SLIGO SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Discipleship 201

Session 5: *Eyes, Cheeks, Pearls, and Pigs*

Matthew 5:38-42

38 "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' **39** But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. **40** And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. **41** If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. **42** Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

Matthew 7:6

Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

Proverbs 4:23

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

Summary:

One of the teachings of Jesus that is often misunderstood this teaching about "turning the other cheek." A surface reading of the text could lead one to worry that Jesus is encouraging his followers to be doormats, to allow others to walk all over them. But the brilliance of this teaching needs to be placed in the context of the other two examples he gives: being sued and forced to go a mile. We need to remember that Jesus is always teaching to the heart, never creating legalisms. He is teaching principles, not specific actions. The actions listed are illustrations of a greater principle.

The principle at play here is the principle of power. When someone seeks to victimize you, to steal from you, to take your power—Jesus points out that you still have a choice, and thus, still have power. He stretches our minds, saying that when someone is taking from us, we can flip the power dynamic by offering more! Sue for a shirt? Then take my coat as well! A Roman soldier forces me to carry something one mile, then I will offer to go two miles! The minute a person does this, they take back the power and they are

now giving instead of losing. This is an incredible psychological technique that can instantly transform a person from being a victim to taking their power back. There is nothing more psychologically damaging than when we feel victimized and powerless. Jesus' teaching is a powerful shift in mindset that can change your life.

And lest we think Jesus is suggesting we should not have boundaries, he later declares that we should not "cast pearls to pigs". This is a strong teaching about boundaries and not giving of ourselves to people who do appreciate our value.

Quotes:

The difference between becoming a victim or becoming a victor, lies in the power of choice. No matter how powerless you feel, the truth is that you always have a choice. —Rick Johns

We become victims not because of what happens to us but when we choose to hold on to our victimization. — Edith Eger

When you blame others, you give up your power to change. — Robert Anthony

Boundaries help us to "guard our heart with all diligence." We need to keep things that will nurture us inside our fences and keep things that will harm us outside. —Henry Cloud, *Boundaries*

Discussion Questions:

As humans, we have a strong internal conviction about justice and fairness. So why isn't "an eye for an eye" the way we should go?

What scenarios do you think it makes sense to turn the other cheek and why?

Have you ever chosen to do something that other people said, "why on earth would you do something like that?

Why do we sometimes choose to do something really hard or risky, while others would call it torture?

What do you think it means to cast your pearls before pigs? Can you think of time when you, or someone you knew, cast their pearls before pigs?

Homework:

Your **practice** for this week is to set aside a minimum of 15 minutes each day to reflect on the following Scripture.

Day 1: Reflect on Matthew 5:38,39. How could this teaching affect your heart by releasing the right to get even or get revenge?

Day 2: Read Matthew 5:40. Is there a time when it may be wiser to let something go than use up a ton of resources fighting to keep it? How much energy do you use up on a daily basis trying to prove to those around you that you are right?

Day 3: Reflect on Matthew 5:41. In Jesus' day, a Roman soldier could grab any Jewish citizen and make them carry something for them. Imagine if this happened to you. What do you think it would do if you offered to carry it for an extra mile?

Day 4: Reflect on Matthew 7:6. How much value do you put on yourself, your heart, your soul? In what ways might you be giving away that value to someone who doesn't appreciate it?

Day 5: Reflect on Matthew 5:39-41. Read the quotations shared above and ask yourself if there are any situations where you feel powerless? Can you think of any way to exercise your free will in this situation, even if it's a small thing?