

Chapter 8

SERMON ON THE MOUNT 3

MATTHEW 5 - PART 2

Introduction: This is the second lesson from Matthew 5 and the second in a series of six lessons on the Sermon on the Mount from Matthew chapters five through seven.

SECTION 1: Divorce and Faithfulness (Matthew 5:31-32) Scripture List: Genesis 2:18-25; Deuteronomy 24:1-4; Jeremiah 3:1; Hosea 2:18-20; Matthew 19:3-9; Luke 16:18; Romans 7:1-3; 1 Corinthians 7:10-16; Ephesians 5:22-33

- I. Marriage is God's idea. The very first marriage began with God's creation of man and woman and placing them together in a lifelong relationship of mutual blessing. It was this relationship between one man and one woman that became the pattern for marriage and the environment in which children were to be born and brought up.
 - A. Just as God initiated the first marriage by bringing Adam and Eve together, there is a biblical order of coming together in the relationship that leads to marriage: first spiritual, then intellectual and emotional, finally physical.
 - B. There are many forces and pressures that work against the establishing and maintaining of godly marriages and a healthy, happy home atmosphere. A good marriage begins in, develops in, is strengthened by, and strengthens the church.
 - C. Don't be satisfied with an unhappy, second rate home and family life. Remember that God is not only a Creator, He is a Redeemer. Commit your marriage to God, draw upon the resources of the church and of God's Kingdom, and determine to make it work.
- II. The basis for Christian marriage is Covenant Commitment. The marriage ceremony is not the marriage and the marriage certificate is not the marriage covenant. In the marriage ceremony, the relationship that has developed between the man and woman is sealed with a vow (promise, pledge, commitment) that declares and establishes a Covenant between the man, the woman, and God. The marriage certificate is merely a symbol of the covenant made in their hearts.
 - A. The marriage is built on a promise of and commitment to faithfulness. The man and woman promise to be faithful, trustworthy, constant, and loyal to one another.
 - B. How to practice loyalty and faithfulness to your marriage covenant and your marriage partner:
 - 1. Make loyalty and faithfulness a trait to be admired and desired. "The best security for the faithfulness of men, is to make interest coincide with duty."
 - 2. Build up your spouse. Make your spouse the most important person in your life. Make your marriage more important than your career, leisure activities, or ministry. (Proverbs 14:1)

Foundation for Christian Service – Term 2 – Chapter 8 – Sermon on the Mount 3

3. Don't continually blame, criticize, or compare your spouse unfavorably with others. Speak well of your husband or wife to others.
 4. Be considerate. Know and follow the wishes of your spouse, pleasing the other without being asked or told.
- C. Don't leave the door open for the failure of the marriage. The only guarantee of success is to refuse to consider failure. The determination that "divorce is not an option" means that a solution can and must be found for every problem and conflict.
- III. We must see and value marriage in the same way that God values it. God's standard of value for marriage is that it is so important that nothing in life should interfere with its development and that nothing should be allowed to destroy a marriage. God's pattern for marriage is one man and one woman for life.
- A. If we learn to value marriage as God does then we will do everything possible to preserve and prosper the marriage. For our own marriage we will not allow career, recreation, other relationships to damage our marriage. We will make it the most important of our human relationships.
 - B. For others' marriages, we will commit ourselves to pray, encourage, and provide a practical example of a healthy marriage relationship. We will be supportive and refuse to take sides in a way that would weaken the marriage. We will contend for peace, healing, and reconciliation.
 - C. It has been said, "There are no perfect marriages; only marriages that are getting better and marriages that are getting worse." Each marriage will have struggles and points of conflict. It is important that we learn how to be constructive in resolving the conflicts that arise. In order to resolve marital problems there are some simple but essential things we must do:
 1. Remain committed to the marriage partner and the relationship on the basis of Covenant. Don't entertain the possibility of failure and divorce. Love does not sustain your marriage, marriage sustains your love.
 2. Be committed to effective communication. It may not be easy, but it is essential that we communicate openly, honestly and with consideration for the other person's feelings and point of view.
 3. Learn to say, "You were right," "I was wrong," "I'm sorry."
- IV. The Jewish religion had made allowances for divorce ranging from adultery and unfaithfulness to simply not getting along with one's wife. It should be noted that the allowances were all to the husband's benefit. Jesus restricted the allowance for divorce to marital unfaithfulness on the part of one of the partners in the marriage. (Matthew 19:9, I Corinthians 7:12-16)
- A. From Jesus' teaching on divorce we must understand that divorce is not God's will. For whatever reason divorce happens, it is a violation of a life-long Covenant between a man, a woman, and God.

- B. God makes allowances for man's condition. God hates divorce but God loves divorced people. God says divorce is sin, but God forgives sin. God has established a standard for human conduct and human relationships, but God is a redemptive God.
- C. On the basis of Old Testament law, Jesus' teaching on marriage and divorce, and Paul's writings about marriage and divorce, we can say that the following apply to the marriage and divorce issue:
 - 1. Whatever may have happened in a person's life before coming to Christ, new life begins at the cross. There may be consequences of violated covenants and complications that one must live and deal with, but God's grace and mercy, His forgiveness and righteousness, are freely available to all people who come to Him in repentance and faith.
 - 2. If there has been marital unfaithfulness, especially a pattern of immorality by one person in a marriage, the other person is not bound, but may be free of the relationship. This should only be as a last resort and should involve opportunity for repentance and forgiveness.
 - 3. If an unbelieving or rebellious partner departs and has no desire to be reconciled or to have the marriage restored, the other partner is no longer bound but may be free in God's sight.
- D. Even in cases where there is a scriptural basis for divorce, it should not be the first resort, but only to be considered after every possible avenue of reconciliation and restoration has been exhausted.

SECTION 2: Oaths and Vows: Honesty (Matthew 5:33-37) Scripture List: Psalm 15:1-4; Matthew 23:18-22

- I. Jesus taught that we should be honest in our speech. He said that when we make a commitment to God or to others, that we must honor our word. It should not require a complex system of oaths and vows to validate our word. We should simply be honest and speak honestly.
 - A. We generally relate honesty first to a person's speech, and then to other areas of life. To speak the truth, don't tell lies, speak the truth in love. (Matthew 5:33-37; Ephesians 4:15; Colossians 3:9)
 - B. Honesty begins even before speech as an attitude of the heart. The key to honest lips is an honest heart. If we develop a love for truth, then honest speech becomes an outward expression of an honest, truth-loving heart. This kind of love for truth protects us against being deceived and deceiving others. (2 Thessalonians 2:10-11)
 - C. Out of the abundance or overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks. Honesty begins first as a quality of character, rather than an act of speaking. An honest person speaks the truth. You don't become honest by telling the truth, you tell the truth because you are an honest person. Hypocrisy is pretending to be something you're not. Real Christianity takes off the mask. (Matthew 12:34-37)

Foundation for Christian Service – Term 2 – Chapter 8 – Sermon on the Mount 3

- II. We must develop honesty with God. The very process of coming into relationship with God involves repentance and confession. God knows everything about us, even the things we manage to hide from others or even from ourselves. But in order to enter a relationship with God, we must be consciously honest with Him about ourselves. (1 John 1:8-10)
 - A. Our faith in God is based on His honesty. God speaks truth and does not lie. God will move heaven and earth to honor His word. This God-quality of honesty makes it possible to trust God and to believe His Word. If God is not honest, then we have no basis for believing His Word.
 - B. We must be willing to see ourselves as God sees us; willing to face our failures and successes; our strengths and weaknesses; willing to “confess” that God is right about us. Honesty is not just “telling it the way you see it,” but it is seeing it the way God sees it. Speaking the truth necessitates knowing the truth.
 - C. We need to see ourselves and the truth about ourselves in God’s Word: We have sin and weaknesses but there is hope. God accepts, forgives, cleanses, and empowers us to be His children, re-created in His image.
- III. We must develop honesty with others. (Ephesians 4:15, 25)
 - A. Openness and honesty is essential to the success of the church. Relationship requires communication.
 - B. Being honest with others doesn’t just mean: “Express yourself, tell what you feel, tell it like it is!” This can be an excuse for rudeness and letting off steam. (Ephesians 4:15, 29)
 - C. Honesty in our speech and faithfulness to our commitments is essential. If we lose our believability as a person, we lose our effectiveness as a Christian. We must be trustworthy to be effective. Will we honor our word even when it hurts? Will we be faithful to a commitment even when the cost overruns the estimate? (Psalm 15:4)
- IV. Here are some enemies of honesty:
 - A. **Selfishness:** Exaggeration, shading the truth in one’s favor to make oneself look good, lying to protect or cover up, lying to gain false credit or acclaim.
 - B. **Using dishonesty as a weapon:** Attacking with your mouth - corrupt communication. Lying to cause or increase trouble for another. (Exodus 20:16; Ephesians 4:29)
 - C. **The idea that the end justifies the means:** Telling an untruth to gain a good goal, to make a good impression, to avoid hurting someone.
 - D. **Fear of what others will think:** Failure to confront, to deal with real issues can be hurtful. Honesty is not just saying what people want to hear. We must use tact, discretion, compassion, but we must “speak the truth in love.”
- V. Honesty should be a point of honor with every believer.
 - A. Should not have to swear on a “stack of Bibles” to verify one’s statement. Involving the

powers of heaven and earth does not strengthen one's word.

- B. Plain truth - Jesus said, "Let your yes be yes, your no be no." A simple yes or no should suffice. Because of the natural human tendency to the dramatic in speech, Jesus says that it "comes from the evil one."
- C. We should handle truth so as to bring life to situations. Consider the account of Jesus, the Pharisees, and the woman taken in adultery (John 8:1-11): They told the truth with in intent to destroy, Jesus used truth to bring life. Example:

"You have failed, your life is a pattern of failure, you are no good to anyone, you are destroying yourself now and eternally!" This may be truth, but is no help.

"You are destroying yourself, but if you will turn, God will help you; you will succeed and be a blessing to many others." This is truth, gives life and hope.

SECTION 3: An Eye for an Eye: Vengeance (Matthew 5:38-42) Scripture List: Exodus 21:24; Leviticus 24:19-22; Deuteronomy 19:16-21; Psalm 119:165; John 18:10-24

- I. God's laws of retribution and vengeance.
 - A. When God gave the laws of retribution or vengeance through Moses, the intent was to be restrictive rather than permissive. Before God's law, if someone hurt or injured another or damaged another's property, it could lead to retribution out of all proportion to the initial act. This could lead to tribal conflict, lasting feuds, and even war. God said, "An eye for an eye" - let the punishment fit the crime. Don't over-react and exact major punishment for minor infractions.
 - B. Jesus then takes God's commandment of just and fair retribution and said, "Here is a better way: Don't react to wrong, don't exact vengeance, don't allow your actions to be reactions to what others have done to you!"
 - C. Jesus said, "Don't get even!" This again takes the issue away from placing external control on outward action and makes it a matter of the heart. Instead of saying, "How far can I go in getting even with the one who hurts or offends me?" I must say, "How can I develop an attitude of mind and heart that will allow me to be able to experience hurt or loss without desiring to hurt the one who hurt me?"
- II. To develop this quality of life that allows one to experience hurt or unfair treatment without reacting requires the grace-quality of meekness and humility.
 - A. What is meekness? Meekness is certainly not weakness. The Bible tells us that Moses was the meekest (most humble) man, and yet he was willing to stand up to the king of Egypt, to meet with God, and to accept the task of leading God's people. (Numbers 12:3)
 - B. The quality of meekness and humility is taught and encouraged throughout scripture. Meekness means to be gentle, mild, humble-minded, patient, long-suffering. Meekness is being willing to endure opposition and violation of rights for a principle or a purpose.
 - C. The meek person is patient and mild (gentle strength) - not inclined to anger (outward) or

resentment (inward).

III. Where does meekness come from?

- A. Meekness in the Christian is from Christ. Human meekness tends to be negative, Christ's meekness is a gentle strength.
- B. Not just controlling the countenance so that inner turmoil doesn't show, but controlling the inside so that there is no inner turmoil.

IV. Meekness in operation

- A. Meekness is not just controlling one's response or reaction to a situation by suppressing anger or pretending the offence didn't occur. Meekness begins with an attitude of heart. We must think meek before we will act meek.
- B. The meek person is not inclined to anger or resentment. If you are inclined to anger or resentment then it becomes a constant battle of determination and will power to not let actions show the anger or resentment. For the truly meek person there is no anger or resentment to suppress; no bristling, defensiveness, or retaliation.

V. The enemy of meekness is the same thing that tends to produce anger - unsundered rights.

- A. When we feel our rights are violated we become angry. We feel we have been treated unfairly. We want justice.
- B. An offence against our rights has occurred and we want the offender to be made to pay for the offence. We desire revenge or retribution to satisfy our rights.
- C. For the truly meek person, who has surrendered his or her rights to God, no offence is taken, because there is no perceived violation of rights.

VI. God purposes to develop qualities of spiritual maturity in his people. This development process takes time and involves most if not all of the things that happen to us in life.

- A. Many of the things we experience are intended by God to develop the quality of meekness in us. If we could be "training conscious" and see ourselves as disciples in training instead of as spiritual big shots, it would be easier to respond properly instead of reacting emotionally. (Hebrews 5:8; 2 Timothy 2:3)
- B. We should observe our reactions to people and situations and judge ourselves. When we are confronted with physical injury and insult, issues of legal rights, personal imposition and inconvenience, loss of material possessions:
 - 1. A "flaring up" or "burning resentment" should signal to us of a need for change.
 - 2. "Turning the other cheek," "going the second mile" is a willing action taken by a person to get control of oneself, one's emotions, and the situation.
 - 3. If you hit me, you have taken control of my situation; if I hit you back, you are still in control of my emotions and actions, but if I "turn the other cheek," I have

regained control.

4. If you impose something on me, you have taken control; if I become angry or resentful, you have control. If I willingly do a deed of service for you, I have regained control. You have no power over me.

C. What about unfair treatment? How should we respond or react to unfairness and violations of our "rights?"

1. Unfair treatment is a fact of life. If we can learn to accept unfairness without letting it take control of our attitudes, thoughts, and actions, we will grow.

2. If we always demand our "rights" and fair treatment, we will not qualify as leaders. Leaders must be willing to lay down personal rights for the greater good. Examples:

- ❖ Moses - Identified with Israel in their bondage and became a deliverer.
- ❖ Joseph - Accepted the wrong and unfairness without bitterness and saved his family.
- ❖ Jesus - Accepted the mockery of a trial and the crucifixion and became our Saviour. "Father forgive them..."
- ❖ Stephen - Martyred for his faith, prayed, "Lord lay not this sin to their charge."
- ❖ Paul - After beatings and imprisonment, led the Philippian jailer to salvation through faith in Jesus.

VII. Seeing the eternal is essential in meekness. Jesus endured the cross for the joy that was set before Him. Abraham looked to a city whose architect and builder is God. (Hebrews 11:10; Hebrews 12:2)

A. When we are living purposefully, then we will not be turned aside and controlled by our reactions to outside influences and circumstances. We will properly see these things as temporary. (2 Corinthians 4:17-18)

B. We will be faced with hard situations, unfair treatment, problems. We cannot control what comes to us, but we can control our reactions, establishing a proper attitude. (Proverbs 16:32; 25:28)

C. What is your motivation in life and service? Is it self exaltation or to minister to God and others? Is it rights now or rewards eternally? Which is more important, your rights or your purpose; your feelings or your goals?

SECTION 4: Love Your Neighbor, Love Your Enemies (Matthew 5:43-48) Scripture List:

Leviticus 19:18; Deuteronomy 6:4-8; Proverbs 24:17; John 3:16; 13:34-35; Ephesians 4:16

I. Law of Love. God's Commandments to Israel through Moses mandated love for God and love for one's brother and one's neighbor. This is saying, "Love your neighbor, love your brother, love your family, love your friends." (Leviticus 19:18; Deuteronomy 6:4-8; Matthew 22:36-40)

A. Jesus changes the emphasis: "But I say unto you..." Love your enemies as well as your friends and family. This becomes like going the second mile, like turning the other cheek;

Foundation for Christian Service – Term 2 – Chapter 8 – Sermon on the Mount 3

the first mile is for them, the second for me. This goes beyond the law and deals with my attitude.

- B. The Law of Love deals with response, not reaction. When we react to things we are controlled by emotion. When we respond we allow our will to take control. Immaturity reacts; Maturity - responds.
- C. Love demands that we take an honest look at ourselves from God's point of view, not comparing with others, but comparing with Christ. Seeing our needs and potentials, seeing our faults and strengths.

II. Types of love found in the Bible: Whereas the English language has only one word "Love" to cover the whole range of human and divine affection, the Greek language of the New Testament has three separate words for three distinct kinds of love.

- A. Eros: Passion, desire. Eros love has its source in emotions and in the desires of the body. This is romantic love and sexual love. Eros love is not evil, perverted, or immoral unless used immorally. God created this kind of love. This love takes from another for its satisfaction.
- B. Phileo: Brother, friend, companion. Phileo love is the love one has for a brother or friend. This love has its source in the intellect and personality, the soul. This love finds its satisfaction in sharing.
- C. Agape: God's love, pure unconditional love. This is the love God has for us. This love prompted God to send His only Son for our salvation. This love moved Jesus to give and to serve. Agape love has its source in the spirit and the will. Agape love finds its satisfaction in giving with no expectation of return.
- D. Our love both to neighbors and enemies is to be agape love - Godly unconditional love.

III. Should Christians have enemies?

- A. Jesus presupposed that we would have enemies. "If they hate me, they will hate you." "You will receive persecution."
- B. If you have Christian convictions and stand for them, if you try to do something worthwhile - to bring change - you will have enemies, you will antagonize someone. You will have people who criticize and pick at you (often behind your back) - at what you say, at what you do. *People don't attack the Bible because it contradicts itself...but because it contradicts them.*
- C. Enemies can be friends in disguise. They keep us on our toes. We are forced to evaluate, examine, "Am I right?" Enemies may force us to defend a position. We must face the question "Is it defensible?" The mature person will appreciate his enemies because they force him to excel. **Be sure you're right, then go ahead.**
- D. Don't be enemy-conscious, don't be paranoid. Treat people as friends until they declare or prove their animosity - then love them even more! Give people the benefit of the doubt. Expect the best, prepare for the worst.

- IV. How should we act towards an enemy?
- A. Try to determine why he is an enemy: Have we offended him? Is there a misunderstanding? Could we communicate with the person and resolve the conflict?
- B. Steps to take (Matthew 5:44)
1. If he hates you, love him. Express and demonstrate love for the person.
 2. If he speaks evil against you, bless him, speak well of him. Don't get caught up in "tit-for-tat."
 3. If he acts against you to hurt or to attack, look for an opportunity to do good to him. (Don't rejoice at your enemy's problems - Proverbs 24:17)
 4. If there's nothing you can do or say, then pray for your enemy.
- C. Identify the real enemy. People are not the real enemy. Satan is our adversary. If we see the attack of Satan in the attitudes, words, and deeds of our "enemies," it makes it easier to respond to them properly.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

Chapter 8 Sermon on the Mount 3: Matthew 5 - Part 2

1. Jesus contrasted the emphasis of Jewish law, which emphasized external compliance with rules, to the Laws of God's Kingdom, which emphasized the attitudes of the heart. Is it easier to obey rules or to keep a right attitude? How is attitude related to obedience. Do you feel that Jesus' presentation of God's law is more or less strict than the Jewish laws? Why?
2. In Matthew 5:38-42 when Jesus talks about "Turning the other cheek" and "going the second mile" what does He actually mean for us to do? What is the real point in "Turning the other cheek" and "going the second mile?" Explain the statement from this lesson that says: "Going the second mile" is a willing action taken by a person to get control of oneself, one's emotions, and the situation.