

SERMON ON THE MOUNT PART 2

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The Sermon on the Mount is probably the most important message that Jesus gave.

Matthew Chapters 5 to 7 gives us some really detailed personal instruction from the Lord Jesus in how we should live.

It is not so much a theological treatise ... as just down-to-earth instruction.

It is important for us to be familiar with it — and ... of course ... practice what Jesus taught!

Last time we looked at the 8 Beatitudes — qualities we should possess — poor in spirit ... people who mourn for the state of the world ... meek ... hunger for righteousness ... be merciful ... pure of heart ... peacemakers as far as we can ... ready for persecution for The Word's sake.

We will move on today to the next major section.

Matthew 5:17-20

17 "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.

18 "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

19 "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

20 "For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

Everybody then looked to the Scribes and Pharisees as ultimate examples in righteousness. They presented themselves that way ... as Holy ... Pious ... Spiritual leaders ... as models who could be imitated.

Jesus is going to correct the faulty teaching of the Pharisees. Jesus is going to show God's intent and heart. The Pharisees had corrupted God's Word by their additions and subtractions — their amendments to the Word of God.

It was a real problem if you heeded their teaching. And ... of course ... people did heed their teachings. They could only get God's Word by what they heard from the Pharisees.

Mark 7:5-13

5 **Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"** *(the traditions of the elders were important in their eyes. And shock horror ... Jesus and His disciples are not listening to the teachings of these rabbis).*

6 **He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:**

'This people honours Me with their lips,

But their heart is far from Me.

7 And in vain they worship Me,

Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'

8 **"For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men**--the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do."

9 He said to them, **"All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.** *(The traditions were vitally important ... that is what they taught).*

10 "For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.'

11 "But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban"--' (that is, a gift to God),

12 "then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother,

13 **"making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down.** And many such things you do."

They make the plain ... clear Word of God — OF NO EFFECT! They were hypocrites!

We need to be careful today of pious religious teachers ... who add and subtract. We need to check out that what is being taught is The Word of God.

Matthew 5:21-26

21 "**You have heard that it was said** to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.'

22 "**But I say** to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire.

23 "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you,

24 "leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

25 "Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison.

26 "Assuredly, **I say** to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny.

“You have heard it said ... but I say” (appears six times).

People say that Jesus is overturning the Old Testament scriptures. No! Jesus is not altering — or even “upgrading” — the Old Testament commands. He is simply wiping away the dross of false teachings.

What they “had heard” was the teaching of the rabbis. Which was based on scripture (to a point) but then often so swamped in man-made rules and interpretations as to no longer be of “any effect”.

If and when Jesus or the Apostles wanted to refer to the Old Testament ... nearly always ... they tended to use the formula ... “it is written”.

Matthew 4:3-4, 7, 10

3 Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

4 But **He answered and said, "It is written,** 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' "

7 Jesus said to him, "**It is written again,** 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God.' "

10 Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For **it is written,** 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.' "

That expression "It is written" appears over 60 times in the New Testament.

Jesus is going to explain God's practical instructions ... clearly — freed from the rabbis add-ons.

"I SAY" — Jesus speaks with authority!

Matthew 7:28-29

28 And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that **the people were astonished at His teaching,**

29 for **He taught them as one having authority,** and **not as the scribes.**

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brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire.

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26 "Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny.

Not just "Don't murder". Even anger without good reason ... is to be avoided.

However ... this was not Jesus overturning the Old Testament ... or even "upgrading" it. It was never permissible to hate or be angry without a cause.

- Was it okay for Cain to have wrath towards Abel?
- Was it okay for Joseph's brothers to hate him?
- Was it okay for King Saul to hate David?

NO! IT HAS NEVER BEEN OKAY!

Leviticus 19:17-18

17 **'You shall not hate your brother in your heart.'** You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him.

18 **'You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people,'** but **you shall love your neighbor as yourself:** I am the LORD.

"You shall not hate your brother in your heart". The rabbis taught you "were okay" as long as you didn't actually murder the person. That's what the people "heard".

Jesus explains the reality of God's instruction.

Hopefully ... the teaching for us is clear? Don't be an angry person! BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS.

Matthew 5:27-30

27 **"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.'**

28 **"But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."**

29 "If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

30 "And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

Don't just avoid adulterous acts — as the Pharisees taught — but also avoid lust. Adulterous thoughts ... even in the heart ... are wrong.

Was Jesus expanding — or upgrading — the Old Testament?

Commandment #10: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife".

Lust was always wrong and to be avoided. Jesus shows the firm action that must be taken.

Probably in most cases ... the actual adultery began in the mind of the participants? Then progressed? **NIP IT IN THE BUD!**

James 1:13-15

13 **Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.**

14 But **each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.**

15 **Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.**

Job 31:1

1 **"I have made a covenant with my eyes; Why then should I look upon a young woman?"**

Job knew lust was wrong and avoided it.

Job 31:1 (NIV)

1 **"I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman.**

Job 31:1 (MSG)

1 **"I made a solemn pact with myself never to undress a girl with my eyes.**

BEATITUDE: BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART!

Jesus was freeing God's pure Word from the compromises and interpretations of the rabbis.

Matthew 5:31-32

31 **"Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.'**

32 **"But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality (*porneia*) causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.**

The teaching of the rabbis was that it was okay to “put away” your wife ... as long as there was the formality of a legal document. Some dispute about whether you could “put away” for any reason — or only sexual immorality.

The Pharisees then (and most people today) look for a host of technicalities and reasons to “put away” ... adultery ... alcohol ... work-shy ... irreconcilable differences. In the USA ... about 50% of marriages end in divorce. It is similar among “Born-again” evangelical Bible believers!!

Jesus upholds the sanctity of marriage. OTHER THAN FORNICATION — ALL “DIVORCE” IS WRONG.

This wasn't a new standard from Jesus. Even though divorce happened in Old Testament times ... God has always hated it.

Malachi 2:14-16

14 Yet you say, "For what reason?"

Because **the LORD has been witness**

***Between you and the wife of your youth,
With whom you have dealt treacherously;***

Yet she is your companion

And your wife by covenant.

15 But ***did He not make them one,***

Having a remnant of the Spirit?

And why one?

He seeks godly offspring.

Therefore take heed to your spirit,

And ***let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth.***

16 "For ***the LORD God of Israel says***

That He hates divorce,

For it covers one's garment with violence,"

Says the LORD of hosts.

"Therefore take heed to your spirit,

That you do not deal treacherously."

God hates divorce! He classes it as treachery!

The garments of the Saints should be clean and white. Not stained and dirty and contaminated.

In Matthew Chapter 19 ... the Pharisees seek to get Jesus to adjudicate between the different schools of thought (Shammai ... who was fairly strict. Hillel ... who was very liberal). Jesus dismisses their whole approach! "From the beginning it was not so — what God has joined together let no man put asunder".

Because Jesus teaches faithfulness. An important quality in every aspect of our lives ... critically important when it comes to Holy Matrimony (or Wedlock ... doesn't that suggest that you are locked?)

God expects us to be completely faithful.

Nothing new there!

Matthew 5:33-37

33 "Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.'

34 "**But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne;**

35 "nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.

36 "Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black.

37 "**But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.**

Vows — promissory declarations are okay (such as marriage vows). Though think carefully — we must be faithful to our promises ... to our covenants!

Jesus isn't changing or upgrading the Old Testament. He's correcting the false teaching of the Pharisees that the disciples would have heard.

Matthew 23:13-14

13 "**But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. *(Their teachings were destructive!)***

14 "**Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!** For **you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers.** Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.

Matthew 23:16-22

16 "**Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged to perform it.'**

17 "Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold?

18 "And, '**Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged to perform it.'**

19 "Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift?

20 "**Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it.**

21 "**He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells in it.**

22 "And **he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it.**

Don't swear by anything ... but keep your words and vows.

We ... of all people ... should be careful of our words — especially pledges ... promises ... commitments ... vows.

Ecclesiastes 5:1-5

1 Walk prudently when you go to the house of God; and draw near to hear rather than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they do evil.

2 **Do not be rash with your mouth,**

And let not your heart utter anything hastily before God.

For God is in heaven, and you on earth;

Therefore let your words be few.

3 For a dream comes through much activity,

And **a fool's voice is known by his many words.**

4 **When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it;**

For He has no pleasure in fools.

Pay what you have vowed--

5 Better not to vow than to vow and not pay.

Take time before a pledge. And don't swear by religious objects. Keep it simple.

If our word is good ... and we're faithful people — that should be enough? And if we're dishonest ... or unreliable — cheats and frauds — any promises/oaths are likely to be worthless anyway?

We should be people of our word just as Jesus was.