

Matthew 5:40

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also.

Analysis

Roman law allowed soldiers to compel civilians to carry their pack for one mile. Jesus says go two—exceed the legal requirement. This transforms an imposed burden into voluntary service, converting forced labor into free grace, and disarming hostility through unexpected generosity.

Historical Context

Roman soldiers could legally compel provincials to carry military equipment for one mile (the practice that forced Simon to carry Jesus's cross). This was resented oppression. Jesus's followers were to shock Romans by voluntarily doubling the requirement, witnessing to different kingdom values.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. When has someone's excessive generosity beyond requirement surprised and impacted you?

2. How can you turn imposed obligations or inconveniences into opportunities for gospel witness?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	τῷ	θέλουντί	σοι	κριθῆναι	καὶ	τὸν	χιτῶνά	σου
And	^{G3588}	if any man will	thee	at the law	And	^{G3588}	coat	thy
G2532		G2309	G4671	G2919	G2532		G5509	G4675
λαβεῖν	ἄφες	αὐτῷ	καὶ	τὸ	ἱμάτιον·			
take away	have	him	And	^{G3588}	thy cloke			
G2983	G863	G846	G2532		G2440			

Additional Cross-References

Luke 6:29 (Parallel theme): And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also.

1 Corinthians 6:7 (Word): Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?