



Title: Living Above and Beyond

Date: March 27, 2022

Scripture Text: Matthew 5:38-42

Sermon Series: Inside-Out

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

We are continuing our walk through the Sermon on the Mount from Matthew 5-7. Today's topic is what it looks like to go above and beyond. There are times when we can get distracted by what we think we deserve or not want to do. It is during those times when we can lose our joy and get consumed with our self. Jesus wants us to take our eyes off our self and focus on living supernaturally, dependent on His enabling power to help us 'go the extra mile'.

I. The Declaration of the Law (Matt. 5:38)

Jesus is quoting from [Ex 21:24](#), [Lev 24:20](#), & [Deut 19:21](#). This law was not given as a mandate for personal vengeance but as a principle to guide courts in determining appropriate punishments. The purpose was as a deterrent to future crimes and to prevent excessive punishment.

- What does the phrase 'let the punishment fit the crime' mean?
- How can the law, as described in this verse, help promote the punishment fitting the crime?

II. The Misapplication of the Law (Matt. 5:38)

The original intent of this law was to be executed within the confines of the courtroom. The Jewish leadership had started applying it to allow retaliation/vengeance when they felt they had been wronged. In those situations, justice becomes a relative thing and is seldom just.

- What is the danger when we take the law into our own hands?
- What are examples of someone retaliating by taking the law into their own hands?
- How might these actions effect our ability to influence someone for Christ?

III. The Expectation of the Lord (Matt. 5:39-42)

Jesus is addressing the issue of personal revenge. He lists four areas where people exercise revenge and how He expects us to respond. To react in this way requires a supernatural enabling. We cannot naturally respond as He instructs without being empowered by the Holy Spirit to do so.

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1. Personal Pride ([Matt. 5:39b](#))

To strike on the right cheek was a blow with the back of the hand, which expresses the greatest possible contempt. This is not an endorsement to be someone's punching bag or a doormat; but to humbly seek de-escalation of the situation and be willing to defer to another with the intent of showing them Christ.

- What does 'turning the other cheek' look like?
- Why is 'turning the other cheek' so difficult?
- How can 'turning the other cheek' create a situation where you can reflect Jesus to another?

2. Personal Property ([Matt. 5:40](#))

The principle here is not primarily the avoidance of lawsuits but a radically unselfish attitude to one's rights and property. It is more important to maintain relationships than to maintain our possessions.

- What are examples of things (possessions) becoming too important?
- What are indicators that things are too important to you?
- What can you do to keep things in the right priority?

3. Personal Liberty ([Matt. 5:41](#))

The Roman soldiers practiced commandeering civilian labor to carry their pack or a load. They could only legally require the subject to carry the load for one mile. The Jewish people fiercely resented this imposition.

- Describe what it looks like to 'go the extra mile'.
- How can going the extra mile create opportunities to share about Jesus to others?

4. Personal Belongings ([Matt. 5:42](#))

This free and unselfish attitude to rights extends also to our belongings. The principle is that the needs of others come before my convenience.

- How did the following Bible characters demonstrate what it looked like to live 'above and beyond'? – Joseph, David, Stephen?
 - Who might be other examples?
- How does living above and beyond give others a reflection of Jesus Christ?

Prayerfully consider areas where you might be motivated for self and not going above and beyond for Christ and for others.