

One day a truck driver stopped at a restaurant for dinner and order a steak. Before he could it, in walked a motorcycle gang with dirty leather jackets and long unkempt hair. They took the man's steak, cut it into six pieces and ate it. ... The driver said nothing. He simply paid the bill and walked out. ... One of the gang members said, *"That man couldn't talk. He didn't say a word."* ... Another one said, *"He could fight, either; he didn't lift a hand."* ... But the waiter looking out the window said, *"He can't drive either. He just drove over your six motorcycles."* ... Of course, one easily imagines what that gang would do to him if they ever found that driver!

Something in us likes the story; we love retaliation. ... Let's be honest, Jesus is unrealistic! **"I say to you, offer no resistance to one who is evil. ... turn the other [cheek] ... hand over your cloak as well ... go for two miles. Give to the one who wants to borrow."** Jesus can't stop himself; he just keeps going on. **"... love your enemies ..."**

Does Jesus want us to be doormats? ... Every American knows that the meek will inherit the dirt! ... America wants to be great again, but it all looks like a power grab and payback. ... We easily ignore Jesus' words! ... Dr. Martin Luther King was right; "Wars are poor chisels for carving out peaceful tomorrows."

It is easy to compartmentalize our faith, and breeze past Jesus' demanding words. ... *But dare we imagine standing before him on the last day? ... Maybe we should first understand Jesus' words.*

"You have heard that it was said, *An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.* But I say to you, offer no resistance to one who is evil. When someone strikes you on your right cheek, turn the other one as well." And so forth with more examples to explain that one shocking phrase we all want to ignore, **"offer no resistance to one who is evil."** This is the central point! *Resistance!*

The Greek word for *resistance* means so much more than our English translation. It carries with it the sense of *armed insurrection and violent revolt*. It means to *stand in battle array*. It is *aggressive*. ... What's Jesus' point? ... He is saying do not resist evil *in the same way, with the same means* that evil attacks you.

When we are confronted by anger, hate, unjust demands or unfair treatment, we first become defensive, then angry, and finally aggressive. *We are in battle array*. We mirror the evildoer!

Jesus is being realistic! ... Evil has an incredible power to transform us into itself! ... We need Jesus' kind of power if we are not to be captured in imitating the evil done to us.

Jesus' non-violence is not passivity. His way demands strength; it takes courage to hold up the mirror to the aggressor so he can see his aggression. And so, Jesus gave us four examples.

To strike a person on the cheek was a terrible affront in the ancient Jewish world, but you dare not use your left hand — the hand you use to clean yourself — lest the community banish you for ten days. The attacker could use the right hand only, so you turning your left cheek forced him to look you straight in the eye. ... *You made him see the injustice he was doing.*

When someone sued you for your tunic, and you give him your cloak as well, you force him to see what he was doing to you, to see your nakedness. ... *You made him see the injustice he was doing.*

When a Roman soldier forced you to carry his gear for one mile and you carried it one more mile. ... *You made him see a greater, freer generosity.*

When someone demanded that you lend, you simply gave. ... *You made him see a greater, freer generosity.*

Jesus is not asking you to be doormats to evil, but to hold it up *to be seen*. ... Jesus freely did the same on the cross, he made us see the evil we were doing and the greater love that he has.

When confronted by an opponent, we either fight or flee. We become either angry or cowardly. Jesus rejects both ways; *Jesus demands that you make love visible.*

The enemy, the angry, the self-righteous, and the avaricious treat others as objects; our task is to treat them as persons *with respect*. Dr. Martin Luther King taught us, **"Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend."**

There is so much violence around us; we don't need more revenge. Jesus confronted evil with a greater love. ... *Becoming enraged in Jesus' name is not Jesus' way.* ... There is too much rage around us; *we need a greater love!*

Jesus' way of acting reveals God himself. Jesus said, **love your enemies ... that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, ... Be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.** *This is the perfect way of the Father!*

We are never going to get out of the box of anger or rage unless we choose the Father's way of perfection. Here is a true story that illustrates it better than I can explain.

Mohammed was driving from Hebron, when he saw an uncommon sight, a car with Israeli plates broken down by the road. The driver was waving and so Mohammed stopped. The driver needed a lift to the nearest Israeli town to get help. Mohammed looked into the car and saw a very nervous wife with her scared children — this was the occupied territory. Mohammed said to them: *'If you can trust me, I will take you all to my house and my neighbor will repair your car. Can you trust me?'* ... Would you?

And so, they squeezed into his car. For three days the Israeli family stayed with Mohammed's family. When they parted, Mohammed told his new friend *'we are brothers now'*.

His new brother made Mohammed promise to visit him. After a few weeks Mohammed sets out but arriving in the Israeli town he had to ask for directions of an old man. The man was suspicious and asked: *Why are you looking for this Israeli?* So, Mohammed told him the story and the old man said: *'I will tell you where he lives, but first you must come back to my home and meet my wife and drink tea with us.'* Mohammed was surprised but not wanting to offend him went for tea. Later the old man said to him, *'that man you rescued and looked after is my son'*! Become the peace that you want to exist; become the love that alone can heal. Be the Father's heart; *it's the Jesus' way!*