

Live Like Christ: The Sermon on the Mount
Session 4: But I Say Unto You (Matthew 5:33-48)

³³“Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.’ ³⁴But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, ³⁵or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. ³⁶And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. ³⁷Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil.

- Oaths had become a tool for tricking and deceiving people (see Matthew 23:16-22).
- Our lives should have complete integrity with no space for a lie. Be Christlike and reliable.
- Bonhoeffer, “Complete truthfulness is only possible where sin has been uncovered, and forgiven by Jesus.”
- Bonhoeffer, “The cross is God’s truth about us, and therefore it is the only power which can make us truthful.”

³⁸“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ ³⁹But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. ⁴⁰And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. ⁴¹And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. ⁴²Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

- This is a personal command not to resist insults, lawsuits, inconveniences, or requests for help
- Be prepared to abandon your sense of “your rights” – Jesus gave up His for you!
- Carson, “The legalistic mentality which dwells on retaliation and so-called fairness makes much of one’s rights. What Jesus is saying in these verses, more than anything else, is that his followers have no rights...Personal self-sacrifice displaces personal retaliation; for this is the way the Savior himself went, the way of the cross. And the way of the cross, not notions of ‘right and wrong,’ is the Christian’s principle of conduct.”
- Bonhoeffer, “Suffering willingly endured is stronger than evil, it spells death to evil. There is no deed on earth so outrageous as to justify a different attitude. The worse the evil, the readier must the Christian be to suffer; he must let the evil person fall into Jesus’ hands.”
- Bonhoeffer, “The cross is the only power in the world which proves that suffering love can avenge and vanquish evil.”

⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. ⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸ You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

- We are to pray for those persecutors mentioned in Matthew 5:10-12
- Loving our enemies proves our sonship to God, because He loves His enemies including us before we trusted in Christ
- Bonhoeffer, “How then does love conquer? By asking not how the enemy treats her but only how Jesus treated her. The love of our enemies takes us along the way of the cross and into fellowship with the Crucified.”
- Perfection is Christ’s call, expectation, and standard. That is why we so richly need God’s grace which both forgives and transforms us!
- Bonhoeffer, “It is by suffering in the fellowship of this cross that the followers of Jesus are perfected. The perfect are none other than the blessed of the Beatitudes.”