

The Gospel According to Matthew

Loving Our Enemies
June 27, 2021

Matthew 5v38-48

38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' 39 But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; 40 and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; 41 and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. 42 Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.

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 children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. 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 and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Jesus & Nonviolence

A Jesus Approach

In reference to Matthew 5v39-41 - "When given a fair hearing in its original social context, is arguably one of the most revolutionary political statements ever uttered."

_ Walter Wink

Do not retaliate against violence with violence.

How does Jesus say we should react?

Fight - Flight - Freeze

Jesus introduces a way in which evil can be opposed without being mirrored.

- 1) Turn the other cheek.
- 2) Give your cloak.
- 3) Go also the second mile.

The dynamics of personal interactions are transformed.

"In every concrete situation we have to ask ourselves, not 'Did I do the specific thing in Jesus' illustrations?' but 'Am I being the kind of person Jesus' illustrations are illustrations of?'"

_ Dallas Willard.

Who is my enemy?

"The wrongs in question are clearly personal injuries, not institutional or social evils. How do we know that? It is clear from the parts of the old law referred to.

_ Dallas Willard

Luke 6v27-28

But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.

What if distance, plus 'enemy language,' can lead to dehumanization?

What does it look like to live as people, to be the kinds of people, that Jesus' illustrations are illustrations of?

What if Jesus is calling us to step in closer and recognize the humanity in those we call enemies?

Resources: *The Divine Conspiracy* by Dallas Willard, *Jesus and Nonviolence: A Third Way* by Walter Wink

Looking to Connect?: One of the Narrate staff would love to connect over lunch or coffee. To schedule a time please email info@narratechurch.org and we will get back to you within the week.

Therapist or Spiritual Director?: Email info@narratechurch.org and we will get you the contact of the therapists and directors we recommend.