How Far Are You Willing To Go

During our last two weeks we studied Matthew 5, where Jesus begins the Sermon on the Mount.  We focused on individual responsibility, particularly in dealing with others.  See Matthew 5:9 (“Blessed are the peacemakers…), 5:13 (“You are the salt of the earth…”), 5:14 (“You are the light of the world…”), 5:21-25 (resolving issues with a brother before worshipping) and 5:4343-48 (“love your enemies”).   We talked about doing all of these things as a duty of the Christian.  But how far does the obligation go?

Paul speaks about a Christian’s obligation to others when he spoke to the young man Timothy.  Paul gives a number of traits a Christian must demonstrate.

* “Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus” (I Tim. 2:3)
* “An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.” (I Tim. 2:5)
* “It is the hard working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops.” (I Tim. 2:6)
* “Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.” (I Tim. 2:7)

All of these are things that we can do (or use) in the service of others.  But like the questions arising from Matthew 5, how far do these obligations go?  Before you answer, look at what Paul says to Timothy:

“THEREFORE, I ENDURE EVRYTHING FOR THE SAKE OF THE ELECT, THAT THEY MAY OBTAIN THE SALVATION THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS WITH ETERNAL GLORY.”  (I Tim. 2:10)

For our discussion, let’s think about how we can apply these principles to real-life situations between people with whom we interact – Christians and non-Christians alike.  In other words, what are you willing to sacrifice?  How far are you willing to go?

**-Kevin E. Hyde**