

**Sovereign Grace Church**  
“*Lex Talionis or Non Obniti?*” outline  
July 22, 2018

**Matthew 5: 38-42**

*As we work our way through Jesus' sermon on kingdom righteousness we come to a particularly challenging admonition. When we find ourselves affected by a particular display of wickedness our tendency is to fight back if it is in our power to do so. To be smitten on the cheek....or the nose!....by a fellow human being does not naturally provoke thoughts suited to a temperate and gentle disposition! Our anger is aroused. The grade school playground can be a useful illustration! Two kids find themselves in disagreement concerning something they have a genuine interest in....words are exchanged....push comes to shove and someone either takes a swing or grabs the other and tries to get all Dan Gable on him! Kids are one thing....their powers are limited & usually do not do much damage. Adults are more serious....and adults in the form of nation-states are downright civilization-threatening. And yet the same forces in play between children are in play between those humans who govern nations!*

*Jesus came to reverse all of this! He suggested that if we get hit up side our head that we not respond in kind....but turn the other side to our tormentor! The world thinks that this represents insanity at its most pristine! Who could survive in this cruel world using such an ethical device?! This advice led Jesus to the Cross of his own free will. He could have avoided it....He had the power....but he chose not to! In submitting to an unrighteous cross Jesus put His teaching to the most profound test. His death not only paid the penalty of our sins, but also demonstrated the extent of His power! Jesus offered His hands to be pierced and the result was not His being tossed into the ashcan of history....but of reversing Hell and opening the floodgates of Heaven to every solitary human being who desires to enter in! In turning His cheek by allowing his palm to be pierced Jesus split the spiritual atom! This power is displayed not only in the just forgiveness of our sins but also in the power now available to us to bring the life of heaven down to earth now!  
The grace is present....the only lack is belief!*

1. The Old Righteousness v.38  
Ex. 21: 23-25; Lev. 24:20; Dt 19:21; Jer. 31: 33

**The Old Righteousness assumed that fallen human nature could not be overcome!**

2. The New Righteousness v. 39a

**Illustrations:**

- *whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also v. 39b*
  
- *if anyone wants to sue you & take your tunic, let him have your cloak also v. 40*

- *whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two* v. 41

- *give to him who asks you & from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away* v. 42

**Rom 12:17; I Pet 3: 8-9**

### **3. A Paradigm Shift**

- **World vs. Kingdom; Flesh vs. Spirit**
- **THIS is how God does things!**
- **Our tormentors response?!**

#### **Questions for Conversation and Reflection**

- 1. How have you tried to put Jesus' words into practice? How did it turn out? How was your opponent affected by the exchange? What did you learn?**
- 2. Most commentators believe that Jesus is not intending to replace institutional and social justice with a replacement ethic of non-resistance i.e., it is still wrong to randomly strike someone on his right cheek! How would such a replacement ethic affect the admonition in Romans 12 to overturn evil with good? Wouldn't it seem that to overcome evil with good that evil must remain evil and good must remain good? In other words, isn't Jesus' admonition here the "right" thing to do?!**
- 3. Can you think of other illustrations of not resisting evil? Think of occasions when you did not turn the other cheek. What might have happened if you had done so?**
- 4. How does a wife "turn her other cheek" in an altercation with her husband, given her wifely role? How does a husband "turn his other cheek" in an altercation with his wife, given his husbandly role? Does Jesus' words mean a woman in serious abuse should not seek to be delivered from such abuse? May there be occasions where "turning the other cheek" (acting in love w/ no self interest) might involve resistance? Can you give some examples?**