

Your Reward

Intro

- Have 2 more weeks of our series 'The Great Invite' left
 - Start a series on Neighbors leading up to Easter
 - Will be doing it with other area churches
- Sermon on the Mount where he instructs his followers who have come to hear him speak and heal
- 3 weeks ago= #Blessed
 - blessed in order to be a blessing
 - Everyone blessed not just the rich, good looking, etc
- 2 weeks ago= Be Salt and Light
 - Jesus told his disciples that they are the salt of the earth and the light of the world
 - We are to be salt in the world, our goodness should flavor the world we live in with God's love
 - We are to shine the light of Jesus, so that others will be drawn to him
- Last week= This, Not That
 - Jesus is correcting some of the thoughts and assumptions that his followers had
 - Not the actions, but the thoughts and motives behind them
- This week= Your Reward
 - Concludes the "This, Not That" teaching from last week

Matthew 5:38-48

38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' 39 But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. 41 And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. 42 Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you. 43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

- Two linchpins in this passage
 - V. 46, basically there is no reward in loving those who love you already or
 - V.38, taking limited revenge against anyone who has harmed you
- This is imperfect righteousness, loving those who love you and/or taking revenge
- Jesus calls us to righteousness beyond that, remember what he said earlier in Chapter 5 a few weeks ago, v.20 'righteousness that exceeds the scribes and Pharisees

Pain

- That= v.38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'
- This= v.39 But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.
- We have all been there someone has caused us pain
 - Physical, emotional, mental, spiritual
 - The source was a specific individual
- A lot of times our first reaction is to get revenge
 - Story last week of Basketball Coach
 - Coaching the JV team, JV coordinator/transportation director
 - I hoped he would get fired
 - I wanted to tell the world how wrong he had done me and do things to tarnish his reputation
 - I refrained,
 - I would like to say that I never said anything against him and I did what a follower of Christ should
 - I tried, but I still failed
- They hurt me so I will hurt them
- Even if we don't try to hurt them, we hope for their demise, maybe even pray for it?
 - Romans 12:19 Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."
- It's hard to turn the other cheek
 - I have noticed that Jesus never calls us to do the easy/popular thing
 - Always easy to find someone to help you seek revenge
- Things to remember when someone has caused you pain
 - Like everyone else, they are not perfect
 - Struggle with things
 - It doesn't make it right
 - Revenge never brings closure and
 - For followers of Jesus, remember non believers are not held to the same standard, never makes us feel better in the end

Monetary

- 40 And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. 41 And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. 42 Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.
- Another hard teaching from Jesus
- "Give more than asked" and "Go the extra mile"
- "What if someone takes advantage of me?"
 - If they can live with it than I can live without it
 - Catering Truck Story
- Hebrews 13:2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares

- Bottom line= Be generous and don't expect anything in return,
 - doesn't mean you can't ask questions

Enemies

- That=43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'
- This=44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.
- It's not easy being a disciple of Jesus
- It would be easier and maybe feel more satisfying in the moment to do the "eye for an eye thing"
- I believe that this is really and truly the better way, THE ONLY WAY
 - Romans 12:20-21, read v. 19 earlier, 20 To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.
 - When you want to do bad, take revenge, do the opposite
 - And it even says 'you will heap burning coals on his head', that's better than revenge!? JK, I know that is not what it means
- Love your enemies

Reward

- 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.
- Jesus
 - Not just a character in a story
 - Not a sage from the past
 - Not a wise/important teacher
 - He is MY Savior
 - He is MY Messiah
 - He is the Son of the Living God
- I believe him when he says it is worth it
 - Turn the other cheek
 - Go the extra mile
 - Not to seek revenge
 - Give to others
 - Love my enemies
- Seeking the heavenly reward is better than any temporary feeling
- Not only that, but difficult teachings like this give us a glimpse at the very heart of God

Closing

- Healing
 - Maybe you are here this morning and you have been harmed by someone, maybe even someone you loved
 - Healing can't come from revenge, another human being, or even from yourself
 - True healing can only come from the one who made you
 - Jesus, path he laid out
 - Forgiveness
 - Grace
 - Reconciliation
 - You can't do it for yourself, nor can you get there by yourself, you need Jesus
 - God can show you the path of healing
 - God can take the imperfect and make you more perfect
 - God can heal you
 - That healing is the true reward
- Jesus is the way the truth and the light
 - He is the only way for me
 - He is the only way forward today
 - He is the only way to everlasting life
 - I'm going to follow him, trust in him and know that the reward that I will receive in heaven one day will be greater than anything I can imagine
 - Won't you Trust Jesus today?