

THE LOVE MILE – Going the Extra Mile

Matthew 5:41

1. Can one single statement of Jesus change your life?

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- a. Can One Single statement of Jesus change your marriage?
- b. your Family? Your Job? Your Relationships? Your Devotion to God?

2. The Answer is YES! This is A Simple Profound Truth that WILL change your Life

— **IF** You Practice it Faithfully

a. Think of This section of the Sermon on the Mount as Jesus Teaching on— —How to Overcome Evil with Good

- (1) How to Handle Personal Insult and Injury
- (2) Being Taken to Court
- (3) Forced Labor by Law
- (4) Requests for Assistance

b. In this context Jesus Gives the Command to Go the Extra Mile (**Matthew 5:41**)

The First Mile is the LAW Mile — the Second Mile is the LOVE Mile

I. WALKING THE LAW MILE

A. THE CONTEXT: Why Would Someone Be Compelled to Walk One Mile?

—And Who Would Willingly Want to Go Another Mile After That?

1. Israel was occupied—ruled by the Power, Conquest, Greed of Rome...

- a) When Rome Conquered a people or nation they would force the citizens to march under a Roman Archway to signify they were now under the Yoke of Rome
- b) Sometimes it was all the people, sometimes the chief rulers of the people, but it was done in public for all to see.
- c) They Were Now Under Submission, Obedience and Respect to Roman Law

2. Under Roman Law a Roman Soldier had the right to enlist anyone to carry his pack for up to 1 mile

- a) He Could grab anyone off the street & force him to carry a heavy pack 1 mile: LAW
- b) The Problem was they Often Abused this Law—Forcing them to go further than Law

3. The Jews hated this law—it was Truly a Thorn in their Side...

- a) A Humiliating reminder of how oppressed they were under the Roman Empire

4. So They Decided to Try to Outsmart the Romans...

- a) From the Center of town, in every direction, they would march off 5,280 ft
- b) There they would drive a Peg or Marker On the Side of the Road
- c) So When Compelled into service, when they reached the peg they dropped the pack
- d) That's As Far as I Go—and No Further

B. THE COMMAND: Why Would Jesus Say This? —To Go Two Miles?

1. Imagine this Jewish Audience Hearing Jesus Say This! WHAT?! WHY?!

2. The Romans built an Empire on Power, Conquest and Greed

- a) The Power of the Empire Enforced by Fear and the Penalty of Death
- b) Think of How Offensive this must've sounded to this Jewish audience

3. But the Kingdom of God is Not of This World!

- a) It's Not Based on Power or Greed, — But on Faith and Love!

**Freedom was NOT to come from a Jewish Revolt—
but From Within the Heart Set Free by God's Grace!**

C. THE CHARACTERISTICS...

1. SOME PEOPLE ARE 1 MILE PEOPLE...

- a) They Will Only Do What they HAVE to Do—and No More... LAW Mile

2. SOME MARRIAGES ARE 1 MILE MARRIAGES

- a) WIFE: I Cooked the Meals and Raised the Kids—Everything I Was Supposed to Do
—I'm Not Going to Do Any More, I'm Done
- b) HUSBAND: I Worked Long Hours, I Paid the Bills, I Provided for My Family...
—I Did Everything I Had to Do... I'm Miserable and Tired... I'm Done!
- c) One Mile Marriages—are in Competition Against Each Other over Who Does More,

3. SOME CHRISTIANS ARE ONE MILE CHRISTIANS...

- a) THIS IS AS FAR AS I GO—Only What I Have to Do—and No More

Jim Hoff met a retired Pastor who had preached for 30 yrs in a particular church denomination.

But when Jim asked where he worshipped... "I don't worship anymore, I'm retired, I did my time!"

It's Shocking Because it was a Preacher—What's Not Shocking is when Christians Retire

- b) It Happened in Sardis: Who had a reputation for being alive but were spiritually dead
- c) It Happened in Ephesus — They had Left their First Love...
- d) And the Laodiceans, who were so Luke warm it made Jesus sick (Rev. 3:14–18)

Consider the Characteristics of Those Who Only Walk the LAW Mile

1. RESENTMENT: If I already resent even having to walk the 1st mile!

I'll Really Resent Going the 2nd Mile—Extra Mile!

2. JUDGING & COMPARING: > 5,280 steps! I had to—YOU Have to!

If I have to walk the Law mile—Then You Have to Walk it too!

3. GRUMBLING: Parable of the Talents: One Buried their talent

- a) Only Given 1 Talent—Only Gave Back 1 Talent—They Did the Bare Minimum
- b) Then they Blamed and Complained against the Master for being too strict!

4. LACK OF EMPATHY A Man is Beaten—and Left Half Dead...

- a) Bleeding on Side of Road... The Priest and the Levite Walked By...
- b) I'm a Priest! I'm Important—I Work in the Temple... I'm a Levite! I'm Important
- c) They Walked the LAW Mile—The Samaritan Walked the Love Mile

5. DENIAL: I Did the Bare Minimum — so I'm Fine...

Only the Bare Minimum is Necessary so I'm OK

6. LACK OF JOY or PEACE:

- a) I'm only doing it because I HAVE to...
- b) There's no Joy in my heart—only OBLIGATION

7. GUILT: Deep Down They Know They Are Only Doing as little as possible... and faking it the rest of the way

II. WALKING THE LOVE MILE

A. THE FIRST MILE IS THE LAW MILE... THE SECOND IS THE LOVE MILE

1. **Imagine Someone Forcing you to Carry their Heavy Backpack for 1 mile**
 - a) You reach the Mile-marker and they stop expecting you to drop the pack
 - b) But you just smile and say, "Oh, I've decided to walk another mile with you."
2. **There was a Power Differential — Now There's a Power Shift...**
 - a) You Had No Choice in 1st Mile—But now you're making your own freewill decision
 - b) in a way that might shock—Now Who's in Control of Their Own Decisions?
3. **And what might happen as you walk that extra mile?**
 - a) Perhaps a conversation takes place.
 - b) Perhaps you talk not as adversaries but as fellow human beings.
 - c) Perhaps he says, "No one has ever volunteered to go an extra mile before,"
 - d) You might say, "Well, Jesus went the extra mile for me—
—and I want to go the extra mile for Him."
4. **The Law Mile is what you HAVE to do—Love Mile is what You Choose to Do**
 - a) The Choice to Forgive, to Be Kind, to Give Grace, to Encourage & Help
It's The Extra Mile—It's the LOVE Mile

B. THE CHARACTERISTICS... of those who go the extra mile are different

1. **LOVE: Agape love is not a feeling—it is a choice**
2. **ENCOURAGEMENT:** Everyone needs encouragement but who's willing to give it?
3. **KINDNESS:** Could you be kind for \$10,000?
 - a) If you were promised \$10k to not argue w/ your wife for 3 months would you do it?
Can You Be Kind? You Can if You Choose To!
4. **FORGIVENESS:** Joseph had reason to resent his brothers—he chose to forgive
5. **GRACE:** Giving Grace to Others because Christ gave Grace to You!
6. **JOY:** Joy is not a characteristic of 1 milers—Only those who go the extra mile
7. **HOPE:** Those who walk the Love Mile aren't hyper-focused on themselves
They Don't have a Scarcity Mindset—but an Abundant Mindset

Our Dear Sister ..., who's flown away to be with the Lord, did not have an easy life.

Her and her twin brother were born premature and weak, and her hand was deformed from it... she had to work harder because of it...

But she raised her children in the Lord and took them to worship every Sunday.

Her husband had been a Christian but fell away soon after they were married

After they moved to ... he retired and taught flying lessons at the Airport he had an affair....

He left his wife and the kids for a woman who was younger and prettier,
but didn't realize at the time that he had cancer.

As the cancer began to take away his health, becoming weaker and sicker,

his new mistress got tired of him. She went for his best friend and broke up another family.

Her husband came back and she cared for him at home because he was too weak to care for

himself. **She took care of him until he died, even though she had every right to say NO**

III. GOING THE EXTRA MILE

A. THE FIRST MILE IS BY LAW – THE SECOND IS BY LOVE

1. A NT Example of Soldiers enlisting a man for service **SIMON OF CYRENE**

Compelled BY LAW, to Carry Jesus' Cross! (Matthew 27:27–32)

- a) He Didn't Travel all the Way from Northern Africa to Carry a Criminal's Cross!
- b) He Could've Carried it to Calvary and the Dropped it and Left...
- c) But It's Possible that He Stayed and Watched What was Happening,
- d) And Don't Forget the 7 miracles that all took place at the cross!
- e) The Darkness, the Earthquake, the Tombs that Opened, the Veil Torn

2. **We Have Evidence that Simon of Cyrene Became a Christian...**

- a) His Two Sons are listed by name in the gospel accounts (Mk 15:21)
- b) Why would they be named unless the early Church knew who they were...
- c) Paul named one of them and the mother at the end of the Romans letter

3. **Simon Had Travelled from Cyrene for the Passover in Jerusalem...**

- a) Not Realizing it Would Change His Life, His Families Lives
and Give them a Future and Hope in Heaven!

FORCED by Law to Carry the Cross—Compelled By Love to Follow the Savior

B. JESUS FULFILLED THE LAW MILE—THEN WALKED THE LOVE MILE

1. **In the Garden Jesus Suffered Acute Anxiety...But He Did 2 Critical Things:**

- a) **FIRST** He Prayed to the Father...
- b) **SECOND** He Submitted to the Fathers Plan

2. **God Sent and Angel to Comfort Him—and Jesus Went to the Cross**

C. THE LOVE MILE MAY SEEM TO BE THE HARDEST MILE

BUT WE DON'T WALK IT ALONE

1. **We Don't Have the Strength to Go the Extra Mile Alone...**

But We Don't HAVE to Go the Extra Mile Alone!

- a) Moses Couldn't Do it Alone—God Helped!
- b) Abraham Couldn't Do it Alone—God Provided!
- c) Paul Couldn't Do it Alone—God Strengthened Him!

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (Phil 4:13)

God Will Never Ask Us to Do What He Won't Help Us to Do

God Gives Us the Strength We Need!

Jesus is our Mediator: one who walks / draws along side to strength and intercede

WHAT WOULD WALKING THE LOVE MILE DO FOR YOU?

1. **FOR YOUR FAITH?**
2. **FOR YOUR MARRIAGE?**
3. **FOR YOUR DEVOTION TO GOD?**
4. **FOR YOUR SERVICE IN HIS ETERNAL KINGDOM? (Matthew 11:28–30)**