**Self Defense**

Matt 5:43-48 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, **Love your enemies**, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.As in all six “Ye have heard that it hath been said … But I say unto you” cases in Matt 5:20-48, Jesus is quoting Old Testament law and then contrasting His New Testament law with what that OT passage said. The OT said “thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Lev 19:18) and the OT taught the Israelites to hate their national enemies in passages like Deut 23:3-4,6-7, Psalms 26:5, 31:6, 139:21-22 (“Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.”). That is **hate in action** (not feeling) - like Prov 13:24 “He that spareth his rod hateth his son.” This is why I am a conscientious objector – because this very contrast shows it is wrong to fight our national enemies in war today even though that was many times right during OT times.

Another of the six cases is Matt 5:38-39 Ye have heard that it hath been said (referring to violent crime in Exod 21:24), An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. Note: this text is not saying “**turn the other cheek**” is the only option:

* Matt 10:23 But when they persecute you in this city, **flee** ye into another …
* Acts 9:22-25 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ. And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and **let him down by the wall in a basket**.
* Acts 25:10-11 Then said Paul, I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest. For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I **appeal unto Caesar**.
* Acts 23:12-24 Paul “**called the cops**” for protection

So Matt 5:38-39 is telling us not to strike back (don’t do An Eye For An Eye); it is saying not to defend ourselves by hurting another. As the text says, we are not to resist evil – James 5:6 Ye have condemned and killed the **just; and he doth not resist you**. Active Shooter Training? - **Run, Hide, but don’t Fight.**

How Christians are to operate in this regard:

* I Pet 3:8-9 Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: **Not rendering evil for evil**, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.
* Rom 12:17-21 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but **overcome evil with good**. Leads to the next verse …

God uses the police/courts for our protection; Christians should take advantage of that – Rom 13:3-4 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a **revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil**.

Jesus did not self defend – Luke 22:48-49 And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss? When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword? Matt 26:50-52 And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus and took him. And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for **all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword**. Luke 22:51b And he touched his ear, and healed him.

We are to follow Jesus in this regard – I Pet 2:19-23 For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, **leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps**: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, **when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not**; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

Why do faithful Christians not self defend? - John 18:36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: **if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight**, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

Some other passages to consider (depends upon the translation):

* Matt 10:16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and **harmless as doves**.
* Luke 3:14 And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, **Do violence to no man**, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.

Conclusion: Rom 13:10a - Love worketh **no ill** (harm NIV) to his neighbour ,,,. In the NT, we are to love our enemies also (Matt 5:44), all of them. So we must not harm anybody – period.