

The Great Allower and the Great Regulator

Matthew 5:33-42—*“³³ Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: ³⁴ But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God’s throne: ³⁵ Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. ³⁶ Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. ³⁷ But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil. ³⁸ Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: ³⁹ But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. ⁴⁰ And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. ⁴¹ And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. ⁴² Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.”*

I. Verse 33—*“Thou shalt not forswear thyself”*

- A. Now, the Lord moves to the third commandment which is to not take the name of the Lord in vain or misuse the name of the Lord as He says in **Matthew 5:33**.
 - 1. The verse says, *“Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths.”*
- B. “Forswear thyself” means to take a vow that you know you cannot meet. It means to deceive a person by promising to do something that you know you cannot do.
- C. This is what is referred to in **Psalm 24:4**—*“He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.”*
 - 1. It is promising something you know you will not do.
 - 2. For example, we have a rental, and on the last month, the renter decided to not pay for his last month of rent.
- D. The Lord commends the person who lives up to his promise even when it hurts.
 - 1. **Psalm 15:4** states, *“In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.”*
- E. That is one application of this truth, and the other is for a light use of the name of God.
 - 1. For example, when Jezebel vowed to kill Elisha, she said, “God do so and more in **2 Kings 6:31**.
 - 2. **2 Kings 6:31** says, *“Then he said, **God do so and more also to me, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day.”***
- F. It is a very serious thing to use the name of God, especially when making a promise which is why Solomon said in **Ecclesiastes 5:4-5**, *“⁴ When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. ⁵ Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.”*
- G. So, the Lord just made it simple and said to not use God or anything sacred when making a promise in **Matthew 5:34**.
 - 1. The verse says, *“But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God’s throne:”*
- H. Now, the Lord goes on to talk about habits in speech that had become so common that no one ever thought about them. These habits included making a promise and saying things like, “I will do this just as sure as there is Heaven” or “Just as sure as there is God’s throne.”
 - 1. These were habits that had grown all too common, and God says to stop it.
 - 2. People in that day were saying these things without even giving it one thought, and they were bad.

3. It would be like today when people say, “Oh my gosh,” “Gosh darn it,” “Golly,” or “Dang it.” These are all habits that have crept into our vocabulary, and they are not good. The Lord would have said, “Don’t do it.”
 4. It is not that all swearing is bad. The Bible also says the following:
 - a. **1 Kings 2:23**—“Then king Solomon sware by the LORD, saying, God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah have not spoken this word against his own life.”
 - b. **2 Samuel 19:13**—“And say ye to Amasa, Art thou not of my bone, and of my flesh? God do so to me, and more also, if thou be not captain of the host before me continually in the room of Joab.”
 - c. **Deuteronomy 10:20**—“Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name.”
 - d. **2 Corinthians 1:23**—“Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.”
 5. By swearing, we pawn the truth of something known and sure (like God or the existence of Heaven or the Temple) for something that is not known and not sure.
- I. It used to be in the courts that a witness put his hand on a Bible and was asked the question, “Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth so help you God?”
1. Today, they don’t do that because God does not mean anything to most people today.

II. Verse 34—“Swear not at all”

- A. So, the Lord just made it simple when He said in **Matthew 5:34**, “But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God’s throne.”
- B. The whole idea is to bring seriousness to the conversation which is really the idea behind swearing. To put a foul adjective in front of something or to say the name of God or worse—the name of the Lord Jesus Christ—is all designed to get the shock effect to get people to listen.
- C. What is a common practice today is to not say a swear word but to say a word that is like that word to bring shock and awe to what is being said.
- D. Swearing had become so common that people just did it without thinking about it.
- E. The closer a person gets to God, the more he will be bothered by loose lips.
 1. This was the experience of the Prophet Isaiah who had let the world around him affect his speech when he said in **Isaiah 6:1-7**.
 - a. **Isaiah 6:1-7**—“¹In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. ²Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. ³And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. ⁴And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. ⁵Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. ⁶Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: ⁷And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.”

- b. In the year that King Uzziah died, Isaiah has a life-changing experience. He sees Jehovah Jesus. Seeing God had made Isaiah feel so horrible because the first thing that Isaiah thought of was his lips.
 - c. His lips felt so dirty and rotten. Isaiah felt he had dirty, rotten lips as he put his hands over his lips to cover them.
 - d. Isaiah saw the Lord and it was, “Oh, no! My lips!”
 - e. What Isaiah was saying in verse 5 was that he had let the language around him defile him to the point where he started to use that language. Maybe it wasn’t even out loud, but he whispered it in his heart.
- F. But, there was good news for Isaiah, and the good news did not come from something that Isaiah did. It came from God.

- 1. **Isaiah 6:6-7** says, *“Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:7 And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.”*
- 2. It was a seraphim sent by God to take coal off the altar and apply it to Isaiah’s lips.
 - a. That was like seeing the cross of the Lord Jesus as the altar of sacrifice and applying His sacrifice to cleanse sins.
 - b. **1 John 1:7 and 9**—*“The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

G. That was the good news for Isaiah. The seraphim came with the live coal, but the seraphim only came to Isaiah after Isaiah confessed his sin of unclean lips. If he did not confess his sin, then there was no remedy for him.

- 1. Without confession of sin, there is no Gospel. There is only one person who is saved.
 - a. **1 Timothy 1:15** says, *“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”*
- 2. The Lord did not come into the world to save the righteous. No sin, no salvation which is what the Lord said in the following verses:
 - a. **1 John 1:8-10**—*“8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”*
 - b. **Proverbs 30:20**—*“Such is the way of an adulterous woman; she eateth, and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness.”*

III. Verse 38—“An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth”

A. The Lord moves to another misunderstanding of the law as He says in **Matthew 5:38**.

- 1. **Matthew 5:38** says, *“Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.”*

B. What is interesting about how the Lord referred to this subject in His introduction.

- 1. Here again, the Lord did not say, *“Ye have heard that it hath been said by them old time”* like in verse 32 which referred to the application of the third commandment to not take the name of the Lord in vain.
- 2. Similarly, verse 27 referred to the commandment to not commit adultery, and verse 21 referred to the commandment to not murder.
- 3. This is like verse 31 which says, *“It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife”* which refers to divorce that God is not for.

4. Again, this verse starts in the same way with, “*Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye,*”
 - a. So, He is indicating that what He is referring to is not of God like He did with divorce.
 5. This statement of ‘*an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth*’ is in the Law. It does occur three times in the first five books of Moses.
 - a. It can be seen in **Exodus 21:24**, **Leviticus 24:20**, and **Deuteronomy 19:21**.
 - b. **Deuteronomy 19:21** says, “*And thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.*”
 6. The reason is found in His clarification in the following verses:
 - a. **Matthew 5:39**—“*I say unto you, That **ye** resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite **thee** on **thy** right cheek.*”
 - b. **Matthew 5:40**—“*If any man will sue **thee**, and take away **thy** coat, let him have **thy** cloke.*”
 - c. **Matthew 5:41**—“*Whosoever shall compel **thee***”
 - d. **Matthew 5:42**—“*Give to him that asketh **thee**, and from him that would borrow of **thee**.*”
 7. All of these personal words of “Ye,” “Thee,” and “Thy” show that the law of “*An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth*” was to be taken very personally.
 - a. This was to the point where the teaching had degraded to the level where it was taught that it was acceptable for the person to take an eye for his eye, and the person was to take a tooth for his tooth.
 8. This is not what Moses wrote. All of those instances of “*An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth*” were not written to the person who suffered the loss of the eye or the loss of the tooth.
 - a. Those three times where it is written are not spoken to the person who lost his eye or his tooth.
 - b. Those were all written to the judges who were responsible for making decisions—the magistrates. They were the ones that decided what should happen to the person who took another person’s eye or tooth.
 9. The principle of the “eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth” also brought balance because the common practice of the heathen nations around Israel was that they should take more.
 10. By saying, “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,” God was saying to the judges not to be off-balanced in the judgment. Don’t go beyond what is fair.
- C.** But, the main point of what the Lord was teaching was that the offended person was not taking revenge on the offender. The Lord was teaching that the offended person should forgive and allow himself to be taken advantage of. They should rely on God who was allowing it to deal with the offender and leave the judgment to the ministers of the state as stated in **Romans 13:3-4**.
1. **Romans 13:3-4** says, “*³For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: ⁴For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.*”
 2. The government and not the individual is “*a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.*”
 3. The following verses are meant to encourage the offended person.

- a. **Romans 12:19**—“*Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*”
- b. **Matthew 5:44**—“*But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.*”
- c. **Romans 12:17**—“*Recompense to no man evil for evil.*”
- 4. That means to not pay back as it says in **Proverbs 24:29**.
 - a. **Proverbs 24:29** states, “*Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work.*”
 - b. The same book of Leviticus that said in **Leviticus 24:20**, “*An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth*” also says in **Leviticus 19:18**, “*Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.*”
 - c. The same book of Deuteronomy said in **Deuteronomy 19:21**, “*An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.*”
 - d. It says this one more time in **Deuteronomy 32:35**, “*To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.*”
- 5. When the Lord said in **Matthew 5:39**, “*But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil,*” He was restoring the Biblical truth that the government takes the eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth as the minister of God; the injured person takes not vengeance. He just loves.
 - a. The Lord is teaching the individual to forgive the offender and leave justice with God.
- D. That is all very easy to say that if we are offended, we should forgive and love the enemy who wronged and hurt us. The real question is, “How? How are we supposed to do that?”
 - 1. This requires looking up to God and seeing God in certain ways. This requires a dependence on God.
 - 2. This requires a dependence on God to be the One who allows us to suffer from others and to do what He wants to do with our offenders.
 - a. **Proverbs 20:22** says, “*Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee.*”
 - 3. These verses help us to see God as the Great Allowor. God allows and even regulates how much we get wronged and how much we get hurt. The verse that describes God as the Great Allowor or the Great Regulator is **1 Corinthians 10:13**.
 - a. **1 Corinthian 10:13** says, “*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*”
 - 4. When Job was being wronged by Satan, we see that behind the scenes, Satan had to ask permission to harm Job, showing God as the Great Allowor. God gave limits to what Satan could do to Job, showing God as the Great Regulator.
 - a. **Job 1:9-12** says, “⁹*Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? ¹⁰Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.*”

¹¹ But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. ¹² And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.”

- b. God had in mind for Job to become stronger in his faith in God, and for Job to become wiser and grow.
 - c. That is why God as the Great Allower gave permission to Satan to destroy Job’s possessions.
5. But, God as the Great Regulator limited what Satan could do to Job.
 6. The first step in forgiving and loving our enemies is to lift up our eyes and see above our enemies. We must see God as the Great Allower and the Great Regulator of what happens to us.
 7. That is the first step to being able to have the kind of response described in **Proverbs 25:21**.
 - a. The verse says, “If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink:”
 - b. That means that we substitute retaliation with love.
 - c. That is the kind of love that studies the needs of our enemies and does **not** say, “Oh, my enemy is hungry. Good, I hope he starves to death.”
 8. This is the kind of love and forgiveness that says, “Oh my enemy is hungry. I will cook him food, and if he is thirsty, I will bring him something to drink.”

IV. Verse 39—“Smite thee on the right cheek”

- A. The Lord has established who should take vengeance for who wrongs and hurts us. The Lord tells us what our response should be to the person who hurts us in **Matthew 5:39**.
 1. The verse says, “But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.”
 2. The Lord covers three types of offenses, and these are three areas where we get wronged and hurt in.
- B. The first area is called, “Smite thee on thy right cheek.”
 1. This is a slap across the face which is an injury to our body and pride
 2. There is something very offensive to being slapped across the face; it is such a personal attack on our bodies and pride.
 3. To be slapped across the face is not only an injury to our body, but it comes as a shocking attack on our person. The face is you. When a person is slapped across the face, it is such a personal attack.
- C. Now, it is not as if the Lord is saying to us from an easy chair, “Go ahead and turn the other cheek while I sit up here in the safety of Heaven.”
- D. The Lord is speaking to them with the knowledge that He will be slapped across the face. He will do what He is commanding His followers to do because this is exactly what happened to the Lord.
 1. **Isaiah 50:6** says, “I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.”
 - a. Here, we see the Lord being beaten on His back, and we see Him giving His back to be beaten.
 - b. Here, we see the Lord having the hairs of His beard pulled out of His face, and He is giving His face to those who are doing that. He is not trying to protect His face from them.
 - c. Here, we see the Lord being spit in His face, and He says that He did not hide His face from those who spit in it.

V. Verse 39—“Turn to him the other also”

- A. Now, the Lord calls on His followers to do what He did and offer the other cheek for the person to slap.
- B. How are we supposed to do that? How are we supposed to give the other cheek to the person to slap who has just slapped our cheek?
- C. There is only one way to do that, and it is found in **1 Peter 4:19**.
 - 1. **1 Peter 4:19** says, *“Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.”*
 - 2. This teaches three imperatives for how to turn the other cheek and suffer another slap.
 - 3. First, notice the words, *“According to the will of God.”*
 - a. See the suffering and mistreatment as the “will of God” and do not resist the will of God.
 - 4. Second, *“Commit the keeping of thy soul.”* This means to see ourselves in the hands of God just as the Lord said when He died in **Luke 23:46**.
 - a. **Luke 23:46** says, *“And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.”*
 - b. Some saw Him as only seeing a cruel cross that killed Him, but the Lord saw the hands of God that He surrendered Himself into.
 - 5. Third, focus on the phrase *“Keeping of their souls.”*
 - a. See God as having made so much investment by dying on the cross that He has committed Himself to keep our souls.
 - b. **Psalms 121:3-4** states, *“³ He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. ⁴ Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.”*
 - 6. Fourth, see God as “a faithful Creator.”
 - a. See God as the One who made me and therefore, cares for me. He started our lives by creating us, and He will be faithful to keep us.
 - b. **Philippians 1:6** says, *“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”*
 - c. He finishes what He starts. He started us in Creation, He saved us in Redemption, and He will keep us as a Faithful Creator as He said in **John 10:28-29**.
 - a. **John 10:28-29** says, *“²⁸ And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. ²⁹ My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.”*

VI. Verse 40—“Sue thee at the law”

- A. Now, the Lord turns to the next area of hurt which is **Matthew 5:40**.
 - 1. **Matthew 5:40** states, *“And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also.”*
- B. Regarding a lawsuit, there is something about being sued that is very offensive—especially when the judge reaches a verdict that you feel is not fair.
- C. The Lord is talking about a situation where a person is sued, and he ends us having to give his coat.
 - 1. The first word is shirt, and the second word is coat.

- D. The Lord is saying when the judge awards your opponent your shirt, go ahead and give him your coat also.
 - 1. That would be an unbelievable move!
- E. This is the offense of being hurt by taking our property. The concept here is to view our property as coming from God.
 - 1. If God wants this bad person to have the shirt, then give him the coat also.

VII. Verse 41—“*Go with him twain*”

- A. This next is an offense of forced labor or wages.
 - 1. **Matthew 5:41** says, “*And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.*”
- B. The last is the offense of being taken advantage of by a so-called “friend.”
 - 1. **Matthew 5:42** says, “*Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.*”
- C. In all of these instances, the important issue is to look over the head of the offender to see God as the Great Allowor who allows us to be wronged and hurt and as the Great Regulator who regulates how much we are wronged and hurt.