



HG207: The Sermon On The Mount **Living Under Authority**

Matthew 5:38-38

Home Group Study Notes

11 October 2020 - Revd Rupert Hankey



PLEASE COMPLETE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN
ON THIS WORKSHEET IN PREPARATION
BEFORE THE MEETING!

*Don't forget to take your Bible to Home Group
with you, along with any previous notes and other
resources which might be helpful for your discussions.*



Welcome (10 mins) *Ice Breaker*

What is the best thing that has happened to you this year so far?



Looking Upwards (10 mins) *Worship*

In your time of worship, you may want to sing Songs of Praise; listen to a Worship CD, as well as using Meditations; Bible Readings; Prayers ...



HG207: The Sermon On The Mount Living Under Authority

Matthew 5:38-38

Home Group Sermon

11 October 2020 - Revd Rupert Hankey

This has been called both the most admired and resented passage in the New Testament:

- ◆ Admired for the standards it sets
- ◆ Resented for the difficulty in keeping those standards

1. Old Testament background to vs. 38-42

The law of “eye for eye, tooth for tooth” (Leviticus 24:20) was supposed to be a law of mercy: you could not inflict on another person a greater injury than they had inflicted on you. It was not a charter for revenge against whoever had wronged you.

It was intended to be administered by the law courts, not by individuals. The Scribes and Pharisees, however, had wrongly used it to justify revenge between individuals.

2. “Do not resist an evil person” (v.39)

The command to turn the other cheek is often misunderstood:

- ◆ A blow to the right cheek would have been administered back-handed, with the object of insulting and humiliating more than injuring.

This is because a back-handed blow was only given to someone inferior, e.g. master to slave, husband to wife, Roman to Jew.

*When Jesus commands, ‘Turn the other cheek’, He is **not** telling us to be doormats, but the opposite:*

- ◆ In 1st century culture, the left hand was kept for unclean tasks
- ◆ So if the victim offered their left cheek to be hit, the only option for the aggressor was to punch or slap with the right hand – *the way in which people of equal status would fight.*

The victim is thus making a statement: ‘I am of equal status to you, and if you want to hit me, you must acknowledge that.’

So the point Jesus is making is: Don’t answer the other person on their terms – this will bring you down to their level. Rather, **you take control and set the tone of the relationship.**

Paul taught the Roman church along the same lines: “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:21).

Jesus’ injunction not to resist an evil person in no way advocates turning a blind eye to evil. We are to live in the love of God, which always opposes evil. One of many scriptural examples of this is when Paul opposed Peter in Galatians 2:11-14 when he wrongly backed away from associating with Gentiles.

3. Old Testament background to vs. 43-48

The command to “love your neighbour and hate your enemy” (v.43) is not actually found anywhere in the Old Testament. The law taught, “love your neighbour as yourself” in Leviticus 19:18, but the word ‘neighbour’ had been interpreted as being limited to other Jews, so that it was permissible to hate non-Jews.

4. Love your enemies (v.44)

Jesus turned this conventional wisdom of hating one’s enemy on its head by commanding, “Love your enemies.” He does so for 2 reasons:

(1) Be true sons and daughters of your Father in heaven (v.45)

God loves both the evil and the good without discriminating (v.45). We all demonstrate some degree of likeness to our natural father in our appearance and mannerisms, and in the same way we are to become more and more like our heavenly Father. As Paul says, “Be imitators of God...as dearly loved children” (Ephesians 5:1).

(2) Be distinctive (vs. 46,47)

The world we live in is rightly sceptical of words on their own. The Christian faith makes very bold claims for itself:

- ◆ Jesus is the only way to God (John 14:6)
- ◆ In Jesus we find eternal life (John 3:16) which is fullness of life (John 10:10)

The Bible is the authoritative word of God (2 Timothy 3:16)

The world, with some justification, says, ‘Back up your claims by living out your faith’, and when it sees Christians genuinely loving their enemies, the effect can be powerful. Whereas when it sees Christians being kind only to their friends and family, like the rest of the world, it shrugs and say, ‘I told you so’.

5. Power to do the job

The problem is that loving those who have acted, and continue to act, hurtfully and unkindly towards us, is too difficult. We are not able to do it...on our own. *But we can when we allow God's Spirit to fill us with the power of the risen and ascended Jesus!* The power He gives us to be witnesses for Jesus (Acts 1:8) includes the power to live with distinctive Christlikeness – even in painfully difficult circumstances.

Keep on asking God for more of His Spirit and learn to depend more and more on Him and less on yourself.

Emmanuel Church Text for 2020

*“The Lord Your God is with you. He is mighty to save.
He will take great delight in you. He will quiet you with
His love. He will rejoice over you with singing.”*

Zephaniah 3:17



Looking Upwards (40 mins)

Bible Study

Read the text for this study, and any references given, then answer the following questions. You may find it helpful to listen to the sermon and/or read through the sermon notes as you do so. Discuss some, or all, your answers with your Home Group and, remember, these questions are only a guide to start your discussions.

1. What is Jesus teaching when He tells us to turn the other cheek?

2. In what situations in your life could this teaching of Jesus make a difference? How?

3. What do you understand by ‘taking control and setting the tone of a relationship’?

4. In what sense are we *not* to resist an evil person, and in what sense *are* we to resist an evil person? Romans 12:20,21 may help.

5. Think of those who have been, or are being, unkind to you. How do you feel about loving them?

6. Is there any difficult relationship/situation in your life in which a Christlike response from you might have a powerful effect on a non-believer? Have you seen this happen at any time in the past?



Is there anything you most want to put into practice as a result of this study?



Looking Inwards (15 mins) *Caring For Each Other*

Reflecting on your life at the moment, is there anything you would like to share with other members of your home group which you feel is appropriate (this is an opportunity to share, not something you have to do, however, 'It's the sharing that enables the caring!') for:

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?



Looking Outwards (15 mins) *Concern For Others*

Is there anything concerning someone in your: family; circle of friends; neighbours or church, which you would like to share (please be sure not pass on anything that is confidential or which you think the person concerned would not wish to be shared) for:

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?

Emmanuel Church, Laindon Road, Billericay, Essex. CM12 9LD

P 01277 632120 **E** emmanueloffice@billericaychurches.org **WA** EmmanuelCM12

T @EmmanuelCM12 **W** emmanuel-church.info **FB** [EmmanuelChurchBillericay](#)

Part of The Billericay & Little Burstead Team Ministry