

# Hard Sayings Of Jesus

## Lesson 2

### I. This Week's Hard Saying

Matt 5:39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. KJV

### II. Why It Is Considered Hard

- a. This is particularly hard in that it prescribes a course of action which does not come naturally to us.
- b. It would seem to the natural mind that to follow this course of action is inviting the aggressor to continue striking the person who does not retaliate.

### III. The Context

- a. Matthew 5 is frequently referred to as "The Sermon on The Mount" in which Christ lays out the significant distinctives of those who would attain the Kingdom of God.
- b. This is one of a number of examples by which Jesus shows that the life-style of the kingdom of God is more demanding than what the Law of Moses laid down. Matt 5:38
- c. When Moses gave the earliest law-code, it was a great step forward for it imposed a strict limitation on the taking of vengeance. Ex 21:24
- d. It replaced an earlier system of justice according to which, if a member of one tribe X injured the member of another tribe Y Tribe Y was duty bound to take vengeance upon Tribe X.
- e. This quickly led to a blood feud between the tribes and resulted in suffering which far exceeded the original injury.
- f. But, under the Law-code of Moses we find a principle of exact retaliation; one eye, and no more, for one eye; one life and no more, for one life.
- g. When wounded honor was satisfied with such proportionate amends, life became less fraught with the peril of one's enemies lying in wait to continue an existing blood feud.
- h. The Law of Moses made it easier to regard monetary compensation as being, in many cases, a reasonable substitute for physical retribution. Ex 21:22

### IV. The Higher Standard of Christ

- a. Jesus, however, lays out a further revelation beyond the Law of Moses in which He says, "Don't retaliate at all!"
- b. He told His disciples if someone does you injury or puts you to inconvenience, or wrongs you in some way, yield to the Spirit of Christ by forgiving and being a blessing to the offender. Matt 5:44; 6:14
- c. Paul, under the leading of the Holy Spirit also picks up this theme. Rom 12:14; 1 Cor 4:12; 6:7
- d. Peter also understands the issues in this way when he says that when we "do well and suffer for it" we are following the example of Christ. 1 Peter 2:20-23
- e. In a parallel vein Jesus also addresses Christians being sued or being taken advantage of in court over some minor personal property issue. V40
- f. He also addresses the issue of believers being conscripted (V41) by Roman soldiers to carry loads which was permitted by Roman law. Mark 15:21
- g. The over riding issue in these cases has to do with Christians living up to their "high calling" in Christ Jesus; to live as though the present world has no effect upon us. Phil 3:14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. KJV
- h. The way of Christ is to abstain from fleshly lusts and carnal fights and to resist the temptation of believing our lives are spent for the here and now. 2 Cor 10:3-4 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) KJV
- i. It is only when we are abiding in Christ and He, abiding in us, that we have the freedom and the strength to resist these temptations. John 15:4-5 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except

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ye abide in me.<sup>5</sup> I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

- j. Believers are to **set** their affections on things above not on things of the earth. Col 3:2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

#### V. Wrong Application

- a. Some **mis-apply** this passage and infer from it that Christians ought to be pacifists and to avoid joining police or military organizations.
  1. The admonition to turn one's cheek is given to individuals not to **nations or governments**.
  2. The sword is given to rulers (government) with which to protect its citizens and to **execute justice**. Rom 13: 4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain : for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. KJV
  3. God is **just**. Law enforcement and soldiers are acting as God's minister of justice.
  4. Therefore, they ought to **conduct themselves** justly even while dealing with criminals and enemy combatants. Luke 3:14 And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.
- b. We should **not** resist persons who are attempting to kill or maim us or our families.
  1. Whatever sacrifice the Lord asks of His followers, He does not ask them to sacrifice their **minds**. John 18:22-23 When Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby struck him in the face. "Is this the way you answer the high priest?" he demanded. 23 "If I said something wrong," Jesus replied, "testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?"
  2. While we are enjoined to live peaceably with all men, that should not be taken as a command to submit to an **evil doer** who is intent upon harming or killing us. God is Just. 1 Sam 19:10 And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin; but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the javelin into the wall: and David fled , and escaped that night. KJV
  3. Resistance can take the form of a verbal rebuke, escape, Jesus Himself escaped murderous mobs who intended to kill Him. John 10:39 Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand, KJV

#### VI. Application

- a. Every day, **several times** a day, we have opportunity to turn the other cheek to one who has hurt, offended, or inconvenienced us.
- b. What gets **in the way** of your turning your cheek to those who have hurt, offended or inconvenienced you?
- c. What do you need to **do** about it?

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