THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

February 16 & 17 '08
"Reboot" Series
When its time to adjust the "default" settings...

This Week's Message: **"Can You See The Father In Me?**
Pastor Mark Burch

The text we come to this weekend may well be the most controversial portion of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. It is a section that has intrigued people for centuries, has drawn some to the teachings of Christ, and has pushed others away. Great leaders, both Christian and "non", have built their philosophies of peaceful non-resistance on this text. Our Anabaptist heritage is firmly rooted in the concepts Jesus teaches here.

How do you respond when you have been injured by another? There may be no more powerful expression of the "family heritage" that runs in the DNA of the child of God, than in looking at our willingness to forgive others when we have been personally wronged.

It is also one of the most difficult principles to live out!

Matthew 5:16 *"…that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."*

Do you have questions about Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount? Send them to sermonquestions@willowparkchurch.com and then listen to future messages for the answers!

SMALL GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

History (Making it Personal)

1. Share a time when you have needed to ask for someone's forgiveness and you weren't sure how they would respond to you. What were your emotions as you approached this conversation?
2. Talk about the impact of "peaceful resisters." Think of men like Gandhi or Martin Luther King Jr. who used the principles of Jesus' message in their protests against corruption. How did this up-side-down approach serve them?
3. What do you think the average person on the street thinks about revenge, getting even, eye for eye, etc.? Do you see anywhere in our culture, the desire for forgiveness first? What might it look like if justice and mercy were balanced in our response to personal injury?
4. Before you dig into the text, take time to re-watch the interview we saw in the weekend services. How do you respond?

Digging Deeper (Looking to the Bible)

5. Read Matthew 5:38-38 together with Exodus 21:24, Leviticus 24:20 and Deuteronomy 19:21. Take note especially of Matthew 5:43 and look for the mis-teaching that was being passed along. Consider Leviticus 19:18 as well.
6. Have someone read the corresponding text in Luke 6:27-36 and take note of any differences.
7. The Old Testament texts quoted above come from the civil law of the nation. How do you understand the difference between the law of the land and its demands for justice, in contrast to my personal response to an offense and the exercise of mercy?
8. Talk about the "mis-quote" in regards to enemies. Where did the idea of "hating your enemy" come from? Consider a couple texts in your discussion: Exodus 23:4-5; Proverbs 25:21; Leviticus 19:18 & Psalm 139:21-22.
9. Talk about some other texts that speak to enemies: Romans 12:17-19 and I Peter 3:8-14.
10. Remind yourself of the principle expressed in Mathew 5:16 and 5:48. Being a "whole" reflection of the Father requires the choice to forgive as He forgave us. Philip Yancey calls this the "unnatural act." Others have said that it is grace alone that sets Christianity apart from other religions. How do you think our forgiveness or lack thereof will reflect the Father's image to a watching world?

Taking It Home (Application)

11. Spend some time in discussion about how this is actually lived out in our lives. Maybe you want to dig into the controversy surrounding just war theory and the doctrine of non-resistance during days of war…, however, more relevant may be daily relationships we live with. How can we better live out this love for our enemy? Who is our enemy?
12. Do you have a relationship that needs to be restored through confession and offering forgiveness? Pray for each other that love and mercy would be the hallmark of all our relationships. That we would prove ourselves children of our Father in heaven by reflecting this character trait!

SATELLITE WEEKEND - MARCH 1/2 (RUSH)

Because 1500 kids will take over the Hwy 33 campus for Rush on March 1/2 weekend, services will be held at the Glenmore location (formerly Garden Valley, 228 Valley road) on Saturday at 5:15p.m. and 7:00 p.m. and on Sunday 9:15 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.. Or you can join us at the other campus locations on Sunday (South 9:15 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. or Lake Country at 10:00 a.m.)