

Sermon Title: Be Different, Be Like Jesus

A short story about a monumental change in my thinking:

- And in fact, I take that mental shift with me today, and I try and live my life the way **God** wants me to, not the way that other people want me to.
- Our passage for this morning has 2 very difficult sayings of Jesus:
  - Turn the other cheek.
  - Love your enemies.

**Matthew 5: 38-48**

What is Jesus saying in this passage?

- Does he want us to be perfect? Isn't that a little unfair?
  - When Jesus tells us to be perfect, that has nothing to do with our efforts, our works, or our actions, it has to do with us having true faith in Him, and his perfection.
- We first need to have God change our hearts, then we (God and us) can change our actions.
  - **Matthew 12:34**: "For whatever is in your heart determines what you say."
  - **1 Peter 3:15**: "but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you."
- Scenario:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Step 1: **Responding in the moment.**

Step 2: **Set boundaries.**

Step 3: **If it persists, you can walk away.**

Going deeper into today's passage:

- "If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also."
  - This is not just about physical assaults, but actually Jesus is also referring to the phrase we know today as "a slap in the face" or someone assaulting your **character, your pride, or your integrity.**

- "And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well."
  - This has legal undertones, saying that if you are sued you should pay what you owe, and Jesus goes over the top to say pay more.
- "And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles."
  - This is a direct mention to an occupying **enemy army** taking you away from work to help them.
- "Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you."
  - If we took this literally, we all would be broke and supporting 100 Nigerian princes, but instead Jesus utilized hyperbole precisely to challenge his hearers, to force us to consider what we value.
- "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'"
  - This is an interesting phrase, because nowhere in the Old Testament can you directly quote "hate your enemy."
- "But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you"
  - Again, Jesus' words are graphic pictures that force us to probe our hearts; they do not cancel the Old Testament belief in divine vindication but summon us to leave our vindication with **God** and seek others' best interests in **love.**

How can we do this?

- If we want to follow Jesus' commandments, we need to act more like Jesus. That starts with learning more what Jesus said and did.
- Stop doing it **your way** and start doing it **Jesus' way.**

Challenges:

1. Take time each day and read about Jesus.
2. Work on how you **respond** to people.
  - a. The most important part in this is your motivation, you are controlling your actions and your words because you are loving the other person.

Start with these baby steps this week, and just imagine how different, and how much like Jesus you can be like this Christmas.

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• Scenario:

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Step 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Step 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Step 3: \_\_\_\_\_

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Scripture passages to go up on the Screen:

Matthew 5:38-48: <sup>38</sup>“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ <sup>39</sup> 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. <sup>40</sup> And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. <sup>41</sup> And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. <sup>42</sup> Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you. <sup>43</sup> “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ <sup>44</sup> But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup> 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. <sup>46</sup> For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? <sup>47</sup> And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? <sup>48</sup> You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Matthew 12:34 - “For whatever is in your heart determines what you say.”

1 Peter 3:15 - “but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.”