



The Sermon on the Mount

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PREFACE

How many people through the ages have marveled at the wisdom our Lord revealed in His famous “Sermon on the Mount”? So many profound lessons abound in this wonderful display of the wisdom of God. It is well worth our time to delve into the treasures found in this sermon, and to be reminded of how we should live our lives in preparation for the Judgment Day and what lies beyond. We hope that this book and the sermons presented will be beneficial to many, and that God will be glorified.

As we anticipate the lectureship and the good that we believe will come from it, we are also saddened, because this year will be the first time in seventeen years that brother Jim Green will be missing from our lectureship. Brother Green is retiring, and we will truly miss him not being present and recording the lectures for us. He recorded every sermon for the first sixteen years of the lectureship (2000-2015). Over the past 30 years, brother Green has traveled to many places, and he has recorded about 7,000 sermons! Visit his website for more information: www.jgreencoc-video-ministry.com. We are thankful for brother Green and his work in preserving these sermons for us and future generations.

This year’s speakers put a lot of hard work into their outlines, and we are thankful to them for their diligence. I am always thankful for all the hard work the Nesbit congregation puts into the lectureship to make it a success. To God be all glory in all things.

Jason Hilburn

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The Beatitudes

Matthew 5:1-12

Daniel F. Cates

INTRODUCTION:

1. Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount" is the greatest discourse known to man, for He was the Master Teacher!
 - A. In this great sermon on attitudes, He touched on how the behavior of the righteous (Mat. 5:3-12), the influence of the blessed (Mat. 5:13-16), the obedience required of those who would enter His kingdom (Mat. 5:17-20), the actions of those who would compose the kingdom (Mat. 5:21-42), the humility and motivation of the righteous as opposed to the hypocritical (Mat. 6:1-18), the elevating of the spiritual above the material (Mat. 6:19-34), the just judging of sinfulness (Mat. 7:1-6), the blessing of the just (Mat. 7:7-12), the entering of the kingdom (Mat. 7:13,14), the warnings about believing false teachers (Mat. 7:15-23), and the wisdom of building upon the teaching of Jesus (Mat. 7:24-27).
 - B. When He finished, "the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as *one* having authority, and not as the scribes" (Mat. 7:28,29).
2. That first section, how the righteous should behave (Mat. 5:3-12), is the assigned focus for this study.
 - A. First, the setting of the sermon (Mat. 5:1,2), in general, will be introduced.
 - B. Second, the attributes of those who are the subject of this section (Mat. 5:3-11) will be defined: they are blessed, poor, mournful, meek, hungry and thirsty, merciful, pure, peaceable, persecuted, and reviled.
 - C. Third, the latter verses (Mat. 5:10-12) which elaborate on persecution will be considered.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE SETTING OF THE SERMON

- A. The location.
 1. Jesus went up into a mountain to teach (Mat. 5:1).
 - a. Though He would go up into mountains to pray (Luke 6:12; 9:28), His posture indicates that He had gone up for the purpose of teaching.
 - b. Of the mountain, while Johnson stated it was "thought to be the 'Horns of Hattin,' a mountain about seven miles south of Capernaum," Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown stated it was "one of the dozen mountains which Robinson says there are in the vicinity of the Sea of Galilee, any one of them answering about equally well to the occasion."
 - c. The American Standard emphasizes that it was "the mountain," which while not specified was important enough to be called by Delitzsch "the Sinai of the New Testament"

(Vincent).

B. The speaker.

1. Jesus was the Master Teacher!
 - a. "Never man spake like this man" (John 7:46).
 - b. He was sent of God (John 7:28-29,33) and, more than that, *is* God (John 1:1; 10:30).
 - c. Accordingly, His speech had authority which none other could even begin to match (Mat. 7:28-29).
2. Three things demonstrate the authority which He had and the respect which He received: first, "he was set"--"sitting was the posture of masters, or teachers," (Gill); second, the "disciples came unto him"--the teacher did not have to go after the students; third, "he opened his mouth"--"a solemn way of arousing the [hearer's-DFC] attention, and preparing him for something weighty" (Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown).

C. The audience.

1. The disciples were the focus.
 - a. The word for disciple (μαθητής) "means more in the NT than a mere pupil or learner. It is an adherent who accepts the instruction given to him and makes it his rule of conduct" (Robinson).
2. The multitude (ὄχλος), who appeared to have been left behind at the first (Mat. 5:1), ultimately heard the teaching of Jesus (Mat. 7:28)--perhaps they slowly gathered as they learned where he had gone.

II. THE STATE OF THE SUBJECTS

A. Blessed.

1. The subjects of the early verses of the Sermon on the Mount are described consistently by the adjective "blessed"--it should be noted that subjects follow the linking verbs throughout this section.
2. "Blessed" carries the idea of having a reason for an abiding joy.
 - a. This is not mere happiness.
 - b. This is not something flighty.
 - c. This is not something lightly gained, rapidly fluctuating, or easily lost.
 - d. This is the state of Christians who endure trial triumphantly (I Pet. 1:7-9).
 - e. This is the state that no man can steal from the righteous (John 16:22).

B. Poor (Mat. 5:3).

1. Being "poor in spirit" is a realization of man's need for God!
 - a. Vincent wrote, "["Poor in spirit"-DFC] is very graphic and appropriate here, as denoting the *utter spiritual destitution*, the consciousness of which precedes the entrance into the kingdom of God, and which cannot be relieved by one's

own efforts, but only by the free mercy of God"

2. This humility would precede exaltation (Jam. 4:10, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up").
 - a. Being in the kingdom, simply, would imply that one was under the rule of King Jesus; specifically, in a few short years that kingdom would be established (Acts 2; cf. Col. 1:13).

C. Mournful (Mat. 5:4).

1. This mourning, or grieving, was a mourning over sin--the sin of self, the sins of others, sin in general, recognizing the terrible nature of it (Rom. 6:23) and its universal scope (Rom. 3:23).
2. It is this sorrow that precedes repentance and salvation (II Cor. 7:10) and, therefore, comfort.

D. Meek (Mat. 5:5).

1. Meekness, shown through the perfect example of Jesus (Mat. 11:19), is popularly referred to as "strength under control"; it is "meekness, mildness, forbearance" (Robinson).
2. The Jewish mindset sought physical reward (consider the land promise to Abraham and its importance to Hebrews throughout the two millennia that followed); meekness would provide the spiritual inheritance in the promised land of the kingdom church and, ultimately, Heaven.
 - a. Johnson wrote, "Canaan as the type of all blessings. It is the heavenly land especially that is inherited. The especial reference is to the Messiah's kingdom, of which 'the land' of Canaan was a type."

E. Hungry and thirsty (Mat. 5:6).

1. Hungering and thirsting for spiritual perfection (Mat. 5:48) ought to be as much a part of spiritual existence as hungering and thirsting after physical sustenance is to the physical existence.
 - a. That need was beautifully described by the Psalmist (Psa. 42:1,2; 63:1,2).
2. Those who have that hunger shall not want for nourishment!
 - b. The Psalmist also spoke of the hunger and thirst being satiated (Psa. 107:9, "For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness").

F. Merciful (Mat. 5:7).

1. This mercy, a compassionate benevolence (Robinson), is something learned from Jesus who was willing to forgive those who were actively putting Him to death (Luke 23:34).
2. It is also a necessity on the part of those who would receive mercy from "the Father of mercies" (II Cor. 1:3, "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy" (Jam. 2:13); for "if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Mat. 6:15).

G. Pure (Mat. 5:8).

1. The "pure in heart" have not merely been washed, but have truly been

cleansed (Heb. 10:22; Jam. 4:8; I Pet. 1:22).

2. In order to see God, one must be like God (I Pet. 1:15,16, "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy").

H. Peaceable (Mat. 5:9).

1. Christians are commanded, "Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14).
 - a. Christians ought to endeavor "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3).
 - b. Christians will "seek peace, and ensue [pursue (Strong)] it" (I Pet. 3:11).
2. Christians are commanded to and will so act, because "the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, *and* easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace" (Jam. 3:17,18)--the fruit will not have fallen far from the tree: as is the Father, so are those who "shall be called the children of God."

I. Persecuted and reviled (Mat. 5:10,11).

1. These two shared traits appear negative, but they are yet tied to blessing, for the Christian must be willing and ready to suffer for Jesus (II Tim. 3:12), but he may do so knowing that he will be rewarded in heaven.
2. Focus on the three verses regarding the suffering of the saints.

III. THE SPIRIT OF THE SUFFERERS

A. They suffer for righteousness.

1. It is one of the costs of forsaking all for Christ (Mat. 10:29,30).
2. It is suffered for Jesus' name (Luke 21:12; John 15:21; Acts 5:41) and sake (Phi. 1:29).
3. It is suffered for the church (Col. 1:24; II The. 1:5,6; Jam. 1:2).

B. They rejoice in tribulation.

1. Paul so rejoiced (Phi. 2:17).
2. They rejoice because the terror is nothing in comparison to the cause (I Pet. 3:13,14).
3. They rejoice because of the subject of their sacrifice (I Pet. 4:13,14).
4. They rejoice because there is even temporal benefit, patience, in suffering (Rom. 5:3).
5. They rejoice because they so glorify God (I Pet. 4:16).
6. They rejoice because ultimately they receive a reward for their faithfulness, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory;" (II Cor. 4:17).
7. They rejoice because they are victorious (Rom 8:35-37; Jam. 1:12; Rev. 2:10; II Tim. 2:12).

CONCLUSION:

1. In this study, attention has been paid to the setting of the Sermon on the Mount, the attributes of those who will be pleasing to and rewarded of God, and the future of those who give themselves for the Lord and His cause.
2. May Christians today and always seek to incorporate these "Beatitudes" into their lives so that they may likewise be blessed!

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The Christian's Influence

Matthew 5:13-16

Billy Bland

INTRODUCTION:

1. Influence is something that every person possesses.
 - A. Whether righteous or wicked, every person exerts an influence.
 - B. The apostle Paul warned about adopting bad influences: "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Cor. 15:33).
2. The Christian is to exert a positive influence on those about him.
 - A. Jesus stated, "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:13-16).
 - B. Jesus used two metaphors to illustrate the influence He wants His disciples to possess.
 - 1) A metaphor is a word expressing similarity without the sign of a comparison.
 - 2) A Biblical example of Jesus' use of a metaphor is in His description of Herod as a "fox."
 - 3) Jesus said, "And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected" (Luke 13:32).
 - 4) Jesus also used the metaphors of "salt" and "light" to describe the good qualities a Christian must possess.
 - C. It is obvious from Jesus' teaching that He does not expect a Christian to become a hermit or withdraw from society.
 - 1) Salt does not influence food by remaining in the cabinet.
 - 2) It must come into contact with food to make it more tasteful.
 - 3) Light also must show the way for those in darkness.
3. Let us notice some things relative to salt, light, and the Christian.

DISCUSSION:

I. YE ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH.

- A. Salt helps flavor our food.
 1. Salt makes food more tasteful.

2. Some people, by their association, make it easier for others to be Christians.
 - A. By associating with genuine Christians it is much easier to live the Christian life.
 - B. A worldly person's or a hypocrite's association makes it more difficult to live the Christian life (cf. 1 Cor. 15:33).
 3. Salt comes into contact with an environment that is unlike itself.
 - A. By coming into contact with that environment, it makes it better.
 - B. Likewise a Christian comes into contact with the world and makes the world a better place.
 - C. Christians should make a community better by their living in that community.
 - D. A community does not have to worry about locking their doors in order to keep genuine Christians from stealing their possessions.
 - 3) Our speech is to be always with grace, seasoned with salt. "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Col. 4:6).
 - 4) While Christians live in the world, they do not allow worldliness to live in them.
 - A. Jesus's prayer shows the proper position.
 - B. "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:15-16).
- B. Salt has preservation power.
1. Salt is often used to preserve food.
 2. Christian influence can help preserve homes, nations, and countries.
 - A. When salt departed from Noah's day, God destroyed the world by means of a flood (Gen. 6-9).
 - B. He likewise destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah due to their wickedness (Gen. 18-19).
 3. "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34).
 4. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Psa. 9:17).
- C. Salt can lose its saltiness.
1. Jesus stated, "Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another" (Mark 9:50).

- A. Salt can become corrupted and is no longer suitable for its designed usage.
 - B. "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men" (Matt. 5:13).
 - C. It has been observed, "corrupted salt cannot be thrown on the fields for it still has power to destroy good crops; it can only be thrown on the footpaths and roads where it is trodden underfoot" (Winton 47).
2. Just as salt can lose its saltiness or savor, so a Christian can lose his good influence.
- A. "If our country suddenly lost all or even most of Christianity's saving influences, think of the horrible consequences that would quickly develop. All of the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21) would increase to the fullest degree. There would be no reason extant for God to preserve the nation (Ps. 9:17; Isa. 60:12; 2 Chron. 7:14; Deut. 9:3-5; 2 Kings 17:13-18; Jer. 18:7-10; 51:49,53; 51:54-56,58)" (Ibid).
 - B. Christians should remain true in doctrine and in practice.
 - C. Otherwise, they become "good for nothing."

II. YE ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

- A. Light Is Essential For Life.
 - 1. The very first recording of God speaking is, "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light" (Gen. 1:3).
 - 2. God is the Creator of both physical and spiritual light. Without light this world could not exist.
 - 3. Plant and animal life would die if they did not have light.
 - 4. Darkness is used in the Word of God as a symbol for sinful living.
 - A. One can be in darkness due to ignorance of (not knowing) the light of God's Word.
 - B. One also can be in darkness due to his loving sin (darkness) and hating righteousness (light).
 - C. Those who continue to walk in darkness will one day be cast into "outer darkness" for an eternity (cf. Mat. 25:30).
- B. Jesus – the Light of the world.
 - 1. "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

2. Hundreds of years prior to Jesus coming to this world, Malachi prophesied, "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall" (Mal. 4:2).
 - A. Jesus is the "Sun of righteousness."
 - B. He has "healing in his wings."
 - C. Consequently, one does not have to continue in darkness.
 - D. Although we live in a world filled with spiritual darkness, there is light that illuminates our way. The Psalmist stated, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psa. 119:105).
 - E. God's Word illuminates our path. Again the Psalmist said, "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple" (Psa. 119:130).
- C. Jesus' disciples are lights of the world.
1. As a follower of Jesus, the child of God is to "let his light so shine," that men may see his good works and glorify his Father which is in heaven. He is not to "shine his light" in a bragging, superior, "more holy than thou," attitude, rather he is to "let his light so shine" that his good works would cause others to glorify, not him, but his Father.
 2. Paul wrote, "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain" (Phil. 2:14-16).
- D. Light expels darkness.
1. There is no communion between light and darkness. Paul stated, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor. 6:14).
 2. Just as light dispels darkness, the Christian dispels spiritual darkness by turning on the light of God's Word against error. Paul admonished, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11).
 - A. The word, "reprove" means "by conviction to bring to light, to expose" (Thayer).
 - B. The church is to turn on the light against wickedness.

C. Jesus stated, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (John 3:19-21).

CONCLUSION:

1. God knows that the whole world lies in wickedness. "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness" (1 John 5:19).
2. The darker the world, the brighter our light should shine.
3. Christians have a great opportunity to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.
4. Being the salt of the earth and the light of the world requires the inward quality of possessing salt and light within in order that the disciple may have a good influence without.

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Christ Came To Fulfill

Matthew 5:17-18

Gary Colley

INTRODUCTION:

1. Most of the people of the earth know that Jesus came into the world, but perhaps do not know what He came to accomplish.
2. Matthew 5:17-18 gives the answer to an important part of the mission of Christ...He came to fulfill the prophecies and predictions given in the Old Testament about the Savior of the World, and He fulfilled them perfectly (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:20-23; Heb. 1:1-3; 2:1-4).
3. Several Scriptures need to be cited to add to the importance of our study: (Jn. 5:39-40; Lk. 19:10; Jn. 10:10; Matt. 23:37-39).
4. Jesus came to abolish the Old Law (remove its power), and thus He did (Eph. 2:15; Jn. 12:48).

DISCUSSION:

I. JESUS LIVED AND DIED UNDER THE OLD LAW.

- A. Jesus taught men to keep the Old Law during His personal ministry (Matt. 19:16-22).
 1. Jesus lived under the Old Law and kept it perfectly (I Pet. 1:22).
 2. He challenged the Jews to show one sin that he had committed (Jn. 8:46).
 3. Jesus said, "For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished" (Matt. 5:18).
 4. "Jot and tittle" are the smallest letters or points in the Hebrew alphabet.
 5. Hence, the smallest part or teaching of the Old Law will not be removed until it has been fulfilled.
- B. He did not come to destroy the Law of Moses, but to fulfill it, that is to bring it to a close (Col. 2:14).
- C. Many have never learned that the entire Jewish economy ended at the cross of Christ (Col. 2:14; Rom. 15:4).
- D. The blood of Christ not only canceled the Old Law as a law for us today, but He also sealed the New Covenant with His blood (Matt. 26:28).
- E. The system of faith under which all live today was inaugurated by Christ (Matt. 28:18-20).
- F. All live today in the "latter times" or the day of Christianity.

- G. Patriarchy gave way to Judaism when the ten commandments were given; Judaism gave way to Christianity at the cross, but Christianity shall not give way to any other! There will be no succession (Dan. 2:44).
- H. The Old Law has been “done away” (II Cor. 3:6-11).
- I. We are “delivered” from that Law (Rom. 7:6-7).
- J. We have in the Christian Dispensation a “better Covenant” (Heb. 8:6-7).

II. A NEW COVENANT WAS ANNOUNCED.

- A. Long before the coming of Christ, it was predicted that a new covenant would come into effect (Jer. 31:31-34).
- B. The new covenant came into force after Jesus died (Heb. 8:7-13; 9:11-17; 10:1-10).
- C. The ten commandments were a part of the 613 laws in that old covenant which were taken away (II Cor. 3:4-18; Eph. 2:14-18; Col. 2:8-15).
 - 1. Nine of the ten commandments are brought over into the new law, but changed in that they were strengthened. Six times in Matthew 5, contrast is given: “Ye have heard it said, but I say unto you” (Cf. Matt. 5:21, 27, 29, 31, 33, 43).
 - 2. All authority is now vested in Christ (Matt. 28:18).
 - 3. Jesus established His church in which all sinners could be saved (Matt. 16:18-19; Rom. 3:23; Acts 2:38-41, 47; Heb. 5:8-9).
 - 4. He is the head of the body, the church, and now has all the preeminence (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23).
 - 5. When God raised Jesus from the dead, He ascended to the right hand of God, where He was above all rule, authority, power, dominion, and every name that is named (Eph. 1:18-21).
 - 6. Hence we are to hear Him in all things, and no one else (Jn. 10:4-5; Acts 4:12).
 - 7. The transfiguration should settle all questions concerning His authority (Matt. 17:1-5).
 - 8. Moses, representing the Old Law, and Elijah, representing the prophets, are removed from the scene.
 - 9. Peter suggested three tabernacles to respect the Old Law and the prophets.
 - 10. But God said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” (Matt. 17:5).

III. THE OLD LAW WAS NOT PERMANENT.

- A. The Jews did not realize then, neither do they now, that the Old Law was only for a limited time, and was never intended to be permanent.
 - 1. The Jews strongly held to the tradition of the elders in addition to the Old Law.

2. Jesus completely disregarded these human additions to the Law, just as we should abhor human additions today (Gal. 1:6-9).
- B. All need to learn that the Old Law was limited in its extended power.
- C. It would cease when it accomplished its purpose.
 1. That purpose was to be like a school bus driver, or a conveyance to bring the Jews to Christ where God's intended purposes would be fulfilled (Gal. 3:23-25).
 2. When the "bus driver" brought them to the place where they could learn, his mission was complete.
 3. The Old Law, with its types and shadows, pointed to Christ, and He fulfilled them!
 4. No one but Christ fulfilled the righteous demands of the Old Law, but Jesus fulfilled its demands perfectly! (Rom. 3:23).
 5. Having fulfilled the Old Law, he took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross (Col. 2:14).
 6. He wants all today to live in submission to His authority (Col. 3:16-17).

CONCLUSION:

1. Jesus came to fulfill the Old Law, and HE FILLED IT FULL, AND REMOVED IT.
2. Doctor Luke states the facts of history about Jesus, in Jesus' own words, stating that He fulfilled all that was predicted about Him (Acts 1:1).
3. Further, please notice:

And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things (Lk. 24:44-48).
4. The New Law, or covenant, is superior in every way to the Old Law (Heb. 8:6; 9:23).

Righteousness Exceeding the Pharisees

Matthew 5:20; 6:1-8, 16-18; 7:1-5

Dwayne Butler

TEXT: "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:20).

THESIS: To learn about the Pharisees and their supposed righteousness.

INTRODUCTION:

1. As you study the New Testament, time and time again you will come across a group of people who seemed to always be a thorn in the side of our Lord.
 - A. They were a group of people who seemed to have come from nowhere.
 - B. But as all things do but God, they had a beginning.
2. Before we go any further, it is important to learn a little more of the background of this group known as the Pharisees.
 - A. The word "**Pharisee**" means, "**to separate**" (Vine 470).
 - i) It's quite a fitting definition, considering there was no one who caused as much division as the Pharisees did.
 - ii) It's also quite fitting as to how it describes the way they thought of themselves as being holier and better than everyone else.
 - B. The Pharisees had their beginning during the Intertestament Period (**between Malachi and Matthew**).
 - i) "The Pharisees had their roots in the group of faithful Jews known as the Hasidim. The Hasidim arose in the second century B.C. when the influence of Hellenism on the Jews was particularly strong and many Jews lived little differently than their Gentile neighbors. But the Hasidim insisted on strict observance of Jewish ritual laws" (Youngblood 979).
 - ii) "When the Syrian king Antiochus IV tried to do away with the Jewish religion, the Hasidim took part in the revolt of the Maccabees against him. Apparently from this movement of faithful Hasidim came both the Essenes---who later broke off from other Jews and formed their own communities---and the Pharisees, who remained an active part of Jewish life. Indeed, during the period of independence that followed the revolt, some of the Greek rulers who controlled Palestine favored the Pharasaic party" (Ibid).
 - C. Although there is no mention of them whatsoever in the Old Testament, by the time we first see them on the pages of the New Testament, they are a full blown sect.

3. They were a group of men who seemed to be righteous from the way that they looked, and even the way that they talked about the Lord.
 - A. However, after several face to face interactions, the Lord showed them to not be the people they claimed to be.
 - B. This group of individuals received some of the harshest rebukes of our Lord during His earthly ministry.
 - C. In Matthew 23, Jesus calls the Pharisees hypocrites seven times.
 - i) The word "**hypocrite**" means "**a stage actor**" (Vine 316).
 - ii) The Pharisees were wearing masks, and Jesus took the mask off for all to see.
4. To the naked eye, they may have looked devout and hardcore when it came to God, but they were doing nothing more than playing a part, because they were the most bitter enemies the Lord ever faced.

DISCUSSION:

I. THEY SAID ONE THING AND DID ANOTHER.

- A. In other words, they did not practice what they preached.
 1. They were said to "**Sit in Moses' seat.**"
 2. The scribes, Pharisees, and lawyers composed the Sanhedrin Council.
 - a. The Sanhedrin Council was almost like the Jewish Supreme Court of the day.
 - b. "*The Sanhedrin was the highest ruling body and court of justice among the Jewish people in the time of Jesus*" (Youngblood 1127).
 - c. Peter and John found themselves before them after healing a man at the temple (Acts 3-5).
 - d. There is a good possibility that Paul was part of it as well (Acts 8:1; Acts 26:9-10).
 3. They had egos much larger than any person should have, especially those who were seated in positions of authority.
 4. To put it in short, they were seated in positions of authority, but that in no way meant that they needed to be followed.
- B. "Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, *that* observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not (Matt. 23:1-3).
 1. "**All they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works.**"
 - a. This statement, of course, must be tempered by the laws of God.
 - b. They held many positions that they had dreamed up in their minds, which certainly did not come from God's Word.
 2. The things the Pharisees commanded which were contained in the Law were to be followed.
 - a. They needed to be followed because they were part of God's Law.

- b. We need to follow God's laws because they are God's laws, even if it comes from a hypocrite, but we do not have to live like them.
- c. These things needed to be followed, not because of what the Pharisees said, but because the law came from God.
- 3. In fact, Jesus next says, "**They say and do not.**"
 - a. This is the point of contention in our passage.
 - b. The Pharisees talked long and hard about Godliness, but failed in obeying the very law they so strictly upheld.
 - c. It is one thing to tell someone to live a certain way, and it is another thing to do it yourself first (Matt. 7:1-5).
 - d. The Pharisees seem to be that group who knows what is good for you, but do not dare expect them to do the same.
- C. As Christians, we need to always make sure our actions are in agreement with our words.
 - 1. "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked" (1 John 2:4-6).
 - 2. "Therefore thou are inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou are that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things" (Rom. 2:1).

II. THEY THOUGHT THEY WERE BETTER THAN OTHERS.

- A. I do not know about you, but I find this to be the most despising characteristic (**in a long list**) of characteristics that the Pharisees had.
 - 1. Is there anything worse than the person who walks around with their nose stuck up in the air?
 - 2. There is nothing, and I mean nothing that is more detrimental to the work of the church than smug, self-righteous people.
 - a. The Pharisees were righteous, but not in the good kind of way.
 - b. "And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others" (Lk. 18:9).
- B. It is a fact that most of the Words that Jesus spoke to the Pharisees were brought upon them because of their self-righteous attitude.
 - 1. They got mad and threw a fit when they saw Jesus eating with a sinner like Zacchaeus (Lk. 19:1-10).
 - 2. Simon the Pharisee got mad when Jesus allowed a sinner to wash his feet (Lk. 7:37-50).
 - 3. The parables that we read in Luke 15 (**sheep, coin, sons**) all had to deal with the Pharisees and their unwillingness to realize that they weren't better than others.
 - a. They continually rejected Jesus because of His associations.

- (1) "How can He spend time with all of those sinners?"
- (2) "If He knew what kind of woman she was, then He wouldn't want to be anywhere around her."
- b. The sad thing is that the entire time it must have never crossed their minds that they were no better than those sinners, because they were sinners too.
- c. Had they not been so self-righteous, they could have understood that Jesus was in the world to help them too.
- 4. "And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Lk. 18:9-14).
 - a. If you will, notice with me just a few things in this short parable.
 - b. He prayed "**thus with himself.**"
 - c. In two short sentences, he used the word "I" five times.
 - d. He prayed to God, but it is crystal clear he only trusted in himself.
 - e. Most of the things he said about himself in the prayer were not consistent with what the Pharisees practiced.
 - f. This list could go on and on and on.
- C. It is a sad day in the Lord's church when any Christian starts to think they are better than someone else (**regardless of their situation**).
 - 1. "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10).
 - 2. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).
 - 3. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12).

III. THEY LOVED TO BE SEEN OF MEN.

- A. "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they

- may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matt. 6:1-6).
1. Has there always been a command to give back to God what is rightfully His?
 - a. God has always commanded sacrifice from His people (**all the way back to Adam and Eve**).
 - b. We are supposed to give of our means and we are supposed to do it with a cheerful heart (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:6-8).
 - c. Evidently, the Pharisees were givers, and according to Scripture, they gave of abundance (Mk. 12:44).
 - d. However, it was all for naught, and this passage shows us why.
 - e. They did not give because it was right to do so; they gave where they could look good to the people around them.
 - f. If you want to do good and give to God, do so, but make sure it is for the right reasons.
 - g. Doing good is the right thing to do, and you do not need a trumpet man to follow you around to make sure everyone knows you are doing good.
 2. The same could be said for their prayer lives.
 - a. Of all of the different places to pray, why the street corner?
 - b. If you are on the street corner, you could be seen from every direction.
 - c. We do not need to make a mockery out of our prayer lives by doing it to be seen of men.
 - d. And to be perfectly honest with you, I sometimes wonder if social media has become our 21st century street corner.
 3. "Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly" (Matt. 6:16-18).
 - a. Jesus' third illustration concerned fasting.
 - b. All throughout the Old Testament, God's people practiced fasting for several different reasons:
 - (1) Israel fasted during times of war (Judg. 20:26; 1 Sam. 7:6).
 - (2) David fasted for his son while he was sick (2 Sam. 12:16-23).
 - (3) Moses fasted for forty days because of Israel's sin (Deut. 9:15-18).
 - (4) David and the people fasted for Saul and Jonathan's death (2 Sam. 1:12).
 - c. Fasting was given by God for the good of His people's souls.
 - d. By Jesus' time, the Pharisees fasted twice a week (Lk. 18:12).

- (1) On those days, they made sure everyone knew they had afflicted themselves.
 - (2) Hypocrites will even take a time of misery and turn it into an opportunity to receive praise and adoration from men.
 - e. Jesus was not opposed to fasting, but He was opposed of fasting to make a spectacle of one's grief.
- B. "But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi" (Matt. 23:5-7).
- 1. **"They enlarge the borders of their garments."**
 - a. The Hebrews were required to make fringes on the borders of their garments and to put on the fringes "a ribbon of blue" (Num. 15:37-39).
 - b. This was a law that was intended to put them in remembrance of the entire Law which God had given to them.
 - c. It was not a bad thing to have the borders on the garments (**God said to do so**), but the Pharisees were so intent on being seen of men that they enlarged the borders on their garments.
 - 2. They wanted it all (**uppermost rooms at the feasts, chief seats in the synagogues, greetings in the markets**). They wanted it ALL!!
- C. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, clean first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity" (Matt. 23:25-28).
- 1. I would imagine that most people looked at the Pharisees and thought:
 - a. **"Now there is someone who has it all together!"**
 - b. **"They have their Bibles, and they are wearing their Sunday's best!"**
 - c. **"We need more people just like them!"**
 - 2. Jesus says they were full of extortion and excess.
 - a. They robbed widows (Matt. 15:1-9; Mk. 7:1-23).
 - b. They dealt deceitfully with others around them.
 - c. They defrauded in money changing.
 - d. They had no mercy when it came to those who were sick, starving, and invalid.
 - 3. Their outward conduct was something else, but Jesus says they were dead on the inside.
 - a. Jesus compared them to **"whited sepulchers"** which is a way of saying they were all flash and no substance.

- b. A whited sepulcher was a tomb that was fixed up beautifully on the outside.
 - c. Tombs may be a sight to behold, but the story is the same with each one.
 - d. Inside of each tomb is a dead man's bones.
4. The statement that the Lord made there should hit home with every one of us.
 - a. The Pharisees, with all their pomp and glamour, earthly glory and prestige, outward beauty, were, for all that, actually dead in the eyes of Jesus.
 - b. They were dead both spiritually and morally.
 5. I hope that as Christians we never begin to believe that just because we look like we have it together on the outside, means we have it together on the inside.
 6. Jesus is interested in the heart (John 7:24).
 7. We have to be willing to live for Jesus, and if we are not, we need to make changes and begin to live for Jesus.

CONCLUSION:

1. Unless our righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the Pharisees, we cannot enter the kingdom of God.
2. There is so much more that could be said of these men, but time will not allow it.
 - A. They were quick to make judgments without having all of the facts (Matt. 9:23-24).
 - B. They were more interested in trickery than in truth (Matt. 19:3; Mk. 12:13).
 - C. They were more concerned with tradition than with truth (Matt. 15:1-9).
 - D. They were inconsistent in applying their own rules (Matt. 23:1-4).
 - E. They trusted their own merits instead of the one they were obeying (Matt. 23:5-12).
 - F. They created followers more radical than themselves (Matt. 23:15).
 - G. They narrowed down the law to what they wanted to keep (Matt. 23:23).
3. Friends, we can never enter the kingdom of God if we are imposters.
4. There are many great lessons we can learn from these Pharisees, but perhaps the most important one is that they were the greatest enemies that Jesus ever faced.
5. If we live like them, then we are enemies too.

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Righteousness Leading to Reconciliation

Matthew 5:21-26

Robert Jefferies

INTRODUCTION:

1. When we open our Bibles to the New Testament and engage in a study of Matthew 5-7, we see the subject matter preached by the Lord at the great Sermon on the Mount.
2. Here Jesus will emphasize the importance of relationships:
 - A. Man's relationship with God.
 - B. Man's relationship with mankind.
3. Then there are some areas in the sermon where one will notice both thoughts come together, as if Jesus is giving a combo message about our relationship with God and others.
4. Such is the case with Matthew 5:21-26.
5. Points of Discussion:
 - A. The Diagnosis Of The Problem.
 - B. The Treatment Of The Symptoms.
 - C. The Prescription That Is Given.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE DIAGNOSIS OF THE PROBLEM

- A. "Ye have **heard** that is was said by **them** of old time..." (Matthew 5:21a).
 1. The listeners of Jesus did not have a copy of the Old Testament Scriptures like you and I have today (Butler 154).
 2. They had to rely upon the religious leaders of the day to provide them with information from the Word of God (Butler 154).
 3. Unfortunately, those individuals did not always apply the Scriptures properly.
 4. Notice what Jesus says about these religious teachers.
 - a. "Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the **tradition** of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread" (Matthew 15:1-2).
 - b. "But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also **transgress the commandment of God by your tradition**?" (Matthew 15:3).
- B. What had they heard?
 1. "...thou shalt not kill..." (Matthew 5:21b).
 - a. This was not a new message. Consider what the Law taught...

- b. “Thou shalt not kill” (Exodus 20:13).
 - c. “Thou shalt not kill” (Deuteronomy 5:17).
 - 2. “...and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment” (Matthew 5:21c).
 - a. The Law gave command for capital punishment to be administered for anyone who murdered someone else.
 - b. “And if he smite him with an instrument of iron, so that he die, he is a murderer: **the murderer shall surely be put to death**” (Numbers 35:16; cf. v. 17, 18, 21, 30, 31).
- C. What was wrong with what they had heard?
 - 1. The Law valued human life and was designed to be respected, cherished, and protected.
 - 2. However, these Jewish leaders had reduced the command to the physical act only.
 - a. They approached this law without any regard to the thoughts, intents, and attitudes that led up to the murder.
 - b. They took the Law and misconstrued it completely and missed the application.
 - c. The people of Jesus’ day understood that murder was wrong, but it seems that their only concern was that the murderer would be in danger of the judgment of the local courts.
 - d. Jesus needed to show them that it was deeper than what they thought.

II. THE TREATMENT OF THE SYMPTOMS

- A. Jesus wanted to get to the root of the problem.
 - 1. The disposition of the heart.
 - 2. “But I say unto you, That **whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause** shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire” (Matthew 5:22).
 - 3. “But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee *shall be* his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him” (Genesis 4:5-8).

- B. Is all anger wrong?
1. "**Be ye angry**, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath" (Ephesians 4:26).
 2. There were times that Jesus was angered (Matthew 21:12-13). His anger was directed at the sin, the problem.
 3. Sometimes parents get angry with their children.
 4. Sometimes spouses get angry with one another.
 5. However, the anger is to be controlled.
- C. Jesus warns about using our anger to say sinful things.
1. He warned against expressions that were used to bad mouth someone.
 - a. "...and whosoever shall say to his brother, **Raca**, shall be in danger of the council..." (Matthew 5:23).
 1. "Good for nothing."
 2. "Empty headed" (Thayer).
 - b. "...council: but whosoever shall say, Thou **fool**, shall be in danger of hell fire..." (Matthew 5:23).
 1. "Morally worthless" (Strong)
 2. Taken from the Greek word, "moros" (Butler 161).
 2. Here, we have an example of an individual using words that they might not normally use, but because of anger, they have crossed the line. Their temper has caused them to be in danger of...
 - a. Local judgment.
 - b. Sanhedrin Council.
 - c. Hell fire.

III. THE PRESCRIPTION THAT IS GIVEN

- A. What is the prescription?
1. "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be **reconciled** to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matthew 5:23-24).
 2. A little different than Jesus' teaching in Matthew 18:15-17, but the same prescription applies, **reconciliation**.
 3. This can apply to so many areas...
 - a. Husbands and wives.
 - b. Parents and children.
 - c. Co-workers.
 - d. Friends.
 - e. Brethren.
- B. When is the prescription to be taken?
1. "Agree with thine adversary **quickly**, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge,

and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing" (Matthew 5:25-26).

2. Reconciliation comes before worship.
3. Reconciliation comes before a court matter.
4. What happens when we do not handle our problems quickly?
 - a. "Be ye angry, and **sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath**" (Ephesians 4:26).
 - b. "Neither give place to the devil" (Ephesians 4:29).

CONCLUSION:

1. One cannot be on good terms with God if he is on bad terms with others.
2. Let's be sure that we heal the breaches between ourselves and others when the situations arise.

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But I Say Unto You...
(Re: Lust, Marriage, and Divorce)
Matthew 5:27-32

Will Anderson

INTRODUCTION:

1. When one begins to speak publicly about what the Bible teaches on the various topics that fall under the broad category of sexual sins, there is generally much trepidation.
 - A. Some will say that those topics have no place in a public forum because of their sensitive nature.
 - B. Others don't feel it appropriate to speak publically against what has now become societal norms.
2. The harsh reality is, the world is portraying a strong message in favor of the improper use for sex.
 - A. One can hardly watch television without, at the minimum, a commercial using sensuality to sell a product.
 - B. Societal influences are teaching all ages that, if one is not giving into his sexual desires, he is strange and not in touch with the times.
 - C. In sharp contrast to the influence of the world around us, God's word teaches us that sexual intimacy is a precious thing when used according to God's plan, but is highly foolish when used improperly.
 - 1) "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4).
 - 2) "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind... shall inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9, 10b).
3. With these ideas in mind, we will study what Jesus, the Master Teacher, taught in the greatest sermon man has ever known on the topic of sexual sin.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE DEFINITION OF LUST

- A. "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. 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. 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" (Matt. 5:27-30).
- B. In the previous passage, Jesus strengthens the Old Testament mandate to not commit adultery by showing the importance of controlling one's mind.
1. "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14).
 2. "Jesus puts emphasis on what he has to say; there is a contrast between what they "have heard" concerning the law and what Jesus says; he declares the sin to be in the heart and not in the external act merely; Jesus goes behind the acts and legislates against the thoughts which precede the act" (Boles 139).
- C. So based upon this passage, what is lust?
1. A study of the Greek used in the passage can give us insight.
 - a. Strong defines the word translated "lust" as "to set the heart upon, i.e. long for (rightfully or otherwise)" (34).
 - b. Thayer, similarly, defines the term as, "to have a desire for, long for, to desire," "to lust after, covet," or "of those who seek things forbidden" (238).
 2. Lust, in the negative sense, is a strong desire for something that is forbidden.
 3. Looking with sexual desires at a man or woman who is not your spouse is lust.
- D. Jesus is teaching that when lust is present, the act of adultery is the end result, because, "as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Pro. 23:7).
- E. He goes on to explain the importance of doing everything possible to remove ourselves from situations which further lead to the temptation to sin.
1. He gives the illustrations of plucking out an eye or cutting off a hand to ensure that one will not be cast into hell.
 2. While many view this teaching as hyperbolic, the idea should help us to understand that we must be serious and vigilant to remove from us anything that would put an eternal home in Heaven in question.

II. THE DEFENSE OF MARRIAGE

- A. "Marriage is honourable in all" (Heb. 13:4b).
- B. Marriage is the most ancient institution known to man.
 1. God knew from the beginning that man needed an help meet.
 2. "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18).
 3. What is fascinating is that God's next move was not to create woman.

- a. God first created all of the beasts of the field, and He brought them before Adam so he could name them (Gen. 2:19, 20).
- b. After naming all of those animals, Adam can to the realization that “there was not found an help meet for him” (Gen. 2:20).
- c. What God already knew, Adam needed to understand.
- 4. When God created woman, there was obvious joy in Adam’s heart, as can be seen by his response, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh... Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Gen. 2:23a, 24).
- 5. It was God’s desire that man would use this arrangement for the furtherance of humanity, but it didn’t take long for man to break from that plan (Gen. 4:19).
- 6. It was this great institution which God would use as a template for the relationship between Christ and His church (Eph. 5:22-33).
- C. Many modern proponents of “same-sex marriage” have used an argument from Jesus’ supposed silence on the subject.
 - 1. The issue with that argument is that it is simply not true.
 - 2. Jesus gave a comprehensive definition of God-ordained marriage.
 - 3. “And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matt. 19:4-6).
 - 4. Jesus states very clearly that marriage is between a “male and female.”
- D. When someone submits to marriage, whether they understand the concept or not, they are submitting to a divine institution, and it should be treated as such.

III. THE DANGER OF DIVORCE

- A. “It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: 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” (Matt. 5:31-32).
- B. There is hardly a biblical topic today which stirs up as much controversy and protest as the biblical teaching on marriage, divorce, and remarriage.

- C. There was a great deal of debate among Jewish rabbis throughout the preceding centuries about what Moses meant when he gave the regulation of divorce in Deuteronomy 24.
 - 1. Some believed that anything that displeased the husband was grounds for the man putting away the wife.
 - 2. Others believed that the legislation pertained to “unchastity or adultery” (Wright 12).
- D. Jesus took what they had “heard” and strengthened their understanding of the topic.
- E. Carefully noticing word usage, we can understand the meaning of Jesus’ teaching on this critical topic.
 - 1. The word, “whosoever,” gives us the breadth of the application.
 - a. This verse applies to the same whosoever that is mentioned in John 3:16.
 - b. To make this verse applicable to some and not applicable to others would not give this verse the force that it truly has, and would be a foolish mistake.
 - 2. The phrase, “shall put away his wife,” is another way of saying he divorces his wife.
 - 3. The phrase, “saving for the cause of fornication,” is possibly the most critical aspect to this verse.
 - a. The act of divorcing one’s spouse and marrying another is forbidden in the scripture (Mark 10:1-2), that is God’s rule.
 - b. What is added here is the only exception to that rule found in scripture, fornication.
 - 4. The word fornication is very important.
 - a. The word, in its original Greek form, means “illicit sexual intercourse” (Thayer 532)
 - b. This word expresses that illicit sexual has physically taken place between the non-married parties.
 - c. This word does not include lust, which He defines earlier as adultery, but includes the end result of that lust, physical sexual action.
 - 5. The phrase, “causes her to commit adultery,” shows the end result of a divorce and remarriage when there has been no fornication.
 - a. If a person has been put away for a cause other than fornication, any subsequent marriage would be adultery and not be approved by God.
 - b. When the exception is not present, one must fall back upon the stated rule.
 - 6. The phrase, “and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery,” shows that the actions of the one put

away affects not only their spiritual life, but also that of the new partner.

- F. Let us briefly notice some questions people have about Jesus' teaching on divorce and remarriage.
1. "Are all men answerable to the Law of Christ?"
 - a. Many say that one who is outside of Christ is not answerable, or amenable, to the law of Christ.
 - b. If that were the case, it would be better off not becoming a Christian, because "where no law is, there is no transgression" (Rom. 4:15).
 - c. Jesus' statement in John 12:48 clearly indicates that all people are answerable to and judged by His law: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."
 2. "Does Jesus' teaching apply to the church today?"
 - a. Some say that because Jesus lived and died under the Law of Moses, that none of His teachings during His life are authoritative under the New Testament.
 - b. After His resurrection, He clearly told His disciples to teach "them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:20).
 - c. Even in His sermon on the mount, He speaks regularly of "the kingdom of heaven."
 3. "Can the guilty party remarry?"
 - a. There are those who teach that if a divorce takes place for fornication, both parties are able to remarry.
 - b. The latter part of Matt. 5:32 expresses that the one who has been put away and marries another, commits adultery.
 - c. The put-away person does not have the right to remarry, with God's approval, whether they committed fornication or there was no fornication.
 - d. When entering into the marriage covenant, there must be the understanding that the vows spoken are not just toward one another, but they are also toward God.
 - e. Even if the innocent party is loosed, they are still bound by God.
 4. "Does baptism sanctify an unscriptural marriage?"
 - a. There are others who say that baptism washed away any unscriptural marriage that the person may have had.
 - b. That view stands on the idea that one can arrogantly refuse to repent, and still have their sins washed in baptism.

- c. Repentance is a prerequisite to baptism that, if not met, nullifies any subsequent baptism.
 - d. A drunk must repent of drunkenness, a thief must repent of stealing, a liar must repent of lying, and an adulterer must repent of adultery.
 - i. Repenting would mean that the action stops.
 - ii. If a marriage is adulterous, the only way to repent would be to remove oneself from that marriage.
5. "What if there is no consent to the divorce?"
- a. There is another idea that, if one party does not consent to the non-scriptural divorce, they may wait until the other marries, and can then claim fornication and have a "mental divorce."
 - b. Again, this is just another example of someone trying to skirt around Jesus' clear words.
 - c. The type of "divorce" or "putting away" that Jesus is referring to here includes legal aspects.
 - d. In Matt. 19, Jesus clearly refers to the "bill of divorcement," which was used as a legal way to acknowledge the divorce.
 - e. Jesus was not here simply referring to some mental aspect or occasion where one decides to divorce.
- G. Many other questions can arise, but the main question that people who are looking into these circumstances must ask is, "was the divorce for fornication or not, and if so, who committed fornication, and who did not?"
- H. If divorce takes place for the cause of fornication of one party, the innocent party has the right to remarry, while the guilty does not.

CONCLUSION:

1. While these topics are neither the most comfortable to discuss, nor the easiest to hear, they are critical to our understanding of scripture.
2. While society pushes against God's plan for sexuality, we must be willing to push back.
3. All of what Jesus discusses in this section of scripture hinges on one idea; we need to have a renewed mind (Rom. 12:2) that pushes out the evil thoughts that can so easily become actions.
4. Since we become what we think (Pro. 23:7), let us think on "things above" (Col. 3:1, 2; Php. 4:8).

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But I Say Unto You...
(Re: Oaths and Swearing)

Matthew 5:33-37

Chris Butler

INTRODUCTION:

1. "And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech betrayeth thee" (Mat. 26:73).
2. What was it about Peter's speech that prompted their recognition of him?
3. Is there any other way our speech can betray us?
4. Do people know I am a Christian by the things I say and do not say?
5. Do people question my Christianity by the words that they hear from my mouth?
6. Christians are described by our Lord as the light of the world and the salt of the earth (Mat. 5:13-16).
 - A. Their lives exhibit the marvelous character described by our Lord in His first discourse.
 - B. As Jesus lays the foundation of His ministry He teaches us how our righteousness is to exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees both in principle (the beatitudes) and practice.
 - i. The principle. The beatitudes express the characteristics that are necessary to righteous living.
 - ii. These principles are then to be practiced, and when they are, our lives will be righteous before God.
 - iii. The Jews failed in this area. Their lack of humility before God lead them to their false interpretations of scripture and the problems that followed
 1. They failed to put self out of the way.
 2. Friends the same is true of us. We must never overestimate the value of the Sermon on the Mount to our lives, in particular the beatitudes, which are the very core of Christ like living.
7. The Christian has a deep hunger and thirst for righteousness according to our Lord (Mat. 5:6)
8. Our discussion today focusses on one's speech, which is like all our actions, a manifestation of the heart.
 - A. Mat. 12:34-36.
 - B. Luk. 6:45

DISCUSSION:

I. THE PASSAGE: Mathew 5:33-37

- A. Consideration of the text. "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: But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: 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" (Mat. 5:33-37).
- B. Explanations of words:
 1. Forswear:
 - a. "To commit perjury" (Strong).
 - b. "To swear falsely, forswear one's self" (Thayer).
 - c. "A perjured person. To swear falsely, not to fulfill one's oath" (Zodhiates).
 - d. "To swear falsely, to undo one's swearing, forswear oneself" (Vine's).
 2. Perjure: meaning to tell a lie in a court of law and therefore be guilty of perjury.
 3. Oaths:
 - a. "A limit, that is, (sacred) restraint (specifically oath)" (Strong).
 - b. "That which has been pledged or promised with an oath" (Thayer).
 - c. "'a fence, an enclosure, that which restrains a person'; hence, 'an oath.'" (Vine).
 4. Swear: to affirm, promise, threaten, with an oath.
 - a. "To swear, that is, take (or declare on) oath" (Strong).
 - b. "To swear, 2) to affirm, promise, threaten, with an oath, 3) in swearing to call a person or thing as witness, to invoke, swear by" (Thayer).
- C. Proclamations of Christ.
 1. The Preceding law of oaths. "Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shall perform unto the Lord thine oaths:" (Mat. 5:33).
 2. The Perversion and Prevention of oaths. "But I say unto you, Swear not at all."
 3. The Principle in oaths. "Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay."
 4. The Profane use of oaths. "...for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."
- D. Observations on the text.
 1. "This is not the sin of "cursing," but the sin of using oaths to affirm that what is said is true" (Wiersbe).

2. "When a Christian speaks, everyone should know exactly for what he can be counted upon and where he stands. There can be no trick words or evasions which take away personal responsibility for what is said, in order to keep God out of the question" (Fowler).
3. IVPBBC entitles comments on this section of scripture as, "Integrity, Not Oaths" (Keener).
4. "The principle underlying all this is that men should see God in everything. That the creature cannot be separate from the Creator" (Pulpit).
5. "Jesus taught that our conversation should be so honest, and our character so true, that we would not need "crutches" to get people to believe us. Words depend on character, and oaths cannot compensate for a poor character" (Wiersbe).
6. "He recommends such a veracity, honesty, and sincerity in speech, that we may be trusted upon our bare word, without an oath" (PHC).
7. Notice the idea of integrity of Character in many of these statements.

II. THE PAST

A. Earlier Laws about oaths from the O.T. "Ye have heard that it hath been said."

1. The Negative.
 - a. "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (Exo. 20:7).
 - b. "And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD" (Lev. 19:12).
 - c. "If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth" (Num. 30:2).
2. The Positive.
 - a. "Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name" (Deut. 6:13).
 - b. "When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee. But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee" (Deu. 23:21-22).
3. Oaths were, in some circumstances, required by the Law of Moses.

- a. "Then shall an oath of the LORD be between them both, that he hath not put his hand unto his neighbour's goods; and the owner of it shall accept thereof, and he shall not make it good" (Exo. 22:11)
- b. "And the priest shall charge her by an oath, and say unto the woman, If no man have lain with thee, and if thou hast not gone aside to uncleanness *with another* instead of thy husband, be thou free from this bitter water that causeth the curse" (Num. 5:19).
- c. We see, then, as McGarvey concluded, "It will be seen from the quotation given by Jesus that the law permitted oaths made unto the Lord. It was not the intention of Jesus to repeal this law.....What we style the judicial oaths of the law of Moses then were not included in the prohibition."

III. THE PERVERSIONS OF SWEARING

- A. The Perversions. "But I say unto you, swear not at all; neither by..."
 1. "The basic principle to which Jesus refers in this summary of the Mosaic legislation is the use of God's name to guarantee the inviolability of some promise made to Him, or to attest the truth of one's word by appeal to Him to witness" (Fowler).
 2. "[It will be seen from the quotation given by Jesus that the law permitted oaths made unto the Lord. It was not the intention of Jesus to repeal this law. But the Jews, looking upon this law, construed it as giving them exemption from the binding effect of all other oaths. According to their construction no oath was binding in which the sacred name of God did not directly occur. They therefore coined many other oaths to suit their purposes, which would add weight to their statements or promises, which, however, would not leave them guilty of being forsworn if they spoke untruthfully" (McGarvey).
- B. Jesus addresses the perversions of the law. "But I say unto you"
 1. Swear not at all.....
 - a. By Heaven; for it is God's throne (Isa. 66:1).
 - b. By the Earth; for it is his footstool (Isa. 66:1).
 - c. By Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King (Psa. 48:3, 8).
 - d. Thy Head; ...canst not make one hair white or black.
 2. "Swear not at all is Jesus' criticism of all the perversions of God's permissive legislation, created by the rabbis because they honored certain oaths and ignored other cleverly-worded promises they did not intend to keep. (See Mat_23:16-22) Their sophistry had developed into the fine art of evasion! The obligation to honor an oath, according to their verdict, depended upon the nature of the

object by which one swore: if they swore by something created, it was not necessarily binding and might be simply forgotten for convenience. If the oath was sworn by the dread Name of Jehovah God, the oath was binding" (Fowler).

3. "It appears, however, from this passage, as well as from the ancient writings of the Jewish rabbins, that while the Jews professedly adhered to the law, they had introduced a number of oaths in common conversation, and oaths which they by no means considered to be binding. For example, they would swear by the temple, by the head, by heaven, by the earth. So long as they kept from swearing by the name Yahweh, and so long as they observed the oaths publicly taken, they seemed to consider all others as allowable, and allowedly broken" (Barnes).
4. See Mat. 23:16-22 for an example of their inconsistency.

IV. THE PREVENTION OF PERJURY

A. Jesus said, "swear not at all".

1. In speaking about the examples of the New Testament, cited above. "Thus, whatever Jesus may command in regard to swearing must be interpreted in light of these examples which throw light on how His word was intended" (Fowler).
2. "To prevent this evil practice of loose swearing Jesus lays down the prohibition, "Swear not at all;" but the universality of this prohibition is distributed by the specifications of these four forms of oaths, and is, therefore, most strictly interpreted as including only such oaths. Jesus surely did not intend to abolish now, in advance of the general abrogation of the law, those statutes of Moses which allowed, and in some instances required, the administration of an oath. See Exo_22:11, Num_5:19. What we style the judicial oaths of the law of Moses then were not included in the prohibition. This conclusion is also reached when we interpret the prohibition in the light of authoritative examples; for we find that God swore by himself (Gen_22:16, Gen_22:17, Heb_6:13, Heb_7:21). Jesus answered under oath before the Sanhedrin (Mat_26:63), and Paul also made oath to the Corinthian church (2Co_1:23). See also Rom_1:9, Gal_1:20, Phi_1:8, 1Co_15:31, Rev_10:5, Rev_10:6. We conclude, then, that judicial oaths, and oaths taken in the name of God on occasions of solemn religious importance, are not included in the prohibition" (McGarvey).

B. Examples of oaths in the O.T. and N.T.

1. God swore by himself
 - a. Heb. 3:11, 18; 4:3; 6:13-18; Heb. 7:21.
 - b. Gen. 22:16-17

2. Jesus was under oath (Mat. 26:63-64).
 3. Paul was often called God to witness (Rom. 1:9; 2 Cor. 1:23; Gal. 1:20; Phil. 1:8).
- C. A person taking an oath today in a court of law is not parallel to the situation Jesus here addresses.
1. The oaths that were made under the Old Covenant required honesty and integrity of heart in the making of the oath and in keeping the oath.
 2. "Originally, the oath was the truest, most natural expression of a man's conviction of a right awe of God. With the passing of the fervency of the convictions, there arises that contemptible familiarity with sacred things that is seen in frivolous, hypocritical swearing" (Fowler).
 3. A Christian by nature should be truthful, and his word should be a reflection of his heart.
 4. Confirming that by taking an oath, in a court of law for example, is not a violation of what Jesus addresses here.
 5. Any oath that a Christian makes in the name of God, or on His holy word is just a confirmation of what is already true of his character.
- D. "There is no real way to keep God out of your smallest transactions" (Fowler).
- E. "Live in the consciousness of God at all times...one is never out of God's sight" (Camp).
- F. Considerations for our speech.
1. The consideration of God.
 - a. Understanding the nature of God will curb reckless uses of the tongue. Our speech may bring about our punishment.
 - b. Reverence for God is constantly challenged by a world where false swearing, lying, perjury and such like are the norm.
 - c. Christians must ever be reminded of God's nature and the reverence it demands in order not to become desensitized by the world.
 2. The consideration of our Christian example.
 - a. Mat. 5:13-16.
 - b. 1 Pet. 2:12-16.
 3. What are some modern day examples that represent the same reasoning of the Scribes? Their use of substitutes in oath is very similar to what we call euphemisms today. They are numerous, and follow the same spirit of the scribes and Pharisees.
 - a. "Lord, have mercy."
 - b. "Oh Lord."
 - c. "Oh my Lord."

- d. "Oh my God."
- e. "Oh my goodness."

V. THE PRACTICE OF PURE SPEECH

A. The Principle of oaths. "yea, yea; nay, nay."

1. "Jesus' general purpose, running through this whole discourse on the nature of true righteousness, as opposed to legal righteousness, is to reveal a heart rectitude which is unconditionally and consistently observable in the simplest, outward acts" (Fowler).
2. "The disciple of Jesus is not to honor his word merely because it is supported by an oath, but because it is sustained by an integrity of character that will honor any and every commitment" (Fowler).
3. Jesus is saying, "Make your life so transparently pure that your simplest statement is easily accepted as valid by your obvious sincerity."

B. The Practice of Pure speech.

1. Remember I am a Christian (Acts 11:26).
 - a. I wear the name Christ, I follow his teaching. (Disciple - Mat. 5:1).
 - b. My speech, should reflect the One I claim to follow.
2. Remember I am accountable for my words.
 - a. "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Mat. 12:34-37).
3. Remember what the Bible teaches about our speech.
 - a. "Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee" (Pro. 4:24).
 - i. "Froward" - perverse.
 - ii. "Perverse" - Distortion, crookedness, false.
 - b. Col. 3:5, 8 - "Filthy communication out of your mouth"
 - i. "Mortify..." - to make dead, deaden.
 - ii. "Filthy" - vile, foul, low and obscene speech.
 - c. "Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile" (Psa. 34:13).
 - d. Speech should be good. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use

of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers” (Eph. 4:29).

- e. Speech should be plain (2 Cor. 3:12). “Plainness” - same Greek word as boldness in Acts 4:13.
- f. Speech should be sound (Tit. 2:8). “Sound” - healthy, true, whole
- g. Speech should be wholesome (1 Tim. 6:3). “Wholesome” - to have sound health, be well, uncorrupted. Free from any mixture of error.
- h. Speech should be with grace (Col. 4:6; Col 3:16; Eph. 4:29).
- i. Speech should be words of truth (Acts. 26:25).

VI. THE PROFANE

A. Jesus said, “Whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.”

- 1. “ALL such frivolous oaths and unnecessary supporting additions, even the necessity for vows, finds its basic origin in evil and the father of lies” (Fowler).
- 2. Consider a few examples.
 - a. The Jews used many things in making oaths (Mat. 23:16-22).
 - b. When Peter denied the Lord, he lied and began to curse and even swear that he did not know him (Mat. 26:74).

B. The continual use of oaths makes one doubt the sincerity of the speaker.

- 1. “Indeed, it makes one doubt the truth of him who has to confirm every assertion by an oath” (PNT).
- 2. Certain phrases can make you doubt a person.
 - a. “Honestly.”
 - b. “To be honest with you.”
 - c. “To tell you the truth.”

VII. THE PROFITS OF THIS STUDY

A. A righteous life is the result of a heart that is set to do righteousness (Mat. 5:6).

- 1. A person’s speech, like his actions, reveals what is in his heart.
- 2. Truthful speech is the only speech for the Christian.

B. What is deemed good and acceptable by a religious teacher may not be in harmony with the Master Teacher.

C. The sacredness of oaths. Oaths that call on God as witness to the truthfulness of what is being said are not to be taken lightly.

D. Our Christian reputation.

- 1. Live such a holy and pure life that truthfulness is expected by all you friends, neighbors and brethren (1 Pet. 1:15-16).
- 2. Dedicate your life to truth manifesting that dedication in the words which you speak (Eph. 4:25).

CONCLUSION:

1. "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer" (Psalm 19:14).
2. To put it another way: "Putting away falsehood, let every one speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another...Let no evil come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for edifying, as fits the occasion, that it may impart grace to those who hear" (Eph. 4:25, 29).

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Pray After This Manner

Matthew 6:9-13

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

INTRODUCTION:

- I. There are two accounts of this prayer in the New Testament.
 - A. In the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6 Jesus gave this prayer to aid His people in their prayers (Matt. 6:9-13)
 - B. Later, Jesus gave these instructions again (Luke 11:2-4).
 - 1) Jesus was the greatest preacher the world has ever known or will know, yet there is no recorded request from a disciple, "Lord, teach us how to preach."
 - 2) Likewise, Jesus was the greatest teacher the world has known or ever will know, yet there is no recorded request of where any disciple ever requested, "Lord, instruct us how to teach."
 - 3) But in Luke 11: 1, after Jesus had finished one of His prayers, a deeply impressed disciple requested, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."
 - 4) No man on earth ever prayed like Jesus did, and no man could teach others to pray like Jesus did.
 - 5) He honored this noble request promptly in Luke 11:2-4.
 - C. Though often called "The Lord's Prayer," better designations for it would be "The Disciples' Prayer" or "The Model Prayer."
 - D. The real Lord's Prayer is John 17 when Jesus prayed for Himself, the apostles, and for all who would believe on Him later through apostolic testimony.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE PROPER ONE TO ADDRESS IN PRAYER IS GOD THE FATHER, WHICH IS STRESSED IN COMMANDMENT FORM.

- A. Prayer is not to be addressed to Jesus Christ, though we are to pray in His name always (John 16:23).
- B. We are not to pray to the Holy Spirit, though we pray in accord to His instructions in Holy Writ.
- C. We are not to pray to the Lord's mother, Mary.
- D. We are not to pray to a departed saint.
- E. Jesus never prayed to Himself, the Holy Spirit, His mother, or a departed saint from Old Testament days.

II. WE ARE TO PRAY TO "OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN."

- A The Bible teaches His omnipresence, but His throne is situated in Heaven – not in Jerusalem or on earth.
- B. God the Father is not in us actually, literally, or bodily, so we do not pray, “Our Father, who is in us.”
 - 1) He indwells us by faith or by the marvelous means of His Word.
 - 2) The same is true for the indwelling of us by Jesus and the Holy Spirit.
- C. There is massive misunderstanding about the indwelling of the Godhead, both among us and among the religious world as a whole.

III. “HALLOWED BE THY NAME.”

- A. This calls for the deepest of respect and a depth of awe as we approach Him in the avenue of prayer.
- B. His name stands for all He is.
- C. Israel of old was warned in the Decalogue, “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain” (Ex. 20:7; Deut. 5:11).
- D. “Thanks, Dad” is the way a young man prayed before eating his meal at a college cafeteria. Those who heard him were shocked at this and inquired if this was his normal way of expressing thanks, and he assured them it was.
- E. I once helped with a funeral for a faithful gospel preacher, only to hear the other participating preacher refer to God as Dad in one of his prayers.
- F. This happened out in Texas some years back and was told by brother Guy N. Woods in a gospel meeting at Airways in Memphis, Tennessee.
 - 1) The young man said this with total irreverence, “God, I never had a son like you did. But if I had had a son, I would not have treated him as you did your son!”
 - 2) The young man who called on him for that offensive prayer said at its conclusion, “Some of you do not like what you have just heard, but it is coming more and more!”
 - 3) Brother Woods commented, “It will come over the dead bodies of many of us.” I say, “Amen” to Woods’ sentiment.
- G. Reverence must permeate our prayers to Him who is the Sovereign of the Universe.
- H. I still stay with “thee,” “thou,” and “thine” in the prayers I pray publicly and privately as well.

IV. “THY KINGDOM COME.”

- A. Its establishment was still in the future when Jesus uttered this petition.
- B. This was stated while He was here in His personal ministry.
- C. The kingdom was established with power on Pentecost in Acts 2 after He had gone back to Heaven.

- D. We cannot pray this as He taught it in Matthew and Luke, since it is no longer future as it was when He so stated.
- E. We might pray for it to be spread and that men might become citizens of it.

V. "THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH; AS IT IS IN HEAVEN."

- A. Jesus had come from Heaven, and He knew how quickly, completely, and joyfully God's family of angelic beings honored His Father's will (Psa. 103:20-21).
- B. We should be likeminded in doing His will on earth quickly, completely, and joyfully.
 - 1) It was the case with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane just prior to His arrest, trials, and crucifixion (Matt. 26:36-42).
 - 2) It should be priority number one in our lives.

VI. "GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD."

- A. Please note that He did not say, "Give us our weekly bread."
- B. He did not say, "Give us our monthly bread."
- C. He did not say, "Give us our yearly bread."
- D. We should pray daily, and even a number of times each day, as David did in Psalm 55:18 and as Daniel did in Daniel 6:10.
- E. Quite possibly, this is a comprehensive expression referring to all our daily needs.

VII. "AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS."

- A. The parallel in Luke 11:4 has sins – not debts.
- B. Our own forgiveness is linked with our willingness to forgive those who sin against us.
- C. A man once said to his preacher, "I never forgive anybody that sins against me." The preacher responded, "You thus have closed the door to your going to Heaven."
- D. He should have realized that his own sins could not be forgiven.
- E. On Calvary Jesus prayed so fervently, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34),
- F. Stephen said, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 7:60).
- G. Paul prayed for those who had forsaken him in Rome (2 Tim. 4:16).
- H. We cannot be right with God unless we possess the willing spirit of forgiveness.
- I. God only forgives those who repent, and we are to forgive on that same basis (Luke 17:3-4).

VIII. "AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION."

- A. This is a petition for the Lord to be a sure shield to us in the hour of temptation.

- B. Jesus told Peter, James and John in Gethsemane to “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation” (Matt. 26:41).
- C. Paul assures us in 1 Corinthians 10:13 that God is faithful and will not allow us to be tempted above what we are able to face, but will provide a way of escape.
 - 1) A young man was once in service. On a Wednesday some of his military group told him they were going into town that night to spend the night in drinking and immorality, provided available women could be found. He was tempted to go and said he would. Then it hit him like a thunderbolt – “Tonight is Wednesday night, and my godly mother will be in Bible Study and will remember her son as they will pray.” He could not live with the thought of spending a night in strong drink and immorality with a praying mother at home. He told them he would not be going after all.
 - 2) Surely, this was the provided lever of escape for him.
- D. Jesus met and defeated the devil in the wilderness of temptation by remaining loyal to the Scripture (Matt. 4: Luke 4).

IX. “DELIVER US FROM EVIL.”

- A. The ASV has here in italics, “one,” which is an obvious reference to Satan.
- B. Satan is the kingpin of all temptations he hurls at us.
 - 1) Note how he tempted Eve and Job (Gen. 3; Job 1-2).
 - 2) He sought to thwart the Messianic mission of the Christ in Matthew 4 and Luke 4.

X. FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, AND THE POWER, AND THE GLORY, FOR EVER. AMEN.”

- A. Some translations omit this section, but the KJV and the NKJB include it.
- B. I prefer to leave it intact.
- C. The Kingdom is the Lord's.
- D. The Kingdom is His power.
- E. The Kingdom is His glory.
- F. The three concluding words are powerful and precious, “for ever, Amen.”

CONCLUSION:

1. This prayer is noted for its brevity.
2. This prayer is noted for its beauty.
3. This prayer is noted for its comprehensive nature.
4. This prayer is noted for its power and pathos.
5. Only the Lord Jesus Christ could teach so marvelously and majestically this wonderful and worthy prayer for His disciples to emulate in their own prayerful lives.

Laying Up Treasures

Matthew 6:19-24

Bobby Liddell

TEXT: “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Mat. 6:19-24).

THESIS: To show the importance of placing proper value and priority on that which is of eternal importance.

INTRODUCTION:

1. Jesus, in this section of the “Sermon on the Mount,” presents the choice each man must make, and will make, whether to serve God, or mammon.
 - A. None can serve both at the same time, but each will serve one or the other (Mat. 6:24).
 - B. That which one treasures will determine his choice between the heavenly and the earthly--to be a slave of God, or a slave of mammon (riches).
 - C. Man chooses what he treasures, and his treasure will have the foremost place in his heart, soul, and mind.
2. What are treasures?
 - A. Literally, Matthew 6:19-20 would read: “Do not treasure for you treasures on the earth, where moth and rust removes, and where thieves dig through and steal; but treasure for you treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust removes, and where thieves do not dig through nor steal.”
 - B. That which one treasures is that which he loves, which he holds in highest regard, and puts in first place in his life because of the value he places on it, whether in accordance with God-placed values, or in spite of them.
 - 1) Many think of material wealth only as the point of this passage.
 - 2) Truly, such treasure could be possessions of money, wealth, and financial gain of whatever sort.

3) However, included in this context are the other earthly things one might “treasure” such as popularity, power, position, and pleasure.

- C. We must note that Jesus does not, in this sermon, prohibit one’s wise preparation and saving in order to care properly for his family, which care God’s Word plainly and strongly enjoins elsewhere, nor is wealth inherently sinful.
3. In our study, we shall consider these main points as given by our Lord.
- A. Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth (Mat. 6:19).
 - B. Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven (Mat. 6:20).
 - C. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Mat. 6:21).

DISCUSSION:

I. LAY NOT UP FOR YOURSELVES TREASURES UPON EARTH (Mat. 6:19).

A. Why Lay Up Treasures That Are Earthly?

1. These treasures hold the danger of making one poorer for having them, because they can take God’s place, and crowd out what is really valuable.
2. They are earth-bound, and they are earth-binding, for their earthly possession is the love of the possessor’s life.
3. They appeal to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, and not to the higher, nobler, and purer affections.

B. Why Lay Up Treasures That Are Temporary?

1. These are treasures that do not last.
2. At best, they are but temporary, and our days of having them are soon over.
3. At worst, in our brief sojourn, they have us, until we depart this life and leave them all behind.

C. Why Lay Up Treasures That Are Subject To Loss?

1. Those who trust in such treasures often find out, it is as Jesus said.
 - a. The moth, in satisfying his appetite, does not consider the worth of his meal, devouring the finest, most valuable artist’s tapestry, as readily as a discarded rag.
 - b. Rust enters the palaces of kings as it does the hovel of the destitute.
 - c. Thieves break through (dig through the wall) and steal without regard for the depth of attachment of the former possessor to his treasured belonging.
2. One may be wealthy today and lose it all, ending up a pauper on the morrow, losing not only the things he holds dear in life, but also his reason for living.
3. Why place such value on that which is so fleeting?

II. LAY UP FOR YOURSELVES TREASURES IN HEAVEN (Mat. 6:20).

A. Lay Up Treasures That Are Heavenly.

1. These treasures are not chosen under the direction of the outward man, but are the choice of the inward man, whose faithful continuance leads him to that heavenly home.
2. At the close of day, the simple cow does not have to be forced from the far end of the pasture, but waits at the gate, ready to be taken to the barn, for his feed, his treasure, is there, and his heart is there.
3. So, the child of God, at the close of his earthly day, is ready to go to where his treasure is—where his heart is.

B. Lay Up Treasures That Are Eternal.

1. That which is of real value is neither temporary nor transient, but timeless.
2. Why enslave ourselves to mammon, spend our lives seeking its gain, hoarding it greedily, when its possession is so soon to end, and our purpose for living ends with it?
3. That which is of real value is that which is of lasting value.

C. Lay Up Treasures That Are Not Subject To Loss.

1. Men may lose possessions, physical health, power, popularity, position, and that which brings pleasure, but the treasures that are heavenly will continue.
2. When the faithful servant of God leaves this earth, he leaves behind, as does the servant of mammon, all earthly things, but, unlike mammon's servant, he goes to Heaven where he has laid up his riches.
3. No force of nature, man, or the devil himself can remove these treasures from their heavenly store.

III. FOR WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS, THERE WILL YOUR HEART BE ALSO (Mat. 6:21).

A. Where Are Our Thoughts?

1. Jesus warned: "Take no thought" for the things of this world.
 - a. "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on" (Mat. 6:25).
 - b. "And why take ye thought for raiment?" (Mat. 6:28).
 - c. "Therefore take no thought, saying, what shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" (Mat. 6:31).
 - d. "Take therefore no thought for the morrow" (Mat. 6:34).
2. The literal meaning of "take no thought" is "be not anxious"; that is, do not commit the folly of worrying about the earthly, material,

temporal things of this world for, “Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?” (Mat. 6:27).

- a. Worry is unproductive, burdensome, and, more often than not, in vain.
- b. Worry announces one’s lack of faith in God and his fear that God will not provide as He has promised.
- c. Worry robs one of peace, prevents happiness, presents an improper influence, and hinders his service to God.

3. Where a man’s treasure is, there will his thoughts be also.

B. Where Is Our Trust?

1. In light of Jesus’s statement that no man can, at the same time, serve mammon (the god of temporary, material riches) and God (the God of true, eternal riches), in whom do we trust?
2. If our trust is in things, Jesus said we are like the Gentiles (literally, “nations,” and, by implication, “heathen,” who do not believe in God, “For after all these things do the Gentiles seek” [Mat. 6:32]), but the same God who has given us our needs has promised to supply our needs.
3. Where a man’s treasure is, there will his trust be also.

C. Where Is Our Treasure?

1. There will be our thoughts, our trust, and our hearts, centered either upon God or mammon!
2. There are only two places where one may lay up treasure—upon earth or in heaven.
3. If our treasure is laid up on earth, these sad conditions must also follow.
 - a. We have failed to heed God’s warning (Mat. 6:19).
 - b. We have failed to follow God’s command (Mat. 6:20).
 - c. Our sight is out of focus, and we are in great darkness (Mat. 6:22-23).
 - d. We are mammon’s servants (Mat. 6:24).
 - e. We are too worried about things (Mat. 6:25).
 - f. We have missed the lesson of God’s compassionate care (Mat. 6:26).
 - g. We have failed to consider the glory of God’s creation (Mat. 6:27-29).
 - h. We have shown ourselves to be “of little faith” (Mat. 6:30).
 - i. We have behaved as the heathen (Mat. 6:31-32).
 - j. We have failed to put first things first (Mat. 6:33).
 - k. We have borrowed trouble, worrying about tomorrow, instead of trusting that God can take care of the future (Mat. 6:34).

CONCLUSION:

1. When we consider, "Laying Up Treasures," there are some important questions that deserve our careful attention.
 - A. "Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" (Mat. 6:25).
 - 1) The slave of mammon worries about these physical things.
 - 2) The servant of God is concerned about that which makes life precious, gives us purpose, and offers possibilities of godly service, while the servant of mammon is concerned about things that fill the belly and clothe the body.
 - 3) God's servant sees the value of making a life while mammon's servant can see only the need to make a living.
 - B. "Are ye not much better than they?" (Mat. 6:26).
 - 1) The Father, who made the birds, cares for them, supplying them with food.
 - 2) As someone asked: "When was the last time you saw a worried bird?"
 - 3) Of how much greater worth are God's children!
 - C. "Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature?" (Mat. 6:27).
 - 1) One's worry over the measure of his life does not increase it.
 - 2) Being anxious about things will, instead, cause us not to profit in real riches.
 - 3) What a simple lesson, and how we need to learn it!
 - D. "Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" (Mat. 6:30).
 - 1) One of the greatest challenges to man is to trust in God's providential care.
 - 2) Where is our faith?
 - 3) Do we believe God will keep His word to His children?
2. What Shall We Treasure?
 - A. The lesson is this: there are some things men must not treasure, and there are some things men must treasure.
 - B. If we treasure the earthly above the heavenly, our prosperity will come to a complete and final end when death comes (if not before).
 - C. If we treasure the heavenly above the earthly, our reward shall be abundant, heavenly, and eternal.
3. Remember These Points.
 - A. Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth.
 - B. Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.
 - C. The divinely given reason: For where you treasure is, there will your heart be also.

WORKS CITED

I would happily reference any of the many sources (from books I have read, and sermons that I have heard) that, over the last forty years, have influenced my preaching on this subject, were I able to do so (that is, had I recorded those thoughts, points, and observations at the time). If there is credit, I am happy to give that to others, and if there is any honor, I give that to God.

Cast Not Your Pearls Before Swine

Matthew 7:6

Tim Wilkes, II

INTRODUCTION:

1. What a blessing it is to be a child of God and to be in the body of Christ!
 - A. In Christ, we are able to have “all spiritual blessings” (Eph. 1:3); in Him, we are able to have salvation (2 Tim. 2:10), redemption (Eph. 1:7), and eternal life (1 John 5:11).
 - B. Being in Christ means having “no condemnation” (Rom. 8:1).
 - 1) What is the implication for those who are outside of Christ? They *have* condemnation.
 - 2) This makes it vitally important to understand who Christ is and how to gain entrance into His body.
2. The blessing of being in Christ is NOT something that is to be kept to ourselves.
 - A. Followers of Christ have the power of salvation in their possession; it is the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:16)!
 - B. Because of this, the Lord has left a tremendous task for His followers: The Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16).
 - C. There is a responsibility for followers of Christ to take the saving Gospel to others. There are more than seven billion people currently on this earth, and the vast majority are lost.
 - 1) There are lost people all over this world; there are lost people in our own communities; there are lost people in our own neighborhoods; often, there are even lost people in our own homes, and the only hope of salvation is the Gospel.
 - 2) Without a doubt, the child of God has plenty of work to do.
3. With these thoughts in mind, the topic at hand comes from Matthew 7:6: “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.”
 - A. Something interesting about this passage is the context in which it is found.
 - 1) Verses 1-5 is the fairly well known passage about judging, with verse one being the commonly misapplied verse, used by many to say we ought not judge other people at all.
 - 2) Immediately following this discussion of judging, Jesus used terms like “dog” and “swine” in reference to people and indicated they are not to be given spiritual pearls or that which is holy.
 - 3) Clearly, some type of judgment must be applied toward individuals to determine who is a dog or pig.
 - 4) This reveals the importance of considering the context when

determining what is being taught.

- B. Considering what verse six says, despite the importance of the Gospel; despite the Great Commission; despite the value of the human soul (cf. Matt. 16:26); despite God's desire for all mankind to be saved (cf. 1 Tim. 2:4), is it possible that some people are not to be presented with God's saving Truth?

DISCUSSION:

I. WHAT IS THE "HOLY" AND THE "PEARLS"?

- A. The word "holy" means "worthy of veneration" or "set apart for God" (Thayer 6-7).
1. It is something that is worthy of great respect or reverence. It is something dedicated to use in the service of God.
 2. This may have an allusion to the Old Testaments sacrifices and the service of the altar.
 - a. "Those parts of the victims which were not consumed on the altar, were eaten by the priests or by the people; but as they were holy, no unclean person, much less an unclean brute, was allowed to eat them. What was left, after the clean persons had eaten, was not, as at the close of an ordinary meal, cast to the dogs, but it was burned with fire. (Lev. vi. 24-30; vii. 15-21.)" (McGarvey 70).
 - b. While, with reference to the dogs, there could very well be an allusion to the sacrifices at the altar, the application is certainly not limited to such.
 3. "It probably means here anything connected with religion - admonition, precept, or doctrine" (Barnes 76).
 4. The use of "holy" here must be applied to the New Covenant, which Jesus came to establish and is preaching about in this great Sermon on the Mount.
 - a. God's plan of redemption is not for dogs; it is not for the unclean.
 - b. The New Covenant; the church must be kept pure and clean.
- B. The use of "pearls" in the text brings to mind a parable of Jesus.
1. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it" (Matt. 13:45-46).
 2. In this parable, and in the series of parables, Jesus is describing the church, the kingdom of heaven. Here, He is describing the tremendous, unmatched value of the church.
 3. The New Covenant church is a pearl; a pure and precious stone that is not to be contaminated with that which is unclean, like swine.

II. WHO ARE THE DOGS AND SWINE?

- A. The use of “dogs” and “swine” in this passage brings to mind 2 Pet. 2:22. “But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”
1. It also brings to mind Proverbs 26:11. “As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.”
 2. The context of the passage in 2 Peter is that of Christians, those who have escaped the pollution of the world through Jesus Christ, but once again went back into the sinfulness of the world.
 3. The text says it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness.
- B. The passage in 2 Peter is a clear use of dogs and pigs to describe brothers in Christ, members of the church, who have departed from the faith and gone back into the world.
1. This certainly applies to the use of the terms in Matthew 7. In fact, the previous verses describe the mote in the brother’s eye, and how that is to be viewed and taken care of.
 2. There are times when brethren become like dogs and pigs; they have lost the faith they once had; they have lost their respect and appreciation for the things of God; they have lost their reverence for God Himself.
 3. When such have gone so far as to have no more respect for things that are holy, for the pearls, and are continually living in sin and refuse to repent, it comes to a point when they must not be allowed, or at least not given opportunities to profane the things of God or the church that belongs to Him.
- C. It seems these terms are not limited to members of the church who have lost faith, however.
1. That which is holy and described as pearls would certainly include the doctrine of the New Covenant.
 2. “Dogs signify men who spurn, oppose, and abuse that doctrine; men of peculiar sourness and malignity of temper, who meet it like growling and quarrelsome curs...Swine denote those who would trample the precepts under feet; men of impurity of life; those who are corrupt, polluted, profane, obscene, and sensual; those who would not know the value of the gospel, and who would tread it down as swine would pearls” (Barnes 76-77).
 3. Jesus said not to give what is holy to individuals like this; do not cast those precious pearls before them. That is, the pearls of the Gospel, of the kingdom, the church that He purchased with the shedding of His blood.

D. But doesn't God desire for all people to be saved? Why would Jesus say to withhold it from these individuals?

III. WHY ARE THEY TO BE WITHHELD?

A. "Lest they trample them (pearls, TW) under their feet, and turn again and rend you" (Matt. 7:6).

1. The swine will trample the pearls under their feet and the dogs will turn and rend you, the one who is trying to give them what is holy.
2. Those with a disposition for ungodliness have no more appreciation, and see no more beauty in holiness than a pig sees in a pearl. Instead of recognizing its beauty and its value, it is trampled underfoot as if it is worthless.
3. The vicious dog may attack if it finds disappointment in what is being offered to it. This description of a dog rending one who gives it holy things "expresses the personal enmity which those who wilfully reject the gospel often feel towards those who have offered it to them" (Spence 281).
4. That which is holy ought not be treated in such a way.

B. One must remember just how precious these pearls are; Jesus used this terminology to refer to the church He would establish. How valuable is the church?

1. The church is God's saving institution, which He planned from eternity through Jesus Christ (Eph. 3:9-11).
2. The church is what Jesus, Deity, came to this earth and shed His blood to purchase (Acts 20:28).
3. The church, the body of Christ, is that of which Jesus is the Savior (Eph. 5:23).
4. The church, the kingdom of God, is that which the Lord will take home to heaven at the Second Coming (1 Cor. 15:23-24).

C. There is nothing more valuable and important than the church. As such, Jesus is describing how it must be guarded against those who would profane it and contaminate it.

1. This is not a matter of Jesus not desiring the salvation of some individuals. He shed His blood for the remission of sins (Matt. 26:28).
2. Rather, it is a matter of protecting what He established. It is a matter of seeking those who will have a love and appreciation for it, rather than allowing it to be trodden on by those who lack a love and appreciation for it.

IV. APPLICATION AND EXAMPLES

A. Notice what Jesus said: "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank

thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes" (Matt. 11:25).

1. Very similarly, notice the words of the Apostle Paul: "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence" (1 Cor. 1:26-29).
 2. "They who try to glory (boast) because of human greatness and wisdom, are 'confounded' or put to shame" (Jamieson 1 Cor.).
 3. God has hidden the knowledge of salvation from the wise and prudent. Why? "To bring our own 'wisdom and prudence' to such questions is impertinent and presumptuous; and if the truth regarding them or the glory of it, be 'hid' from us, it is but a fitting retribution, to which all the right-minded will set their seal along with Jesus" (Jamieson Matt.).
 4. While these things are hidden from those who think themselves wise, they are revealed to those who recognize their own insufficiency, their own dependence upon God.
 5. It is only a matter of time until those who think themselves wise will apply their own supposed wisdom to the church and the way of salvation and, by such, profane the church.
- B. Notice an account of Paul practicing this teaching of Jesus: "And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus" (Acts 19:8-9).
1. Paul taught the things of God boldly and worked to persuade them concerning the kingdom, the church; however, they were hardened and refused to believe, and even spoke evil of the "way" (cf. John 14:6; Matt. 7:13-14).
 2. Paul was not going to allow that to continue. He left such individuals, and took the disciples to a separate place. He was guarding the pure things of God from those who would profane it.
- C. Examples of this teaching of Jesus being practiced might also be noticed in the way Jesus and others sometimes dealt with those who had a

continual attitude of impenitence (see Matt. 23; Acts 7:51).

1. These were individuals who should have known the Truth and had been provided multiple opportunities to acknowledge the Truth, yet they were still opposing the Way of the Lord.
2. Such individuals were rebuked openly for their opposition to God. They would not be allowed to continue to do such while wearing the facade of men of God.

D. The application of not casting pearls before swine might also be found in the withdrawal of fellowship from erring brethren.

1. The church in Corinth had a brother among them who was openly engaging in a sinful lifestyle, but was apparently still being treated as a faithful member of the Lord's body by the Corinthian brethren (1 Cor. 5).
2. Paul rebuked them for their arrogance in not dealing with the problem and instructed them to deliver the sinful brother to Satan. This was to be done in an attempt to save him (to help him acknowledge his wrong and repent) and also to protect the integrity and purity of the church.

E. Another example of this teaching of Jesus being practiced might be noticed in Jesus' refusal to answer questions on occasion.

1. On one occasion, Jesus was approached by the chief priests and elders of the people. They asked, "By what authority do you do these things? And who gave thee this authority?" (Matt 21:23).
2. Jesus knew their motives were not pure and, in order to reveal that, He responded with a question of His own: "The baptism of John, whence was it? From heaven or of men?" (verse 25).
3. They could not say it was from heaven, because they had rejected it, but they could not say it was of men, because they feared the people, as the people believed John to be a prophet, so they refused to answer.
4. Now that Jesus had revealed their ill motive and that they were not seekers of Truth, He refused to answer their question.
5. Likewise, when those who oppose God ask questions with ill motives or in an attempt to start an argument, children of God are not under obligation to answer.
6. Such would be casting pearls before swine. Or perhaps better described as giving that which is holy to dogs, for their response is often to "turn again and rend you."

CONCLUSION:

1. "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you" (Matthew 7:6).

- A. Though this passage may seem, at first, to be harsh and even lacking compassion for souls, that is not at all the case.
 - B. Jesus is not lacking in compassion. His love for souls transcends our ability to comprehend. In fact, this is why this teaching was given.
 - C. Jesus shed His blood to purchase the church (Acts 20:28); the church is His bride (2 Cor. 11:2); it is His body (Col. 1:18); He is the Savior of it (Eph 5:23), thus it must be kept “holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:27).
 - D. Because of such, the church must be guarded and kept pure for those to desire to contaminate it.
2. May we ever be mindful of the church’s purity and never be guilty of becoming dogs or swine.

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The Narrow and Wide Gates

Matthew 7:13-14

Jared Rhodes

INTRODUCTION:

1. The sermon which Jesus presents upon the mountain in Matthew 5-7 could be considered one of the richest pieces of literature ever recorded.
2. When studying Christ's sermon, near the end one will notice the narrow and wide gates on which we will focus.
3. The narrow and wide gates present themselves in opposition to one another.
 - A. The opposition between the gates prevents one from being able to choose both gates.
 - B. This leaves every individual with a decision to make as to which one they will choose.
 - C. The contrast found in these verses does not end with the gates.
 - 1) The contrast continues into the paths that are chosen.
 - 2) The number of people which will choose each path is pointed out.
 - 3) The ending point of where the paths lead also oppose one another.
4. Since the creation recorded in Genesis 1 there have been choices presented to mankind.
 - A. Those choices that are made are then followed with consequences, whether for the betterment of that individual, or possibly for the heartbreak.
 - B. One might notice Adam and Eve succumbed to temptation in Genesis 3 and punishment followed affecting the lives of every human being after them.
5. We will consider four factors found in Matthew 7:13-14:
 - A. The Doorways of our Journey.
 - B. The Detours of our Journey.
 - C. The Directions of our Journey.
 - D. The Destinations of our Journey

DISCUSSION:

I. THE DOORWAYS OF OUR JOURNEY

- A. The doorways found in verse 13 are applicable to every individual alive.
 1. Christ begins by laying out the gate that is at found at the completion of a successful journey.
 2. Christ immediately points out the opposing gate which is nothing more than ultimate failure.
- B. The two doorways spoken of are the only choices available.
 1. Buffet Christianity has become a huge problem in our society because everyone wants it their way.

- a. There is no back door through which one may sneak into heaven.
 - b. Jesus limited the number of the saved to those who obeyed His word (Joh 12:48).
- 2. The idea that Christ will bless an individual with eternal life who is living contrary to the doctrine of Christ is preposterous.
 - a. We understand the walls of Jericho would not have fallen had the Israelites decided not to march the seventh day, because nothing had happened the first six days (Jos. 6).
 - b. If Naaman had chosen to dip seven times in the rivers of Damascus instead of the Jordan, we would not have been surprised when his leprosy would have continued (II Kin. 5).
 - c. This only leaves the question, Why on earth would Christ choose to save an individual who decides to make their own path to the mansion which Christ is preparing? (Joh. 14:2-3).
- C. Christ limited the gate to the narrow one, which is Christ (Joh. 14:6).

II. THE DETOURS OF OUR JOURNEY

- A. The journey that is to be taken includes detours which are to be avoided.
- B. The detours that exist are very simple to fall into.
 - 1. Broad is the way, because whoever is not on the narrow path by default is on the broad path.
 - 2. The broad path consumes all other choices that are not the strait and narrow way, including the back door we mentioned earlier.
- C. One great distraction of detours is how attractive they appear, which enables the devil to draw in the masses (Jam. 1:14-16).

III. THE DIRECTIONS OF OUR JOURNEY

- A. In giving directions, Christ lays out the strait way as the one to be chosen.
- B. "Strait," points to the difficulty of the way that must be endured to reach that gate.
 - 1. The journey in which we are engaged includes tribulation (Acts 14:22).
 - 2. Therefore we must encourage one another to prevent faithful brethren from being overtaken by sin's deceit.
- C. Christ then gives a warning of which path not to choose.
- D. Christ describes the path further as narrow which seems hardly appealing (Rom. 6:17-18).

IV. THE DESTINATION OF OUR JOURNEY

- A. The way which Christ presents seems hardly inviting, but the end is most pleasant.
- B. The final destination of your journey is life eternal (Rev. 22:14).
- C. The sad reality of this is MANY will not choose this path that leads to eternal life.
 - 1. Most people today believe they are going to Heaven and their loved ones will all be there as well.
 - 2. Jesus however sad there will be FEW who enter life Eternal.
 - 3. Therefore, we are only left to consider if our lives measure up to the eternal truths of God's Word (Psalm 119:160).

CONCLUSION:

- 1. The Strait and Narrow way is of utmost importance to the New Testament Christian because it is the only way that leads to heaven.
- 2. In our Christian journey we should always consider the way home!
 - A. The Doorways of our Journey.
 - B. The Detours of our Journey.
 - C. The Directions of our Journey.
 - D. The Destinations of our Journey
- 3. The study of this great passage should only give Christians a greater desire to search God's Word, so we may know on which path we are traveling (Acts 17:11).
- 4. The key to us reaching our destination is dependent solely on our willingness to accept Christ's sacrifice by being obedient to the whole of Scripture.

Beware of False Prophets

Matthew 7:15-20

Brian Briscoe

INTRODUCTION:

1. There is not anything more dangerous than a false teacher of religion.
2. One may reply to such a statement by saying, "What do you mean? There are murderers!"
3. It is true that man is his own greatest threat physically speaking, but there is a threat that far exceeds the physical, and that is the spiritual threat led by Satan – man's greatest enemy (1 Pet. 5:8).
4. Men can take physical lives (which are temporary to begin with), but the influence of a false teacher can cause one to lose his soul in eternal punishment!

I. THE CAUTION IN REGARDS TO FALSE PROPHETS (v. 15).

A. The definition of a false prophet.

1. Vine's dictionary defines a prophet as "a proclaimer of a divine message" (493).
 - a. A prophet was one who was simply a mouthpiece for God. He spoke the words that God had given him to speak; and because God is eternal, knowing all things past, present and future, His prophets could, and often did, foretell future events that would come to pass.
 - b. Since a prophet is one who proclaims God's Word, a false prophet is one who does NOT proclaim God's Word.
 - 1) Rather than letting God put words in his mouth to speak forth, such as with David (2 Sam. 23:2) and as with Jeremiah (Jer. 1:9), a false prophet tries to put words in God's mouth.
 - 2) He is one who speaks falsely or speaks lies in the name of the Lord.
 - c. There were false prophets during the time of the Babylonian captivity (Jer. 5:31; 6:14; 14:11-16; 28; Ezek. 13).
2. Although there are men and women today who claim to be prophets and prophetesses, the truth is there are no prophets living today.
 - a. The Bible teaches that prophesying would cease when the perfect system of revelation would come (1 Cor. 13:9-10).
 - 1) The gift of prophecy was a partial system of revelation during the infancy stage of the church.
 - 2) We now have the perfect (complete) system of

Revelation, and It is the written Word of God (Bible).

- 3) Therefore, we no longer need prophecy, because we have the complete all sufficient revelation of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3; Jude 3; Eph. 3:4).
 - b. Someone may say that since a prophet is one who speaks or proclaims the Word of God, then anyone who preaches can be considered a prophet.
 - 1) A prophet was not just one who spoke a divine message from God, but he received the message by a miraculous means – dream, vision, angels, visible manifestations of God (burning bush-Exo. 3) or directly (Num. 12:6-8).
 - 2) God does not talk to anyone today by any of the aforementioned ways. He talks to man today solely through His written Word and by no other means.
 3. All today who claim to be prophets and to speak on God's behalf introducing strange doctrines and new revelations are nothing more than liars!
 - a. God does not want us to have anything to do with them nor those who claim to be psychics or fortune tellers.
 - b. All such things are ungodly (Deut. 18:10-12).
 4. The word "prophets" in the sense of this verse is most likely and generally to be understood as "religious teachers."
 5. Jesus' caution about false teachers right after He teaches about the broad and narrow way is probably no coincidence.
 - a. It is by the deception of false teachers that most of the "many" Jesus mentions as entering into the wide gate (Matt. 7:13-14), will choose to travel the broad way of destruction.
 - b. The greater percentage of the world is religious, but yet the greater percentage of those claiming to be religious are not Christians.
- B. The disguise of false prophets.
1. Jesus said they come in "sheep's clothing."
 - a. Sheep can be used to describe one who is gentle, kind, harmless, innocent, etc.
 - b. God's people also have been generally described as sheep whose shepherd is the Lord.
 2. A false teacher is going to appear to be one of God's own.
 - a. If everyone knows he is a false teacher, then he cannot lead people away from the Truth with his doctrine.
 - b. He must first disguise himself that he may gain the

confidence of his hearers; then he influences them in the way he wants.

c. Paul wrote to the Galatians about false brethren that were brought in privately to spy out the freedom that is in Christ, and their intentions were to bring Christians back under bondage of the Law of Moses by binding circumcision (Gal. 2:4).

1) These were false teachers, and how did they come in?

2) They did not march straight in and immediately start forcing their teachings, but rather came in “unawares” to others and “privately.”

d. Notice also Acts 20:28-30; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; and Jude 3-4.

3. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (2 Cor. 11:14-15 – KJV).

a. Someone may say, “But he’s so nice and he knows the Bible so well and he is such a good preacher. There’s no way he could be a false teacher!”

b. Friends, the first sign of a potential false teacher is when he is admired by all men (Luke 6:26).

1) If one truly lives and teaches the doctrine of Christ then he is going to face opposition.

2) The Truth is the reason Christ was murdered, and He warned His followers that the time would come when they too would face persecution (John 15:18-20; 1 John 3:13; 2 Tim. 3:12).

3) Was Paul liked by all men? Certainly not!

C. The true demeanor of false prophets.

1. They come disguised in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves (v. 15b).

a. “The thought of ‘ravening’ is of both violence and greed.

These false prophets are not merely wicked at heart and opposed to the truth, but they wish to injure you, and that for their own gain” (Pulpit Commentary).

b. “Applied to the false teachers, it means that they assumed the appearance of holiness in order that they might the more readily get the property of the people. They were full of extortion and excess. See Mat. 23:25” (Barnes).

2. The true demeanor of the majority of false teachers is covetousness, greed and or self-exaltation.

a. Peter wrote, “And through covetousness shall they with

- feigned words make merchandise of you" (2 Pet. 2:3a).
- b. Paul wrote, "For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Rom. 16:18).
3. Many sincere people are being made merchandise by false teachers.
 - a. Televangelists persuade the masses by what is called the "prosperity gospel."
 - 1) Paul warned Titus of such individuals (Tit. 1:10-11).
 - 2) Paul also told Timothy to withdraw himself from such people (1 Tim. 6:5-6).
 - b. Well known and favored Atlanta preacher Creflo Dollar publicly petitioned for his followers to give an offering of 300 dollars each to go towards purchasing him a 60 million dollar jet (Ohlheiser).
 - c. Joel Osteen, another well-known and favored preacher has the largest congregation in America located in Houston Texas. He lives in a 10 million dollar mansion (Wikipedia.org).

II. THE WAY FOR ONE TO BE CONSCIOUS OF FALSE PROPHETS (vs. 16-18).

- A. How can one heed the caution given by Christ to "beware of false prophets," if he cannot possibly determine who is a false prophet?
 1. Christ gives an illustration to help them understand how to recognize a false teacher (v. 16).
 - a. Men do not gather grapes from thorns, nor do they gather figs from thistles, because neither of those plants produce grapes or figs.
 - b. Therefore, one should not expect to get grapes or figs from such plants.
 2. Jesus then compares the nature of trees to that of religious teachers (v. 17-18).
 - a. As is the tree, so is the fruit.
 - b. The fruit determines the nature of the tree, whether it is good or bad.
 - c. The same applies to religious teachers.
 - 1) A good teacher produces sound (healthy) doctrine, while a false teacher produces doctrine that is not sound.
 - 2) Some think the "fruits" referred to in this passage refer more to the works of the teacher rather than his teaching.
 - 3) The overall idea seems to point to his teaching rather

than works, because a man can preach the Truth and still live a life contrary to his teaching. But, does this necessarily make him a false teacher? No, it makes him a hypocritical teacher.

- d. How does one recognize a false teacher? By his teaching.
3. There was given in the Old Testament a method of proving or disproving one to be a true prophet of God (Deut. 18:18-22).
 - a. If the prophecy does not come to pass as stated by the prophet, then he is without question proven to be a false prophet!
 - b. There are so many religious leaders throughout history who have failed this divine test time again, yet they still have a great following.
4. During the first century A.D., some in the church had the spiritual gift of discernment (1 Cor. 12:10).
 - a. This gift seemed to give them the ability to discern truth from error.
 - b. John, when writing about antichrists who had gone out from among them and made themselves known, seems to refer to this gift by writing, "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things" (1 John 2:20).
 - c. He also wrote, "These *things* have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him" (1 John 2:26-27).
 - d. This gift also gave Peter the knowledge of Ananias and Sapphira's deceit (Acts 5:1-10).
- B. How does one determine a false teacher in the present age when miraculous gifts no longer occur?
 1. He does it by comparing what is being taught to what the Scriptures teach.
 - a. With God's written Word we are to "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thes. 5:21).
 - b. If it agrees with what the Bible teaches, accept it, and if not, reject it!
 2. The Apostle John clearly exhorts Christians to "believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).
 - a. John warns that there are going to be many false teachers in

the world, and that one is not to accept just any doctrine that comes along from anyone professing to be a Christian; but he is to try, test, or prove the teaching, regarding whether it came from God.

b. Notice also 1 Pet. 4:11; Acts 17:11; Rev. 2:2.

III. THE CONDEMNATION THAT AWAITS FALSE PROPHETS (v. 19).

A. Christ uses this simple illustration to warn of the eternal punishment of false teachers.

1. Bad trees produce bad fruit and therefore are worthless.
2. Their only use is to be cut down and used for fire wood.
3. False teachers, who have led countless souls away from the Truth for any number of reasons shall all face the same fate as a useless tree that produces bad fruit. On the Judgment Day they shall be cast into the fires of Hell.
4. Paul warned the Galatians "If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. 6:9).
5. Peter mentioned the fact that one can wrest or twist the meaning of the Scriptures, resulting in his soul's destruction (2 Pet. 3:16).

B. James wrote something to which all who desire to preach should really consider, "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation" (Jas. 3:1).

1. The ASV uses "teachers" rather than "masters" and "heavier judgment" in the place of "greater condemnation."
 - a. Why shall public teachers receive a heavier judgment?
 - 1) Because the Words they are handling are the very Words of Almighty God (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Prov. 30:6).
 - 2) Because of the great responsibility they take upon themselves by choosing to publicly proclaim a Word that is "quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword" (Heb. 4:12).
 - 3) Because to whom much is given, much is required (Lk. 12:43-48).
 - b. Those who publicly teach and preach have such great responsibility because of the influence they have on so many souls.
 - 1) Preachers and teachers will be held liable for how they have handled the Word of God.
 - 2) Grave judgment will come upon all who, as a result of teaching error, cause another to stumble (Matt. 18:6).

2. The meaning of James 3:1 is not all should be public teachers of

God's Word.

- a. Not everyone is qualified to stand before a number of people and teach God's Word.
- b. One does not need a college degree to preach, but he MUST have an understanding of the Bible and know how to rightly divide it (2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Tim. 4:13, 16).
- c. He must also be faithful (2 Tim. 2:2; 1 Thes. 2:4; 2 Cor. 4:5; Phil. 2:20-21).

CONCLUSION:

1. Christ cautioned about false prophets; He gave a way for all to be conscious of false prophets, and He also told of the sure condemnation that awaits all who speak falsely in the Name of the Lord.
2. May we not be deceived or put our souls in jeopardy by not being certain of the Truth (John 8:32).
3. Let us study and know the Word of God, so that we may clearly distinguish the Truth from error as Christ said, "Ye shall know them by their fruits" (Matt. 7:16).

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The Judgment Day

Matthew 7:21-29

Mike Hixson

INTRODUCTION:

1. In bringing the historic Sermon on the Mount to a close, the Lord Jesus emphasized the importance of obeying the Word of God in light of the coming day of judgment.
2. There is a day God has set aside to judge the human family.
3. The judgment will be inclusive of all people.
 - A. The apostle Paul said, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Co. 5:10).
 - B. On another occasion, Paul wrote, "for we shall all stand before the before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, as I live saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:10b-12).
4. For the purposes of this lesson, we want to examine what the Lord said in Matthew 7:21-29, underscoring the theme, "The Judgment Day."

I. THE POWER OF PROFESSION AND PRACTICE IN THE NAME OF JESUS (7:21, 24-25, 28-29).

A. *The powerful legislation of Jesus (7:21, 28-29).*

1. **His authority (5:1-2, 21-22; 7:28-29; 28:18; 17:5).**

- a. The prerequisite to entering the kingdom of heaven is obedience to the commands of God (7:21).
 - 1) We must obey the gospel to become a member of the kingdom of God (Jo. 8:24; Lu. 13:3; Acts 8:37; 2:38; Jo. 3:3-5).
- b. There are provisions granted to all who enter the kingdom of heaven through obedience to the commands of God.
 - 1) We are blessed to be pardoned by God (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Eph. 1:7; Rev. 1:5).
 - 2) We are blessed to enjoy peace with God (Rom. 5:1-2; Eph. 2:12-17; Phil. 4:7).

- 3) We are blessed with the privilege of prayer to God (Eph. 1:3; I Pet. 3:12; I Jo. 5:14-15).
- 4) We are blessed with the presence of God (Phil. 4:5; Heb. 13:5-6).
- 5) We are blessed with the promises of God (Jo. 14:1-3; I Pet. 1:3-4; Rev. 20:1-7).

B. *The powerful illustration of Jesus (7:24-25).*

- 1. We must be willing to hear what Jesus says in His Word (7:24a).**
 - a. We need to be wise to the words of Jesus (Isa. 34:16; II Tim. 2:15; 3:16-17; Eph. 5:17; Jo. 12:48).
 - b. We need to be wise to the ways of Jesus (I Pet. 2:21; Phil. 2:5-8).
- 2. We must be willing to heed what Jesus says in His Word (7:24b-25).**
 - a. We have the assurance of life eternal if we remain "faithful unto death" (Rev. 2:10).

II. THE PROBLEM WITH PROFESSION WITHOUT PRACTICE IN THE NAME OF JESUS (7:22-23, 26-27).

A. *The fate of the disobedient on the day of judgment is sobering (7:22-23).*

- 1. It is sad to think of the sayings of many people on the day of judgment (7:22).**
 - a. Many people will boast of their words in the name of Jesus at the judgment (7:22a).
 - b. Many people will boast of their works in the name of Jesus at the judgment (7:22b).
- 2. It is sad to think of the sentencing of many people on the day of judgment (7:23).**
 - a. On the day of judgment, the disobedient will hear the sobering words, "I never knew you" (7:23a).
 - b. On the day of judgment, the disobedient will hear the severing words, "depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (7:23b).

B. *The foolishness of the disobedient before the day of judgment is serious (7:26-27).*

1. It is the height of foolishness to disregard what the Lord says about becoming a Christian.

- a. There is only one road to salvation and it runs through Jesus Christ (Jo. 14:6; Acts 4:12).
 - 1) In order to be saved, we must hear the saving message of the gospel (Rom. 10:17; Rom. 1:16), and
 - 2) Put our faith and trust in Jesus as the Son of God (Heb. 11:6; Jo. 8:24).
 - 3) The next step in God's plan is repentance of sin (Lu. 13:3), which is a change of heart followed by a change of activities.
 - 4) Repentance from sin is followed by confessing the name of Jesus before others (Matt. 10:32; Acts 8:37).
 - 5) The final step that leads to salvation is immersion in water "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Baptism into Christ also places us in the church of Christ (Acts 2:38, 41, 47; I Co. 12:13).
 - 6) The necessity of being in the church of Christ is reflected in the fact that Jesus is "the saviour of the body" (Eph. 5:23), which is the church (Eph. 1:22-23).

2. It is the height of foolishness to disregard what the Lord says about behaving as a Christian.

- a. The Lord has only promised to save us if we are "faithful until death" (Rev. 2:10; Jas. 1:12).
 - 1) We must be faithful in our walk with God (Gen. 5:24; Heb. 11:5; Eph. 5:8; Tit. 2:11-15).
 - 2) We must be faithful in our work for God (Eph. 2:10; Matt. 5:16; Matt. 25:31-46).
 - 3) We must be faithful in our worship to God (Heb. 10:25).

CONCLUSION:

- 1. We can be absolutely certain there will be a final day of judgment.
- 2. There will be no exclusions or absentees.
- 3. The Hebrews writer affirmed, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27).
- 4. Are you ready for the day of judgment?

Ladies'
Lectures

But I Say Unto You, Love Your Enemies

Matthew 5:38-48

Irene C. Taylor

INTRODUCTION:

1. The command to love our enemies is issued in a context of teaching proper human deportment.
2. The teaching of this section of scripture is a test of our capacity to love our fellow man.

DISCUSSION:

I. WHAT IS LOVE?

- A. One of the definitions of love given via Webster's dictionary is "a feeling of brotherhood and good will toward other people."
 1. There are different kinds of love.
 - a. *Agape* is a type of spontaneous, unselfish love. Some have called it the highest form of love.
 - 1) It is the kind that wishes only good, not harm, for the object loved.
 - b. *Phileo* love is a warm affection for one's mate, children, parent, and friends.
 - B. For our study, we will focus on *agape* love.
 1. This love desires only the best for the person loved.
 2. This kind of love will use every opportunity to do good to others.
 3. *Agape* love includes the treatment rendered to those near and dear to us, as well as those who oppose or mistreat us.

II. WHO ARE OUR ENEMIES?

- A. Turning again to Webster's dictionary we find that an enemy is "one who is unfriendly, a person who hates another, a nation or force hostile to another; one willing to do anything injurious or harmful."
- B. An enemy is one who works behind the back of another to produce harm or injury, one who slanders the character of another.
 1. This can be done by issuing false information or insinuations.
 2. It can take the form of speaking outright lies against another.

III. HOW CAN WE LOVE OUR ENEMY?

- A. We must understand this is not the same depth of love felt toward family and friends.
- B. First, we should pray for them.

1. Jesus commands this: "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" (Matt. 5:44).
2. Speak a kind word to help them through sorrows and trials.
 - a) Note the response commanded in the surrounding context.
 - 1) We are to turn the other cheek (vs. 39).
 - 2) "Let him have thy cloak" (vs. 40).
 - 3) Go that extra mile with him (vs. 41).
 - 4) Let him borrow from thee (vs. 42).
- C. Good deeds are not done to be requited.
 1. Many a situation has been remedied by "killing them with kindness."
 2. "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them..." (Matt. 7:12).
- D. Doing the right thing is not always easy, but it is God's will.
 1. We must not stoop to "rendering evil for evil" (I Pet. 3:9).
 2. "Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heaps coals of fire on his head" (Rom. 12:20).

IV. THERE ARE DIFFERENT TYPES OF ENEMIES.

- A. There are personal enemies.
 1. Sometimes these are the result of jealousy.
- B. There are enemies of Truth.
 1. What should we do toward them?
 - a. We must teach them the truth. This often requires love and much patience.
 - b. We must show them the beauty and benefits of accepting and living by God's Truth.
 - c. To be effective, we must exemplify truth in our own lives.
- C. There are enemies of nations during war.

V. SOME EXAMPLES OF AGAPE LOVE.

- A. Look at the life of Saul, later known as Paul.
 1. He was a prominent enemy of the Lord and the Christian movement.
 - a. He was known as a persecutor of Christians.
 - b. Jesus took note of his persecutions (Acts 9:4).
 2. Saul the persecutor became Paul the apostle.
 - a. He became a stalwart in the spreading of the Gospel of Truth.
 - b. How did such a change occur?
 - 1) Jesus practiced *agape* love.

- 2) Paul was taught the Truth and left his life of sin.
- B. Take note of the work of Otis Gatewood.
1. If you are unfamiliar with this work, you would benefit from researching it.
 2. The war with Germany had ended.
 3. Otis Gatewood led a group of missionaries to take the Gospel of Truth to a downtrodden nation.
 - a. He spent many years converting many and helping to establish congregations of the Lord's people.
 - b. Instead of thinking about retaliation, he focused on salvation.

V. THE BENEFIT OF LOVING ONE'S ENEMIES.

- A. We are obeying the Lord's command.
- B. We are following the example of Jesus.
- C. We rise above the standard of the world.
 1. The world says, "I'll get even."
 2. Jesus says look toward Heaven.
 - a) He taught the need to practice love toward enemies, "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:45).
 - b) If we practice only the world's standards, what reward have we? (Matt. 5:46-47).
 3. Our goal is to "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48).

CONCLUSION:

1. By following the command to love our enemies, we are helping to keep our Christian record on a higher plane.
 - A. Jesus did not say it would be easy, only that it would be worthwhile.
2. We are helping to make the world a better place for all.
3. We can make our own life much happier by removing the desire to retaliate, thus eliminating much undesirable stress, which adversely affects our health.

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LOVE YOUR ENEMY

When we refuse to join the world
In retaliation to those against us,
We keep our life on higher plane
And free of strife and fuss.

The love for those who dislike us
Is different from love for mate.
It is a challenge all its own.
It can affect our fate.

The self-control herein required
Helps mold our walk below.
It helps to keep our eyes on high
Toward heaven as on we go.

So let's determine while we can
To move above life's fray,
Release the hurt and anger now.
Instead, let's love and pray.

Let's press our goal toward heaven above
By living correctly now,
That in that final Judgment Day
Before the throne we'll bow.

Irene C. Taylor
January 9, 2016

Take No Thought

Matthew 6:25-34; 7:7-11

Maggie Colley

INTRODUCTION:

1. Is this not the perfect time to speak on "Take No Thought"?
2. Resolutions have been made all over the United States and the world, including myself, and also you who are in this class.
3. Two important references to our study of the Sermon on the Mount are:
 - A. When the Lord's disciples "feared exceedingly," He asked them, "Why are ye fearful? Have ye not yet faith?" (Mk. 4:40-41).
 - B. As our text shows, fear and faith stand in opposition to each other:

Matthew 6:25-34 - "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof."

Matthew 7:7-11 - "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

4. A close study of these passages will give the solution to fear, help us to handle our problems in life, and do so without worry!
5. Therefore we will "Take No Thought" for the things which God provides.

DISCUSSION:

I. WE ARE CONVINCED THAT MOST OF OUR PROBLEMS STEM FROM NOT APPLYING THE PRINCIPLES OF TRUTH TO OUR LIVES.

- A. Because of this fact, we have stress in our lives which robs us of happiness and peace in life.
- B. Though we may not have the answers, God does have those answers.
- C. When we go to the Bible, great help is given (II Pet. 1:3; II Tim. 3:16-17).
- D. Oftentimes our problem results from a lack of faith in God and His Word (Heb. 11:6).
- E. Jesus invites us to come to Him believing (Matt. 11:28-30; Jn. 14:1-3; 8:24).

II. SATAN WANTS US TO FEAR, STRESS OVER MATTERS, AND DOUBT ABOUT GOD'S HELP (I PET. 5:8).

- A. First in our lives, we must obey the primary principles of the Gospel (We must hear the Gospel, believe, repent, confess, and be baptized for the remission of sins. Acts 2:36-42; 8:26-38).
- B. Then we must faithfully live and serve in the Lord's kingdom (Acts 2:42; I Cor. 15:58; Rev. 2:10).
- C. This life of faith relieves us of anxiety, fear, doubt, and the results of human reasoning!
- D. Since faith is the remedy for these problems in life, we must know how to obtain this faith, hence again, we must turn to the Bible (Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:1).

III. ANOTHER WORD FOR FAITH IS "TRUST."

- A. We must learn to trust in God for doubt, disbelief, and distrust to be removed from our lives.
- B. How wonderful to know that our God is omnipresent (in all places all the time), omnipotent (unlimited in power), omniscient (He has infinite knowledge, knows all things) (Psa. 139:7-12).
- C. We must develop a trust in the Providence of God; He does give providential care.
- D. God's providence works through and in keeping with His prescribed laws.
- E. He promises to take care of us, as we have learned in our study of the Sermon On The Mount.
- F. We gain great comfort from passages such as these and also from other references (Prov. 3:5-6).

CONCLUSION:

1. How thankful we should be to be able to hear the greatest preacher that ever lived describe the greatest way to live!
2. We can safely put our entire trust and confidence in Him, and learn to love Him with all our hearts (Matt. 22:37).
3. Today we have learned that the only way a Christian woman can survive in this challenging world is through the study and obedience to God's Word (Psa. 119:105).
4. After we become Christians we have to continue to study and put into practice the lessons learned in order to have a strong faith that saves and helps us to overcome the difficulties of this world (II Tim. 2:15; II Pet. 3:18).
5. Though Christians are not exempt from doubt, disbelief, and distrust, our faith is able to lift us above these crushing difficulties.
6. The poet said: "Faith came singing into my room and other guests took flight; Fear and anxiety, grief and gloom, sped out into the night!"

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