

Matthew Chapter 5 Second Continued

Matthew 5:26 "Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing."

This is in connection with the last lesson, where we need to agree before going to court and being thrown in jail. Christians, as I said in an earlier lesson, should not be looking for reasons to sue someone. We need to live peaceably with all men.

Verses 27-28: "Thou shalt not commit adultery" was the demand of the Old Testament Law (Exodus 20:14). Jesus goes beyond this outward command to reveal that its act is the result of an inner attitude of lust.

"Whosoever looketh" characterizes the man whose glance is not checked by holy restraint and results in an impure lusting after women. The act would follow if the opportunity were to occur. By taking His listener beyond the outward statement of the law to its real intention, Jesus was trying to get the listener's attention off the physical and onto the spiritual.

Matthew 5:27 "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:"

This is one of the 10 commandments. In Old Testament times, the participants in this type of sin were stoned to death. This sin involves the body (the temple of the Holy Ghost), and is therefore a very serious sin.

Matthew 5:28 "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."

Our hearts will be judged, even more than our deeds. The desire to sin is worse than the act of sin, unknowingly committed. Premeditated murder is much worse than killing someone during an argument, because of the desire of the heart to murder. Our hearts are either desperately wicked and cause us to sin, or we have pure hearts which make us righteous in God's sight.

The Bible says, whatever is in our hearts will come out of our mouth. We cannot speak both good and evil, because sweet and bitter water does not come from the same well. Whatever is in our hearts is what we really are. Following Jesus, or Satan, comes from the heart. The whole thing takes place in the heart, as we read in Romans 10:9-10.

Romans 10:9-10 "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Verses 29-30: The statement of cutting off one's hand or plucking out one's eye definitely is not to be taken literally. What Jesus implies is that if "thy right eye offend thee," then the logical thing to do would be to "pluck it out." His point is not that one should literally pluck out his eye, but that one should recognize that the source of lust comes from within the mind and heart of man, not from the physical organ itself.

The right eye is not the source of sin; the heart of man is that source. The seriousness of the sin of lusting is thus illustrated by this graphic comparison. Ultimately, it would be better for a person to be physically maimed than to go to hell forever.

However, doing physical damage to oneself doesn't in any way guarantee entrance into heaven. Jesus is simply teaching that man must bring the passions of his heart under the control of the Spirit of God.

Matthew 5:29 "And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast [it] from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not [that] thy whole body should be cast into hell."

"Pluck it out and cast it from thee": Jesus was not advocating self-mutilation (for this would not in fact cure lust, which is actually a problem of the heart). He was using this graphic hyperbole to demonstrate the seriousness of sins of lust and evil desire.

The point is that it would be "better" (verse 30), to lose a member of one's own body than to bear the eternal consequences of the guilt from such a sin. Sin must be dealt with drastically because of its deadly effects.

Matthew 5:30 "And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast [it] from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not [that] thy whole body should be cast into hell."

These 2 verses above are fundamental. It would truly be better to be blind, and on our way to heaven, than to see clearly on our way to hell. It also would be better to be a cripple, and on our way to heaven, than to go to hell with a whole body.

Sometimes, our good looks, or our special physical abilities, may turn our heads and cause us to believe we do not need God. This I believe, is what this Scripture is talking about. Anything that draws us away from God is bad.

Verses 31-32: "It hath been said" is again a reference to the Old Testament commandment of the Mosaic regulation (Deut. 24:1). The normal custom of the ancient Near East was for a man to

verbally divorce his wife. In contrast, the ancient law of Israel insisted on a “writing of divorcement” or certificate of divorce.

This written statement gave legal protection to both the wife and the husband. Jesus explains elsewhere (Matt. 19:8), that Moses’ concession was not intended to be taken as license. The only exception given by Christ is for “the cause of fornication” (Greek *porneia*), meaning sexual unfaithfulness.

These statements make it clear that adultery or fornication is a legitimate ground for divorce. However, the legitimacy of the divorce does not necessarily establish the legitimacy of remarriage.

Scripture never commands that one must divorce an unfaithful wife or husband. On the contrary, there are many examples of extending forgiveness to the adulterous offender (Gen. 38:26; Hos. 3:1; John 8:1-11). The responsibility of divorce is clearly laid upon the one seeking the divorce.

“Whosoever shall put away his wife” without biblical basis “causeth her to commit adultery.” Thus, the divorcer brings about an unjust suspicion upon the divorcee.

Matthew 5:31 "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:"

“It hath been said”: The rabbis had taken liberty with what Scripture actually said. They referred to (Deut. 24:1-4), as if it were given merely to regulate the paperwork when one sought divorce. Thus, they had wrongly concluded that men could divorce their wives for anything that displeased them, as long as they gave “a certificate of divorce.”

But Moses provided this as a concession to protect the woman who was divorced, not to justify or legalize divorce under all circumstances.

When Jesus said this, it was about like it is now. People were being divorced for every little whim. Jesus was trying to show how important marriage is, and it is not to be taken lightly. Not being faithful has always been grounds for divorce, and in our day homosexual activity is also, grounds for divorce.

Matthew 5:32 "But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery."

Divorce was allowed in cases of adultery. (Luke 16:18), must be understood in the light of this verse. “Causeth her to commit adultery”: The assumption is that divorced people will remarry. If the divorce was not for sexual immorality, any remarriage is adultery, because God does not acknowledge the divorce.

God also says do not be unequally yoked with those of unbelief. If your spouse is a Satan worshipper, then you must not stay with him. What Jesus was saying, is that marriage should be forever. Nothing, except something of a moral issue, should separate husband and wife.

When they two are married, the Word says, they two become one flesh. Only a spiritual matter should cause a split. If we would just pray and ask God to send His choice of mate for us, we would save everyone a lot of pain.

Verses 33-37: The basis of Old Testament swearing, or oath-taking, is found in (Exodus 20:7; Leviticus 19:12; and Deuteronomy 23:21). To “forswear” means to swear falsely or perjure oneself. Oaths taken in the name of the Lord were looked upon as binding, and perjury of such oaths was strongly condemned by the law.

By the time of Christ, the Jews had developed an elaborate system of oath-taking, which often formed the basis of actual lying. In other words, there were stages of truth and thus also of falsehood within the system of taking oaths.

All such oath-taking, Jesus announced, was unnecessary if one were in the habit of telling the truth. Thus, His command was “Swear not at all.” This does not have reference to cursing, as such, but to oath-taking. The disciple is to speak the truth in such a way that his “yes” means yes and his “no” means no.

“Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay.” When you say “yes,” make sure that is what you mean. When you say “no,” make sure that also is what you mean. Mean what you say; say what you mean. Anything that is more than a simple affirmation of the truth “cometh of evil.”

Matthew 5:33 "Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:"

This expresses teaching from (Leviticus 19:12; Numbers 30:2; and Deut. 23:21, 23).

Matthew 5:34 "But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:"

“Swear not at all”: This should not be taken as a universal condemnation of oaths in all circumstances. God Himself confirmed a promise with an oath (Heb. 6:13-18; Acts 2:30). Christ Himself spoke under oath (26:63-64). And the law prescribed oaths in certain circumstances (Num. 5:19, 21; 30:2-3).

What Christ is forbidding here is the flippant, profane or careless use of oaths in everyday speech. In that culture, such oaths were often employed for deceptive purposes to make the person being victimized believe the truth was being told, the Jews would swear by “heaven,” “earth,” “Jerusalem,” or their own “heads” (verses 34-36), not by God, hoping to avoid divine judgment for their lie.

But it all was in God’s creation, so it drew Him in and produced guilt before Him, exactly as if the oath were made in His name. Jesus suggested that all our speech should be as if we were under an oath to tell the truth (verse 37).

Matthew 5:35-37 "Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King." "Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair

white or black." "But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."

Our word should be our bond. Whatever we say, we must stick by it. The Bible says, that God swore by Himself, because there was no greater. We really cannot swear even by ourselves, because we are not our own. We have been bought and paid for. We have nothing to base our oath upon; for everything we are and everything we hope to be is by the grace of God.

Verses 38-39: The principle of retaliation is common in both Hebrew and other ancient Near Eastern law codes (the Code of Hammurabi). The judicial penalty of “an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth” is stated (in Exodus 21:24), as a means of ending feuds. However, Jesus is clearly saying this method is not a license for vengeance.

The Savior’s point is that we should “resist not evil”. Evil is seen here, not as a state, but rather as the action of the evil ones or the malicious ones.

It represents the evil and sinful element in man which provokes him to an evil act. Jesus shows how the believer should respond to personal injury. He is not discussing the government’s obligation to maintain law and order.

These passages do not mean that a man should not defend his family or his country, but rather that he should not attempt personal vengeance, even through the means of the law, to compensate for a personal injury. Jesus gives five examples (verses 39-42), of how the believer should react to unfair or unreasonable treatment.

In retaliation to physical violence, he is to “turn to him the other (cheek) also”. Man’s natural impulse is to strike back, but the disciple is not to be a natural man. He is to “overcome evil with good” (Rom. 12:21). There is no greater example of this ethical truth than the life and death of Jesus Himself.

Matthew 5:38 "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:"

“An eye for an eye”: The law did establish this standard as a principle for limiting retribution to that which was just (Exodus 21:24; Lev. 24:20; Deut. 19:21). Its design was to ensure that the punishment in civil cases fit the crime. It was never meant to sanction acts of personal retaliation.

So again, Jesus made no alteration to the true meaning of the law. He was merely explaining and affirming the law’s true meaning.

Matthew 5:39 "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."

“That ye resist not evil”: Like (verse 38), this deals only with matters of personal retaliation, not criminal offenses or acts of military aggression. Jesus applied this principle of non-retaliation to affronts against one’s dignity (verse 39), lawsuits to gain one’s personal assets (verse 40), infringements on one’s liberty (verse 41), and violations of property rights (verse 42). He was calling for a full surrender of all personal rights.

"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Romans 12:19).

We do not need to take vengeance. The Lord will take care of it for us. If we will let Him handle it for us, it will heap coals of fire on their heads. Vengeance is a never ending cycle. Kill them with kindness; it hurts worse.

Matthew 5:40 "And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have [thy] cloak also."

Whether robbed by personal assault or compulsory litigation, the believer is to respond with confidence in what is eternal, rather than that which is temporal. If the believer is sued in order that the accuser may "take away thy coat," he is to also let him have his "cloak." The coat is the undergarment or tunic. The cloak is the more expensive outer garment worn over the tunic.

Jesus taught us to have confidence in an almighty God who is completely aware of the injustices done to man and totally capable of evoking ultimate and eternal justice.

Jesus was saying, don't argue over material things. They will pass away. We get ahead much faster by trying to out-give the other person. If we are generous, people will be generous with us also.

Matthew 5:41 "And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain."

"Compel": The word speaks of coercion. The New Testament picture of this is when Roman soldiers forced Simon the Cyrene to carry Jesus' cross (27:32).

In ancient times government agents were in a position to compel forced service upon a subjugated people. A Roman soldier, for example, could compel a Jewish native to carry his armor or materials for one mile. Jesus now states that if someone compels you to walk a mile, "go with him twain."

The believer is to be willing to "go the extra mile." Doing double our duty not only proves our loyalty to human authority, but likewise proves the spiritual intention of our heart.

Do more than is expected of you.

Matthew 5:42 "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away."

Jesus clearly taught that a loan should be looked upon as a potential gift. There are many statements in Proverbs against borrowing, lending and surety (Prov. 6:1; 11:15; 22:7; 27:13). While we are warned of the dangers of borrowing and lending, Jesus clearly emphasizes that the believer ought to be willing to lend to those in need.

Even the beggar is to be ministered to through the provision of giving to "him that asketh thee." This statement certainly forms the basis of all Christian charity, and provides the proper social application of the message of the gospel to the physical as well as the spiritual needs of man.

The Scriptures say, if we do these things, we will never have need. God rewards us openly for the good we do secretly.

Verses 43-44: The law of love, sometimes called “law of Christ,” summarizes the ethical principle of the Sermon on the Mount. “Love thy neighbor” summarizes the entire second table of the law (Lev. 19:18-34). But the unscriptural addition “hate thine enemy” was a popular concept in Jesus’ day.

The admonition “Love your enemies” is one of the greatest statements Jesus made. The love enjoined in this passage is love that originates from God Himself. Man is not commanded to attempt to love his enemy on the basis of mere human affection but rather on the basis of a love that comes from God. The quality of love commanded here is expressed by giving.

“Bless them” that curse you, “do good” to them that hate you, and “pray” for them that persecute you. Loving an enemy involves doing good toward that enemy in order to win him over to Christ.

Matthew 5:43 "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy."

“Love thy neighbor ... hate thine enemy”: The first half of this is found in Moses’ law (Lev. 19:18). The second part was found in how the scribes and Pharisees explained and applied that Old Testament command. Jesus’ application was exactly the opposite, resulting in a much higher standard: Love for one’s neighbors should extend even to those neighbors who are enemies (verse 44). Again, this was no innovation, since even the Old Testament taught that God’s people should do good to their enemies (Prov. 25:21).

“Verses 44-45”: “Love your enemies ... that ye may be the children of your father”. This plainly teaches that God’s love extends even to His enemies. This universal love of God is manifest in blessings which God bestows on all indiscriminately. Theologians refer to this as common grace. This must be distinguished from the everlasting love God has for the elect (Jer. 31:3), but it is a sincere goodwill nonetheless (Psalm 145:9).

Matthew 5:44 "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;"

Verses 45-47: In summarizing the importance of love, Jesus reminded that love was a necessary proof of salvation: “that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven” may be better rendered, “that ye may prove to be sons of your Father.” An initial reading of this text out of its context might seem to imply that loving one’s neighbor automatically makes one a child of God.

However, the New Testament is clear that love is the evidence that one is already saved by the grace of God (1 John 3:14). Therefore, Jesus reminds us that we are to love our enemies as our “brethren,” for “even the publicans” love those who love them.

Publicans were public officials of Jewish nationality who worked for the Roman government as tax collectors and were generally despised by the people.

Matthew 5:45 "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."

Jesus loved everyone in spite of their sins. He said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." If we are truly His followers, we can do no less. We should pattern our lives after His. We should be unselfish, kind, gentle, long-suffering, and giving.

Matthew 5:46 "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?"

“Publicans”: Tax collectors who were disloyal Israelites hired by the Romans to tax other Jews for personal profit. They became symbols for the worst kind of people. (9:10-11; 11:19; 18:17; 21:31; Mark 2:14-16; Luke 5:30; 7:25, 29, 34; 18:11-13), Matthew had been one of them.

The world loves its own. To be different from the world, we must love the unlovely.

Matthew 5:47 "And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more [than others]? do not even the publicans so?"

He was saying, that is the way the world acts; giving to receive in return. Give with no hope of return, not just money, but of yourselves, also. Forget about self.

Matthew 5:48 "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

“Be ye therefore perfect”: Christ sets an unattainable standard. This sums up what the law itself demanded (James 2:10). Though this standard is impossible to meet, God could not lower it without compromising His own perfection.

He who is perfect could not set an imperfect standard of righteousness. The marvelous truth of the gospel is that Christ has met this standard on our behalf.

This section of the Sermon on the Mount is summarized with the statement “Be ye therefore perfect.” Since the New Testament is clear that even the believer is capable of sin, the term perfect is not to be taken as sinless perfection. Perfect here means “complete,” that is, possessing a complete love that, like God’s (verse 45), embraces those who love you as well as those who do not.

Try to be as near like Jesus as is humanly possible. Jesus is our example. We must try every day to be a little more like Him.

Matthew Chapter 5 Second Continued Questions

1. How should Christians live with all men?
2. What is our body?
3. Why is adultery such a bad sin?
4. If a man looks at a woman with lust in his heart, what sin has he committed?
5. What will be judged more than our deeds?
6. Man's heart is either _____ or _____.
7. What kind of message will come out of our mouth?

8. Can we curse and bless both? Explain.
9. What 2 things do the Scripture, Romans 10:9-10, tell us we must do to be saved?
10. Physical blindness would be better than what?
11. For what 3 things is it okay to get a divorce?
12. Man and wife are one what?
13. Why did Jesus say we should not swear by heaven?
14. Why not by earth?
15. Why not by our own head?
16. Instead of taking vengeance, what should we kill them with?
17. If someone sues you and takes your coat, what should you do?
18. If someone asks you to go a mile with them, how far should you go?
19. Who are we told to love?
20. If we learn to love like this, who are we like?
21. Does God let the sun shine on just the good? Explain.
22. If we are Christians, what should our lives be like?
23. To be different from the world, what must we do?
24. In verse 48, we are told to be perfect. In the flesh, can we achieve this? What must we do?