

Good morning! One of my favorite parts of the Bible is the Sermon on the Mount. In this famous discourse, Jesus gives us details of what the Kingdom of God looks like in the lives of people who are following Him. Maybe I should say it tells us what the Kingdom of God is *supposed* to look like, because from a human or “natural” perspective it is so impractical as to be nearly impossible. Jesus Himself demonstrated the Kingdom of God in His own conduct. When He came to earth, the Kingdom of God had a name and a face---Jesus of Nazareth. Have you ever taken time to compare your behavior with Jesus’ message? This morning, let’s look together at some of Jesus’ instruction, taken from that sermon:

“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 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 your shirt, let him have your coat also. Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.”

Matt 5:38-42

To recap, here’s what Jesus instructs us to do: Don’t resist when evil people want to take advantage of you. If someone slaps you, offer to let them do it again. If someone wants to sue you, give him more than the amount he wants. If someone wants to borrow your stuff, that’s OK; let them borrow it. The reference to someone forcing you to go a mile with them is a reference to the Roman military practice of commandeering citizens to carry soldiers’ equipment for them. Jesus tells his listeners that if a Roman soldier forces them to carry their equipment for a mile, they should volunteer to carry it another mile. There must be a hidden meaning to this text---it’s too plain! Could Jesus possibly mean what He said here? He means it; He did it and He means for us to do it, too. Jesus doesn’t seem to care very much about our rights, does He? He doesn’t seem to care very much about our schedules, either. The Kingdom of God, as Jesus proposed and demonstrated, is counterintuitive. The Kingdom of God coming into our lives doesn’t mean we become more religious; it means we become more like Jesus. This morning, ask God to help you see situations today in a different way, outside the box of how you would normally view them. Be more like Jesus...look for ways to live redemptively today!