



Compassion for Others

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June 27, 2021



³⁸You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.'³⁹But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. ⁴⁰And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. ⁴¹If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. ⁴²Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

Matthew 5:38-42



This morning as we continue in this *Sermon on the Mount* series, I want to take a little bit of a step back, and I want to make sure we understand the full context of what we're talking about. As we kind of slowly walk through the text, sometimes we can lose what's actually happening in the text. And I don't want to do that, because there's a point and purpose in what Christ is sharing with these disciples.

And again, just the idea that Jesus himself is on a mountainside speaking to his disciples—I mean if you could wrap your head around what that must have been like to be able to sit on that mountainside at the feet of Jesus—while He likely did not stand like I am and preach, He likely sat down on the ground and just spoke to his disciples. Imagine the blessing, the beauty of that! And they didn't even understand the event that was happening, right? They didn't yet fully understand who Christ was. But now looking back, to know that these precious words that He shared with his closest followers...I mean these words have weight, they have meaning. And even if we don't fully understand them, and even if we don't fully want to embrace them—because there's hard words in this text—understand that these are the very words of Christ that He shared with his closest followers.

As he's trying to teach them what it means to be a follower of Christ...acknowledging that even

2,000 years ago being a follower of Christ...even before they were actually followers of Christ. Before his death burial and resurrection, before the world knew exactly who this Jesus was, Jesus knew that the world would reject the very followers of Christ. He knew that being a follower, a disciple, a servant to God, a follower of Christ—even 2000 years ago—would be met harshly, would be met with rejection.

And we get so focused on what we're experiencing in the here and now, that we lose the understanding that this isn't a surprise. It's not a shock. God is not surprised.

He was telling his followers 2000 years ago, *“be prepared. Being a follower of me in a broken world, being a citizen of heaven already, and existing in a fallen place will not be easy”*. It will not be easy to dedicate your life to Christ, to call Him both Savior and Lord, to say that *“my life is being changed from the inside out”*, that *“I'm not just merely choosing to try to follow some set of laws, but that I'm being changed...and I can't stop that change”*. And now I express that to a world in a place that largely rejects that truth. How do I do that?

Jesus sitting on the ground, teaching his followers, *“be prepared”*...they don't know it yet, but they're going to kill Jesus. He says, *if they reject me they'll reject you, because I am in you*. And so, he's sharing with them this understanding of what it means to be a follower of Christ.

He starts with the Beatitudes, this idea that our hearts are being changed. And He gives an image of what transformation looks like. Now the beauty of transformation—or what we call sanctification—the beauty of that is, that it's both something being done within us, and something that we're choosing to participate in outside of us.

So Jesus is laying out what our heart should look like, and not just that we merely follow some other set of rules, not just that I convince myself that I have to look and act a certain way...because you could follow all of the beatitudes, you could follow all of the laws that Christ is laying out, you can follow all of those things, and still be separated for eternity from God.

This is not about following a set of rules. This isn't about just following, adhering to some teaching. This is about Christ opening up to his disciples: *this is what is being done in you*. Now go live it out. Go be what I've called you to be. Ground your identity in Christ, not in anything else.

And what He begins with after the Beatitudes, is this fulfillment of the Law conversation, which is where we've been over the last several weeks. Jesus says that He didn't come to destroy the law. He didn't come to remove the law. All of the Old Testament still stands. We don't look at the Old Testament and say *“That was for them”*. Christ says, *I've fulfilled it*. He didn't say, *I canceled it*. He didn't say *I've removed it*. He said *I fulfilled it*.

And then He goes into this conversation about the difference between the Law then, and the Law today. What he's teaching on, is that the Law built guidelines, the Law built limits.

But the Law wasn't salvation. The Law was merely some limits on human behavior. But there's actually an intention far greater than the Law. And when He says He came to fulfill the Law, what Jesus starts to lay out He does it in six examples. But we could do this for every Law in the

Old Testament. The Law didn't go away, it wasn't canceled. It was fulfilled.

And what we're living into now, is not just trying to follow the Law—trying to make choices and decisions that follow the Law—we're trying to live out the very intention of the Law. Living out the intention of the Law is actually far harder than just following the Law. Living out the intention is far harder. Jesus says, *I didn't come to cancel, it I came to expand it. I came to show you who I am and what my intention is.*

And so, as we've walked through them so far, I want to make sure we see what we've been talking about over these last several weeks. Jesus said the Law says, don't kill, right? Don't murder. He says that is the meaning of the Law; that is the limit of the Law. That is the statement. If we walked out of here this morning and said “*we didn't kill anybody*”, well we followed the Law. But He says that's not the intention of the Law. That's merely an understanding, that we are sin filled people.

The Law was built because we are evil fallen people. And I know we don't like that word *evil*. We don't like the word *depraved*. We don't like to say that *I'm a bad person*. But I, without Christ...I'm depraved. In and of myself, I'm fallen. Each and every one of us is. We don't like that truth because it diminishes us. But I'm willing to be diminished to be able to kneel at the feet of my Savior.

The Truth is that Jesus is coming to us, and saying that it's not just about “*not killing people*”. He says we need to be reconciled, and we're not just trying to *not kill people*. The intention of the Law is that we would be reconciled to one another. He's talking about believers in Christ, that we'd be reconciled to each other. So the Law says, don't kill. The intention of the Law is be reconciled.

The Law says do not divorce; do not commit adultery. But is that the intention of the Law? The Law says don't do these things. The intention is to be faithful in all things. That's the intention, to be faithful.

The intention of the Law is far greater than just the do-nots of the Bible. Sometimes we look at the Bible as a set of rules. And what Jesus is saying, He's telling these disciples, “*I know you as Jewish people. You follow these Laws. You know these Laws. But I want to tell you that it's not about the Law. It's about the intention of the Law, and I want you to be faithful in everything*”.

Last week, Vince had talked about *do not take an oath*, right? That's the Law, don't take an oath. But what is the intention of that Law. If the Law says don't take an oath, the intention is that we would be trustworthy and led by *capital “T” Truth*, acknowledging it's not just about me saying, “*well I've never made a promise to somebody. I've never not kept my promise because I never made one*”. That's not the intention of the Law. The intention of the Law is not merely to *not take an oath*. The intention of the Law is that we would be trustworthy in everything, and that we would follow Truth, and not the truth that gets fed to us from every platform out there. And I don't care what news source you watch, that you are convinced is right...it's not *capital “T” Truth*.

Capital "T" Truth comes from Scripture. It comes from the very word of God. It's open to us through the very Grace of God; through the gift of his Son on the cross; through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit within us. We have access to *capital "T" Truth*, and if we are following anything else, then we're missing the intention of this Law. It's not just about *not taking an oath*. It's about following after Truth, pursuing after Truth.

This morning, the Law that Christ is looking at, is *do not retaliate excessively*. And we'll get into that when we get into the text, but he's saying *do not retaliate excessively*. That's not the intention of the Law, right? The Law says...and again we'll talk about it in a minute...but it says *"eye for eye, and tooth for tooth"*.

The Law says it's a limit, meaning that me, as a person, if someone wrongs me, how do I want to respond? If someone wrongs me in some way, what is my natural response, right? If they wrong me to "this level", I'm going to "here", right? There is no desire in me to do *eye for eye*. My desire is to do, *"a tooth...I'm going eye"*, right? You do "limb", I'm going "body". Whatever that offense is, however you've hurt me, I want to repay it larger. Even in our legal system, we don't just have *"I'm not just going to sue you for what you owe me, I'm going to get you for pain and suffering"*, right? I want to take it an extra step. I want you to pay an extra price.

So the Law says, don't retaliate excessively, but it's not about following the Law. The actual intention that we're going to look at, is if the Law says *do not retaliate excessively*, the intention is be compassionate.

Look at what God is calling us into. What Christ is calling us into is not just that we would observe the letter of the Law. He said *"I fulfilled the Law"*. This is not just about observing the letter of the Law. This is about understanding the heart changes happening within us. If we are genuine followers of Christ, then these things should be planted within us.

And now how do we live into those truths? Not just how do I choose to live a certain way? I don't just get to say *"Well, I try to reconcile with people, and I'm faithful in things, and I try to be trustworthy, and I'm compassionate"*. If I don't have Christ, I will never be these things.

He is first and foremost, our identity. We're grounded, first and foremost, in Him. We first put our trust in Him, and then He changes us from the inside out.

And this is what he's changing us into. I should never have to worry about whether I killed somebody or not. I should never have to worry about whether I need to take an oath and swear to God or not. I should never have to worry about the things that are on this list. But that's just following the Law. The point isn't the Law. The point is the intention behind it.

And so, what I want to make sure we look at in the *Sermon on the Mount*, is not this idea that *now we just have more things to follow*, right? We just have more things to do. We just have more things that have to be done. But Jesus is saying *"I'm freeing you up, because I'm doing the work in you, and now I'm just asking that you live it out"*.

He's changing us when we genuinely put our faith and trust in Jesus Christ, and that's where we

started this series, when He called to His followers. He was talking to everybody...thousands of people on the side of that mountain. But His true disciple, the one who trusts Him, it says they came closer and He taught them. He's speaking to everyone, but he's teaching us as followers of Christ.

So we go into the text this morning, and it starts with the Law. He said the Law is “*eye for eye and tooth for tooth*”. And I talked about it a little bit, but this idea that we should limit our retaliation...that's why the Law was put into place, because as people, we desire to hurt more than we've been offended. We desire to punch back greater than what somebody has offended us...because we operate out of emotion, right? We feel a certain way, and we want to make somebody feel the way that we feel, and so we push back. And so, a Law was put into place that says, no, you can't retaliate that way, you can't retaliate out of emotion.

The Law actually says that it's okay to retaliate...that's what the Law says. The Law, in Scripture, says “*eye for eye, tooth for tooth*”. It is okay to retaliate. But now He's going to walk through the intention of the Law, not to just say that we can follow it to know good. If somebody's wronged me, I now have boundaries. But at least I know how I can retaliate. At least I know how I can solve the situation.

But Christ says, “But I tell you”. *But I tell you*. “Do not resist an evil person”. Do not resist an evil person. He starts out and says the Law is this: *eye for eye and tooth for tooth*. And we can kind of get behind that, right? *Eye for eye, tooth for tooth*...I get to retaliate. Okay! You can limit me, but I still get to do it. People deserve it...I still get to do it. But He says don't resist an evil person.

Now He started out...remember when we talked about the Sermon on the Mountain, especially the first one, He says about brothers and sisters being reconciled together. He's talking about believers in Christ. Here He expands it, and next week when we talk about loving one another, He expands it beyond just this family, beyond the kingdom family, beyond followers of Christ. He expands it to everyone. Here He says this isn't just about if other believers offend you, just let it alone. That's not what He says here. That was on *the be reconciled* point.

Now He says, if an evil person offends you, don't resist them. That's not easy. These words that he's sharing now...again, the passage I'm going through this morning is not some theologically difficult passage. I don't need to re-explain this to you, I don't need to get into the Greek and help us understand exactly what was meant.

The question is not will we understand what Jesus says. First of all I'm going to tell you you're not going to like it, right?...at least I don't like it...maybe I'm the only person that doesn't like it...then you can preach to me next week. But I can tell you the issue is not that we won't understand it. The issue is, what are we going to do about it? Are we going to choose to say “*I don't like it*”?

I hear so many people use the verses that we're talking about this morning and say, “*well He clearly doesn't want us to just be a doormat*”. Now again, we're going to be talking a lot about the

“why” as we go through this message, because when we use things like that, when we say, “*He doesn't just want us to be a doormat*”, what we're saying is that it's all about me, right? What we're saying is how I feel matters; how I'm treated matters; what's happening to me matters. And so, why is Jesus saying “*don't resist an evil person*”? We're going to get to the “why” later. But what He is saying is important. Why He is saying it is vitally important.

I was talking to my Dad a week or so ago, and we were just talking about how you can understand scripture in terms of what it says, but if you don't understand why it says it, we as a people...I know I don't handle that well. If somebody just tells me what to do, I'm probably never going to do it. I'm going to push back on it all the time. I'm constantly going to be frustrated by it. And if I do follow it, it'll be out of an intent of more of a hierarchical respect, right? Like I have to do this so I'll do it. But when I understand the why behind it, I can begin to actually embrace it.

And what Christ is laying out to his disciples, is not just the “what”. He's trying to help them to understand the “why”, because there is far more at stake in Christ's perspective than just our feelings. There's far more at stake than just the offenses of this world.

And so He says, “*do not resist an evil person*”. If anyone...and again, anyone, meaning not just a believer in Christ, not just a follower...if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek...and here I'll give a little bit of context...when they're talking about slapping somebody on the right cheek, they're likely talking about a right-handed person facing a right-handed person. So when you slap somebody on that side of their face, it's got to be a backhand. That symbol in this time, was a sign of extreme disrespect. This was a massive insult! This wasn't about trying to beat somebody up, right? This wasn't about trying to overpower somebody physically. This was about trying to show them “*I don't value you; I don't trust you; I don't need to hear what you say; your words are garbage; just leave me alone*”. It was a massive insult. It was a statement that “*you're nothing to me, leave me alone*”. He says, if somebody slaps you on the right cheek, give him the other one. If somebody insults you and tells you...and again, think about this from a Christian, a follower of Christ's perspective and being insulted, because that's what we're talking about. It's not just some physical attack we're talking about, *the insult of the action*.

If somebody insults you as a believer...what is our response when somebody attacks our faith? What do we try to do? I don't need to lay it out. I could probably have pulled up a lot of Facebook accounts, right? What do we do when somebody says something that's opposed to our beliefs?

If somebody slaps me in the face and insults me, my response: “*I'm not gonna slap you back. I'm gonna punch you*”, right? “*You were coming in to slap me, I'm coming in to punch you*”. And now things escalate and we've got this war that takes place. But what does Jesus actually say? If somebody slaps you on the cheek if they insult you...and again, he's talking to his disciples. He's talking about your faith in Christ.

So he's talking about, what you believe and how you live your life. If somebody insults you for

that, our response is not to stand up and fight back. Our response is not to stand up and punch them harder. Our response isn't...within the Law, we could retaliate. That is the Law. The Law says, "*eye for eye, tooth for tooth*". We could retaliate, but the intention of the Law is greater than that.

And so He says if somebody slaps you, if somebody insults you, if somebody diminishes you, do not respond out of what you feel. Do not respond out of the feeling of being insulted. Do not respond to the feeling of being offended. Do not respond to the feeling of being diminished. He says if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. If somebody wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well.

Now again, here, He does not say if someone successfully sues you and takes your shirt. What does He say? If somebody "wants" to, not that they do. If somebody takes you to court, and it's a long drawn-out process, and finally they win and they take your shirt, then begrudgingly hand over your coat too—"Here, take that". When you take that, just out of spite... "*You can have it. Take all my clothes. I don't care. You won*"—That is not what he's laying out here. What he's saying is if somebody wants to sue you and take your shirt... "*Oh, you don't need to take me to court, here's my shirt. You know what, you look like you need a jacket, here's my jacket*".

Again, we're going to get to the "why" of all of this, but He's sharing the "what", and the "what" is very hard. The "what" is against what we want to do; the "what" is against...and again, if anybody has a different perspective on what this text means, please let me know. As I said, this is not a hard text to understand. If someone wants to sue you...not hard [to understand]...and they want to take your shirt, if they want something, give them more than what they asked for...that is not a hard Theological text to wrap our head around. But it's a hard emotional text for me to wrap my head around. It's a hard understanding.

So if somebody comes to me and says, "*we want to sue you for something*", I say, "*well what did you want, because let me give you more than that*". He [Jesus} says, if anyone forces you to go one mile...He's talking about a conscription when the Roman military would come into town. They would grab people out, and they would say, "*You need to take my bag and you need to carry it for a mile*", so that would give them a break. He says if somebody does that, if somebody can script you into service, what should you do? Go the one mile and complain and argue the whole time? Go that mile and be like, "*I'm only doing this because you made me do it. I don't want to do this, I don't like you. I'm just doing it because you made me do it*". What is He saying? Go that mile, and then look at them and say, "*You know what I got more in me, let's go another mile*".

You know that phrase "go the extra mile"...that's where this comes from, saying that you've asked me to do something but I'm going to go the extra mile, not because I'm forced to. He's laying all of this out.

Look where he's putting control of the situation. Is the control placed in the person who slaps me if I go take this cheek too? Is the control placed in the person who's suing me if I go "*You don't even need to take me to court...take my shirt and my jacket*". Is the control placed in the person who's forcing me into service if I go a mile, and then I go "*You know what, I'm going to give*

you an extra one. That one's on me”.

Where's He placing the control? He's taking the control from all the people who offend us, and he's giving the control back to the Christ in us. He's telling us that our hearts should be dramatically changed, and that the offenses that we face, that the difficulty that we see in this world, is not centered around what's happening to me. But there's something greater at play.

He says in verse 42, give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you...if someone comes and asks you for something, He doesn't say give to them what they ask. We need to be clear about the text. If somebody comes this morning and says *“hey I want all your money”* He doesn't say then *“Just give that to them so don't ask”*. What He's saying is that if somebody asks, give them something. Help them in some way. He doesn't say give *“everything”* to everyone that asks, but rather, He says give *“something”* to everyone who asks.

Now we've talked a lot about the *“what”*, we have to get to the *“why”*. Why is Christ saying these things? Why is He saying, we live in a broken world. If the Law says that I can retaliate, why can't I retaliate? Why can't I respond in kind? Why can't I give them a taste of their own medicine? Why can't I do the same?

What Christ is actually talking about, before it became in vogue, is He's telling the disciples to lay down your personal rights. That's what He's telling them. And I know not one of us likes that. But Jesus is saying you have rights within the Law. You have rights. It's not illegal to enforce your rights; it's not illegal to operate that way, and it's not even against the Law in Scripture. But it's not the intention of the Law. He says the intention of the Law is that everyone who offends us—everyone who is against us, everyone who insults us, everyone who slaps us, everyone that sues, us everyone that demands our service, every one of those people—He says when an evil person does that, should we be looking at the offense? Should we be looking at how I feel? Or should we be broken for the person who's doing it. Should we be looking at the other person? If all I do is look at what they did to me, and how they need to pay, and how I need to fix it, what am I missing? I'm missing compassion. I'm missing the fact that there is a person behind that action. I am missing the fact that there is a hurting person.

My goal, Christ's goal, is not to just say *“Here, I need you to follow some laws”*. What he's saying is that there is a world that's not...we used to talk about a world that's fallen, and a world that's lost. Christ says there's a world that's hurting. There's a world that desperately needs a Savior. And you know that Savior. Now if that world that needs a Savior slaps me in the face, and my response is to go, *“I'm going to slap you back just as hard as you slap me”*; if my response when somebody is opposed to my faith is to say, *“I'm going to make sure you understand how I feel and I'm going to make sure I stand up within the limits of the Law and that's what I'm going to do”*, who have I forgotten in the process? I've remembered me. I've even tried to remember Christ. But I've lost sight of the other person.

Jesus is saying that this is about compassion. When somebody offends us we have the opportunity to show them the Truth of Christ. Them offending us is a way for us to open our

eyes and realize. Sometimes it takes me to be slapped in the face for me to open my eyes and see that there's a lost world standing right in front of me. Jesus said every offense that we receive, everything that happens to us, instead of personalizing it, say *"That's not okay and I will respond"*.

What if we truly understood the person on the other side? What if we truly understood the heart of the Law, rather than just trying to follow the Law. In fact, the best example that I can find of this in Scripture and the intention of this, is in Romans chapter 5, verses 8 to 10. *"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!"*

Look at what the Scripture says. You and I, before we came into a relationship with Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we were enemies of God. I spent my day slapping Him in the face. I spent my day telling Him how He should act and what He should do. I spent my day telling Him he's got to carry the weight for me. I spent my day telling God exactly what He should do and how He should do it, and I sued Him with my mouth and with my heart, telling Him he's not acting in the way that He needs to act, demanding His service, demanding his action. And while I was an enemy to him, do you know what God could have responded in? He could have responded in complete justice.

What is justice? It's retaliation that is not excessive. It's retaliation in kind. When I was his enemy when I slapped him in the face, do you know what I deserved? To be slapped in the face by my God. What did I deserve? Separation from God for eternity. Where would I be if God responded in kind? Where would I be if God was not a God of reconciliation, and He was a God of retaliation? Where would I be if God said *"There are no chances, you messed up. You caused the offense. I don't care about the people. I care about your actions and that's it"*.

Christ is teaching us what it means to first be saved, that the only reason we're saved is because we serve a compassionate God. The only reason that we're saved is because we serve a God who...when we slapped him, and when we sued him, and when we forced him into service...that same God said, *I can take it. I can take it.*

Now we serve a God of wrath, at which point when we say, *"I don't want your reconciliation"*, we then find ourselves on the other side of that wrath. But we serve a God who desires to reconcile, who desires to be compassionate. We serve a God who is holy, and good, and right, and loving, and yes, wrathful and full of judgment. But He's a God who sent his Son to save us.

Now if I look at everyone who offends me as not worthy of that, if I look at everyone who offends me as not deserving of that, if I look at everyone who offends me as deserving of retaliation, what am I missing? I'm missing the very compassion of God, and that we are going to be offended, we are going to be maligned. These things are going to happen in this world. They were happening 2000 years ago.

But how we respond is of eternal significance. How we respond shows the very love and

compassion of God. Retaliation is permissible by Law. It's permissible. It's in the Bible. We can operate by the Law and retaliate, but the intention of the Law is that we see the person behind the offense; that we see other people; that we see them from an eternal perspective. Not just from what they've done to us, but we see them from an eternal perspective. Being offended, inconvenienced, or persecuted, is not to be a distraction to compassion.

And I often find, especially right now in our world, it is a distraction to compassion. We're so worked up about all of these things...and honestly we should be. We should be offended but not for us. We should be offended for our God. We should be offended for our King. And we should know that there is a lost world. We should be offended that there are people who do not know Christ, and are headed to an eternity separated from God. We should acknowledge there are people who have no idea who they're really offending. They think they're offending us, but they're offending God. The highest compassion is to bring the Truth of Christ to those without Him.

If we want to show somebody compassion...people say "*Well then we're just supposed to be doormats*"...not at all. Not at all. Our job is to not be slapped on the face, and turn the other cheek, and they beat us until we got a bunch of black eyes and lost teeth, and we're just beaten up and huddled in the corner. We're not to just continually be insulted, insulted, insulted. All of those things are to be a wake-up call to us. What do they need? Do they need a rant from us about how they're wrong? Do they need a punch in the face to show them who's boss? What do they need? They need Christ. It's our opportunity to share Christ with them. It's our opportunity to say "*This is a world in need*".

The highest level of compassion we can give is not defending our rights. It's not defending what they've done against us. The highest level of compassion is to not adhere to the Law, but to adhere to the fulfillment of the Law, Jesus Christ; to adhere to the compassion that He's given us while we were yet enemies.

The two questions that I want to leave us with this morning are first, *is my desire to retaliate stronger than my desire to show compassion?* Is my desire to retaliate...when somebody does something against me, when somebody offends me, when somebody offends my faith, when somebody offends what I believe is against me, am I more focused on retaliation, or am I desiring to show the very compassion of God to that person.

And if God preferred retaliation over compassion where would I be where would I be. I stand firm in the knowledge of my salvation. I stand convinced—what Paul preaches in Romans chapter 8, that nothing can separate me from the very hand of God, from the very love of God—I stand convinced of that Truth. But I also stand convinced that there is a world who is eternally separated from God. And while it is not my job to save, it is my job to bring the Truth of Christ, to bring the very compassion of God.

I pray that we would be so focused on the lost, that we would forget about the offense. I pray that we would be so focused on the lost, that it's nothing for me to turn the other cheek, that it's nothing for me to give my jacket when they ask for my coat. It's nothing for me to go the extra

mile. Why, because I'm a lame duck? Why, because I'm afraid of the fight? Why, because I'm just cowering in the corner? Not at all. But because greater than my offense is their lostness.

I pray that we have the heart of Christ, and that we continue to desire to see souls won for Him.

Please join me in prayer.

Father, I thank you God for your Word. I thank you for the Truth of Scripture. I thank you for the fact that you took the time. And not just the time to sit and teach these disciples, but you took the time to come off your rightful seat in heaven. You took the time to come into this world to save us. You took the time to come down while we were enemies. While we were enemies! While we were busy offending God, when we were busy being separated from Him, while we were busy focused on self, you came to save us. And then you took the time to sit and tell us what that means. I pray God, that each and every one of us—in our every day, we will be offended, we will be frustrated, we will be persecuted, we will be diminished—but I pray that that is never greater than our desire to bring the lost to Jesus Christ. I pray that you be with us, I pray that you teach us, and I pray that you soften our hearts. In Jesus name, amen.



TAKE-AWAY SUMMARY

Retaliation is permissible by law, but the intention of the law is that we see the person behind the offense.

Being offended, inconvenience, or persecuted, is not to be a distraction to compassion

The highest compassion is to bring the truth of Christ to those without Him.



QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

Is my desire to retaliate stronger than my desire to show compassion?

If God preferred retaliation over compassion, where would I be?



WORSHIP SONGS:

Grace Like Rain | Lead Me To The Cross | Grace To Grace | God So Loved