



Sermon Discussion Guide
You First: You Carry Their Gear
Sunday, April 18, 2021
Based on Pastor Jason's Message

Introduction

We're in a series called *You First: Becoming the Change You Want to See*. We all have a mental list of things in the world we want to see changed and how we want others to start acting. In this series we're trying to listen to the invitation from Jesus for us to lead the way. If we want to see a change in the world, it's time to hear Him say, "You first." In this second lesson, we're going to be looking at Jesus' advice to us when we are hurt, have been wronged, or want to get revenge.

To watch this week's sermon before your group discussion, go to www.journeyoffaith.com/messages

Share Your Story

1. What's one thing someone did for you to help you out of a cycle of hurt or frustration?
2. How do you instinctually view another person at the moment when they've hurt or wronged you? And, how do those feelings line up with your understanding of the heart of God?

Hear God's Story

3. Read Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5:38-42 straight through. What's He saying here?
4. Verse 41 is what inspired the common phrase today to "go the extra mile" for someone. Weighing 50-100 pounds, Roman soldiers of that day could ask anyone to help carry their gear for a while. No one liked this government rule but people had to obey. Imagine it. Why is Jesus telling His followers to meet situations like that with a spirit of generosity?
5. How does a spirit of patience play into this, and how can we grow in that today?
6. Pastor Jason encouraged us to identify why we want to strike back, to stop the cycle by not retaliating, and to start a new cycle by being generous. What's the one thing you need to work on inside of you this next week to help you live this out?
7. Matthew 27:27-32, then Matthew 16:24. What connections and application can you find with what we've been talking about and these verses?

Create a New Story

8. What's one way you can "go the extra mile" for someone this week?

Further Studies: The Ancient Principle of Building a Fence

Jewish literature and commentary written after the New Testament, such as the Mishnah (200 AD), help us understand what Jesus was doing in the Sermon on the Mount where we get this week's text (Mt. 5:38-42). In these readings we see reaffirmed what was widely believed in Jesus' day. In particular, we learn that it was common for religious leaders to "build a fence" around the Torah, God's Word, or literally "instruction" or "teaching" (Pirke Avot 1:1). This is what Jesus was doing in the Sermon on the Mount. Here's what that means in modern day terms:

Imagine someone keeps eating your sandwich in the work fridge before you get to it. The nerve! You write a mass e-mail telling staff, "Please don't eat my sandwich! It has my name on it!" But, someone keeps doing it. Your blood is boiling, and your stomach is rumbling. So, you put a post-it on the fridge that says, "Please don't open the fridge." Because, you think, if they don't open the fridge, they won't take your sandwich. The post-it in this ridiculous analogy, is the same as the ancient Jewish practice of "building a fence" around God's teachings.

The historical context of "eye for an eye" in Mt. 5:38 (referenced from Ex. 21:23-24; Lev. 24:19-20; and Deut. 19:21) actually prohibited personal revenge but encouraged the courts to rule. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus basically says, "To help make sure it doesn't even reach the courts, if someone asks from you something and it really annoys you, meet it and even go above and beyond. By this they'll know you're Mine." As in most of the Sermon on Mount, Jesus built "a fence" around the heart of God's ancient law. He wasn't changing anything; rather, He was helping to reframe it to make it easier for us to understand and apply.

Discuss

1. How does this historical context help you understand Jesus' teaching in Mt. 5:38-42?
2. What one thing does this bring to light that you need to change within yourself so you can better nurture and live out the heart of this teaching?
3. When combining the Scripture we went over with the historical context, what one thing can we learn about God's heart here that you're most challenged by?

For Parents: Repackaging for Youth

4. For those who have young children in the home, what are some ways you could teach this lesson to them that takes into account their age and learning level?

For questions about this curriculum, contact Pastor Matthew Jensen at matthew.jensen@journeyoffaith.com