

Sermon on the Mount Series  
"Go the Second Mile"  
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Note: Unless otherwise noted, all Scriptures are from the NKJV of the Bible.

**Go the Second Mile**

Matthew 5:38-42

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away."

- "...an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth..." Exodus 21:24
- This verse was directed to the judges of Israel and applied to administration of civil justice, not personal revenge.
- The Old Testament law was known as *lex talionis*, or the law of retaliation.

Now Jesus is teaching his followers that He wants them to take it to the next level.

"But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you" Luke 6:27-28 (NIV).

The four-fold solution to have a heart of retaliation:

1. Turn the other cheek. "But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also." (v.39)

- The word resist translates the word *anthistemi*, also used for "take legal action against."
- The word Jesus used for slap was the Greek word *rhapizo*, which meant to strike with the open hand, or slap. It was the slap of insult.

Romans 12:17-19 "Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord."

- We are to trust God who will one day set all things right.

Psalm 54:5 "He will repay my enemies for their evil. Cut them off in Your truth."

2. Give more than is required. “If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also.” (v. 40)

Under God’s law no one could take a person’s cloak.

“If you take your neighbor’s cloak in pawn you shall restore it before the sun goes down; for it may be your neighbor’s only clothing to use as cover; in what else shall that person sleep? And if your neighbor cries out to me, I will listen, for I am compassionate”  
Exodus 22:26-27 (NRSV).

- Jesus’ followers should hold their material possessions very loosely.
- Show the world that you find your security in God, not in the material possessions that you own.

3. Go the extra Mile. “And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.” (v. 41)

- The first mile was demanded, but it was their choice to go the extra mile.
- Jesus wanted them to go the second mile, not because they must, but because they chose to do so.
- We cannot do this with our own strength because it goes against our human nature.
- To fulfill what Jesus is asking us to do we have to partake of his divine nature according to 1 Peter 1:4.
- Jesus called his followers to have a serving attitude as he himself exemplified throughout his life, and especially at the cross.

4. Show mercy to the less fortunate. “Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.” (v. 42)

- Jesus was asking his followers to be generous in their giving and not to expect anything in return.

Proverbs 19:17 “He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord, And He will pay back what he has given.”

- Make a point of helping others as the Lord has helped you.
- Jesus lets us know that it is not about our rights...it is about living like citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven – our citizenship is from above.
- Jesus illustrated the heart attitude that He expected of His followers. They must willingly put others’ needs before their own and others’ rights before their own.
- They should have a generous spirit.

Love seeks the welfare of the other person, even if that person is an evildoer. By responding with non-violence, generosity and helpfulness, we may stand a chance of leading someone closer to Jesus.

Standing for our rights vs. Standing up for what is right.

- We should be willing to suffer innocently for the cause of Christ, but we have the responsibility as citizens of God's Kingdom to stand up for God's law and order and justice.

**Jesus is our Example**

1 Peter 2:20-25 “For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, **that you should follow His steps**:

Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth;’ who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”