

Week 10

June 15, 2008

Mt 5:38-42

*Vengeance & Our Pervasive
Push-Over Paranoia*

The Greatest Sermon Ever

Kevin shared a story of eating all the Fruit Loops on a family vacation while his sister had the flu. Her reaction was to cry, "It's not fair!"

Read Mt 5:38-42

Vs 38

Retaliation

Look at Exodus chapter 21, especially verse 24. This is one record of the law

Jesus is referring to here.

See also Lev. 24:20, Deut. 19:21.

Vs. 39-42

"Jesus now proposes a creative new way that dares to break with the ancient rule of reciprocity. . . It preserves God's own right to be the judge and makes the disciple a reconciler instead of a prosecutor or executioner. Jesus makes it clear that the way of the reconciler is difficult and will involve unusual skill and balance. Jesus' words do not describe the strategy of weakness but the restrained wisdom of a person who is fully aware of what is happening and of how potentially dangerous are the results when unthinking anger responds to anger in a crisis. The strategy Jesus advocates will require tremendous skill and inner resources." - Earl Palmer

Pray Together!

Let your prayer time be guided by what surfaced during your discussion time today.

What experiences shaped your sense of fairness as a child?
Share a childhood story of 'unfairness' that involves your siblings or a playground incident.

Share some examples of how our culture accepts, or even promotes, retaliation.

Share a time when you chose a creative response instead of retaliation or grudging acceptance.

What has helped you build the skills and inner resources necessary to respond creatively?

In what ways are you aware of your need to grow in our ability to respond this way?

How can you support one another as a group so that this 'new way' is encouraged?

Discuss the following scenario:

A friend keeps borrowing things from you but either fails to return them or returns them damaged. Confrontation has done no good. Do you (a) make the friend pay for anything lost or damaged, (b) refuse to loan anything else to your friend or (c) continue to loan anything he or she asks for? Explain. (from a LifeGuide study by John Stott)

The past 4 weeks we have considered four of six ways Jesus redefines an old law into a new way of living in the kingdom. How are you feeling about these high values so far? Kevin suggested we will either see them as impossible or as surprising ways to enter the kingdom. What is your honest response?

NOTE: There will **not** be a Sermon-based Small Group Guide next week – June 22nd. (Worship on June 22nd will focus on a message given through music and drama by some of our children.)

On June 29th we will continue with the Sermon on the Mount.