

# DEEP IN SCRIPTURE

*Verses & Notes August 2, 2006*

*Matthew 5:33-47*

- 33: *"Again you have heard that it was said to the men of old,  
`You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.'*
- 34: *But I say to you,  
Do not swear at all,  
either by heaven, for it is the throne of God,  
35: or by the earth, for it is his footstool,  
or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.*
- 36: *And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black.*
- 37: *Let what you say be simply `Yes' or `No';  
anything more than this comes from evil.*
- 38: *"You have heard that it was said, `An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'*
- 39: *But I say to you, Do not resist one who is evil.  
But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also;  
40: and if any one would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well;  
41: and if any one forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.  
42: Give to him who begs from you, and do not refuse him who would borrow from you.*
- 43: *"You have heard that it was said, `You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'*
- 44: *But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,  
45: so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven;  
for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good,  
and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.*
- 46: *For if you love those who love you, what reward have you?  
Do not even the tax collectors do the same?*
- 47: *And if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others?  
Do not even the Gentiles do the same?*
- 48: *You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

## Discussion Notes:

### Intro: (Review)

1. The Sermon on the Mount
  - Jesus calling & training disciples = call to holiness & union with Him.
  - i.e., Establishing, outlining, and establishing his program of discipleship.
2. Beatitudes: the core of his teachings; ladder of renewal / foundation stones
3. They ARE salt / light: how his disciples DO this affects the world!
4. NOT a new law that cancels the old, but a FULFILLMENT.
5. HOW? Section of SIX EXAMPLES / applications of this fulfillment
  1. How we, as followers of Christ, are (by grace) to fulfill the law.
6. Sandwiched between 2 Difficult expectations:
  - Vs. 20: Righteousness must be > that of Sc / Ph;
  - Vs. 48: Must be PERFECT as your heavenly Father is perfect.
7. Pattern:

1. "You've heard it was said to the men of old"
  - they "heard" OT read / preached / expounded ...
  - Includes quotes from law PLUS expansions.
2. "But I say to you": this was unique / novel / startling!
  - This is why vs. 7:28-29 ... authority!
  - Jesus explains the full intent of the law;
  - Generally pointing to a deeper obedience;
    - The causes / source / motives behind sin are an internal heart condition!
    - Mt 6:21: where your treasure is = heart!
    - Rev 2:23: "All the churches shall know that I am he who searches mind & heart, and I will give to each of you as your works deserve."
    - Growth in holiness (as outlined in the Beatitudes) requires external detachment (B 1-3) as well as internal purity of heart (B 6).
    - Essentially what Paul means in Romans 8:1-17: 8:3-4 *"For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do; sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."*
3. Practical illustrations of how serious / necessary this fulfillment is!
  - Often uses hyperbole: not mere exaggeration but emphasizes seriousness (i.e., leave gift at altar & reconcile; cut off right hand / eye).

#### First Four examples:

- 1: (21-26) Not just murder, but Anger;
  - Behind, underneath, leading to thoughts, words, actions, murder
  - The source, underlying cause, attitudes that poison the heart / squelch the Spirit;
  - These must be examined & rooted out.
- 2: (27-30) Not just adultery, but lust;
  - The process of sexual sin involves the 2<sup>nd</sup> glance.
- 3: (31-32) Not just an issues of divorce and remarriage (the external act / writ), BUT this involves the breaking of an internal / eternal bond!
  - A legal writ of divorce does not end a valid / sacramental marriage, because remarriage constitutes adultery.
  - Calling his followers to recognize the commitments of the heart.
- 4: (33-37) The heart problem of DISHONESTY:
  - Not merely an issue of swearing falsely, But swearing at all;
  - A disciples word should represent his heart (1 Tim 1:5)

#### Two More Examples:

5: (38-42) The right of retribution

Following his pattern he begins with what they have been taught:

38: *"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'*

- Quoting Ex. 21:24; Lev 24:20; Dt 19:21
- Total context of Dt 19:15-21 is significant . . . the law of witnesses.
- Essentially a God-imposed protection against escalated retaliation:
  - Compensation NOT to exceed the damage.
- Problem: expanded over time into a cumbersome legal edifice of rules & regulations.
  - Lost track of the underlying point: mercy & fairness.

Jesus' answer of fulfillment, pointing out the essential truth of the law:

39: *But I say to you, Do not resist one who is evil.*

*But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also;*

40: *and if any one would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well;*

41: *and if any one forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.*

42: *Give to him who begs from you, and do not refuse him who would borrow from you.*

- First, recognize that He is speaking to individuals not setting rules for governments.

- Calling His followers to subordinate strict justice to generous charity.
- Need to also recognize His use of hyperbole: vigorous language to make a point.
  - Jesus uses 3 specific examples of how we are called to overcome our natural inclinations / our “knee jerk” response & act out of mercy:
    1. Context = violence: Literally turn the other cheek?
      - Jesus didn’t (Jn 18:33) but Lk 23:34 (“Father forgive them ...)
    2. Context = law court: Is he literally setting a rule? No; 1 Cor 6:1, 7-8
    3. Context = state requisitioned service; Rule? No; accept inconvenience with joy!
    4. Context = beggars & borrowers; Rule? No; but lean toward charity.
- He will expand later in His sermon abt judging others; here applying beatitude of mercy.

### 6<sup>th</sup> Example: Problem of bigotry:

Jesus reminds them of what they’ve been taught:

- 43: *“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’*
- *Only the 1<sup>st</sup> half in OT and even that truncated! Lev 19:18!*
  - *No where does the OT strictly teach to “hate” their enemies, though of course there are many places where Israel was called to fight against God’s enemies & reject those who reject God.*
  - *BUT the command to “hate your enemy” was a pharisaical extrapolation that then translated into how they treated all outsiders ...gentiles & Samaritans.*

Jesus’ answer of fulfillment, pointing out the essential truth of the law: (expounding on the last 3 Beatitudes)

- 44: *But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,*  
 45: *so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven;*  
*for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good,*  
*and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.*  
 46: *For if you love those who love you, what reward have you?*  
*Do not even the tax collectors do the same?*  
 47: *And if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others?*  
*Do not even the Gentiles do the same?*
- Underlying foundation: living out the complete law of God, which he will later include in the Two Great Commandments upon which the law & the prophets depend: (Mt 22:36-40)
  - But Jesus’ definition of “neighbor” has no boundaries.
  - Not merely “not-hate” or tolerate, but active, positive benevolence.
  - **IMPORTANT: Not dealing with feelings; in fact none of these 6 examples are addressing feelings! He is not commanding us to NOT FEEL ANGRY, etc., but rather to overcome our feelings of resentment, etc. and act in mercy, charity, etc.**

### Verse 48 is, essentially Jesus’ concluding “therefore” to these 6 examples:

- 48: *You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*
- Being a child of God, being a disciple, entering into the kingdom, requires that the trajectory of our lives, our faith, be the Father; (i.e., Phil 3)
  - He is to be our model; He is to define how we are to live.
  - We are to aim our lives in preparation for our eternal life with God
  - In other words, we are to be getting ready for the great Wedding feast...
  - Clearly expressed by the Apostle John towards the end of his life: 1 John 3:1ff
  - This means listening to & following those He has established to as our leaders. (Heb 13:17)  
 ... but both Jesus & the other NT writers warn their followers to beware of false teachers / leaders who break from the Truth.
  - How does one know whether a leader is following the truth?
  - Christ gave us a trustworthy teacher: the Church (Mt 16; John 14-16)