

Life Group Homework

IS IT RIGHT TO RETALIATE?

Matthew 5:38-42

Let's Get Started:

Read Exodus 21:23-25. At first glance, this Old Testament law might seem harsh or even unfitting. But is it? Think about Pastor Jerry's sermon this past weekend and circle your answers to the following questions:

T or F: The Law was about carefully measured justice, not wild revenge.

T or F: The loss of an eye was to be replaced by another eye, plus mental and emotional damages.

T or F: Old Testament law decisions were handled by the individuals involved in the dispute.

T or F: Revenge is a sin.

In the Pentateuch, the principle of matching the punishment to the crime had two basic purposes. 1) To curtail further crime. 2) To prevent excessive punishment based on personal vengeance and angry retaliation. As such, the law was considered both just and merciful.

What do you think is just and merciful about our current American justice system?

What do you think is unjust and unmerciful about it?

Let's Dig In—Begin by reading Matthew 5:38-42.

Unjust and Unfair Treatment

Per Pastor Jerry's message, "Jesus is trying to show us that to be a true disciple is to avoid the temptation to get involved in the business of trying to get even—making sure everybody gets what

they deserve.”

Have there been times when you have been treated unjustly or unfairly without a chance to defend yourself? What is your “go to” reaction when this happens?

Why do you think it is so difficult to be in-step with Jesus when we face unjust and unfair treatment?

But I Have Rights!

Jesus gave us the supreme example of giving up all of His rights for a greater goal. He gave up the right to be with His Father. He gave up the right to a home. He gave up the right to financial gain and the accumulation of personal possessions. He gave up the right to be married, and the right to His reputation. As far as most people are concerned, He was an illegitimate baby, raised in a town where nothing good could come from it. Perhaps the ultimate slam to His reputation came when He was called a devil by the church—the religious experts of His time. And He gave up the right to life itself, becoming obedient to death on a cross. It appears that Jesus was showing us that the only way to win is to lose; the only way to conquer is to submit. Perhaps the only true right a Christian has is the right to give up our rights for the greater cause of being formed and shaped into the image of God.

Read Mark 8:34-35 and Philippians 2:5-11.

How do the teachings and examples of Jesus in these scriptures go against the grain of culture when it comes to demanding justice and our own personal rights?

Is it possible that we, as Christians, have some rights that we feel entitled to and would have a difficult time giving up in order to imitate the heart and humility of Jesus?

Which ones come to mind?

Enduring Suffering

1 Peter is a letter addressed to Christians who endured suffering without cause. Ponder the text below.

In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 1:6-7)

In lieu of Peter's teaching, why is the Christian supposed to "welcome" a trial or a test?

What does suffering injustice and unfair treatment like Jesus result in for the believer?

Let's Live It Out Together:

In his message, Pastor Jerry identified four examples of what he called "Kingdom non-resistant kindness and mercy." 1) Your cheek 2) Your undergarment 3) Your path and 4) Your money.

Re-read Matthew 5:38-42 out-loud to the group.

Share about an unjust or unfair situation, a trial or a test in your own life and how this study of Matthew 5:38-42 has influenced your thinking.