

Communion service.

Matthew Chapter 5: v. 21-48.

Title: **A New heart changes our behaviour.**

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. 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. 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 causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery. 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. ³⁸ “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ ³⁹ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. ⁴⁰ If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have *your* cloak also. ⁴¹ And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. ⁴² Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away. 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, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father 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 greet your brethren only, what do you do more *than others*? Do not even the tax collectors do so? ⁴⁸ Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Introduction

Up to now in Matthew Chapter 5: v. 1-20 we have learnt some important things taught to us by Jesus. His sermon takes up 3 chapters. However, in the original writings there were no chapters, it was just one long sermon. This is very important.

The key text in Jesus’s sermon is contained in Matthew chapter 5: v. 17.

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

Here Jesus linked the teaching of the Old Testament to the teaching of the New Testament.

It is absolutely essential that we understand the link and connection between the Old Testament teaching of the Law and the teaching of Jesus in the New Testament.

If we don’t understand this connection, then we will fail to understand the gospel message correctly.

Today we will study v. 21-48 of Matthew Chapter 5.

In v. 21-48 Jesus gives us **6 examples of how He Himself, fulfills the Old Testament.**

I want you to note the following verses.

v. 21 “ You have heard that it was said.....

- v. 27 “ You have heard that it was said...
- v. 31 “ ...it has been said...
- v. 33 “you have heard that it was said...”
- v. 38 “you have heard that it was said..”
- v. 43 “you have heard that it was said..”

All of these phrases is Jesus’s way of linking the Old Testament to the New Testament teaching about the Gospel.

These are 6 examples of Jesus coming to fulfill the Law.

These examples, or illustrations are powerful ways of showing that the **righteousness of Jesus’s disciples had to exceed that of the Pharisees and teachers of the Law.**

Very clearly these six examples teach us that **nobody can attain the requirements of God and His holiness, without the righteousness of Jesus Christ.**

We are going to work through, very briefly, each of these six examples, to discover the practical application that Jesus wants to teach us today.

1. Verse 21 - You shall not murder – Old Testament Law. (Exodus 20: v. 13)

Jesus reminds his disciples of the Old Testament Law about murder.

He also says that those who murder will be judged for that act.

The judgement for murder is based upon only what a person can see or comprehend.

We look with human eyes and human judgement.

Basically human judgement is legalistic.

We make rules and expect people to be punished if they disobey those rules.

However, with Jesus it is different.

Jesus sees with **X-ray vision** and His judgement is not human judgement, it is **eternal judgement.**

The root cause of the crime of murder is the **human heart.**

In v. 22 Jesus says that being angry in our hearts, and also saying bad things to people **is as bad as murder in the eyes of God.**

Jesus is saying that **every sin starts with a bad attitude in the heart.**

If our **hearts are pure, then our actions will be pure.**

In v. 23-24 Jesus tells his disciples that there is absolutely no point in coming to worship God if you have a bad heart attitude towards another believer.

Jesus commands us to be in a right heart attitude towards each other.

How is your heart today towards every Christian?

Jesus died on a cross that we might be reconciled to Father God, so the least we can do is to be **reconciled to each other as believers.**

Of course you can’t do this **without the love of Jesus in your heart.**

It is easy to be legalistic. **That doesn’t require a good heart attitude.**

Jesus says here that if you want to enter God’s kingdom **you need to have a different heart from other people.** He especially targeted people who thought that their **good works and behaviour were enough to gain acceptance with God.**

2. Verse 27 -You shall not commit adultery - Old Testament Law – Exodus 20: v. 14.

Jesus quotes from the Old Testament Law about adultery.

Perhaps the teachers of the Law were **beginning to get rather very proud.**

They had not murdered anybody and now they would say, I haven’t had sex with a woman outside of the marriage covenant.

Then suddenly Jesus throws something into the conversation that **would convict lots of men.**

Jesus says, whoever **looks at a woman to lust for her,** has already committed adultery.

This takes adultery to a different level. **It examines what is going on in a man’s heart.**

I think that today most men have committed this sin at some time in their life.

This means that most men have broken this commandment from God.

They have broken God’s Law.

It seems very harsh that Jesus tells these men to pluck out their eyes, in order to stop lusting after women.

He does this not to make all men blind so that they can't lust after a woman. He says this to show the **seriousness of sin coming from the heart.**

When you know that you have committed a sin in your heart, you should be looking for forgiveness from somebody!!!

Jesus came not only to change our hearts, but also to bring grace and forgiveness into our lives. Grace means forgiveness from God because of Jesus, what He did, and its nothing to do with our actions of kindness or obedience.

Jesus came to fulfill the Law, and complete it.

He came to change hearts and pour **His grace into our lives.**

There is NO LAW that can change hearts.

3. Marriage is sacred and binding in God's eyes. – v. 31-32.

In these verses Jesus is attacking the situation of the day concerning easy divorces in the Jewish culture.

Jesus is saying here that the **only reason a man has for divorcing his wife** is when she is sexually unfaithful to him.

This doesn't mean that he has to divorce her, but it does mean that it is the only reason that he can.

In these days, if a man became unsatisfied with his wife for any reason, he could just write a certificate of divorce, and then send her away.

Jesus said to these people that this attitude is **wrong and sinful.**

4. Verses 33-37 - Jesus teaches on the sin of breaking oaths. – Deut. 23: v. 21-23.

The old Testament Law is not against making vows or oaths.

However, what the Scribes and Pharisees did was to devise a number of escape clauses from binding oaths.

They changed the rules and said this;

"If you made an oath by Jerusalem or Heaven, or earth, or by your hair, then you could break that commitment. It is only when you say I swear to God, that the oath was binding."

Jesus said that you should **not swear or make an oath at all, unless you want it to be binding.**

God makes the rules about oaths and not us.

When I was a policeman, if you went to court to give evidence, you had to swear an oath by God. It went like this.

"I swear by Almighty God, that the evidence I shall give shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

Although the situation has changed today, only 40 years ago people had to swear an oath with a Bible in their hand every time that they gave evidence in court.

5. Verse 38 - Jesus teaches on understanding the Law concerning retaliation – Exodus. 21:24, Deuteronomy.19:21, & Lev. 24:20.

The scribes and the Pharisees twisted the teaching on this Law to benefit themselves.

Jesus quotes **Exodus 21: v. 24 "eye for eye, tooth for tooth, ...**

This must be seen in the context of God's teaching about the Law concerning violence which is contained in **Exodus Chapter 21: v. 12-27.**

These Laws were designed for **legal justice** and **NOT** to justify private retaliation when somebody committed violence against you.

The Scribes and Pharisees **twisted God's word** to support their actions of violence.

This was a sin and came about through a wrong heart attitude.

The teaching of Jesus which counteracts this attitude was to show love towards our enemies. This is **NOT POSSIBLE,** unless the love of Jesus is inside your heart.

You may be able to say things with your mouth, but unless you have the love of Jesus in your heart, it will not mean anything.

Example

When I was a Pastor in London, a strong lady punched me in the face while I was involved in helping support a children's mission in the open air, one summer.

Although it hurt me and I fell to the ground, the love of Jesus overwhelmed me, and I didn't want to get up. **I felt such love for the woman.**

However, **I didn't ask her to hit me on the other cheek.**

Nevertheless, it taught me very clearly that the love of Jesus can be a very powerful witness during difficult times when your enemies hate you or hurt you.

I did report it to the police and the lady received a caution.

The policeman said she was quite sorry that she did it.

She said, **"If I had known he was a Pastor I wouldn't have hit him".**

6. **Jesus teaches on true love – Lev. 19: v. 18.**

Finally, we come to the last fulfillment.

Jesus is referring to **Lev. 19: v.18** –N.K.J.

¹⁸You 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.

And also he is referring to **Deut.23: v. 3-6.** –N.K.J.

³"An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his *descendants* shall enter the assembly of the LORD forever, ⁴because they did not meet you with bread and water on the road when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you. ⁵Nevertheless the LORD your God would not listen to Balaam, but the LORD your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God loves you. ⁶You shall not seek their peace nor their prosperity all your days forever.

(Jesus refers to a particular incident in the history of Israel concerning the Ammonite and Moabite not entering God's assembly.)

Basically Jesus is teaching here that believers must have a love that is deeper than human love.

It is easy to love people who love you, but it is much more difficult to love people who are difficult to love.

Sometimes even professing Christians are difficult to love, but this is where the test of true love in Jesus comes into its reality.

Conclusion & Application.

In conclusion, the teaching of Jesus over these verses is designed to teach us that God is 100% Holy.

God's requirements and His standards can't be met by human behaviour.

The Bible teaches that we have ALL sinned and come short of God's glory.

(Romans 3: v. 23)

It doesn't matter what rules man makes or how man tries to twist God's word to fit into cultural acceptance in any society. The fact is, we need our hearts to be changed.

Our hearts are born with a sinful nature. We need to receive a new nature from God if we want our hearts to be changed.

Jesus is the only person who can give you that new nature.

He does this when **we acknowledge our sinfulness**, and trust in the **work of Jesus on the cross.**

Jesus died to take the **punishment of our sin**, and to make us acceptable in God's sight.

Jesus will send His Holy Spirit into our lives, to help us know the love of Jesus and behave in a supernatural way, as we submit to the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Today we celebrate Communion.

Only receive the bread and wine if you have acknowledged your sin before God and tasted his love and forgiveness.

If you haven't done that yet, why not NOW. – Prayer.