

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

How to Love Sacrificially

Matthew 5:38-48

1 For twenty-five years, a pastor and primary school teacher in west central India, had been faithfully serving the Lord.

Two young men, who were hostile unbelievers, came to visit him to learn more about the Christian faith. After they had left, he became very sick and died two days later of poisoning.

No action was taken by the family in pressing charges to have the young murderers arrested. They said, “We are here to build the church . . . not to put our tribal brothers into jail”.

How would you react if someone murdered your husband or father? This family’s reaction went beyond the expected for the Lord’s sake. This is unnatural love. This kind of love is only possible through the power of the Holy Spirit! 2

Notice Matthew, chapter 5, verses 38 through 48, “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If

someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you. ¹ 3

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. ²

How can you react the way the Lord would want you to? Could you love that sacrificially? ⁴

¹ v38-42.

² v43-48.

Verse 39 says . . .

I. By Conducting Yourself Better Than Expected – v39

By conducting yourself better than expected. ⁵

How would you react if someone hit you? ⁶

The word **strike** ³ in the original language, means to “hit with a rod or slap”. The grammar indicates that this was done repeatedly. How would you react to this? Would you fight back? Would you get revenge? ⁷

No good has ever resulted from revenge. The Hatfield-McCoy Feud during 1878 through 1891 is the record of two warring families along the Tug Fork River which separated Kentucky from West Virginia. The Hatfields lived on the West Virginia side and the McCoys on the Kentucky side.

Both were pioneer families who settled the Tug Valley. When the Civil War broke out the two families took to

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guerrilla warfare on opposite sides: the Hatfields fought for the Confederacy and the McCoys for the Union. Because of this the families despised one another. There was also a land dispute between the families.

The violence started when a McCoy boy was discharged from the Union Army because of an injury and arrived home. A few days later he was found murdered in a nearby cave.

In June 1880, a Hatfield boy was killed by two McCoy men. Then, to make matters worse, a McCoy daughter ran off with a McCoy son who made her pregnant.

Then in 1882 a Hatfield was murdered by three McCoy men. Before the end of 1891 twelve members of the two families had been killed. It took the governors of both states to send their state militias in to restore order. Eight Hatfields were arrested, tried and convicted. One was executed.

So, what good came out of all this? None! 8

To love sacrificially means going beyond what would be expected of you. ⁹ We find this sacrificial love in Romans, chapter 12, verses 20 and 21, **On the contrary: If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.** ¹⁰

Isaiah, the prophet, said that Lord Jesus would refuse to retaliate when He was persecuted, **He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.** ⁴

The second way to love sacrificially is found in verse 40, ¹¹

⁴ Isaiah 53:7.

II. By Giving of Your Possessions

More Than is Expected – v40

By giving of your possessions more than is expected.

12

In a lawsuit, the Law of Moses protected the more expensive overcoat. The defendant would only be required to surrender his less expensive under garment. How would you respond to this? ¹³ Sacrificial love would surrender more than is required. If God has promised to provide all your needs, then He will take care of you if you obey Him, right? ¹⁴ This becomes an exercise of faith! ¹⁵

In Luke, chapter 10, ⁵ Lord Jesus told a story about a man who was beaten unconscious, robbed, and left to

⁵ Luke 10:30-37 - In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to

die. A priest, one of the good guys, saw him lying there and just passed by on the other side of the road.

A Levite, another good guy, also stopped by, took a peek at the poor man, and then proceeded on leaving him to die.

It was the Samaritan, racially despised as a half breed foreigner, who came by and did something to help the poor dying man. He bandaged his wounds, carried him to a local inn and took care of him. Then the Samaritan paid for his care until he recovered.

Surely, when Jesus finished this story, jaws dropped! Here was the unexpected person who went out of his way at great expense to care for a stranger who probably would have scorned the Samaritan otherwise. ¹⁶

an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Lord Jesus wants you to follow His example by taking up your cross and following (imitating) Him sacrificially! ⁶

The final way, in this passage, to loving sacrificially, is found in verse 41 . . . ¹⁷

III. By Serving Beyond What is Demanded –

v41

By serving beyond what is demanded. ¹⁸ This was the Roman Law of Impressments. ¹⁹ It originated from the Persians. A royal courier could compel a person to serve or surrender his beast of burden for temporary service. ²⁰ The Romans adopted this practice but limited the service to only one Roman mile: 1680 yards. ²¹ This law was used to compel Simon of Cyrene to carry the cross of Jesus to Calvary! ⁷ ²²

⁶ Matthew 16:24 - Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”

⁷ Matthew 27:32 - They were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross.

Sacrificial love means to serve more than expected for the glory of God. ⁸ It's the second mile that could win a friend or make a convert. ²³

So here's the question: why go beyond what most people would expect? ²⁴

Because showing kindness is imitating your Heavenly Father Who sends rain on the unjust as well as the just. ⁹ ²⁵

Because a special heavenly reward is implied here for those who obey in this way. ¹⁰ ²⁶

Because gracious treatment of your enemies sets you apart from unbelievers. ¹¹ ²⁷

How do you react to abuse? How can you love sacrificially? Go beyond what the world would

⁸ v 41 - If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.

⁹ v45 - Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

¹⁰ v46 - If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?

¹¹ v47 - And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?

**normally expect you to go and you will be set apart as
God's child!**

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