

What Does the Bible Teach About Revenge?

**October 27, 2022 Indepth Bible Class
of the Trilacoochee church of Christ**



Matt. 5:38-42

- “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ 39 But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. 40 If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. 41 And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. 42 Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.”

What Does the Bible Teach About Revenge?

- Lev. 24:19-20 - “If a man causes disfigurement of his neighbor, as he has done, so shall it be done to him- 20 fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he has caused disfigurement of a man, so shall it be done to him.”
 - The oldest principle of justice known to man. It is known as the Lex Talionis, or the “law of retribution.”
 - It is part of the earliest surviving code of laws, the Code of Hammurabi, ruler of Babylon from 2285 to 2242 B.C. (Barclay. 1:160)

What Does the Bible Teach About Revenge?

- It is both the right and responsibility of civil government to administer justice.
 - Rom. 13:3-4 - “For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. 4 For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.”

What Does the Bible Teach About Revenge?

- When rulers fail to do so, crime increases.
 - Ecc. 8:11 - “Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.”
- The judge who fails to administer justice neither fears God nor regards man.
 - Luke 18:2-5

What Does the Bible Teach About Revenge?

- Moses never intended this principle as a license for unlimited personal revenge, but as a guide to judicial equity.
 - Prov. 20:22 - “Do not say, I will recompense evil; Wait for the LORD, and He will save you.”
 - Prov. 24:29 - “Do not say, I will do to him just as he has done to me; I will render to the man according to his work.”
 - Prov. 25:21 - “If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; And if he is thirsty, give him water to drink”

What Does the Bible Teach About Revenge?

- Rom. 12:17-21 - “Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. 18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord. 20 Therefore If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head. 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

What Does the Bible Teach About Revenge?

- It was not required that one avenge; it was required that one limit his vengeance.
- God briefly allowed it under the Law of Moses. He removed it under the Law of Christ.
- In some cases, compensation was recommended instead of maiming.
 - Num. 35:29-34

What Says The Scriptures?

- Christ teaches us to “resist not evil.”
 - Is this a demand that Christians must passively submit to all sorts of physical violence?
 - Must one allow an evil person to harm his family and destroy his property, without lifting a finger to resist?
 - Is this an injunction against Christians serving in the armed forces or on a police force?

What Says The Scriptures?

- Verbal resistance is still resistance.
 - Luke 17:3 - “Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him...”
 - John 18:22-23 - “And when He had said these things, one of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Do You answer the high priest like that? 23 Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?”

What Says The Scriptures?

- Paul appealed to his citizenship to avoid being beaten.
 - Acts 22:22-29
- Paul appealed to the commander for protection from assassins.
 - Acts 23:12-24
- Paul appealed to Caesar to get a fair trial.
 - Acts 25:9-12
- Eph. 5:11 - “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.”

What Says The Scriptures?

- “Resist not evil” is a prohibition against personal vengeance and an attitude of resentment as the result of wrong suffered.
- When a Christian suffers wrong, he should not “vow to get even” or seethe with resentment.
 - Rom. 12:17-21
- He should do good to the evil-doer and leave vengeance to the Lord.

What Says The Scriptures?

- God has three means of accomplishing this vengeance:
 - The punitive power of civil government, which involves the police officer - Rom. 13:3-4.
 - God still “rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever he will” (Dan. 4:17; Rev. 19:15), and this involves the use of armed forces.
 - God will reap final and complete vengeance in the last judgment of all men (Rev. 20:11-15).

What Did Jesus Teach?

- Matt. 5:39 - “But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.”
 - In all ages, a slap on the face has been regarded as the greatest of insults, but it does not imperil one’s life.
 - 1Kings 22:24; Lam. 3:30; John 19:3; 2Cor. 11:20
- Lesson One: When wicked people heap upon us the lowest and meanest insults, we must not retaliate in kind.

What Did Jesus Teach?

- 1Peter 2:19-23 - “For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. 21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 22 Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth; 23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;”

What Did Jesus Teach?

- Matt. 5:40 - “If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also.”
- Lesson Two: A case of judicial injustice. It does not forbid the Christian’s use of the court in self-defense. It does teach that, even should one use the courts to rob us, we should not seek vengeance. Be rather willing to lose that which by right should not be taken from you than to seek personal vengeance.
 - 1Cor. 6:7 - “Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated?”

What Did Jesus Teach?

- Matt. 5:41 - “And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.”
- Lesson Three: A case of government oppression, subjection to arbitrary military power. But the Christian is to submit to arbitrary, even tyrannical power, with cheerfulness. Rather than seeing how little we can cooperate and still get by, we should exceed expectations.
- 1Peter 2:13-15 - “Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, 14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. 15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.”

What Did Jesus Teach?

- Matt. 5:42 - “Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.”
- The Law of Moses taught that one should lend to poor Jews and not to charge them interest and not to expect to be fully repaid.
- Lesson Four: Jesus went further and told them to lend with no expectation of repayment and not to distinguish between friends and enemies, brethren or outsiders, and not resent or get even when not paid.

What Did Jesus Teach?

- Our Lord does not demand that we be passive in the face of harm and danger.
 - He does allow us to protect our lives, our family and our property.
 - He does not forbid us to serve in the military or police forces.

What Did Jesus Teach?

- Christ does command us not to seek personal vengeance for wrongs.
 - We must be willing to bear the grossest insults
 - The greatest legal injustice
 - The most arbitrary power
 - And the needs of the poor without resentment or personal vengeance
- The standard is high and difficult, but if we would be partakers of the righteousness of His kingdom, we must comply.