

Going the Second Mile

Text: Matthew 5:38-48

Introduction

1. In New Testament times, Roman couriers were authorized to press into service any available person or beast for transportation of official documents but they could not compel a citizen to go further than one mile.
2. Citing this practice, Jesus is saying, "Don't go a mile with bitter and obvious resentment. Go two miles with cheerfulness and good grace."
3. This text is a lesson on attitude—we should live with the attitude of the second mile.

I. A Comparison of the First Mile to the Second

A. The first mile.

1. It is a mile of compulsion. (v. 41)
 - a. Compel (*aggareuein*): "to impress into service." (W.E. Vine)
 - b. Simon of Cyrene was compelled to carry Jesus' cross. (Matt. 27:32)
2. Those who claim to be Christians but who have the attitude of the first mile often ask:
 - a. "Why should I do more?"
 - b. "How many services do I have to attend to be faithful?"
 - c. "How much do I have to give?"
 - d. "How much work do I have to do?"
 - e. "Do I have to attend gospel meetings?"
3. Those who raise such questions betray a false concept of service to God.
 - a. They are trying to see how little they can get by with and still be faithful.
 - b. In reality, it is a matter of dedication and commitment.

B. The second mile.

1. It is more difficult for it is a mile of grace.
 - a. It is a display of goodness and kindness.
 - b. It is accomplished by love for the Lord. (John 14:23; 1 John 4:18)
2. Those who travel the second mile have an attitude of "What more can I do?"
 - a. This attitude is illustrated by 1 Corinthians 15:58. "Abound" literally means to overflow, excel, or exceed.
 - b. This attitude is Luke 6:38 in reverse.

II. Other Applications of This Attitude

- A. When smitten, turn the other cheek. (vv. 38-39)
 - 1. This is a personal challenge to a duel, both an injury and an insult. (John 19:13; 2 Cor. 11:20)
 - 2. Turn the other cheek—do not have an “eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth” mentality.
 - a. Do not sink to their level.
 - b. Rise above a personal affront.
- B. When sued for your tunic, let them have your cloak. (v. 40)
 - 1. The cloak could not be taken from a man by law. (Ex. 22:26-27)
 - 2. The Christian never stands upon his rights because he considers others before he ever considers himself.
- C. Give to the one who asks—do not turn away from one who wants to borrow. (v. 42)
 - 1. This is the attitude one should have toward the needs of others.
 - 2. Jesus is evidently speaking of those who are truly needy. (1 Tim. 5:8; 2 Thes. 3:10)
 - a. One is not to encourage sin or slothfulness.
 - b. One’s attitude must be proper toward those who are truly in need.
 - 3. The Christian is not to be selfish or revengeful but liberal and generous.
- D. Loving your enemy. (vv. 43-48)
 - 1. This refers to those who hate you.
 - 2. *Agapeo*: “To love, to be full of goodwill and exhibit the same, interest in others welfare.”
 - 3. Anyone can love the loving but it takes a “second mile” attitude to love the unlovable.

Conclusion

- 1. “So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.’” (Luke 17:10)
- 2. We must go the second mile.
 - a. It is difficult.
 - b. It is one abundant with reward.