

COUNTER CULTURE

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT



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Loving Your Enemies

Matthew 5:38–48



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³⁸ “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ ³⁹ 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. ⁴⁰ And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. ⁴¹ And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. ⁴² Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.”

Matthew 5:38–48

⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ 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. ⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

Matthew 5:38–48

⁴⁸ You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.



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The paradox of vengefulness is that it makes men dependent upon those who have harmed them, believing that their release from pain will come only when they make their tormentors suffer. In seeking the Bird's death to free himself, Louie had chained himself, once again, to his tyrant. During the war, the Bird had been unwilling to let go of Louie; after the war, Louie was unable to let go of the Bird.

—Laura Hillenbrand, *Unbroken*

1. Respond like Jesus, not like yourself (5:38–42)

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Leviticus 24:17–20

¹⁷ Whoever takes a human life shall surely be put to death.

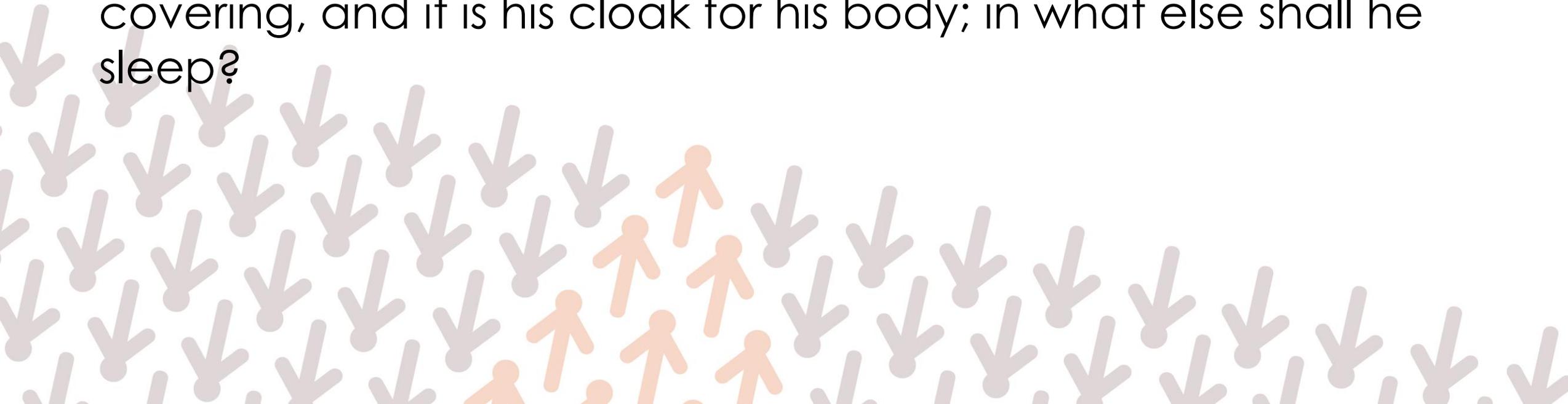
¹⁸ Whoever takes an animal's life shall make it good, life for life. ¹⁹ If anyone injures his neighbor, as he has done it shall be done to him, ²⁰ fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; whatever injury he has given a person shall be given to him.

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Exodus 22:26–27

²⁶ If ever you take your neighbor's cloak in pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down, ²⁷ for that is his only covering, and it is his cloak for his body; in what else shall he sleep?



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Mark 15:21

And they **forced** a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross.



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This oppressive practice was of course deeply resented by the people of occupied Palestine, but it was a Roman legal provision and they would have no choice about complying up to the limit required. But Jesus calls on the disciple not only to accept the imposition but also to volunteer for a double stint. To do this for anyone would be remarkable, but to do it for the enemy was unheard of.

—R. T. France

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If a soldier seizes your donkey, let it go. Do not resist or grumble, or you will be beaten—and lose your donkey just the same!

—Epictetus



2. Love like God, not like yourself (5:43–47)

⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ 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. ⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

Leviticus 19:18

“You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.”



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3. Be like your Father, not like yourself (5:48)

⁴⁸ You therefore must be perfect,
as your heavenly Father is perfect.



Leviticus 19:2

“You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.”



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The disciple's lifestyle draws its inspiration not from the norms of society but from the character of God.

—R. T. France



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In Sugamo Prison, as he was told of Watanabe's fate, all Louie saw was a lost person, a life now beyond redemption. He felt something that he had never felt for his captor before. With a shiver of amazement, he realized that it was compassion.



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*At that moment, something shifted sweetly inside him.
It was forgiveness, beautiful and effortless and complete.
For Louie Zamperini, the war was over.*



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Before Louie left Sugamo, the colonel who was attending him asked Louie's former guards to come forward. In the back of the room, the prisoners stood up and shuffled into the aisle. They moved hesitantly, looking up at Louie with small faces.



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Louie was seized by childlike, giddy exuberance. Before he realized what he was doing, he was bounding down the aisle. In bewilderment, the men who had abused him watched him come to them, his hands extended, a radiant smile on his face.

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