

Matthew Lesson 05

Matthew Chapter 5

Distributed by: KJV Bible Studies

Email: mailKjvBibleStudies@gmail.com

Website: www.KjvBibleStudies.net

Memory verses for this week: *1 Pet 1:25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.*

Introduction: In last week's lesson, we saw the temptations that Christ faced there in the wilderness. Christ was not moved by the temptations, and he stood strong and did not fall for one trick of Satan. We closed with the call of Andrew, Simon, James, and John into the ministry. All four men responded and immediately followed Jesus.

The fifth chapter of Matthew begins with the Sermon on the Mount. It is called this because Jesus went up onto a mount to teach and preach. It continues through chapter 7. The Sermon on the Mount is not found in Mark or John and is in less detail in Luke. The Sermon on the Mount has been called by some the constitution of the kingdom. That is, it gives insight into the spiritual and moral conditions that will exist when the King finally is seated upon His throne in Jerusalem. As an inspired part of Scripture, it certainly has value for us today in the church. However, its fullest application will be in the coming kingdom.

I. The Teaching of the Beatitudes – The Sermon on the Mount

Mat 5:1 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

Mat 5:2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

Christ saw the multitudes in his personal ministry, and he still sees them today and loves and cares

for them. Christ has mercy for those who will seek after him.

Mat 9:36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

Jesus went up into an unspecified mountain. The text does not indicate which, but it is thought to have been a mountainside overlooking the Sea of Galilee on its northwestern side.

Multitudes are mentioned, but only his disciples are specifically mentioned as having heard Him. Whether the multitudes also heard is an open question. Consider that all may have heard Him audibly but not with the heart due to discernment.

In Matthew 8:1, which is immediately after the sermon, mention is made how that the multitudes continued to follow Him. It is safe to assume that they heard the sermon under these circumstances. Accordingly, "he opened his mouth, and taught them."

In verse 2, Christ begins his teaching. No man ever taught like Jesus Christ. He was the master teacher. Some said 'never spake man like this man'. His teaching was with authority because not only did he create the earth and all that is there in, but he was part of the Godhead that penned the Word of God.

Mat 7:28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:

Mat 7:29 For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

John 7:45 Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him?

John 7:46 The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.

Mat 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

From verse 3 through 12 are what are commonly called the Beatitudes. These are nine specific blessings given by Jesus. They likely will find their fullest application in the Kingdom of God though there no doubt are spiritual applications of each, even today.

Notice each of these nine Beatitudes begins with *blessed*. The word so translated (makarion *makarios*) has the sense of (1) having God's blessing (2) and resulting practically in being happy.

Indeed, the blessing of God produces happiness. The world never finds true happiness because they never are truly blessed by God. Accordingly, Jesus taught, "*Blessed are the poor in spirit*". The poverty spoken of here is not of substance, but of spirit. It is an eloquent allusion to humility of spirit in distinction to pride, arrogance, and being puffed up.

To such, Jesus promised, "*for their's is the kingdom of heaven.*" It actually extends on into the eternal kingdom which will last forever. The implication is that those who are humble of spirit will characterize that kingdom. See I Peter 5:5-6 and James 4:6-7. Nevertheless, those truly humble in this life will find the blessing of God and the result of happiness.

James 4:6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

James 4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Mat 5:4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Mat 5:5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Why are the poor in spirit blessed? It is due to the fact that they realize their spiritual need. They hunger for spiritual needs, and all those that come to Jesus seeking mercy and forgiveness find salvation. Those that do have a guaranteed entrance into heaven one day. Until we are poor in spirit, Christ will never be real and precious to us. But oh what he means to the child of God.

Those that mourn are blessed because they mourn for the sin in their lives. Those that mourn will be comforted God promises. The meek will be blessed. What makes us a meek person? First and foremost is our inward calmness and the tranquility of our mind. We don't seek after honor or glory, but do things in a loving and compassionate way without regard for rewards or recognition. A good example of a meek man was Moses. When God called him to do the work and lead the people, he tried to tell God to use his brother Aaron who was a smoother talker whereas he was slow of speech. But God chose Moses to lead the people.

Num 12:3 (Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)

Exo 4:10 And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.

Exo 4:11 And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?

Exo 4:12 Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.

Exo 4:13 And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send.

Exo 4:14 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart.

Exo 4:15 And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do.

Jesus next pronounced, "*Blessed are they that mourn.*" This may be an allusion to sorrow for sin. See James 4:9 and II Corinthians 7:9-11. "*For they shall be comforted.*" As the God of all comfort, He comforts those who are brought low (II Corinthians 1:3). An alternative view is that those of God's people who mourn through tragedy or loss will be comforted by Him.

In the noted cross references, there is a distinct tone that God will encourage and comfort Israel as they are restored to their land in the coming kingdom. See Psalm 40:1, Isaiah 12:1, 25:8, 35:10, 51:11, Revelation 21:4.

God is the ultimate source of encouragement, especially in days of loss and sorrow.

In verse 5, the third beatitude is, "*Blessed are the meek.*" The New Testament word translated as **meek** (prauv *praus*) is often misunderstood. It does not denote timidity or weakness. Rather, it has the sense of gentleness of spirit because one's spirit is regulated by righteousness.

In the Old Testament, it was a reference to those who wholly relied upon God to defend them. Hence, in this context, it speaks of those who are righteousness of spirit, trusting the Lord. Practically, meekness refers to being disciplined of emotion, temper, tongue, and attitude. Its outworking is being even natured or calm of spirit. Moreover, it is part of the fruit of the Spirit as noted in Galatians 5:23. Our Lord described Himself as meek in Matthew 11:28-30.

Mat 11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Mat 11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Mat 11:30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Jesus promised that these shall inherit the earth. God promises no inheritance in His kingdom for those who are self-assertive, self-promoters, or having high self-esteem. It is the *meek* who will not only inherit but also inhabit the earth in the kingdom of God.

The word translated as **earth** here is the Greek word (gh) *gay*. Those of the new age and radical environmentalists to one degree or another actually worship the earth (*gay*). Moreover, it may not be coincidence that the homosexual movement refers to itself as 'gay.' There certainly is an interplay of words that probably is not coincidence. The irony of it all is that the new-agers, radical environmentalists, and 'gays' will be precluded from inheriting the very planet they worship. But the meek will inherit it someday in the kingdom of God.

Mat 5:6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

The fourth beatitude is, "*Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.*"

Even in this wicked world, God will bless those who are hungering for righteousness. Notice this blessing is in His kingdom, "wherein dwelleth righteousness" (II Peter 3:13), "*they shall be filled*".

It is interesting to read, particularly in Isaiah, how that righteousness will abound in His kingdom. See Isaiah 11:4,5; 59:17; 61:3; 61:10; 62:2. The fullness of righteousness, however, will not prevail on this earth until the King of Righteousness reigns.

Mat 5:7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Mat 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

The people of God should hunger after righteousness. We should desire above all things to follow Christ's example and be obedient to the commandments. When we have that desire, it says we will be filled. A person who is merciful is one who thinks of others more than themselves. God says the pure in heart are blessed. Pure in heart mean we are sincere and totally given to the Lord. We have one agenda, and that is to serve the Lord with all our heart and soul. All Christians should be pure in heart. We should be merciful because we have obtained mercy.

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy" (1 Pet. 2:9–10).

In the fifth beatitude, Jesus noted, "*Blessed are the merciful.*" In this wicked world, mercy often is ignored or viewed as a sign of weakness. Notice here the fact that the merciful shall obtain mercy. See Isaiah 57:1.

The sixth beatitude is, "*Blessed are the pure in heart.*" Purity of heart is essentially holiness. Hebrews 12:14 states that without holiness, no man shall see God. Holiness of being is an

absolute prerequisite for ever coming into God's presence. Thankfully, in Christ, we have been made to be accepted as holy and just through Him.

On a day-to-day basis, God's people ought to strive to achieve holiness and purity of life. Eventually, they shall see God.

See Psalm 119:1, Psalm 15:1-4, Psalm 24:3-5, and Isaiah 33:14-17. In each of these Old Testament references, access to the King in His kingdom is predicated upon holiness of life.

Mat 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Mat 5:10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

The seventh beatitude is, "*Blessed are the peacemakers.*" God is pleased when His people seek to make peace. Throughout the Bible, we are admonished to live in peace. See Psalm 34:12-14, Romans 12:18, Ephesians 4:1-3, Colossians 3:13, II Timothy 2:22, Hebrews 12:14.

God is called the God of peace in Romans 15:33. Jesus is the Prince of peace (Isaiah 9:6). Moreover, part of the fruit of the Spirit is peace as noted in Galatians 5:22. In addition, the work of righteousness is peace (Isaiah 32:17). It is only fitting that God's people be peacemakers.

In the eighth beatitude in verse 10, Jesus noted, "*Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake.*"

Down through the ages, God's people have been persecuted for doing right. Look what happened to Joseph in the Book of Genesis, or Daniel, or other of the prophets such as Jeremiah. They were fiercely persecuted because they did what was right.

Upon Christ's return, for those who have been so persecuted, "*their's is the kingdom of heaven.*" It might be inferred that they will have great reward in that day, see 5:12.

Mat 5:11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Mat 5:12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

There are not many peacemakers today. Lots of troublemakers, but few that are concerned about bringing people together and keeping peace in the church and in our families. God is pleased with those who are peacemakers, and said they shall be called the children of God. And when persecution comes (and all that will live Godly will suffer persecution the bible tells us), we have a promise that we will be blessed. It is important to remember that others who came before us endured great persecution that we might have the liberty of preaching the gospel today. When we have persecution come upon us, he tells us to rejoice and be glad because we have a great reward in heaven. The apostles did that very thing when they were beaten.

Acts 5:40 And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

Acts 5:41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

Acts 5:42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

Jesus warned his disciples that tough times would come after he left them.

John 15:20 Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

In the ninth and final beatitude, notice the verb tense changes. "*Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.*"

To this point, either present or perfect verb tenses have been used implying the burdens the righteous have either endured in the past or are presently enduring. Now, the thought looks to the

future Jesus directed the minds of His disciples to what lay ahead for them. God's people down through the ages have been reviled, persecuted, and lied about for serving Him. Now, Jesus warned His disciples that they would likewise endure the same for *His* sake. But He said nevertheless, Blessed are ye.

The King will not forget those who have served Him and suffered for so doing (Revelation 22:12).

Rev 22:12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

We are in honored company, *"for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."* See Jeremiah 26:21, II Chronicles 36:16, Nehemiah 9:26, II Chronicles 24:22, and I Kings 22:27.

There certainly was blessing for men such as Joseph, Daniel, or Abraham as they did right before God. Indeed, there is a reward for the righteous (Psalm 58:11).

II. The Believer is to be Witness to the World

Mat 5:13 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.

As Jesus continued with the sermon on the mount, He now shifts to a number of analogies. Notice the first; *"Ye are the salt of the earth."* In ancient times, salt was used to retard food from spoiling. Hence, many foods were salted. Salt in the life of a believer is doctrine

When salt lost its 'salt' quality, it was good for nothing. Salt is used to season our food and give it a good taste. Food without salt seems to be lacking something and just does not have a perfect taste about it. Christians who are not a witness for the Lord leave a bad taste for the cause of Christianity.

Jesus likens God's people to salt. When we lose our ability to retard sin and corruption about us, we have lost our value. Salt therefore came to be a symbol of righteousness. It should be noted here that the salt of the church is the results of the doctrine it abides by.

Mat 5:14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

Jesus noted another analogy of the Christian life. *"Ye are the light of the world."*

In John 8:12, Jesus said, *"I am the light of the world."* While Jesus walked this earth, He was the light of the world. However, in His absence, we now are. As Christ is in us and shines through us, we, in His physical absence, have become the light of the world. The world about us is dark spiritually. Part of our duty as Christians is to be a witness through which the light of the gospel can be focused upon a dark world.

As Jesus preached from the mount of beatitudes, the city of Tiberias was clearly visible along the hillside looking to the south. Tiberias was built upon the high hills (mountains) rising up along the southwestern shore of Galilee.

It is obvious from the mount of beatitudes in the daytime. At night, its lights are like a beacon. It cannot be missed. God accordingly has called us to be a lighthouse to a perishing world.

Mat 5:15 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.

Mat 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Christians should be a light in a dark place. We should be a shining spiritual light of hope to the lost in this wicked world. Matthew uses the example of a city being on a hill. You can't hide a city on a hill. This probably indicates that God wants us to stay on a high plane spiritually and be out where others can see our light. The term 'bushel' relates to making our livelihood. Some people are so involved in making a living that they have no time for Christ and the things of God. Absolutely nothing, especially money, should stand between us and our Lord. We should be a witness first and foremost in our lives. We have to talk about something when we meet others. Let's tell them about what our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has done for us. We can all tell that story. Verse 16 tells us to work and live in such a way that others will see our good works and give God the glory for it.

Jesus set forth another clear proverb. *"Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel"*. The folly of the metaphor is obvious. Whether it is a candle or the high tech lighting of this day, nobody turns a light on and then covers it up.

In ancient times, a bushel was a unit of dry measure that usually was carried in a basket. To place a candle under a bushel would shield the light, put out the candle or ignite the basket.

The Split Rock Lighthouse is a landmark on the north shore of Lake Superior and has window shades on the windows of its lens. They were intended to shield the heat of the sun during the day so that the keeper could clean and service the lenses. What madness it would be to keep the shades pulled at night when the light should shine out to warn mariners of the rocks below. Nevertheless, many Christians routinely keep the shades pulled in their lighthouse and never witness of the gospel of Christ.

2Co 4:3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

2Co 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Jesus directed, *"Let your light so shine before men."* We are called of God to shine the light of the gospel. Moreover, Jesus instructed His disciples that their lives are to be such that *"men may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven."*

The result is that our heavenly Father is glorified by honesty or other good work that reflects the light of the gospel.

J. Vernon McGee said this about being salt and light in this world.

God's people in any age and under any condition are both salt and light in the world. The Scots translate "savour" by the more expressive word *tang*. I like their word much better. "If the salt has lost its tang." The problem today is that most church members have not only lost their tang as salt, but as pepper they have lost their pep also. We have very few salt and pepper Christians in our day. Now salt doesn't keep fermentation and that type of thing from taking place, but it will arrest it. You and I

ought to be the salt in the earth and have an influence for good in the world.

Christians are also the light of the world. Certainly in the Kingdom the believers are going to be the light of the world. This is a tremendous principle for us. We need to be a light in our neighborhood and wherever we go. We have no light within ourselves, but the Word of God is light. Being a light means giving out the Word of God in one way or another. This doesn't mean that you should be quoting Scripture all the time, but it does mean that you are to share the light that God has given you. It is very easy to cultivate some person, then quietly and graciously introduce them to a Bible-teaching church or radio program. There are many ways in which you can be light in the world.

III. Christ's Relationship to the Law

Mat 5:17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

Mat 5:18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Jesus continued that He did not come to destroy (or overthrow) the "law or the prophets." This term is a reference to the entire Old Testament. Rather, His ministry was to fulfill or complete it. He Himself is the fulfillment of the Law.

It pointed to Him and was in itself preparatory to the coming of the Him. Accordingly, He announced, *"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."*

Jesus' reference to the 'law or the prophets' was one way in which Jews of that day referred to the Old Testament Scriptures. He came not to overthrow the Law the Jews so revered. Rather, He came to fulfill the same.

From here to the end of the chapter, Jesus develops the principle that He came to fulfill the Mosaic Law. The pattern for the rest of the chapter is Jesus either quoting or commenting upon the Mosaic Law. However, He often will counter, "but I say unto you." In effect, He is setting forth what will later be known as the Law of Christ. It sets forth particularly the moral and spiritual conditions that will be found in the coming kingdom when He is King.

Jesus authenticated and exalted the Law. The greater concept is of the entire Scripture itself.

"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."

(1) The *jot* (or, *yodth*) was the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet.

(2) A *tittle* was a little mark that was an appurtenance to some Hebrew letters. It would be analogous to crossing a 't' in our alphabet.

(3) The significance is that even the smallest part of God's Word will be fulfilled.

Not only have the words of God been preserved, but also the smallest parts thereof. If even the jots and tittles of the Word of God will be fulfilled, of how much greater importance must be the very *words* which have been inspired and preserved by God.

Many in Christ's day perceived him to be a trouble maker set out to destroy all the traditions and commandments of the Lord. He did bring in a revolutionary new way in serving the Lord, but he did not come to destroy a single law or the teachings of the prophets. Jesus came to fulfill the law, and only he could do that. Jesus lived without sin, something none of us could do. And by living that perfect life, He became that one perfect sacrifice that would bring salvations to countless numbers of people through the years. He says in verse 18 that not even one jot or one tittle would pass from the law until all had been fulfilled. When Christ died on Calvary, he fulfilled the ceremonial part of the law. The Mosaic Law (The 10 Commandments) are still in effect today. The purpose of them is to bring the sinner guilty before God.

Rom 3:19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

Rom 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Matthew Henry said this about the fulfilling the law.

"Verily I say unto you, I, the Amen, the faithful Witness, solemnly declare it, that till heaven and earth pass, when time shall be no more, and the unchangeable state of recompences shall supersede all laws, one jot, or one tittle, the least and most minute circumstance, shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled;" for what is it that God is doing in all the operations both of providence and grace, but fulfilling the scripture?

Heaven and earth shall come together, and all the fulness thereof be wrapped up in ruin and confusion, rather than any word of God shall fall to the ground, or be in vain. The word of the Lord endures for ever, both that of the law, and that of the gospel. Observe, The care of God concerning his law extends itself even to those things that seem to be of least account in it, the iotas and the tittles; for whatever belongs to God, and bears his stamp, be it ever so little, shall be preserved.

Mat 5:19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Mat 5:20 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.

Jesus went on to warn that anyone who breaks even the smallest commandments and encourages another to do so, will be of the least importance in the coming kingdom. Whoever is careful about keeping every detail of God's word will be called great in that day.

The problem with rabbinical Judaism, manifested in the Pharisees, was that they had substituted their oral and written traditions for the Word of God, giving even greater credence to them than what was written by God. Careful and diligent obedience to the Word of God remains a priority for God's people to this present hour.

Here in verse 20 is the first of Jesus' seven responses. It is not only a fulfillment of the Law, but actually an addition to it. These will be the conditions in the kingdom. The scribes and Pharisees were the superpious, religious leaders of the day. They maintained that observing all 613 rabbinical traditions, which were embellishments of the simple Law of God, would make a person 'righteous.'

Jesus said that one's righteousness would have to be more than theirs to enter the kingdom of heaven. What Jesus, no doubt, was alluding to is the fact that apart from being declared righteous in Christ (justification), no one can go to heaven or the related kingdom of heaven. All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags according to Isaiah 64:6. Only Christ's righteousness will be accepted by God.

It is certainly wrong to teach that it is permitted to break the commandments today. We are under grace, but we are not to use our freedom as an excuse to fulfill the fleshly desires of the flesh. He says unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven. These were very self-righteous people who worshipped God with their lips, but their hearts were far from God. They appeared righteous to God, but they were lost. The way we can have greater righteousness comes from only one way. Know Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. By his imputed righteousness, we can stand before God justified from our sins.

Mat 5:21 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

Mat 5:22 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.

To kill is wrong. It was wrong in Old Testament times, and it is still wrong today. And we might add that killing innocent babies is a sin that man will stand before God and answer for one day. It says in verse 22 that we should not be angry with our brother. If there are hard feelings, we need to get those things lined out and make things right. The word Raca means 'worthless one.' To be guilty of some deed concerning your brother would be worthy of being brought before the councils to be tried. I think wise counsel would be to get along, and not condemn our fellow brethren or call them foolish names.

Jesus makes reference to a familiar point of the law.

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment."

He refers to Exodus 20:13 and Deuteronomy 5:17 ("them of old time"). Moreover, any so accused stood in legal jeopardy before the civil court system established throughout the land. Jesus then continued,

"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."

In the coming kingdom, even being *angry* against another without just cause will make one liable for judgment. In the kingdom someday, to so insult someone will result in being called before the **council**. The word so translated (sunedrion—otherwise known as *Sandhedrin*), in addition to referring to the national legislative/judicial body in Israel of Jesus' day, also referred to local city councils. That undoubtedly is the sense here.

The greater thought is that in the coming kingdom of God, even such minor comments of unkindness will not be tolerated. Absolute righteousness will be enforced in that day. Even insulting others will not be tolerated. If someone in that day becomes even more crass and calls another a **fool**, he will be in danger of hell fire (Gehenna).

Jesus' point is that in the coming kingdom, such simple acts of unrighteousness as being bitter or insulting another simply will not be tolerated. In other words, true righteousness will prevail down to the smallest details of personal life.

Mat 5:23 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

Mat 5:24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

Mat 5:25 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.

Mat 5:26 Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

No doubt, this will indeed be the law of the land (at least in Israel) in the kingdom. Therefore, Jesus gave further advice on how life will be conducted then. There will be a restoration of Temple sacrifices in the kingdom. Jesus said therefore, before you come to offer your sacrifice, first make things right with a brother. Pay all of your obligations on time, lest your *adversary* before the law (the one to whom you owe money) takes you to court.

The greater principle which Jesus taught was in that day, we had best be careful to do right by those about us: whether with our mouths or in our business dealings. These principles are surely helpful even today. It is righteous to be kind to whomever as well as honest and prompt in our affairs.

In that day, unrighteousness in the smallest matters of life will not be tolerated. This is an illustration of Jesus' reign in that day being as with a rod of iron. See Psalm 2:9, Revelation 2:27 and 12:5. Sin, even seemingly minor, will not be tolerated.

The bible tells us here that if we come and bring our gift to the altar, and we remember that we have something against a brother or sister, we should leave the gift and go and make things right with the one with whom we have the problem. Verse 25 speaks of how we can be brought to judgment quickly by an adversary and be quickly placed in prison. But if we correct the problem quickly, it could be reckoned like settling out of court. Things could be cleared without a judge being involved. He tells us to get every minor thing cleared up before coming back to the altar. God wants Christian brethren to dwell in unity and harmony, and to all have the mind of Christ.

2 Cor 13:11 Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

Psa 133:1 A Song of degrees of David. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to

dwell together in unity!

Psa 133:2 It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;

Psa 133:3 As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.

Mat 5:27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

Mat 5:28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Jesus introduced another example. He here refers to the seventh of the Ten Commandments, "*thou shalt not commit adultery.*" But He then takes it a step farther. He said that looking on a woman to *lust after her* is adultery of the heart.

Several other comments are apparent.

(1) It is not the simple looking on an attractive woman or admiring her that can be adulterous. It is the looking to *lust* after her that is. There is a difference.

(2) Recall that out of the heart proceeds adulteries (Matthew 15:19). Moreover, our thought life is the prelude to our actions.

(3) The world today advances the thought that sexual fantasies are harmless and cute. The teaching of Jesus says that such is adultery of the heart.

(4) Men need to discipline their eyes and their thought life to do what is right when an attractive woman appears.

(5) Women need to be ever so modest and careful about their appearance lest they provoke impure thoughts in men. (And, the same injunction is true for women— to not lust after a man in her heart. Men need to also exercise modesty.)

The greater point is that while the Old Testament Law defined adultery as an act, Jesus defined it even further as the lustful thought thereof. That will be the operative principle in the kingdom of God.

We are commanded to not commit sexual sins. Verse 28 says that for us to look upon a woman with lust is to commit adultery in the heart. Under the law, a person guilty of adultery was stoned to death. I heard a preacher on the radio pointing out that sex within marriage is God's perfect plan for our lives. It is built upon trust and true intimacy. When we break out of those boundaries, we lessen the value of our love and may eventually lose our ability to truly love. That is why so many marriages end in divorce today. Not trusting God and doing things His way. We can't improve upon God's plan. Satan will try and convince you there is a better way. But he is a liar.

Mat 5:29 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.

Mat 5:30 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.

We are told that if our eye or hand offends us and causes us to sin, we would be better off to cut that hand off or pluck out our eye than to continue as we are and cause the whole body to be sent into hell. In other words, if something stands between you and turning your whole life over to Christ for salvation, then do whatever it takes to come to Jesus. I believe God's mercy and grace will reach down and save any man or woman who truly wants to be saved and are serious with the Lord.

Jesus further warns that if portions of our body (i.e., our eyes or our hands) would lead us to do wrong, we would be better without them rather than suffer in hell as a result of their sin. This warning is in the direct context of the preceding "But I say unto you—warning against even looking with lust on another.

An eye given to adulterous glances is better plucked out than to suffer divine judgment thereunto. Likewise is the principle for a hand so given to sin. Further implied is that when unsaved people are cast into hell, they are done so bodily. More than just their soul is consigned to hell, but their sinful body as well.

When one considers the pain and difficulties already available in the human body, the portent of hell becomes all the worse.

IV. Jesus and His Teachings on Divorce

Mat 5:31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

Mat 5:32 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.

One of the clear teachings of the bible concerns marriage and divorce. God has always and shall always intend for a man and woman to come together as partners for life. Only the sin of fornication is just cause to seek a divorce. And we are not commanded to divorce, we are given an exception if we choose. I believe if all possible, we should try to reconcile all differences and keep our marriages intact if possible.

Jesus now touches on the sensitive matter of divorce and remarriage. Our Lord here referred to Deuteronomy 24:1. Under this portion of the Old Testament law, a woman could be divorced if she was shown to have been immoral (i.e., unclean). Moreover, according to Deuteronomy 24:2, she was then free to remarry. No other conditions were grounds for divorce.

Jesus restated the principle of the Law that immorality was cause for divorce (though certainly not mandated). However, Jesus went even further and said that if an adulterous woman *under these circumstances* is divorced and proceeds to marry again, she continues in her adultery.

We touch here upon God's law and principle of marriage. The *perfect* will of God is for marriage to be permanent. See Matthew 19:3-8. However, there is ample evidence in Deuteronomy 24, here, Matthew 19, and I Corinthians 7 that God's *permissive* will tolerates divorce.

He in fact has set forth rules to regulate divorce. It, however, is *always* God's perfect will for marriage to be permanent and faithful. Always, always, always! Having said that, nevertheless, God does make provision for the frailty and imperfection of His creatures in tolerating divorce. But it never is His perfect will.

V. Things Said of Old Time

Mat 5:33 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:

Mat 5:34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:

Mat 5:35 Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.

Mat 5:36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

Mat 5:37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

Our Lord continues by noting another provision of the Old Testament Law and then adds thereunto. Jesus here referred to Leviticus 19:12. There, men were enjoined to not swear falsely. If an oath was taken, it was to be fulfilled.

But Jesus took it a step farther. He in effect said, don't swear at all! (There is a distinction between a formal swearing as in a court of law in which one vows to tell the truth. However, in ordinary life, people cast oaths and 'swear words' around casually and in vain. It is this to which Jesus referred.)

The Jews of Jesus day knew better than to swear by God's name. It was considered blasphemy and a capital crime in first century Israel. Unfortunately, today, most godless people are not so constrained.

But then Jesus went on down the list and said, don't swear by the earth, or by Jerusalem (the capital city), or by other people. In fact, Jesus taught, our speech ought to be straightforward, not 'blank yes' or 'blankety-blank no,' as the world routinely does.

Jesus said that when we add various expletives, they in fact come from the evil (one). Notice that no one ever curses by Satan's name. But people routinely curse by God or Jesus Christ's name. It reveals who is behind such profanity.

Christians ought to avoid running around saying 'Well, by blank . . . thus and thus.' Or, 'By blank this!' See James 5:12. What is even more subtle is using diluted oaths such as 'darn,' 'heck,' 'gee,' 'golly,' or 'gosh.' These all derive from more direct swear words or the names of God, but are swearing just in diluted form.

Simply put, Jesus teaches us to not swear. We are just to live honestly and mean what we say. Say YES and NO, and mean what you say. There is no 'gray' area with the Lord where you can be 'sort of' right or almost wrong. If you are unsure, most likely it is wrong. God wants men and women of integrity whose words mean something.

Mat 5:38 Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

Mat 5:39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

Mat 5:40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

Mat 5:41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

Mat 5:42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

In Exodus 21:24 the Law taught that vengeance could only equal the wrong incurred. Though it was harsh, it was just. Here, however, Jesus in effect said to forget about retaliating. The greater principle that Jesus taught here is not that Christians should be doormats and let the world walk all over us. Rather, the principle is to be kind, patient, generous, taking whatever comes without retaliating.

Instead of seeking vengeance, return kindness. Instead of getting even, be generous. That cuts right across the nature of our flesh, but it is harmonious with the fruit of the spirit. It bespeaks a sweet, godly spirit in distinction to a bitter, ugly, vengeful spirit. The former is indicative of the new man in Christ. The latter is of the old.

Such living surely is a part of the Law of Christ, if not part of the gospel of the kingdom. It surely is a principle for Christian living today. In the coming kingdom, it likely will be the law of the land.

We are warned that it is not our responsibility to get even with those who have wronged us. "Vengeance is mine saith the Lord." God will take care of all the wrongs committed against us. Those that say "I will forgive, but I won't forget" have never really forgiven. Forgiving means really forgetting it all and putting it behind us.

Mat 5:43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

Mat 5:44 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;

Mat 5:45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

Mat 5:46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

Mat 5:47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?

Mat 5:48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

We are commanded to love all men. We are not to love their sins, but we are to love their souls.

And we have a responsibility as a church to tell them about the saving power of Jesus' blood. The preaching and spread of gospel is our responsibility.

Jesus refers to Leviticus 19:18. Jesus actually quoted the verse as the rabbis interpreted it. Rabbinical tradition taught that one ought to love the people who lived next door or those having the adjoining property, but it was alright to hate your enemy such as the Samaritans, who ironically lived next door to Judea.

Jesus directly repudiated this distortion of the law and went even further. He directed us to love our enemies. Bless them that curse us. Do good to them that hate us. Pray for them that take advantage of us or persecute us. Jesus did such on the cross. God the Father does the same in sending rain even to the unjust.

It is no great thing to love those who love us or are friendly to us. Even the publicans did the same. Publicans were collaborators with the Romans who were at liberty to extort as much tax as they could get away with. They were contract employees of Rome who were given a tax quota they had to raise. Anything they could extort in excess was theirs to keep. They often were cruel, greedy, and ruthless—and they had the force of Rome to protect them. Hence, they were despised as not only turncoats, but as the lowest form of life. Here, Jesus used them as an example. Even the publicans loved their friends and family.

Rather, the real lesson is to love our enemies as well. That is the gist of the Law of Christ. The Old Testament Law commanded love for one's neighbor. Jesus took that principle and extended it to love even our enemies. That is the difficult part.

Finally, Jesus said, to "*Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*"

The word translated as **perfect** (teleiov *teleios*) has the sense of 'completion' or 'maturity.' The word is used to distinguish an adult from a child. Maturity is characterized by *selflessness*, whereas immaturity is usually characterized by *selfishness*. The preceding context is the quint- essence of selflessness.

Jesus directed us to be mature in the sense defined above—selfless and considerate of others. Certainly our Father in heaven is infinitely mature and selfless. He remains our great example. In summary, Jesus reflected upon the teaching of the Law and illustrated how that He had come to fulfill it.

In each case in this chapter, He gave unspoken approval of the law. However, He then proceeded to supersede it with an even higher level of moral and spiritual principle. These principles certainly are incumbent upon us today. But in the coming kingdom, they likely will be the law of the land.

KJV Bible Studies are prepared and distributed free of charge. The lessons may not be sold without consent. If you have questions or wish to discuss the lessons, or possibly need help in finding Jesus Christ as your Personal Lord and Savior, contact us by email below.

Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

Email: mailKjvBibleStudies@gmail.com

Website: www.KjvBibleStudies.net

Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.