

Authentic Christianity Part 7: Suffer for Now

July 2, 2023

Matthew 5:38-42

It harms the reputation of Christ to take vengeance against others. Vengeance is demonstrated by gossip, slander, distancing from a person, being cold, avoiding, and shunning a brother. Christians don't take person vengeance against others as Christ has commanded.

- 1) **What is Jesus Teaching?** Matt. 5:38, is referencing three OT passages in the Mosaic Law: Ex. 21:24, Lev. 24:20-22, and Deut. 19:15. The Law of Moses speaks of how leaders, elders, or judges are to exercise judgement on criminals. These laws are meant to prevent excessive punishments. In V39, these actions are not passive, but actions to prevent personal vengeance. (5) situations are mentioned in V39-42: 1) personal disputes: V39, slap on the face, give the other. 2) legal disputes: V40, if a tunic is owed, give them a cloak also. 3) occupational dispute: V41, if required to go one, be willing to go two miles. 4) benevolent response: V42, give to him who asks, don't withhold because of vengeance. 5) generous heart: V42, don't turn away from someone who needs your help, don't withhold for vengeance's sake. Jesus compels us to suffer loss by faith because God will deal with injustice by individuals. God provides for our needs; we should not worry.
- 2) **How do I Obey this Teaching?** What not to do? Pro. 20:22, 24:29, vengeance is the Lord's. We don't curse, Rom. 12:14. We don't repay evil, Rom. 12:17. We don't create strife, Rom. 12:18. We never take vengeance, Rom. 12:19. What to do? Rom. 12:20 comes from Pro. 25:21-22. These are relationships in the church that are being addressed. Rom. 12:21, love with actions. From Lam. 3:25-33, God is using the time of suffering by others for His purposes and plans. Worship God for His perfect, infinite wisdom and righteous justice. Why can we trust the Lord in these times? Lam. 3:22-24, God is faithful, merciful, and is our inheritance and portion. Even little acts of vengeance demonstrate an evil heart.
 - a. Jesus demonstrated perfectly how we should not take vengeance, Matt. 26:67, 27:11-12, Jn. 18:22, 19:3, 1 Pet. 2:23 (He did not revile). His example foretold in the past tense in Is. 50:6. His purpose on earth was to go to the cross for us and endure the hostility of man as our example, Heb. 12:3.
- 3) **Why can I have Peace in Obedience?** Every single injustice against us will be handled by God. The unbeliever is destined for destruction. On July 8, 1741, John Edwards preached a sermon entitled: Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God from **Deut. 32:35 (NKJV). The verse, "Vengeance is Mine, and recompense, Their foot shall slip in due time, For the day of their calamity is at hand, And the things to come hasten upon them."** Edwards outlines the perilous condition of those who turn from God's gracious offer. In summary of the ten points Steve provided: 1) They deny the infinite power of God over those who believe themselves to be the strongest. 2) The unbeliever deserves the fire of hell they will be cast into. 3) The sentence of condemnation is already passed against them apart from faith in Jesus. 4) Unbelievers are the object of God's anger for those who act as if God has remained silent. 5) Satan would desire to control all those whom are opposed to God, but God owns their soul and doesn't permit it, Luke 11:22-23. 6) God's restraint of men plunging themselves into hell, God restraining their very nature to destroy themselves. 7) The overconfidence of men to find security apart from God, in things, or health, or time. 8) The self-preservation of natural man to prudently care and preserve their own lives. 9) Self-flattery is used to convince natural men of their ability to escape hell and not go there. 10) Their delusion that God has given His word to keep the natural man from hell.

Further Discussion and Application

Read Is. 50:6. This is the Son of God, already resolved to complete His plan for those who He would come to save. Isaiah speaks to Israel in the past tense, "I gave My back," "[I gave] My cheeks," "I did not hide My face," 700 years before His crucifixion. This is not the plan of a God who wants to withhold His mercy from us. How does this passage deepen your love and increase your worship for the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

What are the promises and expressions of God's character in Lam. 3:22-33? How has God demonstrated Himself to you? How is your salvation realized in God's faithfulness?

The text of Johnathan Edwards sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," is found easily on the internet to read, read in your time. How perilous is the position of those who deny the power of God over the strongest? How perilous is the place of those who deserve hell and are heaping up continued sins like water filling behind a dam until one trickle erodes its foundations?

God has not obligated Himself to hear the prayers of the unrighteous. What is the urgency of 2 Cor. 6:1-2? What is the burden of the minister of the Gospel in 2 Cor. 6:3-10? Why is suffering not compared to the ministry entrusted to them that minister God's word?

The wicked bear a heavy load, impossible to carry, yet walk as though the ground beneath them is secure and prevents them from falling into the clutches of hell. How does this imagery help us to realize our tenuous and perilous position if we must bear the guilt of our sins? How is the message of Christ and the gift He offers now more precious than ever?