

## YOU HAVE HEARD THAT IT WAS SAID: THE WAY OF LOVE

Sunday message from September 4th, 2022

~ Notes & Reflections ~

[Matthew 5:38-48](#)

- **“No one ever wins a fight.” ~ Howard Thurman, et al.**
  - ❖ Consider a fight you have had in the recent or distant past. How did it feel to “lose”? How did it feel to “win”? What were the consequences? Based on your experience, does Thurman’s statement ring true?
- **With the words, “You have heard that it was said,” Jesus challenges conventional wisdom of religion and culture. In today’s passage, He specifically challenges our desire to be right and our drive to fight.**
  - ❖ Read [Matthew 5:38-48](#). Which phrases challenge you? What “conventional wisdom” do they challenge?
- **There is an Old Testament principle ([Ex 21:23-25](#)) that Jesus restates ([Matt 7:12](#)) of how to treat and respond to others, but people have warped this into provocation and cycles of violence.**
  - ❖ How do you see this cycle playing out in and around you?
  - ❖ “Hate cannot drive out hate. Only love can do that.” ~ Martin Luther King, Jr.
- **Our first reaction to any situation, as followers of Jesus, should be non-violence—in word, action and heart.**
- **Pursuing justice is important to the heart of God.**
  - ❖ Maybe Jesus is suggesting we pursue justice in a completely different way—a way that is kind without compromising our safety.
  - ❖ Consider [Matthew 5:38-48](#). What might this kind of non-retaliative, kind way of justice look like?
- **Maybe you’ve allowed other influences to disciple your heart rather than the words and example of Jesus.**
  - ❖ What influences have disciplined your heart? How have these influences affected you?
- **The sin within us and the scarcity around us make us compete with and fight with each other.**
  - ❖ How does sin and scarcity influence your desire to win, be right and hoard things for yourself?
- **Jesus remedies the problem of sin and scarcity with love. ([Matt 5:43-48](#))**
  - ❖ God’s love is an endless resource available to us. We have already been invited to His table. He proves this by giving His own life.
- **My internal sense of scarcity (shame, lack of sense of belonging) keeps me fighting and hating.**
  - ❖ How have you experienced a lack of belonging or not being enough, even as a child of God?
  - ❖ How has shame impacted your interactions with others? Your reactions to others?
- **“Be perfect, therefore, even as your heavenly Father is perfect.” This is the standard, but the Good News is that Jesus knows that and invited you anyway.**
  - ❖ Jesus met the standard on your behalf so you can freely sit and belong at His table.
  - ❖ How does this acceptance and belonging impact your desire to retaliate? Your ability to love?
  - ❖ How might you seek to internalize your belonging on a daily basis?
- What statements or aspects of this message bring comfort? Which bring conviction? Take some time to talk to God about what bubbles up as you read/hear and reflect on this message.
- What might God be inviting you into as a response to this message/reflection on the way of love?