

# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

## Matthew 5-7

### “The King’s Inaugural Address”

#### Study Number Four – Matthew 5:21-48

The conflict in the Sermon on the Mount is between self-righteousness and Christ-righteousness. It has been obvious in the message to this point that there is a tremendous difference between those two.

Christ, in speaking to the Pharisees and scribes in our last study, says, “Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of these guys, you’ll never make it into heaven.”

These guys were meticulously righteous from the standpoint of being self-righteous. In our next passage we’re going to see how self-righteousness acts when it comes to praying, to giving and to fasting. It always goes public.

In the sermon, Christ starts it out. This is His first major address. He starts it out by saying it’s what we are more than what we do that really counts. And in the BE-attitudes, not the DO-attitudes, we see that it’s being poor in spirit. It’s being those who mourn. We see it’s those who are gentle enough to receive something which is not theirs, which is a

righteousness which He provides.

We hunger and thirst for it. We become merciful in action. We become pure in heart, we become peace makers. And we'll be persecuted for our faith because we don't conform to the patterns of the world around us.

Then we also noted together that Christ said we're to be salt and light to our society. We're not supposed to be this way in isolation. Our witness to the world is what we are, not necessarily what we say and what we do. It's what they see as what we really are.

And He says we're salt. And salt can lose its ability to be salty. And then He turns around and He says we're light. We're light to a dark world.

In our last study we related the whole matter of His righteousness to the Law. He says, "I did not come to destroy it. I came to fulfill it." And then He said, "Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees you aren't going to make it."

Now what we were talking about at that particular point in the study was that Christ provides a righteousness because He fulfilled the Law. He kept it perfectly and He died not for His own penalty, but for ours.

Now one of the big problems that we face, and the church is plagued with today, is the problem of performance orientation

after we become a believer. There are certain things that we do and certain things that we don't do if we're going to be spiritual.

There's a great book called *Brethren, Hang Loose* by Girard. He was the pastor of a congregation that was very legalistic. He says:

(Brethren, Hang Loose by Robert C. Girard)

Spirituality [at his church] was being equated with rules and manmade standards. A woman's spirituality was judged by the length of her skirts and how much makeup she did or didn't wear. A man was spiritual if he didn't smoke, didn't drink, didn't play cards or shoot pool, didn't go to movies, didn't say darn, paid his tithe, and was endlessly busy on church committees. His life didn't really have to produce anything of witness in the outside world or love within the body of believers. He could indulge in all sorts of sins of attitude and desire, and as long as he refused to taste, touch or handle the specified no-no's, he could hobnob with the spiritually elite in the church.

(source unknown)

Now many of the experiences that we face in our life come right at this point. Some of the crummiest people in the world are the ones who do all of these things, but they have the lousiest attitudes.

They can have bitterness and jealousy and a critical spirit and

give their tithe and serve on committees and do all these external things, and they're supposed to be the super saints. They have all of this stuff seething inside.

The Lord says, "No! My righteousness doesn't act like that. My righteousness deals with the heart." And the heart having been changed, the actions are going to begin to take care of themselves.

Now what we're going to see is that He just lays bare these guys' hearts. And He's going to lay bare some of ours too, when we actually get into this.

It's not rules and regulations. It's not do's and don'ts. It's a relationship. And out of that love relationship, God knows the heart. And He is saying real righteousness is what's in the heart.

### Proverbs 23:7

For as a man thinks in his heart, so is he.

We can contrast these two kinds of righteousnesses:

1. Christ's righteousness always emphasizes LOVE. Self-righteousness always emphasizes the LAW. It is a restriction, it's a regulation.
2. Christ's righteousness always emphasizes CHARACTER. Self-righteousness emphasizes CONDUCT.

3. Christ's righteousness emphasizes **RELATIONSHIP**. Self-righteousness emphasizes the **RULES**.
4. Christ's righteousness deals with the **ATTITUDE**. Self-righteousness deals with the **ACTION**.
5. Christ's righteousness always works on the **INSIDE**. Self-righteousness always works on the **OUTSIDE**. Like He says we clean the outside of the cup, but inside we're full of all kinds of extortion and sins of attitude.

And that's how the Lord really rings the chains of the scribes and Pharisees throughout much of the ministry.

This outline is so easy. There are **TWO KEY PHRASES** in this whole passage.

1. “you heard that it was said.” Now that little phrase starts out the study, doesn’t it?

We’re going to see that six times and so there are six points to our outline. We’re going to see, “you heard that it was said,” six times.

2. “But I am saying to you”—verse 22. That’s our second key phrase.

So if we were to take Roman numeral one and put it down by “you heard that it was said,” the next time we see “you heard

that it was said,” will be Roman numeral two—and we’ll get to that in just a little bit.

And those are the SIX ILLUSTRATIONS that Christ is going to give.

Just in case these scribes and Pharisees think that their righteousness is going to make it, just in case some things that they have some hope apart from receiving Christ. There’s no way. We’re going to have to become guilty before God.

None of these things that Christ is going to say are going to be things that are very comforting, from the standpoint of we being able to perform them. And that’s exactly why He’s doing this in this sermon.

It’s not so much to be a nitpicker for detail, but it’s to point out that the attitude can be wrong and we’re just as guilty because of the attitude, even though the action might conform to the Law.

For instance, we’re going to get into it right away. So Roman numeral one—verse 21—is the first illustration of the Law.

Now imagine someone said, “The Bible says this, but I say unto you.” There’s nothing to listen to. They would become an authority unto themselves. That’s all, and they would be teaching themselves, and we all would leave.

But Christ can do that. He’s saying, “It says this, but I’m

saying unto you.” Isn’t that going to be a neat Bible class in the sky when He teaches us? We’ll never have to say “I don’t know” and He’ll have all the answers. And He’s going to give it to us clear and He’s going to unroll the canvas and show us all the reasons why He allowed the things to go on in our lives and it will be a liberating and beautiful and fulfilling experience to go through.

## I. ANGER—verses 21-26

**v. 21 You heard that it was said by those of a previous time, ‘You shall not commit murder,’ and ‘Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court;’**

“You heard that it was said by those of a previous time, “You shall not commit murder,” and “Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court;””

**v. 22 but I am saying to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, ‘Raca,’ shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, ‘You fool,’ shall be guilty enough to go into the hell of fire.**

“but I am saying to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, “Raca,” shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, “You fool,” shall be guilty enough to go into the hell of fire.”

He picks number six out of the big ten, and He lays it out there.

He says, “Alright, the Law said you shall not murder or kill. But I’m saying unto you, somebody that says, ‘Raca,’ or ‘Moré’ to his brother is guilty of the breaking of that particular Law.”

Understand what those words mean and what He’s saying? He’s saying that the attitude of anger inside is the same as committing the act of murder. He’s driving us back to the attitude.

Real righteousness deals with the attitude and with the heart, because we surrender our rights and we give up our rights and we become a person who’s gentle and unassuming. It’s awfully tough to fight with us then.

Christ is saying to spew out anger is the same as committing murder. And He uses two words:

“Raca” and

“Moré.”

“Raca” always attacks the mental capacities.

“Moré” always attacks the character.

But remember the last fight with our spouse? What is said?

We start with the mental: “If you had a brain in your head it’d be lonesome!” or Use your head! It’s the little things that count!”

Then when the fight heats up, and we’re having a good one, and we’re really getting after it, then we start attacking their character: “You slob! You liar! You cheat! You stealer! You betrayer!” And we attack the character. That makes us feel even better when we can do it like that.

What He’s saying is, to attack a person’s mental capacities or to attack his character is just the same as committing murder

The Lord has to go a little bit further, because with anger we have forgiveness, don’t we? When we have a real good fight, it’s got to take some time for us to lick our wounds. And then after we get through, somebody has to say, “I made a mistake and I’m sorry. Will you forgive me?” And there’s got to be a reconciliation.

The Lord says that’s got to take place. And on this particular one He has a few extra verses here. Look at verse 23.

**v. 23 If, therefore, you are bringing your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother is having something against you,**

“If, therefore, you are bringing your gift to the altar, and there you remember that your brother is having something against you,”

In other words they had a good fight.

**v. 24 leave there your gift before the altar, and go your way, first be reconciled to your brother, and then having come, be offering your gift.**

“leave there your gift before the altar,”

“The church needs your money.”

“and go your way, first be reconciled to your brother, and then having come, be offering your gift.”

**v. 25 Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way; in order that your opponent may not deliver you to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and into prison you are thrown.**

“Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way; in order that your opponent may not deliver you to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and into prison you are thrown.”

**v. 26 Truly, I am saying to you, you shall not come out of there, until you have paid up the last cent.**

“Truly, I am saying to you, you shall not come out of there, until you have paid up the last cent.”

He said as a believer, we have to be sensitive.

In 1 Peter 3:7 it says there's no sense in even going to church and praying if we're at odds with our wife. Our prayers will be hindered.

He's saying in relationships, our worship is sound and fury signifying nothing, if we're out of relationship with somebody when we go to the church to try to worship. We're just going to sit through something that's not going to mean anything.

That could be the very thing that's true today. We could be sitting here with some broken relationships and some bad things that we've said and done and everything else is just going to go right over the top of our head. It won't mean anything to us. We're just taking up space.

And He says go get right with that guy. Deal with the situation, then come back with a heart that's right. And that's Psalm 139:

### Psalm 139:23-24

Search me, O God, and know my heart;  
try me and know my thoughts.

And see if there be any hurtful way in me,  
then lead me in the way everlasting.

So what He's saying at this point is, forgiveness is involved and we are to be the initiator of it. Don't wait for them! We should take the responsibility and go to them, and seek them before the Lord.

## II. ADULTERY—verses 27-30

**v. 27 You heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.'**

“You heard that it was said, “You shall not commit adultery.””

**v. 28 But I am saying to you that everyone who is looking on a woman to lust for her already committed adultery with her in his heart.**

“But I am saying to you that everyone who is looking on a woman to lust for her already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

**v. 29 And if your right eye is causing you to stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.**

“And if your right eye is causing you to stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.”

**v. 30 And if your right hand is causing you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you, for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to go into hell.**

“And if your right hand is causing you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you, for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to go into hell.”

It was Fred Allen who said, “You know sow our wild oats and when we get to the pearly gates we hope there will be a crop failure.” (source unknown)

And for a lot of people that's the way they live life. As soon as it comes to this matter, again there is an equation between the two. What is it? It's the attitude of the heart, isn't it?

On the attitude of the heart it was the anger—on the murder. Now he picks another one of the big ten and it's another violation of the Law. Anger's a violation of love and so is adultery.

Adultery He says is committed in the heart by the thought. And goes in through the eye-gate and the action is perpetrated by the hand in being involved.

Now what He's saying at this point is that to even look at someone is to have that same thing—that act is the same as committing the act of adultery.

It's interesting we went through a kind of a time where it says "the devil made me do it." Whenever something happened we always said, "the devil made me do it," or "the devil made me eat that piece of cake," or "the devil made me do this and made me do that."

Well these guys were always saying, when it came to things like this, they'd always say, "Well You made me this way God!"

"My eye did it!"—"My hand did it!"

And the Lord is kind of using a sense of humor a little bit here. He says, "Alright, if that's the case, POP! pull it out! Throw it away! Better to go to heaven with one eye than to go to hell with two!"

Or if it was the hand, "POP! Take it off! It's better to go to heaven with one hand than to go with two!"

So if in fact we are living in such a relationship as this, that we think that it is the body that's doing it, we're just saying it's deeper than that. And Christ in His teaching says it's out of the heart comes murders and adulteries and all of these things.

It goes in through the eye-gate. And the eye always gets us in trouble when we're looking the wrong way. There are countless illustrations of this in the Bible. And looking in the

wrong place can create some real problems.

David, the man after God's own heart, the adulterer, in Psalm 119 says:

### Psalm 119:37

Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity.

And then he's got another great verse that's in Psalm 25:

### Psalm 25:15

Mine eyes are ever on the Lord,  
for only He will release my feet from the snare.

So when He comes to this, again He says it's the thought in the heart that makes us guilty of the act.

We're now going on to divorce. Notice the common denominator? They're all violations of love.

## **III. DIVORCE—verses 31-32**

**v. 31 And it was said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give to her a certificate of dismissal.'**

“And it was said, “Whoever divorces his wife, let him give to her a certificate of dismissal.””

**v. 32 But I am saying to you, that everyone who is divorcing his wife except in a case of unchastity, is causing her to commit adultery; and whoever marries her who has been divorced is committing adultery.**

“But I am saying to you, that everyone who is divorcing his wife except in a case of unchastity, is causing her to commit adultery; and whoever marries her who has been divorced is committing adultery.”

Now marriage has kind of gone through a trauma in our day. It's almost like marriage is like sports. We put our marriage on waivers and we play out our options, hoping to get a better contract, rather than going back and reading the permanent arrangement that the scriptures originally intended.

When it comes to marriage, there's a story of the priest and the Rabbi who were eating dinner together one night at a major banquet that had served ham. The priest was telling the Rabbi that it was U.S.D.A. choice and he ought to give it a try. And the Rabbi just completely refused and finally turned to the priest, who was irritating him, and he said, “Are you married?” And the priest said, “No.” And the Rabbi said, “Try it, it's better than ham.”

(source unknown)

Another guy said, “I like those signs that say make love not war. I'm married, I do both.”

Another guy said, “I’m looking for an ideal. I found it and it became an ordeal and now I want a new deal.”

Another guy said, “Marriage is like a cafeteria. You take what looks good to you and then you pay for it later.”

John Denver has an album called “The Seasons of the Heart” and the key song on that album gives us a clue to why we’re having so much divorce. Try to pick out the clause in the song that tells us the difference between a Godlike kind of love and the kind of love that’s described in our day.

## **Seasons of the Heart**

Of course we have our differences,  
you shouldn’t be surprised.  
It’s as natural as the changes  
in the seasons and the skies.

Sometimes we grow together,  
sometimes we drift apart.  
A wiser man than I might know  
the seasons of the heart.

And I’m walking here beside you  
in the early evening chill.  
A thing we’ve always loved to do  
I know we always will.

We have so much in common,

so many things we share  
that I can't believe my heart  
when it implies that you're not there.

Love is why I came here in the first place.  
Love is now the reason I must go.  
Love is all I ever hoped to find here.  
Love is still the only dream I know.

So I don't know how to tell you,  
it's difficult to say.  
I never in my wildest dreams  
imagined it this way.

Sometimes I just don't know you,  
there's a stranger in our home.  
When I'm lying right beside you  
is when I'm most alone.

And I think my heart is broken  
there's an emptiness inside.  
So many things I've longed for  
have so often been denied.

Still I wouldn't try to change you,  
there's no one that's to blame.  
It's just some things that mean so much  
we just don't feel the same.

Love is why I came here in the first place.

Love is now the reason I must go.  
Love is all I ever hoped to find here.  
Love is still the only dream I know.  
(source unknown)

Find it?

“Love is why I came here in the first place.  
And love is now the reason I must go.”

Bologna!

When we love we make a commitment for life and for better and for worse, or we don't know what love is.

If we're looking for some goose-pimply feeling that gives us shivers and chills, that's going to play down a little bit when we weather the storm for a while. But the message in the song is so subtle.

“Love is why I came here in the first place.  
And love is now the reason I must go.  
Love is all I ever hoped to find here.”

We'll never find it by looking for it. We'll only find it when we give it.

The tragedy of it all is that most times people don't realize that the kids are the ones who suffer the most in this kind of traumatic situation.

Dale Evans in her little book *Hear the Children Crying* describes in a poem what it is for a child to go through a divorce:

(Hear the Children Crying by Dale Evans Rogers)

Little girl lost, where is her place?  
Wondering young eyes, and little face.  
How can she choose one from the other?  
On the one side is Daddy, on another is Mother.  
She should be happy, it seems such a shame.  
She has to suffer when she's not to blame.  
She should be running, laughing, chasing butterflies,  
Looking for a rainbow, catching fireflies.  
Daddy and Mommy feel all her fears,  
Daddy and Mommy, see all her tears.  
Stop fighting long enough to see  
What your bitterness has cost.  
Look at her, she's a little child lost.  
(source unknown)

We're going to redefine some things and some of those things everyone won't agree with, but that's alright. The Lord will straighten us out later.

In our churches we haven't done our homework. In the church we're working on the wrong end of the anatomy, and that is we're looking for splinters in the eyes of our brothers and sisters instead of washing their feet.

We have made some grievous errors in that we've made divorce the unpardonable sin. In God's sight, when divorce occurs, as traumatic as it is, and when it happens it is just like any other sin. Once it's dealt with and forgiven, it's under the blood and it's past and today is the first day of the rest of our lives.

The church is a victim of the devil, because the devil often allows well-meaning, self-righteous saints to always point to the past and say we can have no future because of that. Anything that points to the past in the biography of the believer who's come under the blood of Christ is satanic.

If we have to put our finger on something in the past of someone who has been forgiven by the blood of Christ, we're an instrument of the devil and not the Spirit of God. And we are being self-righteous in what we're doing.

A believer who is walking with God will say, "Thank God for His love and His grace and His power that has cleansed this thing. And thank God that now through the blood of Christ, we're brothers and sisters. We're cleansed by the power of the blood! Let's join hands and serve Him and fellowship and give ourselves to one another from here on in."

Chuck Swindoll has done a lot of work on the subject of divorce and remarriage. He says the following:

(Three Steps Forward, Two Steps Back by Charles Swindoll)

Having searched the Scriptures for many years on the subject of divorce and remarriage, I come to the conclusion that divorce and remarriage are permissible in two situations. First, if a partner is guilty of sexual immorality and willfully refuses to live faithfully with his or her spouse, the faithful mate has the option to leave and marry another. Second, if a Christian is married to a non-Christian and the unbelieving partner leaves (deserts, abandons the Christian mate, wants nothing to do with the marriage any longer), the deserted believer has the option to leave and to marry another. In both cases it is ideal (if the offended partner can forgive and persevere) to remain and make the marriage work through God's grace and power. There are occasions, however, when that simply cannot happen. My point regarding rationalization has to do with the breaking [of the] marriage partnership without actual biblical grounds for such action. (source unknown)

Matthew 19:3-9 is Christ's further statement on the subject of divorce.

One writer said:

Theirs was a beef stew marriage,  
and their case was somewhat crude.  
The was always beefing,  
and the husband always stewed.  
(source unknown)

And some of us really know what that means.

Imagine Christ is our teacher and He's sitting on the steps of the temple. He's instructing and teaching and it's a beautiful experience. And all of a sudden the scribes and Pharisees bring a woman into the Bible class and shove her into the middle of the class. One of the guys who is part of the scribes and Pharisees says, "We caught this woman committing adultery!" Another one says, "The Mosaic Law says she's to be stoned! What do You say?"

He stoops down and begins to write in the sand. He probably writes in the sand words like bitterness, resentment, hatred, jealousy, and lots of other things that we consider so little because it's not one of the biggies.

They constantly harass Him while He's kneeling there. Finally He just straightens up and looks them straight in the face and He basically says, "Alright, any guy here without a broken Law can throw the rock!"

When Christ made that statement, there was only one person that qualified in that audience to throw the rock and He chose not to. That's why we're saying to be careful, because Jesus did not choose to execute the Mosaic Law.

The longer we live the more we're aware of sin in our life. And they left quickly and the young bucks followed.

Pretty soon as the Lord is continuing to write on the ground,

He looks up and says, “Where are those guys that are condemning you?” She said in tears, “There’s no one sir.”

“Now get it. Get it and get it clear. Neither do I condemn you. Go and no longer be sinning.” (ref. John 8:11)

If we’re walking with the righteousness of Jesus Christ in our life, and God brings some of the broken humanity into our life that has been trapped in some of these circumstances, may God help us to demonstrate the righteousness of Christ. To show them loving acceptance and to bring healing into their lives, rather than ostracizing them and making them feel terribly alone.

It’s sad to say, we’ve done that in the church. We have really almost made adultery and divorce the unpardonable sins. And as a result of that, there are some awfully lonely people out there who really need our healing arms of love around them at this particular point.

#### **IV. FALSE VOWS—verses 33-37**

**v. 33 Again, you heard that it was said by those of a previous time, ‘You shall not make false vows, but you shall fulfill your vows to the Lord.’**

“Again, you heard that it was said by those of a previous time, “You shall not make false vows, but you shall fulfill your vows to the Lord.””

**v. 34 But I am saying to you, make no oath at all; either by heaven, because it is the throne of God;**

“But I am saying to you, make no oath at all; either by heaven, because it is the throne of God;”

**v. 35 or by the earth, because it is the footstool of His feet; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.**

“or by the earth, because it is the footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.”

**v. 36 Nor shall you make an oath by your head, because you are not able to make one hair white or black.**

“Nor shall you make an oath by your head, because you are not able to make one hair white or black.”

**v. 37 But let your statement be, ‘Yes! Yes!’ or ‘No! No!’ and anything beyond these is of evil.**

“But let your statement be, “Yes! Yes!” or “No! No!” and anything beyond these is of evil.”

It was Dietrich Bonhoeffer who said the very fact that there is the existence of the vow is the fact that there is untruthfulness in us. If we tell the truth we don't have to make a vow that we're going to do it. We're telling the truth. And so he says just don't make vows. (source unknown)

In Ecclesiastes chapter 5 he says

“When you come into the temple, be careful about the words that you say. Don’t tell the Lord, ‘You give me this business deal, I’ll serve You forever!’ or ‘Lord, You do this and I’ll do this.’”

He says, “Don’t do that.

## **V. THE LAW OF RETRIBUTION—verses 38-42**

**v. 38 You heard that it was said: ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’**

“You heard that it was said: “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.””

Now This is the LAW OF RETRIBUTION or retaliation. It’s like, “You do this to me, I do this to you.” And that’s stated in verse 38.

Now the Lord is going to give us FIVE THINGS that real righteousness does.

**v. 39 But I am saying to you, do not resist him who is evil; but whoever is slapping you on the right cheek, turn to him also the other.**

“But I am saying to you,”

1. “do not resist him who is evil; but whoever is slapping you on the right cheek, turn to him also the other.”

**v. 40 And if anyone is wanting to sue you, and take your shirt, let him have your coat also.**

2. “And if anyone is wanting to sue you, and take your shirt, let him have your coat also.”

**v. 41 And whoever shall force you to go one mile, go with him two.**

3. “And whoever shall force you to go one mile, go with him two.”

**v. 42 To the one who is asking of you, give, and do not turn away from him who is desiring to borrow from you.**

4. “To the one who asks of you, give, and”

5. “do not turn away from him who is desiring to borrow from you.”

This is an illustration of the Beatitude: “Blessed are the gentle (or the unassuming).”

When somebody does this to us, we don't immediately think about retaliation. Real righteousness thinks about yielding

one's right and responds to the situation rather than reacts.

In talking about parenting and dealing with children, quality parents will always RESPOND rather than REACT.

When we react in the moment, we'll say some things we're really sorry for. But when under the control of the Spirit, we learn to respond. We are in control of the situation ourselves. And every one of these things is exactly the same way.

Now let's look at them for just a second. Get a little bit closer.

What about this business of when we get hit on one cheek, we turn the other? Is that literal? And does that mean that when some guy comes up and smashes us in the mouth with his right, we'll let him have a left. Let's talk about that for a minute.

There are a couple of reasons in scripture that make us wonder whether that means literally. Remember when Christ was getting ready to be crucified in John 18? The high priest slapped Him and Jesus said, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of that evil. But why do you hit me?"

It does say that He was as before. His shearers a lamb that was done, so opened He not His mouth. (ref. Isaiah 53:7 & Acts 8:32)

After this experience, when He went to the cross He just went on and took all and suffered all the indignities of it.

Now the Apostle Paul certainly didn't do this in Acts 23. He of course is a choleric in temperament. A choleric in temperament has a hair-trigger temper. They just pop off in just a matter of seconds. And Paul was like that and in Acts 23:

### Acts 23:2, 3

the High Priest commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. Then said Paul, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall."

That was pretty strong but it was a typical statement for a choleric in a situation where he'd been hit.

Alright if that's true, then what does it mean to "turn the other cheek?"

### 1 Peter 2:20-22

What glory is it if you be buffeted for your fault? You take it patiently, but if you do well and suffer for it, this is acceptable with God...

In other words, "I am willing to accept the responsibility for loving you, even though you're not responding to me and you're hurting me. And I'm not reacting negatively to that. I love you unconditionally. But I have your best interests at stake."

The best story of “turning the other cheek” is the story that came out of World War II. There was a young guy who came to know Christ as Savior while he was in the service and he wanted to be a real witness for the Lord. And so every night he would read his Bible and then he’d kneel down by his bunk and he’d pray for a little time.

And the guys would just make fun of him saying things like, “Look, the preacher’s at prayer,” and all that stuff. Their sergeant came in on a Friday night and he’d had a little too much to drink. And he went up and said, “Oh! There’s our pious little preacher on his knees to pray!” And he took off one of his muddy boots and he slung it across the room and hit the guy right in the back of the head.

He took the other one off and threw it and hit him right between the shoulders. And the guy didn’t move, he just stayed there and prayed. Well the lights were out in the barracks and he was still at prayer and finally he crawled into bed.

But the next morning when that Sergeant awakened there were two brightly shining, polished boots at the end of his bed. And it’s no wonder that guy soon came to know the Christ of the young Private who was persistent in his prayers.  
(source unknown)

It’s suffering personal indignity. A willingness to do that for the sake of reaching somebody else with the gospel of Christ.

J. Vernon McGee tells about an Irishman who got hit on the right cheek and he turned to the left and he got hit on the left. And he got up and beat the guy. He beat the stuffing out of him. And the guy said, "Why in the world did you do that?" He said, "Well, the Lord said turn the other cheek and you get hit but He didn't tell me what to do after that." So he took care of it for himself.

2. "And if anyone wants to sue you, and take your shirt, let him have your coat also."

He said, just let it go. If he wants it, let him have it.

3. "And whoever shall force you to go one mile, go with him two."

Now we need that explained. That doesn't mean if some guy wants to run one mile, we'll run with him two.

There was government legislation in the Roman Empire that if someone was walking down the road and the post office came by and had a whole bunch of baggage and they needed someone to carry it, they legally could ask them to carry some of their bags for a mile.

If the army came by and someone was walking down the road, they could be compelled to carry weapons and things for one mile—but no further.

That's like taxes and the draft in the government. We resist it but it's there and we've got to cooperate with it because it's part of the government.

To them they had to do this. And the Lord says, "Just to show them where your heart is, when they compel you to do the one—which is the legal requirement—go ahead and do two. Really show them this."

Remember when Christ fell on the way up to Golgotha they compelled Simon of Cyrene to do that? That was the legal requirement that came in at this point. He could be, legitimately by these Roman soldiers, compelled to do that. And so he did it. He didn't argue, he just realized he was in a part of the Roman Empire and that's what they had to do in that situation.

Now the last two are in verse 42:

4. "To the one who asks of you, give, and" then finally
5. "don't turn away from him who is desiring to borrow from you."

Those are self-explanatory.

## **IV. LOVE YOUR ENEMY—verses 43-48**

**v. 43 You heard that it was said: 'You shall love your friend, and hate your enemy.'**

“You heard that it was said: “You shall love your friend, and hate your enemy.””

**v. 44 But I am saying to you: Love your enemies and pray for those who are persecuting you;**

“But I am saying to you: Love your enemies and pray for those who are persecuting you;”

**v. 45 in order that you may show yourselves to be sons of your Father who is in heaven; because His sun is shining on the evil and the good, and is causing it to rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.**

“in order that you may show yourselves to be sons of your Father who is in heaven; because His sun is shining on the evil and the good, and is causing it to rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”

**v. 46 For if you are loving those who are loving you, what reward are you having? Are not even the tax gatherers doing the same?**

“For if you are loving those who are loving you, what reward are you having? Are not even the tax gatherers doing the same?”

**v. 47 And if you are greeting your brothers only, what reward are you having? Are not even the Gentiles**

## **doing the same?**

“And if you are greeting your brothers only, what reward are you having? Are not even the Gentiles doing the same?”

**v. 48 Therefore you are to be complete in your character, even as your heavenly Father is complete in His being.**

“Therefore you are to be complete in your character, even as your heavenly Father is complete in His being.”

What is Christ saying? He’s saying every one of these things we’ve talked about are a violation of the LAW OF LOVE:

1. Anger,
2. Adultery,
3. Divorce,
4. False Vows,
5. Eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.

And He’s saying if we’re really a Christian, if we are living with real righteousness, our righteousness and our love can even:

6. Love your enemy.

And we can do good to those who persecute us or hate us.

In John 13-17 Christ is still telling His men LOVE is where it all is.

We should have great admiration for the Person of Christ, because sitting in that Upper Room were all kinds of violations of love. Proud hearts and dirty feet and love stoops down to wash them.

Betrayal sits there and love is so hurt that Christ is hurting. “Do it quickly, it hurts. You’ve made your decision. You are not going to respond to Me, so get on with it. Get on, get out.”

He turns to Peter and Peter says, “Lord, where are you going Lord?” He says, “Where I’m going you can’t go.” And Peter says, “Why? I’d lay down my life.”

The Lord says, “No, you don’t love Me like that Peter. You’re going to deny me before the rooster crows. But don’t worry about it, I’m going to get a place ready for you.”

And throughout the whole of this last address, He is emphasizing the fact of a love that is beyond human capacity. And a person who is living by real righteousness is a person in whom the Spirit of God is producing a love that knows no bounds. A love that will go even toward one’s enemies and love them and have a deep concern for them.

Christ says, “Even my friend lifted up his heel and they have hated me without a reason.” But did that affect Him?

As He hung on the cross He said, “Father, forgive them for they don’t know what they’re doing.” (ref. Luke 23:34)

Our greatest demonstration to the world around us and the evidence of our real righteousness is a love that is eternal, unchanging and unconditional. It is there for everyone to behold. We’re interested and concerned about them.

He says in that last verse:

“Therefore you are to be complete in your character, even as your heavenly Father is complete in His being.”

How can we be like the Father? The only way we can be is to receive His righteousness, isn’t it?

In our last study we said positionally once we are righteous in Jesus Christ, we’re declared perfect. We’re given the gift of righteousness that will never change.

When we get to glory it’s His righteousness that’s perfect. That’s how we fulfill this. We are made perfect in His sight.

Now granted, we’re far from what we ought to be. We’re on the way. God’s at work. And He’s making us daily more righteous.

We have four lessons that come out of our passage.

Lesson #1: Man looks on the outward appearance but God looks on the heart.

Lesson #2: The Law deals with action. Christ deals with attitude.

Lesson #3: We are told to love our enemies and pray for those who are persecuting us.

Lesson #4: These requirements that we have read can only be fulfilled by the Spirit of God.

What God wants from us more than anything else in the world is reconciliation through His Son by responding to His love.

And the key to that is just to give up, okay? Just surrender. Just yield. Just throw it all on the altar. Throw in the towel. Just give it over to Him.

Now that's true as a Christian too. Perhaps we have some feelings of attitude and bitterness in our heart and we need to turn it over and experience His joy.

Maybe something's happened to us and we just aren't going to turn it over. We're not going to surrender. As a result of that, we settle for God's second, third, fourth and fifth best.

It's best just to lay it in His hands and let Him do what seemeth good, because He knows what's best for all of us.

Father, we thank You tonight for Jesus. We thank You that He's come to provide a righteousness for us, which exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees and makes us perfect in the Father's sight. Lord, we've looked at some of these laws and regulations which speak of performance, but we could get all hung up on those and forget that all the Lord is talking about is attitude. Attitudes that are filled with a heart of unconditional love that will love our enemies and those who persecute us. And always have their best interest at stake. And Lord we realize that when we get angry we violate that. When we have these evil thoughts, we violate that. When we contemplate the breaking of relationships because we're selfish, we violate that. When we lie to one another, we violate it. And when we want our piece of meat and our ounce of flesh, with an eye for eye and a tooth for a tooth we violate it too. Enable us our Father to grasp what the Lord is trying to say to us and just to simply give up trying and turn to trust, in knowing that You know what's best. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

## Matthew 5-7

### “The King’s Inaugural Address”

#### Study Number Four – Matthew 5:21-48

#### NOTES

##### I. ANGER—verses 21-26

v. 21 You heard that it was said by those of a previous time, ‘You shall not commit murder,’ and ‘Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court,’

v. 22 but I am saying to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, ‘Raca,’ shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, ‘You fool,’ shall be guilty enough to go into the hell of fire.

v. 23 If, therefore, you are bringing your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother is having something against you,

v. 24 leave there your gift before the altar, and go your way, first be reconciled to your brother, and then having come, be offering your gift.

v. 25 Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way; in order that your opponent may not deliver you to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and into prison you are thrown.

v. 26 Truly, I am saying to you, you shall not come out of there, until you have paid up the last cent.

##### II. ADULTERY—verses 27-30

v. 27 You heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’

v. 28 But I am saying to you that everyone who is looking on a woman to lust for her already committed adultery with her in his heart.

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## NOTES

v. 29 And if your right eye is causing you to stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

v. 30 And if your right hand is causing you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you, for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to go into hell.

### **III. DIVORCE—verses 31-32**

v. 31 And it was said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give to her a certificate of dismissal.’

v. 32 But I am saying to you, that everyone who is divorcing his wife except in a case of unchastity, is causing her to commit adultery; and whoever marries her who has been divorced is committing adultery.

### **IV. FALSE VOWS—verses 33-37**

v. 33 Again, you heard that it was said by those of a previous time, ‘You shall not make false vows, but you shall fulfill your vows to the Lord.’

v. 34 But I am saying to you, make no oath at all; either by heaven, because it is the throne of God;

v. 35 or by the earth, because it is the footstool of His feet; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.

v. 36 Nor shall you make an oath by your head, because you are not able to make one hair white or black.

v. 37 But let your statement be, ‘Yes! Yes!’ or ‘No! No!’ and anything beyond these is of evil.

### **V. THE LAW OF RETRIBUTION—verses 38-42**

v. 38 You heard that it was said: ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’

v. 39 But I am saying to you, do not resist him who is evil; but whoever is slapping you on the right cheek, turn to him also the other.

v. 40 And if anyone is wanting to sue you, and take your shirt, let him have your coat also.

## NOTES

v. 41 And whoever shall force you to go one mile, go with him two.  
v. 42 To the one who is asking of you, give, and do not turn away from him who is desiring to borrow from you.

### **IV. LOVE YOUR ENEMY—verses 43-48**

v. 43 You heard that it was said: 'You shall love your friend, and hate your enemy.'

v. 44 But I am saying to you: Love your enemies and pray for those who are persecuting you;

v. 45 in order that you may show yourselves to be sons of your Father who is in heaven; because His sun is shining on the evil and the good, and is causing it to rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

v. 46 For if you are loving those who are loving you, what reward are you having? Are not even the tax gatherers doing the same?

v. 47 And if you are greeting your brothers only, what reward are you having? Are not even the Gentiles doing the same?

v. 48 Therefore you are to be complete in your character, even as your heavenly Father is complete in His being.

## QUESTIONS:

1. Read Matthew 5:21-48 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

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2. How does Jesus modify the Law in this section?

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3. What are the instructions for those who have a difference with their brother when they come with their gift to the altar?

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4. What does Jesus command you to do with the offending member of the body, according to verses 29 & 30?

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5. Summarize Jesus' teaching on divorce, according to verses 31 & 32.

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6. What are you supposed to do when someone slaps you on the face, according to verse 39?

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7. What is your responsibility to one who is asking you to give, according to verse 42?

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8. What does He admonish us to do, according to verse 44?

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9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?

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10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

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### **LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:**

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

**LESSON #1:** Man looks on the outward appearance but God looks on the heart.

**LESSON #2:** The Mosaic Law deals with action. Christ deals with attitude.

**LESSON #3: We are commanded to love our enemies and pray for those who are persecuting us.**

**LESSON #4: These six requirements of the law of Christ can only be produced in the power of the Spirit.**

**ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

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