character.' He looked at me and said, 'I don't get it.' I said, 'That's exactly right.' You see, some giving hurts more than it helps."**]

2. **Your Provision** [- Why has God given you what you have?]

[Someone has said, I remember being in New Orleans during the Southern Baptist Convention and I was on Bourbon Street witnessing. I walked by a man standing on the street corner, and went up to engage him in conversation. He said, "Mister, I haven't eaten in several days, would you give me some money?" I said, "No, but I tell you what I will do. I will give you a free meal; I will buy you some clothes; and I will tell you how to be saved." That man began a tirade on how I was a racist, and people like me didn't care about people like him, and why couldn't I just give him what he

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asked for. You see, he didn't want help, he wanted a handout, and those are two different things.”]

[Psalm 112:5 A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion.]

[Yes, when someone comes to you and has a real need, and asks to borrow something, loan it to them. Even better yet, if you can, give it to them. But do it with discretion.]

3. **Your Perspective** [- Where is your treasure?]

[The Character Of God] – Jesus, in this sermon on the mount, asks us to take the abuses of those around us and to pour out blessings to those who ask us because this is what God does. God shows mercy, forgiveness, and blessedness because it is His character to care and to give. Therefore, God is not asking us to do anything that He does not already do. So the question arises, will you be like God?]

[The Hurdles of Humanity] - What keeps people from being like God in this regard, It is the hurdles in their heart, the obstacles that obstruct our benevolent and kind spirit. What are these hurdles that you need to overcome to be more like God? **These hurdles include,]**

- **[Pride** keeps you from forgiving and causes you to seek revenge.]
- **[Selfishness** keeps you from going a step further than you feel you have to go.]
- **[Greed** keeps you from sharing and compassionately giving to others.]

[Christians we need to develop an extra mile attitude toward God and our fellow man.]

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[Go the extra mile! Things to think about as an extra mile Christian,

- [The first mile is the lone mile; the second mile is the love mile.]
- [The first mile is the slave mile; the second mile is the smile mile.]
- [The really successful people in life, and the really happy people in life, and the really blessed people in life are second milers.]
- [Going the second mile will make you a success.]

[Clock watchers never ever climb very high. There is something more important than quitting time.]

[There is something more important than getting every little second out of your lunch hour.]

[There is something wonderfully Christian about someone who goes beyond and above what is asked for, or required, or expected, just as a habit of life.]

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[1] James Merritt, www.Pastorlife.net <<http://www.Pastorlife.net>>, *Murder in the first degree*, [Matt 5.21-26](#)