

Notes for Matthew -Chapter 5 Part 2 (Page 1 of 6)

This lesson is for Chapter 5: Verses 27-48

Introduction Part 1 - "Christians will inherit everything!"

1. "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)
 - a. The Sermon on the Mount is all about how to live your life once you realize you have all of those blessings. You get all spiritual blessings upon accepting Jesus into your life.
 - b. Yes we have needs for food, shelter and clothing. God is aware of all of that and wants to provide those blessings for us. We'll discuss this more in the next lesson.
2. The "Sermon on the Mount" is a title for one speech given by Jesus in chapters 5-7.
3. This sermon reminds us of our shortcomings as Christians.
 - a. 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.
 - b. 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.
 - c. To 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, is when we succeed through Him.

Introduction Part 2 - Review of Chapter 5, Part 1

1. Verses 1-12: The "beatitudes"; a series of statements by Jesus on how to be spiritually blessed.
 - a. 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.
 - b. Jesus said we must "hunger and thirst" for righteousness. This means we are to have a strong desire to constantly live for God, seek God, and live our lives in obedience to God.
 - c. 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.
2. 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 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 God works to change us, from the inside out, so we can be his witnesses to other people.
3. 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. Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek". The opposite of meek is vengeful.
 - c. As believers, we have all the spiritual power and blessings that one can imagine. There is nothing from "the world" we should want. "Anger" comes from the frustration of wanting things our way and putting our needs above others.
 - d. It is only by the Spirit of God working in us that we are able to please God by not acting this way. Our failure as Christians to obey God often comes from trying to please God by our own self-discipline.

Chapter 5, Verse 27-28: "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.

1. 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.

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Chapter 5, Verse 27-28: (cont.)

2. Two of the 10 commandments condemn adultery:
 - a. "You shall not commit adultery." (Exodus 20: 14, NIV)
 - b. "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)
3. Jesus condemns men looking lustfully at a woman.
 - a. The common interpretation is to "avoid the second look".
 - b. 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 as to lust after that woman.
 - c. Remember that we are to love our wives as much as Jesus loved the church (reference: Ephesians 5:25). How much did Jesus love the church? He died for its sake! We should love our wives with the same attitude. Therefore, how much does it please God to look lustfully at other women?
 - i. If you are married, and you "catch yourself", remind yourself "I already have a great wife." Sometimes that simple reminder keeps our focus on what is right.
 - d. 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 the sinful behavior.
 - e. God wants us to "take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2nd Corinthians 10:5b, NIV). Surrender that "thought" to "the foot of the cross"!
 - f. 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.
 - g. A women "lusting" after a man is also implied. Jesus focuses here on the men because it is more of a male-problem than a women-problem.
4. God uses the ideal marriage as a model of our relationship as believers to Jesus.
 - 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)
 - b. The ideal marriage is when both partners are trying to "outdo each other" to make their partner happy. They put each other's needs as a priority over their own needs.
 - i. Living the Christian life is only possible with God working through us.
 - ii. The same with marriage. It is only successful with God working through us.
 - c. In the Old Testament, adultery is a synonym for idolatry.
 - i. In both cases, it is turning away from the relationship you are committed to for another relationship.

Verses 29-30: 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.

1. Jesus talks more about hell than heaven. Jesus talks more about hell than anyone in the bible.
2. When Jesus says to "gouge out your eye" if it makes you sin, He is not being literal.
 - a. If Jesus was being literal, why didn't he say to gouge out both eyes or to cut off both hands? The idea is to exaggerate the point as to show the audience the seriousness of the consequence of going to hell. It is not a literal call to injure yourself if you sin.

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Verses 31-32: "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. It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.

1. 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.
2. There are some "biblical exceptions" to this rule.
 - a. When you become born-again, God forgives all of your previous sins, including adultery. 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.
 - b. 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).
 - i. Paul says if your husband is an unbeliever, you should stay married as to be a good witness to the unbelieving spouse.
 - ii. Paul says that if an unbelieving spouse leaves you, you are free to marry again.
 - iii. We are supposed to be marrying Christians only. (See 2nd Corinthians 6:14)
3. 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?).
4. It is important to state that nowhere in the Bible is divorce ever condemned as eternal punishment. It is discouraged and is sinful, but it is a forgivable sin.
 - a. Verse 32 of this text says the only acceptable reason for divorce is adultery.
 - b. The implication is that if your spouse is committing adultery, you have the option of divorcing them. It is not a requirement.
5. Jesus point is that marital commitment is not just about avoiding a physical adulterous relationship, it is about our attitude as well.
 - a. When we make a marriage commitment, God expects us to honor that commitment. To think about having a sexual relationship with another is not honoring that commitment.
6. Remember God wants us to be a living witness for Jesus. If we have a reputation for not keeping our vows about marriage, how can others take our words seriously when we talk about Jesus?

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.

1. This is not a particular quote from anywhere in the Old Testament.
 - a. It is an interpretation of, "You shall not misuse the name of the LORD" (Exodus 20:7).
 - b. Jesus is focusing on Jewish interpretation of this rule to mean that one should keep all oaths made in God's name.
 - c. 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.

Verses 34-37: 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.

1. Jesus is saying don't swear. Just say "yes or no" when asked a question.
2. The harder someone tries to convince you of something the less likely you are to believe them.
 - a. Suppose someone says, "I swear on a stack of bibles it is true".
 - b. Does that mean when they don't swear on a stack of bibles you can't trust what they say?
 - c. We are getting back to the issue of our reputation among people.
 - d. If we don't have an honest reputation, how can we ever tell anyone about Jesus?

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Verses 34-37 (cont.):

3. Jesus specifically states we are not to swear by heaven, by earth or by Jerusalem. Why those three specific places?
 - a. The Jews had a whole set of rules about how to take an oath. For example, 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.
 - b. A modern equivalent is, "I swear on a stack of bibles", or "I swear on my mother's grave".
4. Notice how Jesus condemns these actions.
 - a. Jesus 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."
 - i. Jesus calls the earth "God's footstool" as a word-picture of God "resting" based on the earth being a finished creation.
 - 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 calls himself "the Messiah" in first person, because he wants us to come to that conclusion on our own, not by him stating it.
 - i. When Jesus returns, it will be specifically to Jerusalem. From there, Jesus will rule the earth for a thousand years. (See Revelation, chapter 20).
5. Jesus cares about our reputation as a truth-teller.
 - a. "A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold." (Proverbs 22:1, NIV)
6. Jesus ends this section by saying, "Anything more than that is from the evil one".
 - a. Taking an oath by anything other than "yes or no" is elevating yourself and not God.

Verses 38-39: "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.

1. Jesus is teaching a principal based on a verse in Exodus (Exodus 21:24);
 - a. The concept has to do with fair punishment for a crime. It is for court-judgment.
 - b. What Jesus is condemning here is taking the law into your own hands.
2. Remember Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek". (Matthew 5:5a). The opposite of meek is vengeful.
3. Jesus is saying to not only avoid revenge but to go one-step further and let them harm you.
 - a. The "world" expects you to strike back. Jesus is teaching to leave that anger at the cross. Your conduct to others shows that you are different and are above retaliation. That peace within your heart will bring others to Jesus. Conduct is a greater witness than our words.
4. 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.
 - a. 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.
 - b. 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". (A paraphrase of Phil. 1:21).
5. "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)
 - a. "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

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Verse 40: "And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well."

1. First of all, this does not apply to wrongful lawsuits.
 - a. Suppose the I.R.S. claims you owe them millions because they got your name mixed up with another. This verse is not about giving your money because of a false accusation.
 - b. 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.
2. We as believers will inherit *everything*. Maturity as a Christian is to realize our dependency upon Jesus and *nothing else*.
 - a. "God does not want to be 1st on a list of 10, he wants to be #1 on a list of one". (Missler)
 - b. I am not saying one has to live a life of poverty to be a believer. One 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?
 - c. 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." It is just stuff, and it is not really important.

Verse 41: "And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well."

1. If you've ever heard the cliché "go the extra mile", know you know where it comes from.
 - a. The word "mile" comes from the Latin "mil'-ee-on"; which means "a thousand paces"¹, so a "mile" is a good paraphrase-translation. (¹Source: Strong's Concordance[©])
2. 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."
3. 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. 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 probably grumble too!
 - c. What a great opportunity to be a witness for Jesus. You show them a proper attitude and even go a greater distance than what is mandated.

Verse 42: Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

1. Like the previous verse on lawsuits (Verse 40), this is not a call to poverty.
 - a. I do believe it is our Christian responsibility to plan, to save for our future and to provide for our family. This verse 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.
2. Remember Paul said, "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." (2nd Thessalonians 3:10b, NIV)
 - a. 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.
3. Whenever I lose something I value, I try to remember that one day God is going to destroy the entire earth and build a new one. (Ref.: Isaiah 65:17, 2 Peter 3:13, Revelation 21:1)
 - a. 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 and make something better!

Verses 43-45: "'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."

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Verses 43-45 (cont.)

1. "Love your neighbor" is in the bible (Leviticus 19:18).
 - a. "Hate your enemy" is a Jewish interpretation based on "Love your neighbor".
 - b. Jesus is teaching that this is bad interpretation.
2. I want to combine two verses to show you a principal that ties to this section of Matthew.
 - a. Jesus said, "He who is not with me is against me," (Luke 11:23, NIV)
 - i. 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.
 - b. "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)
 - i. This verse is in Isaiah is teaching that we need Jesus as a bridge between God-the-Father and ourselves. God will not "hear" us when we sin.
 - c. "Loving your enemies" can refer in this case, to those who are not saved as of yet.
 - d. When it comes to salvation, people are "the prizes and pawns". We are the "prizes" as God seeks all to come to Jesus for 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.
 - e. Therefore, when Jesus says, "Love your enemies", don't think of the harm your enemy has done to you. See that person as someone who needs the Lord in their life.
 - i. "Hurting people hurt people". If their hurting stops, they will stop hurting others.
3. Verse 45 says, "He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good..."
 - a. This verse is saying that the blessings of life "sunshine/rain" come on all people.
 - b. I believe God hears the prayers of the unsaved as God is working to draw them to Him.
4. One has to remember the biblical definition of "love" that Jesus uses here.
 - a. "Biblical love" is about giving of oneself to another as priority over one's own needs.
5. It is important to emphasize that "love your enemy" is not about ignoring judicial justice or letting yourself be violently hurt. This is about perspective and your internal attitude.

Verses 46-47: "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?"

1. 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.
2. 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", others will think, What is the big deal? Every group acts that way."
3. Through the Holy Spirit, God gives us the ability to love the love-less. We can give of ourselves to complete strangers, or even 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.

Verse 48: "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

1. 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.
2. Being "perfect" in the sense of salvation is accepting Jesus as the perfect sacrifice.
 - a. "He has removed our sins as far away from us as the east is from the west" (Psalm 103:12, The Living Bible). Ask yourself, "how far is the "east from the west"?"
 - b. That's 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.