

DEEP IN SCRIPTURE

Verses & Notes July 26, 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,
or by the earth, for it is his footstool,
or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.*
- 35: *And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black.*
- 36: *Let what you say be simply `Yes' or `No';
anything more than this comes from evil.*
- 37: *"You have heard that it was said, `An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'*
- 38: *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;
and if any one would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well;
and if any one forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.*
- 39: *Give to him who begs from you, and do not refuse him who would borrow from you.*
- 40: *"You have heard that it was said, `You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'*
- 41: *But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,
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.*
- 42: *For if you love those who love you, what reward have you?
Do not even the tax collectors do the same?*
- 43: *And if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others?
Do not even the Gentiles do the same?*
- 44: *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 three 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 2nd 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.

Three More Examples:

1: (vs 33-37) The heart problem of DISHONESTY:

- A: 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.’*
- Jesus is summarizing what is taught in several places in the Law of the OT (possible quoting how the Sc / Ph summarize this to the people):
 - Lev 19:11-12: *“You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another. And you shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the Lord.”*

- Num 30:2 *“When a man vows to the Lord, or swears an oath to bind himself by a pledge, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.”*
- Deut 23:21-23 *“When you make a vow to the Lord your God, you shall not be slack to pay it; for the Lord your God will surely require it of you, and it would be sin in you. But if you refrain from vowing, it shall be no sin in you. You shall be careful to perform what has passed your lips, for you have voluntarily vowed to the Lord your God what you have promised with your mouth.”*

B: 34: *But I say to you,
Do not swear at all,
either by heaven, for it is the throne of God,
or by the earth, for it is his footstool,
35: 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.*

- Important to recognize that (as he said earlier) Jesus is not abolishing the law!
 - The truth of the OT laws still apply...
- What's the problem?
 1. Men are following the letter of the law not the spirit. (legal external)
 2. Behind their vows / promises heaped in oaths are dishonest hearts.
 3. A disciple's "word" should represent a pure heart (1 Tim 1:5)
 4. Additional oaths /swearing should not be necessary:
 - Our word / our yes / no should be sufficient!
 5. Quoted by James 5:12
 6. Note: a little hyperbole here:
 - Jesus recognizes that some answers require more than yes or no...
 - But even so, our word should be pure, trustworthy, "Mean what we say, say what we mean."