

# Fully Alive - experiencing the Good Life according to Jesus

study #6

## Reflecting on Sunday's Teaching ::

As we think back to Sunday's teaching, what stands out for you?

- *Was there something that hit home, challenged, or encouraged you?*
- *What questions are you left with and what are you doing with them?*

## Read the Text :: Matthew 5:33-48

*If possible, read the text aloud from a few different translations – and take note of the differences and how they help you hear Jesus afresh.*

## Digging In ::

- Share together how you've often responded to Jesus' command – *"Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."* How did Scott's teaching help you or speak into this?
- What portion of Jesus' teaching here feels most pertinent for you these days – regarding the call to speak truth (with no added endorsement), to not resist an evil person (but instead to seek their best), or to love your enemies?
  - Why is this so unnatural for us?
- In His rejection of the *"eye for eye, tooth for tooth"* standard for justice, Jesus calls us to move beyond *"equal retribution"* and instead counter evil with good – as God does. With this, Jesus then gives four **illustrations** of what it could look like in action.
  - Can you imagine an instance where responding in accordance to Jesus' illustration could actually be unloving (and thus, against the Spirit of Jesus)?
  - What difference does it make to see these are *"illustrations"* and not laws?
- Referring to Jesus' call to respond to evil with mercy, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, *"Evil meets an opponent for which it is no match."*
  - Have you ever seen or experienced this – either on the giving or receiving end? What difference did it make?

## Prayer ::

Reflecting on all that Jesus teaches here, Scot McKnight invites us to consider that *"In Jesus, the evil person becomes our neighbor."* As God loves us, our enemy is also loved by God.

With this in mind, close with the following prayer experience:

- In stillness, **imagine yourself** as the foot of the Cross. Look up at Jesus and let His grace for you settle into your soul. He knows you – your whole story, all of your pain and wounds and sin – and He loves you. Linger in the embrace of God’s grace...
- Now **imagine your enemy** or the person who causes you the most grief... Imagine them at the foot of the Cross. Look up at Jesus and let His grace for them settle into your soul. He knows them – their whole story, all of their pain and wounds and sin – and He loves them – as He loves you. Linger in the knowledge of God’s heart toward them.
- Finally, imagine yourself kneeling beside them before the Cross.
- When you are ready, speak your prayer to God...

*Go in Christ.*