

1. One of my favorite questions to ask a young adult, especially one who is about to start college or they don't know what they are going to do with their life is as follows:
"If you had all the money in the world, what would you want to do all day?"
 - a) A common answer is to travel and see the world. I follow up that answer with this question, "OK, once you have seen the world, then what? Remember, you don't have to worry about money, ever".
 - b) You would be surprised at the answers one gets at that point. I then encourage people to pursue that goal as if money didn't matter. The point is to combine your God-given talent with the desires God put in your heart all for His glory.
2. Gee John, that's neat. What does that have to do with the Sermon on the Mount?
 - a) I'm so glad you asked that question! ☺ The answer is everything!
 - b) As a believer in God, we are given everything. We inherit eternal life. We get to spend eternity with God. In comparison to that, what are riches? What is power? We are given all of that the day we accept Jesus and then are adopted into God's family (one event).
 - c) "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ." (Ephesians 1:3, NIV)
 - i) We have it all folks. In comparison to that, what is our life here on earth?
 - d) Yes, we have needs for food, shelter and clothing. God is aware of all of that and wants to provide those blessings for us. The Sermon on the Mount sermon, which is Chapters 5-7 of the Gospel of Matthew, is about putting all of that in perspective.
3. Most of The Sermon on the Mount is all about how to live your life once you realize you have all of those blessings.
 - a) One can read this speech as sort of a "spiritual test" of one's maturity as a Christian. This is especially true for the second half of Chapter 5.
 - i) I have to admit, that the more I study Chapter 5, the more I fall short myself.
 - ii) I read such statements as "love your enemy" (5:43) and "turn the other cheek" (5:39) and realize I have a long way to go.
 - iii) The realization that we are not the ideal person that God wants us to be is what keeps us close to Jesus.
 - iv) I read and think about all these things Jesus teaches and think, "Boy, if I could live my life like this, I would be truly blessed. I would never struggle, get mad or argue if I could do all of these". I realize what Jesus is teaching is the right way to live and how much I actually fall short of what God expects of me."
 - a) The good news is God loves you unconditionally and His desire is for you.
 - b) God is not mad when you fail. God is like a loving, patient parent who sees his children make mistakes and wants to help them do it right.
 - c) This is why confession of sin is so essential. God wants us to confess our faults so he can forgive us and lead us more into maturity.
 - d) To successfully live the Christian life is not about trying harder, it is about keeping Jesus on your throne. The moment we want to do it our way and not trust God is when we fail. The moment we put Jesus back on our throne, moment by moment, is when we succeed through Him.

4. Let's review a little of last week. We started with the "beatitudes", which is a series of statements by Jesus stating how we are to be eternally happy.
 - a) This is the section of "you will be blessed if you do this". That was the first 10-12 verses.
 - b) The reason Jesus started with this section (beatitudes) is to show our need and dependency upon God on a daily basis. Here are some of the key points:
 - i) If we are "poor in Spirit", we then call upon God, moment by moment to fill us with the Spirit in order to live the life as described throughout Chapters 5-7.
 - ii) Jesus said we must "hunger and thirst" for righteousness. This simply means we are to have a strong desire to constantly live for God, seek God, and live our lives in obedience to God. Again, this is a necessity in order to be able to live out the commands as stated in the rest of this sermon.
 - iii) In the final section of the beatitudes, Jesus warned of persecution. He said to *expect it* if we live our lives this way. The good news is God is greater than the forces that attack us. It is another motivation to stay close to God as oppose to battle those forces on our own strength.
5. The rest of Chapter 5, which includes today's lesson, are examples and illustrations that follow from living the life within the "beatitudes".
 - a) We left off last lesson with a discussion of murder and anger.
 - b) Today we lighten up. We're taking on adultery, revenge and vows. ☺
 - c) God wants you to behave in a superior way than what the world expects of you.
 - d) We are God's ambassadors. Because of that fact, we are to act differently. God wants to use us to draw people closer to Him. That is why we modify our behavior.
6. The other big-picture idea to notice from the last lesson and this lesson is Jesus' authority as to how to properly interpret the Bible.
 - a) A common phrase to look for in the Sermon on the Mount is "you have heard"
 - i) Jesus follows each of the "You have heard" statements with "But I say."
 - b) Most Jews of that day didn't own a bible. They heard the Word of God only by going to synagogue. The rabbi's also interpreted the Bible through their own commentaries.
 - c) Jesus responds to those Jewish interpretations by stating his greater authority ("But I say"). This implies that He is greater than the men who interpret the bible or who even wrote it.
 - d) It is as if I could say, "Here is what the Bible says, and I, as the Promised Messiah, as God, know exactly what it means and there is no deviation from that interpretation."
7. In the last lesson, after the beatitudes, Jesus then talked about murder and anger.
 - a) The point is a non-believer, when angry, wouldn't think twice about retaliating.
 - b) God expects us to "rise above that".
 - i) Remember that one of the beatitudes was that "blessed are the meek".
 - ii) The best way to describe "meek" is that it is the opposite of revenge.
 - iii) To be meek, is to have power, but not to use it to seek revenge.
 - iv) As believers, we have all the spiritual power and blessings that one can imagine. Since we have that, there is nothing from the world that we should want. Why would we want to kill someone? Out of anger, out of revenge? Think about anger and murder from the egotistical standpoint. It is about elevating yourself above another.
 - c) God said to even call someone say, an idiot or a fool is a sin.
 - d) It is only through the Spirit of God working in you that you are able to please God by not acting this way. Our failure as Christians to obey God often comes from trying to please Him by our own self-discipline.
 - e) Leaving off that section, we now pick up with Jesus talking about the subject of adultery.

8. Chapter 5, Verse 27 "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' ²⁸ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.
- a) Adultery is a sexual relationship with a married person, and/or when you are married, and have a sexual relationship with someone other than your spouse.
 - b) Two of the Ten Commandments condemn adultery. Jesus is touching upon both here.
 - i) "You shall not commit adultery." (Exodus 20: 14, NIV)
 - ii) "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor." (Exodus 20: 17, NIV)
 - c) Of all the commands, this is probably one of the toughest ones for Christian men to deal with. Our natural instincts are attracted to beautiful women.
 - i) Guys, the key is to read the fine print. ☺
 - ii) Jesus condemns looking lustfully is the sin.
 - iii) The common interpretation is to "avoid the second look".
 - a) To see someone and think, "oh, she's pretty", and then look away is not the sin. It is to keep gazing or to look again as to lust after that woman.
 - iv) Let me give some practical advice for guys out there when this temptation comes:
 - a) If you are married, and you "catch yourself", try one of the following:
 - b) Say, "you know, I already have a great wife." Sometimes that simple reminder keeps our focus on what is right.
 - (1) Remember that we are to love our wives as much as Jesus loved the church (paraphrase of Ephesians 5:25). Try to think of that phrase in this situation. How much did Jesus love the church? He died for its sake. How much are we to love our wives? The same way. Therefore, how much does it please God to look at other women?
 - c) Another method is when you are in that situation, start praying for that woman. It gets your focus on God and not on your lust.
 - v) Remember the big picture of the eternal perspective.
 - a) Wicked behavior begins at the heart. When those desires come, we may not act them out, but they are still a sin, because we are not killing the "root cause" of what causes bad behavior.
 - (1) God wants us to "take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2nd Corinthians 10:5b, NIV). Give that "thought" to God.
 - vi) For those of you who are single, I have bad news. ☺
 - a) Notice Jesus says that any man who looks at a woman lustfully commits adultery. It does not say any *married* man. This applies to single guys too.
 - d) What about the "reverse"? What about women looking at men "lustfully"?
 - i) I believe the principal is the same, but Jesus focuses here on the men because it is the male that is primarily attracted to physical beauty more than women.
 - a) Women are attracted to emotion and behavior. They are physically attracted to men, but with males, our primary attraction is physical. Ever notice the covers of most men's magazines feature beautiful women and the covers of most women's magazines feature beautiful women as well?
 - (1) This is because men are primarily attracted to physical beauty. Women's magazines put beautiful women on them as they are attracted to the "ideal look" (wrong as that is) in order to be attractive. (I'm talking about magazine marketing techniques, not Christian views here.)

- e) We also need to remember why God holds marriage in such high esteem:
 - i) The relationship of a husband and wife is compared to Jesus and the church:
 - a) “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” ³² This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. (Ephesians 5:31-33, NIV)
 - ii) God designed the marriage as the ideal relationship for a man and a woman.
 - a) It is designed to be one of giving of oneself for the other.
 - b) The ideal marriage is when both partners are trying to “outdo each other” to please each other.
 - c) In a sense, that should be compared to Jesus relationship to God. Although we cannot out give God, our love and effort to Jesus and to fellow believers is the ideal relationship that God desires for us.
 - d) Therefore, God compares the ideal relationship of a husband and wife with the ideal relationship of Christian believers to Jesus and fellow believers.
 - e) This is why adultery is condemned so harshly in the bible.
 - (1) In the Old Testament, adultery is a synonym for idolatry.
 - (a) In both cases, it is turning away from the relationship you are committed to for another relationship.
 - (b) The Bible condemns adultery because God wants the best for our lives. To turn away from that relationship is turning away from that commitment we made to our spouse.
 - f) Getting back to our bible verses, Jesus is focusing on the *thoughts* of committing adultery, as Jesus wants to kill the root-cause of bad behavior.

9. Verse 29: If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

- a) Jesus spends more time talking about hell than he does about heaven.
 - i) In fact, Jesus talks more about hell than anyone else in the Bible.
- b) Jesus uses a teaching illustration style called a “hyperbole”.
 - i) It means an “extravagant exaggeration” as defined by Webster’s Dictionary.
 - ii) My point here is that Jesus is not being literal.
 - iii) Jesus is trying to make a point about how *serious* to take sin.
 - a) If Jesus was being literal, why didn’t he say to gouge out *both* eyes or to cut off *both* hands? He purposely said just one of each as to not be literal.
 - iv) The idea is to exaggerate the point as to show the audience the seriousness of the consequence of going to hell.
 - v) His point is to say it is better to be maimed for life on earth than to have the whole body in hell. It is not a literal call to injure yourself.
- c) Notice Jesus focuses on the “eye” and the “hand”. Lust starts with a look. The next step is to reach out with your hand to act upon that lust. I believe that is why Jesus picks those two objects for an illustration.
- d) Let’s wrap up this section by getting back to the basics of the Sermon on the Mount.
 - i) Jesus teaches us through the beatitudes that we are blessed if we stick close to God. If we keep Jesus on the “throne of our hearts”, our desire will be for Him and not other things. God designed marriage and families as the ideal relationship and a place where we can express God’s love to our spouses and our children. To turn away from that relationship, even in the *thoughts* of adultery is for the moment, giving the glory to ourselves and not to God.

10. Since the last set of verses covered marriage, it is logical for Jesus to then move on and talk about divorce. Verse 31: "It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.'³² But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery.
- a) What Jesus is saying is that if you divorce for any reason other than marital infidelity, in God's eyes, you are committing adultery and are guilty of that sin.
 - i) I think it is important to distinguish between the behavior of a believer and a non-believer in this case.
 - ii) When you first commit your life to Jesus as an adult, Jesus "wipes away the slate" of all previous sins. If you are divorced and become a born-again, Christian, God forgives all of your sins, including any of adultery.
 - a) If you desire to return to that previous relationship before you divorce, you can pray to restore that relationship.
 - b) The point is if you are divorced and became born-again after that time, you are now free to marry again without it being considered an adulterous relationship.
 - c) Paul also discusses being saved after you are married, and your partner is an unbeliever. There are rules of conduct in that situation. (See 1st Corinthians Chapter 7, Verses 7-16).
 - b) Most people are aware adultery is wrong. They make all sorts of excuses to justify it as to comfort their guilty conscious.
 - i) Things were not that much different in Israel when Jesus gave this speech.
 - ii) There was a liberal interpretation of adultery whereby you could quickly and easily divorce your wife so that you could then have a sexual relationship with another person. (Sound familiar?). The idea was "find an excuse to divorce your wife, and then it won't be adultery.
 - c) I should also discuss the topic of divorce and eternal punishment.
 - i) Nowhere in the Bible is divorce ever condemned as eternal punishment.
 - a) There are several lists in the New Testament of sins that lead one to eternal damnation. The point of those lists is that if you continually do those things, they are signs to the world that you are not saved. Divorce is never listed upon in those sins.
 - ii) Verse 32 of this text says the only acceptable reason for divorce is adultery.
 - a) The implication is that if your spouse is having an affair, you have the option of divorcing them. It is not a requirement.
 - d) One of the big-picture ideas to get across here is about marital commitment.
 - i) Jesus point is that marital commitment is not just about not-having a physical adulterous relationship, it is about our attitude as well.
 - ii) God expects us to honor our commitments. We'll get into that more in the next paragraph. When we make a commitment to marriage, God expects us to honor that commitment. To think about having a sexual relationship with another person is not honoring that commitment.
 - iii) The bible has a lot to say about marriage and divorce. Specifically on the topic of marriage, divorce and Chapter 5 of Matthew, Jesus wants us to comprehend the fact that we have every spiritual blessing we can ever imagine. We have are going to live forever and live in a glorious manner. Our lives here on earth should be for the purpose of giving glory to God. What is that in comparison to making unrealistic demands upon our spouse? We (I'm guilty too) of looking too much to my spouse for my needs and not trusting God for those needs.

- a) I'm not saying that that depending upon your spouse for certain things is wrong. Further, I would even add that divorce may be acceptable or at least separation if a spouse is abusive. But too often, divorce comes about as we expect too much from our partners and do not put those cares before God. We are not perfect and neither are our martial spouses. The "trick" to a successful marriage, is to "love our spouse as much as Christ loves the church" (Ephesians 5:25). That is a constant egotistical battle of humbling ourselves and putting our spouse's needs before our own needs.
- 11. Let's move on to the topic of making an oath. Verse 33: "Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.
 - a) Before I get into Jesus' response, I need to talk about the Jesus comment on this verse.
 - b) This is not a particular quote from anywhere in the Old Testament.
 - c) It is an *interpretation* of one verse or a summary statement of several verses.
 - i) One of the 10 commandments says, "You shall not misuse the name of the LORD" (Exodus 20:7).
 - ii) If Jesus is "just" talking about the 10 commandments, then Jesus is focusing on Jewish interpretation of this rule to mean that one should keep all oaths made in God's name.
 - d) The basic argument is that once God's name is invoked in a vow, Jewish interpretation of the law states that one must stick to the commitment of that vow as God's reputation is now at stake.
 - i) The classic example of this is in Joshua Chapter 9.
 - a) A group of people called the "Hivittes" lied to the Israelites about where they lived. They lived close by within the "Promised Land" but they lied and said they lived far away. The Jews, who did not consult God in prayer in this issue (Joshua 9:14) made a treaty with them in spite of God's previous orders to wipe out all the tribes of the Promised Land.
 - b) God took that vow in greater authority than his orders to wipe them out. Thus, they let the Hivittes live, despite their lies. The point is that making a vow to God supercedes God's previous commandments as God's reputation is now on the line.
 - c) Now let's move on to Jesus' response, which is Verse 34:
 - 12. Verse 34: But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; 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 even one hair white or black. ³⁷ Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.
 - a) In summary, Jesus is saying don't swear. Just say "yes or no" when asked a question.
 - b) A classic idiom is "The harder someone tries to convince you of something the less likely you are to believe them."
 - i) Suppose someone says, "I swear on a stack of bibles it is true".
 - a) Does that mean when they don't swear on a stack of bibles you can't trust what they say?
 - ii) We are getting back to the issue of our reputation among people.
 - iii) We should live our lives on the basis of when we say "yes", we mean "yes" and when we say "no", we mean "no". We should not have to add other statements
 - c) Does this mean that when we go on the witness stand, we should not take an oath?
 - i) No, that misses the point of what Jesus is talking about.
 - ii) Swearing on the witness stand, "To tell the truth, the whole truth." is a reminder to ourselves that we are to be honest at all times. Our conduct as believers is to have the reputation of being honest at all times.
 - iii) If we don't have an honest reputation, how can we ever tell anyone about Jesus?

- d) Let's get back to the verses. Jesus specifically states we are not to swear by heaven, by earth or by Jerusalem. Why those three specific places?
- i) In that time, the religious Jews had a whole set of rules about how to take an oath. The more serious the oath, the higher the authority one can use. In other words, if you were serious, you would swear by Jerusalem. If you were *really* serious, you would swear by the earth. If you were *really really* serious, you would swear by heaven. The actual set of rules was more complex, but you get the idea.
 - a) Personally, I always had trouble visualizing this. What is the punishment if you fail to keep your oath because you "swore by heaven"? How is that different from "swearing by earth"? Is the "earth" going to punish you if you fail to keep that oath? ☺
 - b) Again the modern equivalent would be when someone says, "I swear on a stack of bibles", or "I swear on my mother's grave".
 - ii) Notice how Jesus condemns these actions.
 - a) He condemns swearing by heaven because it is "God's throne". When you take an oath in this way you are now claiming to speak for God. (For example, "I swear by God this is true"). You are falsely elevating yourself to God's level.
 - b) Jesus then condemns swearing by "earth, because it is God's footstool." What an odd picture, the earth as "God's footstool". It means this is where God has *finished* his work and is now "resting". The earth belongs to God. It is given over to mankind, but one day (Revelation Chapter 5) it will be redeemed by Jesus himself.
 - c) Jesus then condemns swearing by "Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great king". Jesus is referring to himself in the third person. Jesus rarely states himself as the Messiah in first person because he wants us to come to that conclusion on our own, not by him stating it.
 - (1) Jesus clearly teaches he will come back again. (See Acts 1:11)
When Jesus returns, it will be specifically to Jerusalem. From there, Jesus will rule the earth for a thousand years. (See Rev. Chap. 20).
- e) Let's summarize this section.
- i) Jesus is talking about having a good reputation for speaking the truth.
 - a) Jesus says we should not state anything more than simply saying "yes" or "no" in any commitment. Our reputation as a truth-teller and a "man of our word" or a "women of her word" should be *our* reputation.
 - (1) "A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold." (Proverbs 22:1, NIV)
 - ii) Jesus ends this section by saying "anything more than that is from the evil one".
 - a) Now there is something to think about! ☺
 - b) Making an oath and saying something like "I swear on my mother's grave" is Satanic in its origin!
 - (1) Remember the big-theme of the Sermon on the Mount speech is about having Jesus on the throne of our hearts and not ourselves.
 - (2) "Sin" is defined as "missing the mark". It is about doing our will and not God's will. Satan is the one to encourage us to do our will.
 - (3) To take an oath by anything other than simply saying "yes or no" is elevating (glorifying) yourself and not God.
- f) OK, let's lighten up and move on to the topic of revenge. ☺

13. Verse 38: "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' ³⁹ But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.
- a) Jesus is teaching a principal based on a verse in Exodus (Exodus 21:24);
 - i) The concept has to do with fair punishment for a crime.
 - ii) This rule is part of the set of laws for judges to use in a court trial.
 - iii) What Jesus is condemning here is taking the law into your own hands.
 - iv) Some were interpreting this law in that it is ok to strike back in vengeance.
 - a) The bad-interpretation was "if someone hits you in the eye, it is ok for you to hit them back in the eye".
 - b) This verse was meant for judicial punishment, not personal revenge.
 - v) Remember Jesus said "Blessed are the meek". (Matthew 5:5a)
 - a) Meekness is the opposite of taking revenge.
 - b) Not only is Jesus saying to not take matters, into your own hands, but to go one step further and let them harm you.
 - i) Sometimes being a good witness for Jesus means going beyond what is expected of you. One of the big-picture themes of the Sermon on the Mount is that God expects us to live as witnesses for Him. That means to live differently than what the "world" expects of you. The "world" expects you to strike back. Jesus is teaching to rise above that. Your unusual conduct to them shows that you are different and are above retaliation. That peace within your heart will drive others to Jesus. Conduct is a far greater witness than anything we can say.
 - c) In order to help understand what Jesus meant by this, we can look elsewhere in the bible as examples of what Jesus meant.
 - i) One of the principals of studying the bible is "Interpret the Bible with the Bible".
 - ii) For example, I don't think Jesus meant that if someone is about to attack us with say, a baseball bat, we are to just sit there and let them hit us.
 - iii) In a Jewish culture, when someone slaps you on the cheek, it is a personal insult.
 - a) The closest comparison I can think of is the "swashbuckler" pirate movies where one person would take off his glove, slap his enemy and challenge him to a duel.
 - b) In the Book of Acts, there are several occasions where people were trying to kill Paul for preaching the Gospel. Paul did not stand there and say, "Jesus said turn the other cheek, let them go ahead", but he ran for his life.
 - (1) Paul had the idea of "God alone knows when it is my time to die. In the meantime, I am going to live as long as I can being a good witness for Jesus". (My free translation of Philippians 1:21).
 - iv) So what did Jesus mean by the idea of "if someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also"?
 - a) First of all, it is about to not take judgment into your own hands.
 - b) Second, there are times when being a witness for Jesus is more important than "defending your honor".
 - c) Finally, there is a story in the bible when someone struck Jesus: "When Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby struck him in the face. "Is this the way you answer the high priest?" he demanded. "If I said something wrong," Jesus replied, "testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?" (John 18: 22-23, NIV)
 - (1) "Jesus simply repeats the position he had taken earlier and stands his ground, without retaliation or personal abuse. That is what it means to turn the other cheek: Stand on your rights but without becoming angry or striking back." Ray Steadman

14. Verse 40: And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well.
- a) If it wasn't hard enough for us to "turn the other cheek", imagine how difficult it is for us to live with the concept of "if someone sues us, give him more than what they ask! ☺
 - b) One has to keep in mind that this is the "Christian ideal". I do not claim to be any better a believer than anyone reading this study. Principals such as this is what keeps me close to Jesus as I realize how far short of God's ideal I myself still have to go.
 - c) I don't believe this applies to wrongful lawsuits.
 - i) Let's say the Internal Revenue Service says you owe them millions of dollars because they got your name mixed up with someone else. This verse is not saying you should give all of your money to them based on a false accusation.
 - ii) If you read this verse in context of the surrounding verses, you realize the big-topic is doing more than what is expected of you. It is about rising above the situation.
 - iii) I have stated earlier in this lesson that we as believers, will inherit *everything*. Maturity as a Christian is to realize our dependency upon Jesus and *nothing else*. To quote Chuck Missler, "God does not want to be first on a list of ten, he wants to be number one on a list of one".
 - a) Further, I am not saying one has to live a life of poverty to be a believer. One simply has to see material possessions in their perspective. If for some reason, you no longer had a particular possession, would you still praise God for the blessings you do have?
 - b) That is the idea behind material possessions Jesus is trying to teach. If someone sues you, and let's say they have a good cause. The biblical answer is ok, you can have that thing. By the way, take this one too.
 - d) I can think of a practical example of someone close to me. A friend's mother past away, and that friend argued with their siblings over who would get some particular items. My friend thought, "legally, I'm entitled to those items but I'm not going to ruin my relationship with my family over it. Let them have it". That is an excellent example of how Jesus wants us to react when we are being "sued".
15. Verse 41: If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.
- a) If you've ever heard the cliché "go the extra mile", know you know where it comes from.
 - b) The word "mile" comes from the Latin "mil'-ee-on"; which means "a thousand paces", so a mile is a good translation. (Source: Strong's Concordance[©])
 - c) In that culture, under Roman rule, a soldier could force anyone to carry his gear for a mile. Jesus is teaching "don't complain about the fact you have to do this, in fact, go two miles with him."
 - i) Notice Jesus did not say, "It is not right for a soldier to force you to walk a mile".
 - a) In life, we all sometimes have to do things we don't like to do.
 - b) Usually, the other person is well aware of the fact we are compelled to do something we would rather not do. If they were in our place, they would also grumble about how they wouldn't want to do that same thing.
 - c) What a great opportunity to be a witness for Jesus. You show them a proper attitude and even go a greater distance. If you can show a proper attitude and do more than what is compelled of you, that person would think or maybe ask you, "How do you do that"?
 - (1) One of the joys of "power" is seeing the person under you suffer because you, with that power are over them. It builds their ego. Now imagine, when that person in power over you, sees you happily agreeing to their order, and further, going extra distance over and above compliance. Think about that factor when being as being a witness for Christ.

16. Verse 42: Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.
- a) Like the previous verse on lawsuits (Verse 40), this is not a call to poverty.
 - i) I do believe it is our Christian responsibility to plan, to save for our future and to provide for our family. It is not about letting people take advantage of you.
 - b) The key word is “want”. Don’t turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.
 - c) One has to read this verse in balance of what Paul said,
 - i) “If a man will not work, he shall not eat.” (2nd Thessalonians 3:10b, NIV)
 - ii) Between what Jesus says in Verse 42 and what Paul says in 2nd Thessalonians, it is difficult to often judge when to give and when not to give. When in doubt, give.
 - iii) My personal view toward those who beg is I offer them meals instead of money. Hospitality and clothing is also good.
 - a) How they respond usually gives away their true need.
 - d) Remember what I said earlier about the proper attitude toward material possessions.
 - i) How much does a material thing mean to you compared to your witness for Jesus?
 - ii) How much does a material thing mean in comparison to our eternal rewards?
 - e) Whenever I lose something I valued, I try to remember that one day God is going to destroy the entire earth and build a new one. (Isaiah 65:17, 2 Peter 3:13, Revelation 21:1)
 - i) When we try to hold on too tight to our “stuff”, we have to remember that 1) we can’t take it with us and 2) God’s going to destroy all of it one day anyway and make something better!
17. Verse 43: "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.
- a) “Love your neighbor” is in the bible (Leviticus 19:18).
 - i) “Hate your enemy” is a rabbinical interpretation based on “Love your neighbor”.
 - ii) Jesus is teaching that this is bad interpretation.
 - b) I want to combine two verses to show you a principal that ties to this section of Matthew.
 - a) 1) Jesus said, “He who is not with me is against me,” (Luke 11:23, NIV)
 - b) 2) But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear. (Isaiah 59:2, NIV)
 - ii) What Jesus is teaching in Luke 11:23 is that those who are not helping the cause of Jesus are working against Jesus whether they realize it or not.
 - iii) This verse in Isaiah is teaching that we need Jesus as a bridge between ourselves and God as God-the-Father, in his perfection cannot “hear” us when we sin.
 - iv) Which leads back to our “enemies”. In this illustration, “enemies” are those who are not saved as of yet. Remember that in the concept of salvation, people are both “the prizes and pawns”. They are the prizes as God seeks all people to come to Jesus for eternal salvation. (See 1st Timothy 2:4). We are the pawns in that we are either used by God to do his will or willfully reject God’s plan for our lives.
 - v) Therefore, when Jesus says “Love your enemies”, don’t think of that person(s) as those who have done you harm, think of them as someone who needs the Lord in their life. It will change your whole perspective about how you treat them.
 - vi) In a sense, this whole section is further commentary on “blessed are the meek” because the meek don’t seek their own revenge, but leave it to God.

- c) Notice what Jesus says in Verse 45 “He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”.
 - i) God cares about all people, not just those who are saved. I do believe God hears the prayers of the unsaved as God is working to draw them closer to Him.
 - ii) Seeing people as either “saved” or “needing to be saved” can change your whole outlook on people when they don’t treat you fairly.
 - d) One has to remember the biblical definition of “love” that Jesus uses here.
 - i) Jesus is not talking about the romantic notion of love. Love in this context is about giving of oneself to another over one’s own needs.
 - ii) The idea is to give of one’s self to an “enemy” over yourself.
 - a) How does one do that practically?
 - b) Well, for starters, you can pray for their salvation or pray for God to heal them of what is hurting them. (Remember “hurting people hurt people”!)
 - c) Praying for them also gets you in the proper mode of thinking about eternal perspective over getting justice.
 - (1) It is important to emphasize this is not about judicial justice or letting yourself be violently hurt. This is about perspective and your internal attitude. That is a main theme of this chapter.
18. Verse 46: If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?
- a) Notice in Verse 46, Jesus uses the word “reward”. This is one of many places where Jesus hints that not only is there salvation, but there are eternal rewards in heaven based on our behavior here on earth.
 - b) Remember that Matthew, the author of this book was a tax collector.
 - i) Jesus uses two illustrations of loathsome people “tax collectors” (Verse 46) and “pagans” (Verse 47).
 - ii) Every now and then Matthew will mention that profession as if to say he was “typical” of how an unsaved person would act, no better nor worse.
 - c) The application to you and I is that if we only go around doing good things for our family our the friends close to us, or only to those we know are “saved”, we might think, What is the big deal,? Every group acts that way.”
 - i) Remember the big-picture idea of the Sermon on the Mount is that our internal behavior should reflect God on the throne of our hearts. With that, we have the power to act in a way that is superior to what the world expects of us.
 - ii) It becomes a God-given ability to love the love-less. To be able to give of ourselves to complete strangers, to those we barely know, or even more so, to those we consider our enemy. It is God working through us that enables us to have this power to give of ourselves in ways the world cannot nor does not.
19. Verse 48: Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.
- a) Well, just when you thought you could live like Jesus is teaching in Chapter 5, here comes the last verse that says, “Be perfect as God-the Father is perfect.” No problem. ☺
 - b) Remember a purpose of the Sermon on the Mount (Chapters 5-7) is to keep us close to Jesus. Being able to live like Jesus is teaching in these chapters is *impossible* without God working in our hearts and without constantly letting go of ourselves and letting God work in our lives.
 - c) Being “perfect” in the sense of salvation is accepting Jesus as the perfect sacrifice.
 - i) That is our entrance into heaven.

- d) Being “perfect” in our day to day life is a far greater challenge, and that is the emphasis on Jesus sermon in this chapter.
 - i) To be perfect is to let God rule in our lives so that He may live through us.
 - ii) To be perfect is to constantly confess our sins to Him so that “he can wipe our slate clean”.
 - a) “He has removed our sins as far away from us as the east is from the west” (Psalm 103:12, The Living Bible). How far is the “east from the west?”
 - iii) To be perfect is to act in obedience to what God has called us to do. God never intended for us to “accept Jesus and then go live in a cave”.
 - e) Living the Christian life is not difficult; it is literally impossible.
 - i) It is impossible for us to live a peaceful, joyful life without Jesus.
 - a) The illustrations of what Jesus expects of us is what keeps us close to Jesus.
 - ii) That is the point of the Sermon on the Mount. This speech promises us a life of joy, peace and happiness, but it requires the constant moment-by-moment surrender of our will so that God’s will can work through us.
20. With that, let’s close in prayer. Father, we live in gratitude for what you have done for us and what you have provided for us. Because you have blessed us with every spiritual blessing, we in turn live our lives for Your glory. Help us, moment by moment, to give to you our will so that your will can be done. You promised us great rewards in heaven for living in obedience to what you have called us to do. Help us to keep that eternal perspective and let you work through us for your Glory. For we ask this in Jesus name, Amen.