

Matthew 19-07-14b

We're going to continue now our study in Matthew chapter 5, and we've set a background here. We're stepping back and getting the theme, the focus of Jesus' teaching here. And it centers in the, you have heard it said, but I say.

You've heard it said that there is a letter of the law, and the letter of the law can be skirted. For example, as we continue here in verse 33, you've heard it said to those of old, you shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord. You shall not swear falsely.

This connects a bit to the, thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor in a court of law. And you shall perform your oaths to the Lord. And there's a get out clause there that the only oaths that count are oaths to the Lord.

So Jesus says, I say to you, don't swear at all. And try to invoke the Lord when you're serious. You see the difference? It is as though the oath is a mechanical thing, and only under certain circumstances is it binding.

Have you ever tried to make an application for something, and they say, give me a copy of your birth certificate, show me your driver's license, or whatever. And you give them one, they say, oh, sorry, this is not good enough. Your license is expired.

This is a copy. This isn't, I've had it happen where I had a true original copy of my birth certificate, and they said, well, but this is the wrong kind. This is a hospital birth certificate.

We need the state birth certificate. It's not enough that the Naval dispensary in Barstow wrote a piece of paper saying, you know, Hull Manchild was born. You have to, that's really funny also, because in the old days, they would talk like that.

And so when Jake Hess, the singer for the Statesman Quartet, when he was born out there in Alabama, I think, they wrote Manchild Hess on his birth certificate, and that was actually his legal name. And he was kind of like W.A. Criswell, where people sometimes would just name their kids with initials. The initials might not match their father.

So W.A. Criswell, his name was W.A. That's what was on his birth certificate. And it was his name and only name until he filed for a passport, like in the 1940s. He was born in like 1909.

Well, his official legal name was W.A. Criswell until he asked for a passport. They said, well, we can't give you a passport with initials. We need a name.

Well, his father's name had been Wally Amos Criswell. So he picked Wally Amos to be his name also, which would have made him a junior, except he wasn't a junior. His name

was W.A. But on his passport, it says Wally Amos.

Same thing with Jake Hess. His name was just W.J. Hess, but on his birth certificate, it says Manchild Hess. So he got teased a little for that, or he made a joke himself about it.

But the technicalities of having just the right document or did you use your right signature? I wrote a big check to somebody one time, and the signature card that I had filed with the bank like 16 years earlier, I had signed Samuel C. Hall, my long signature. But having signed rifle cards and meal cards and signed my name a bajillion times and having a nice four-letter last name, I've shortened my signature over the years to just S.C. Hall. It's real quick and easy.

Well, I signed the check S.C. Hall, and they took this multi-thousand-dollar check down to the bank immediately, and they said, sorry, this signature doesn't match the account holder. And so I had to go back, write him another check, and sign my long signature card signature, or it wasn't valid. Little technicalities about the paperwork, well, that's what they were doing in Israel.

They said, you know, I had my fingers crossed when I said that. I said, do it, but I didn't say Simon says do it, so it doesn't count type of thing. The technicalities of the wording, well, I didn't swear in the Lord's name.

I invoked heaven. Well, heaven doesn't count, or the temple doesn't count. They had all these little ins and outs about you could fool somebody into believing that you had made a commitment, but, well, you know, I didn't actually say what you think I said.

And Jesus said, you should throw all of that out, because anything beyond your word saying I will or I will not, yes, it's true, no, it's false. Look at the last verse. Whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

What does the evil one do? Half-truths, twisted truths. What was the first lie in the garden? Hath God not said you can eat of every tree? God did say that, but he said something else. He said every tree except one.

And when it comes to God's word, you do need to nitpick, and you do need to parse and be careful that you understand exactly what God has said and you're not adding to or taking from it. What's the last warning in the Bible? Anybody who adds to the word of God, anybody who takes away from the word of God is in trouble. You add to the word of God, God's going to add to you the plagues in this book.

That's serious. Might receive an encouragement to teach the book of Revelation, but you think, well, you know, if I mess it up, I could be in big trouble. So that's what they were doing here.

And it's all about the letter. Can I skirt the letter of the law? This is what the Korban thing

was all about. You're supposed to honor your father and mother.

And so rich Israelites, rich Jews would dodge taking care of their elderly parents by dedicating their possessions to God. And when it was time to help their parents out with rent or food or care of some kind, they'd say, well, I'd like to help you, but you know, I can't spend this money on you. It's been dedicated to God.

It's a higher calling. You know, I'm dedicated to God. And that's the one love that's above the love for parents.

And they got to keep all their stuff. And they let the folks, you know, scroll off the map with no help. And it was, they were trying to use technicalities.

That's what this is about. So what is the spirit? The spirit is when you make a commitment, keep it. If you can't keep a commitment, hear me now.

If you can't keep a commitment, don't make it. Don't make commitments you're not sure you can keep or that you don't really intend to keep. Stop and think before you say, okay, I will do, or I will be there, or I will cover this.

I will handle this. I will take care of this. I will put myself on the line for this.

Stop yourself and say, once I make this commitment, it is all the same as if I said, before God and the angels, with a golden record written in the throne room of heaven, I will pick you up at such and such a time. Or I will get this thing and bring it to you. Or I will, whatever it may be.

I'm thinking, I'm not accusing anybody. I'm just trying to think of examples. Because nobody I know has failed on a commitment, thankfully so.

I had a spare tire fixed way off somewhere, and my brother said, I'll pick it up and bring it to you. And he did. And it's a wonderful thing, even in small matters, if you can be trusted.

Everybody is going to occasionally forget or mean well and not fulfill. You try to go through Claremore and a train stops you. You say, I'll be there at 3 o'clock, and you get there at 3.07 because there was a 40-mile-long train that went through town.

But every effort is bent toward it. You learn this in the Marine Corps, enlisted or officer, if you get an order, if there is a place you need to be, if the ship is going to pull away from the dock at 05 a.m. on such and such a date, if you're not there, you had better be dead. There are no excuses.

It doesn't matter if you were robbed, beaten, mugged, and are in the hospital. You better drag that cast and your limp body, get somebody to put you on a gurney and wheel you down there to the dock and push you on board the boat before it leaves to get to the

ship to take off. No excuses.

You make a commitment, you keep it. Your yes is yes, your no is no, and it's that simple. If you make a commitment, you keep it.

So like Jephthah, be careful about the commitments you make. Only make commitments you can keep. This is a part of our identity in Christ and before God, is to be people of our word.

And you ought to value your word. God magnifies His word above His name. And what do you think if God was sloppy about His word? Well, I said I would save you all, but I haven't really taken count, and I think there might have been a few stragglers back there, but I can't be bothered with that.

I'm God. I've got bigger things to do than worry about if I got all of the Christians down there at the rapture. I've got this tribulation thing to run and the Antichrist to deal with and the angels and trumpets and bowls and vials and, you know, thunders and a few stray believers here and there.

Well, what if you're that stray believer? Do you want God to pay attention to the individual details of your life, or do you just want a God that's kind of organizing the big picture and you can fall through the cracks? Well, you know why you can count on God? To be faithful. Faithful is He who calls you, who also will perform it. We can take that to the bank.

Why? God is a God of His word. We should be people of our word. That's Jesus' point in verse 33.

And if you're playing with technicalities, that's what the evil one does. He's the one that takes partial truth. Hath not God said, cast yourself down, and angels will bear thee up, lest you dash your foot against a stone? That's devil work.

That's devil talk. Jesus says, quit that. Let your yes be yes and your no, no.

Whatever is more than these is from the evil one. 38, you've heard it said, eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth, I tell you not to resist an evil person. And we talked about this a little bit last time.

We, you know, evil prevails when good men do nothing. We shouldn't resist. Somebody holds us up and you're just passive.

You're, you know, noncombatant, peace above all, and never resist evil. Is that what Jesus is talking about? What is the context here? It's verse 38. You have heard an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

Where does that pertain? Are you walking down the road and a guy mugs you and is

trying to take your goods or he's trying to attack your family? You've got your wife and daughters there, and a guy breaks in and he wants to be violent and manhandle people and do all kinds of wicked, vile things, and you're not supposed to resist? Don't resist an evil person? Is that what he's talking about? What is our primary principle of interpretation? What's the first thing you look at? Context. What is the context of this statement, don't resist an evil person? You've heard it said, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. What is the nature of this opposition of the evil person? There is a court case.

An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth is judicial. This is the recompense that the board of elders, the court in Israel, was to assess. This is the penalty assessed.

You cost this guy a tooth, the penalty is you lose a tooth. But more often, this was symbolic, and even the Jews understood that this was symbolic, for if you, by commission or omission, cost your neighbor two oxen, you pay him two oxen. It's an eye for an eye.

Whatever damage you have caused, you recompense it. This is why Zacchaeus, after the Lord comes to his house, and he's a tax collector and people might accuse him of skimming or cheating or inflating taxes and keeping the difference and such, and he says, if I've cheated anybody, I won't just restore it eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth. I'll restore it fourfold.

If you think I beat you out of a shekel, I'll give you four shekels. If you think I beat you out of 100 denarii, I'll give you 400 denarii. I will give it to you and then some.

This is the context. It's the eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth situation where you do not resist an evil person. Now, who is evil in an eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth situation? Where is the evil person located? He's saying, I want an eye from you and me.

I want a tooth from you and me, and it wasn't our fault. We should not legitimately be getting assessed a penalty of like value in this case. This evil person has trumped up the charge.

They let their ox starve, and they're saying it's my fault for not building a lower fence that his ox could eat over or something. And we are falsely accused of owing a penalty that should be paid. You've heard it said, recompense for damages.

You should fully reimburse damages that are your fault. Jesus says, if somebody is assessing you for damages that aren't your fault, don't resist them. Whoever slaps you on your right cheek, now this is a penalty.

Why do you get slapped? People don't just walk around. It's not like Monty Python and fish slapping. You don't just walk around carrying a fish and you see somebody and you just slap them with a fish.

You don't just walk around in public and you see some random person and you just walk up and smack them in the head. Why would a face be getting slapped? Someone perceives an insult. They perceive an injustice.

This is why people get pried in restaurants or get refused service. There's been recent cases going all the way back to Anita Bryant. This is going back a ways.

She was representing Florida Orange Juice and had been a Miss America and whatnot. It was a well-known personality. When the homosexuals first started really pushing their agenda and wanting a bunch of extra instruction in schools and whatnot, Heather has two mommies and that, Anita Bryant came out and said, I don't think that ought to be in our schools.

Well, homosexuals found her and her husband in a restaurant and took a dish of food and dumped it on her head. I think it was a dessert. It was a pie or something.

Anita Bryant, this wonderful, gracious lady, because of her opinion, instead of answering the opinion with a different opinion, try to support your opinion with facts and reason and logic, will insult and shame and humiliate somebody in public. And so they took this big pot of dessert and dumped it on her head. And she's sitting there with her husband in a restaurant.

There's been politicians in more recent days that have been asked to leave restaurants because people don't like that they work for Mr. Trump's administration or something. And there have been conservatives that have done it to people on the liberal side. And it's just as wrong whoever does it.

If you can't meet somebody on the battleground of ideas, then go get smart until you can. But there was a speaker, we saw a film where a guy went to a kind of a liberal university college campus and was invited to speak, and his lecture was titled, Men Are Not Women. True or false? Men are not women.

Well, people read into this that he was a huge opponent and some sort of a threat to the whole LGBT, add your own letters, agenda. And so a bunch of people used social media and arranged ahead of time. They said, let's all buy tickets and we'll go in.

And then when I hit my tweet button or something, let's all stand up and walk out. And when we're walking out, then let's heckle and jeer and cause a big distraction. And then after we've done that and we walk out, the place will be empty and you won't have anybody to talk to because we brought up all the tickets.

And so they tried to do that, but he was so good at calling their bluff that they stayed around and they were jeering and shouting and heckling, and the man couldn't even make his speech. Well, that's evil. Do you really want to, you know, the liberals are the first ones to say freedom of speech unless you're not saying something they want to

hear.

And then they don't want to give you freedom of speech. They want to take away your freedom of speech. They want to shout you down.

They want to silence you. They want to boo you out of the hall. They want to leave you with nobody to talk to.

And that's evil. If somebody's got a point, meet them with a better point. If somebody's got an argument, counter that argument.

Show the flaws in that argument. Offer a better argument. Maybe they've got an argument you can't meet.

Maybe you ought to rethink your position. But to use force and violence, eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, that's what Jesus is talking about here. Believers should not shout down any opponents.

What's the most powerful type of argument you can offer in the face of evil? Scripture. The Word of God is alive and powerful. It's sharper than any sword you want to make, any edge you want to put on that sword.

It will pierce to the heart. Now, piercing somebody to the heart is not always going to be to your benefit. People that listened to the Lord Jesus were cut to the heart and decided they needed to crucify Him.

Cutting to the heart, that's what the Word of God does. But don't expect the reaction to be agreement. People don't like having their arguments exposed as fallacies.

Jesus said, be careful about throwing your pearls. The pearls from God's Word, if there's a swine, i.e. symbolic for somebody that's evil, unclean and happy about it. You remember what He said? Do not cast your pearls before swine.

Why? And quote it exactly. What exactly did Jesus say? Do not cast your pearls before swine. Why? They will gore you to pieces, but you left something out.

They will turn. They're leaving. They're already disinterested and you're trying to turn them.

You're casting pearls and saying, listen some more, come back. And you're casting pearls at somebody that is already clearly leaving the realm of gracious debate. They're swine.

They're happy to be a swine. They're on the way elsewhere. And you're throwing pearls.

They will turn and tear you to pieces. If they're swine and they're leaving, let them go. If

the truth of Scripture does not convince them, let them go.

Jesus says, I tell you not to resist an evil person. This doesn't mean any old mugger or violent criminal or anything else. If you've got concealed carry and somebody starts shooting the place up, shoot them.

They're an evil person and you're resisting and that's a good thing. This is the context of someone who is opposing you and trying to extract payment from you of, in their mind, like kind. You owe me and I want it.

You owe me a tooth. You owe me an eye. Jesus says, don't scrap with them on their ground and say, no I don't.

And wrangle about words and contracts and timing and all the rest of it. What does he say? In the realm of minor things. Now he doesn't say if they gore you with a spear or if they hack you with a sword or if they drop boulders on you from a cliff.

He says, if they slap you in the face. They are trying to humiliate you. They're trying to put you in your place.

Face slapping. Do you remember a famous biblical example of face slapping? Paul the apostle is before the high priest. And he's not even the real high priest.

He's a fake high priest. He's not even a Levite. But Paul says something about his message in the name of Christ and the high priest commands that he be slapped.

And so they slap Paul in the face. And Paul says, God's going to slap you, you whitewashed tombstone or words to that effect. And they say, don't you know you're talking to the high priest? And Paul apologizes.

He says, I didn't realize that. In other words, I could never conceive that an actual high priest would command that anybody be slapped. That was so far from it.

How could I possibly believe that you're the high priest when you would issue such a command? It's kind of a clever apology because it's like, well, I could have never believed that. But he has Paul's face slapped. But what is the purpose of that face slapping? It's a shaming rebuke.

The high priest doesn't answer him with scripture. Doesn't answer him by saying, you're running counter to the law. He just says, shut that guy up.

Smack him so he'll be quiet. Well, that's what Jesus is talking about here. And if somebody tries to do that, and this is what the apostle Paul does once he realizes the situation he's in.

He says, I take back my rejoinder. Turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you

and take away your tunic, notice again the context here.

Just like the eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth. Somebody claims you owe them a tunic. The example of this that I told you about before, I think, is when Patty and I used to work for a software dealer in Dallas.

Once or twice a client would buy this very expensive, I mean it was a lot of money at the time, like \$6,000 piece of software to do property management. Well, they got the pitch. They were given the features.

It was described. It was demoed. They said, yes, I want it.

They paid the money. They got the system installed. And then they began to find fault with it.

And they said, well, it doesn't do this, and I thought it would do that. And they were trying to get it to do things that nobody ever said it would do. They kind of made up this thing that it didn't meet their needs, and they demanded a refund.

Well, in the legitimate world, they didn't earn, deserve, or rate a refund. That was a purchase made in good faith. They were showed exactly what it was supposed to do.

It was a done deal. The money was already in the bank, and some of it had gone out for payroll. This was like two months later.

Well, our boss, the guy that we worked for at the time, was a believer, and he took this seriously. And he said, no problem. And he took the \$6,000 partly out of his own savings and partly out of the business account to refund that money and take the software back, and he just absorbed the loss.

It wasn't a legitimate claim, but he didn't fight them over it. He said, I'll let the Lord handle that. And his reputation, by the way, as a support guy and as a dealer for software and so on, was sterling.

Because he was always that way, and people knew him to be that way. And people who weren't evil didn't take advantage of him like that. But if somebody did, he just committed it to the Lord, returned the money, didn't fight them over it at all.

That's what Jesus is talking about. Be a witness, be a light. God puts his reign on the just and the unjust.

So if anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. Notice, this is tunics and cloaks. This is not the last scrap of clothing that you have.

This is not your wife's or your children's sustenance. This is something that you can get by without. This is in the realm of small claims, right? This is not if somebody kills one

child, give them the other to kill also.

If somebody kidnaps one person in your family, let them kidnap three or four. This is small claims court, right? Small claims. It's eyes and teeth.

It doesn't say life for a life. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you, do not turn away. Don't be visibly so committed and concerned and tied to your assets that you're worried about them to the extent that you don't want to lend or you don't want to donate.

If you are too tied to things in this life, you're like the guy that's building more barns to house his grain. Fool, do you not know that this night your soul will be required of you? Lift your eyes to heavenly perspective. I may lose a tunic or a cloak.

I may lend, and I doubt I'll ever get it back, but great is your reward in heaven. Great is your reward in heaven. Be self-sacrificial.

Don't be so earthly-minded that you're no heavenly good. Then in 43 through 48, you've heard it said, love your neighbor, hate your enemy, and we need to fix this a little bit. There has been some absorption.

It's not wrong, it's incorrect. You know the difference? It's not wrong, it's just not correct. In verse 44, all it says is, but I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

Everything else isn't there in Matthew. So, I say to you, love your enemies, and you can draw a line through, bless those who curse you, draw a line through, do good to those who hate you, and the verse picks up, I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who, then you line out, spitefully use you and. That's not there either.

All the verse says is, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. That's what Jesus says. Now, where did the rest of this come from? Luke 6, 27 and 28.

Keep your finger here, turn over to Luke 6. This is something we need to talk about real quick. We've already done the Gospel of Luke. This is affectionately known as the Sermon on the Plain from verse 17 of Luke 6. He came down with them and stood on a level place with a crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem.

He came down with whom? The 12 disciples that he has just commissioned on the mountain. Look at 6.12 of Luke. It came to pass in those days, Jesus went out to the mountain to pray, continued all night in prayer to God.

This is a good thing to do before a big decision. No bigger decision for the Lord Jesus than calling the 12 disciples. Jesus went to the mountain, he climbed the mountain, went

up there by himself and stayed there all night in prayer.

When it was day, he called his disciples. They're down at the foot of the mountain. One of the things about being up a mountain and having people down below is you can usually call and they will hear you.

So Jesus says, listen up. He called Simon, whom he named Peter, Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James, Ben Alpheus and Simon called the Zealot, Judas, Ben James and Judas Iscariot, who also became a traitor. Never see Judas mentioned in the New Testament without that tag.

And he came down with them. Now, think about that. I've talked about this before and I don't really have time to talk about it now, but I'm going to anyway.

Look at the movement here. Jesus climbs the mountain and talks to his father. He stays up on the mountain and calls his disciples up to his level.

That's significance. This is Jesus investing earthly things with heavenly significance. Did the Lord Jesus empty himself, take on the form of a servant and come in the likeness of men? Who is he that ascended but he that first descended to the lower parts of the earth? That's not Hades or shadowy darkness of Sheol.

Who is he that ascended but he that first descended? He came from heaven to earth is all that's talking about. Well, here there's a different message. It's one thing for Jesus to empty himself, take on the form of a servant and come in the likeness of men and he descends.

He comes to our level. That's talking about one thing. Jesus partaking of our humanity.

We have a high priest who was tested in all points like as we are yet without sin. That's one aspect. But here when Jesus is calling followers, he will use various verbal and symbolic means to tell them what's involved.

If any man come after me, let him do what? Take up his cross and follow me. Jesus says this before they have any notion that he's going to be crucified. He says, let him take up his cross.

And people are saying, cross? Take up a cross? What are you talking about? We just take it for granted. Take up your cross because we know Jesus was crucified. When Jesus said those words, they had no notion that he was going to be on Calvary, on a cross.

But he uses that cross image because convicted criminals would carry their cross to the place of execution. And he said, this is a metaphor for faithfulness unto death. You're going to be despised and rejected as I am, as Isaiah said the Messiah would be.

He is despised and rejected to many. There's no form or comeliness that we should

desire him. And you've got to be willing to undertake that.

You're not going to be popular. You're not going to be respected in many cases. Well, here, when Jesus climbs the mountain and calls his disciples to him, what is the nature of this call to be a disciple? You need to be thinking in elevated terms.

You are coming up to the Lord Jesus level of service, of understanding, of self-sacrifice, of commitment. It's no accident that he called them up the mountain. He is up the mountain because symbolically that gets you closer to God and he's calling his disciples closer to God.

Be as close to God as I am. He calls them. Then he comes down with them from the mountain, right? And stands on a level place with a crowd of his disciples.

This is the larger group of followers and a great multitude from Judea, Jerusalem, seacoast of Tyre and Sidon to hear him and be healed of their diseases as well as those who were tormented with unclean spirits and they were healed. The whole multitude sought to touch him for power went out from him and healed all. Then, verse 20, he lifted up his eyes toward whom? Toward the multitudes? Toward his disciples.

This is the immediate group of 12 and the larger group of disciples mentioned in verse 17. And he says, blessed are you poor. Now notice there's going to be four of these statements.

We don't have the fullness of the Beatitudes in Matthew, but notice also Jesus preached the same content more than once. What he covers with his disciples on the mountain in Matthew, he's covering on the plain with his disciples in Luke. It's a different occasion, slightly different wording, but the essence of it is the same.

What is the new element that Jesus is adding to the law? Blessed are you poor because they're going to leave the corners of the fields unreaped so that you can glean and provide for yourself. Blessed are you poor because I've told everybody else to look out for you and remember the poor and so on. Yours is the kingdom of God.

Blessed are you who hunger now for you shall be filled. Blessed are you who weep now for you shall laugh. It's the element of hope in the eternal future.

Blessed are you when men hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and cast out your name as evil when they themselves are the evil ones. We just saw that in Matthew. For the son of man's sake rejoice in that day and leap for joy.

Why? Your reward is great in heaven. Truly, indeed, your reward is great in heaven. In like manner their fathers did to the prophets.

If you're only hoping for vindication and peace and acceptance and prosperity and good

things in this life, you are of all men most miserable. You're going to be miserable. Reward is great in heaven.

Now those four things, blessed are you poor is number one, blessed are you who hunger is number two, blessed are you who weep is number three, blessed are you when men hate you is number four. Now 24-26 he's going to give the opposite of those. Woe to you who are rich instead of poor.

In verse 24, you have received your consolation. Riches in this life, you've got your hope in this life and you've received as much as you're going to get and you're done. And that's a woe, that's an oy.

Woe to you who are full now for you shall hunger. Woe to you who laugh now for you shall mourn and weep. Woe to you when all men speak well of you.

That's what their fathers did to the prophets. They cast out their name as evil and excluded them. And when men are speaking well of you, they spoke well of the prophets as long as the prophets were speaking well of them.

But as soon as the prophets delivered a message they didn't like, they got the verse 22 treatment. Now look at verse 27, does it ring a familiar note? I say to you who hear, and now we're back to what we just covered, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you. This got imported over into a later copy of Matthew.

But these items, while they're right, Jesus said them, but they're incorrect in Matthew. They don't belong in Matthew, the context is different. If Jesus had wanted to say this in the Matthew context, he would have.

But he didn't. It's fine to come over here and look at it in Luke, but don't copy it over into Matthew. That's incorrect.

Notice, to him who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also. From him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold your tunic. He doesn't say, volunteer it, but he says, if the guy says, and I want that too, let him take it.

Give to everyone who asks of you, and from him who takes away your goods, do not ask them back. This is sort of lending, even if it's not necessarily with permission. Just as you want men to do to you, you also do the likewise.

But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back.

But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return. Remember now, even what Jesus is talking about here has wider application than just the specific case of lending. If you experience a loss, if something leaves you in this life, don't worry about getting a return in this life.

There is a better, greater life coming. Love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return. Why? Your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High.

You will be a chip off the old block. Why? He is kind to unthankful and evil people. He keeps their hearts beating.

He lets their money buy stuff, and their health persist. They find love. They have kids.

They enjoy things. The rain falls on the just and the unjust. Right? God is kind to the unthankful and the evil.

Therefore, be merciful like your Father is merciful. It's a family value. It's a family value.

Don't harbor bitterness. Don't sit there grouching about why something wasn't returned, or something wasn't restored, or something wasn't covered as an expense. Let it go.

Disinvest. We learned that in our study of 1 and 2 Peter, didn't we? All about disinvesting. You know that bumper sticker, if you love something, let it go, and sometime later it will return, or whatever.

And then the alternate bumper sticker, if you love something, let it go, and if it doesn't come back, hunt it down and kill it. You shouldn't have either one of those attitudes. If you love someone, let issues go.

Let it go. Don't let it crawl back into your mind. Well, but, why didn't? How come? Let it go.

I was doing dishes and nobody helped. I was working in the yard and nobody helped. I was doing this, I was doing that.

Why didn't somebody do this? Why didn't somebody do that? If you want to be a son of your father in heaven, if you want to be a daughter of your father in heaven, you say, you know what? I bet in heaven, I don't have to do dishes. I bet in heaven, the lawn grows to a perfect length and stops, and there's no need for mowing. Did you ever wonder that? If evolution is true, how come grass hasn't evolved to be three inches long and stop? We mow it and mow it and mow it and mow it, it never adapts.

I want Darwin to explain that to me. By now, with all the blades of grass that have been cut for so many years, how come grass has not adapted to what I want it to be? But I think there's going to be perfect golf course lawns outside my little pup tent in the kingdom, and I won't have to mow it. Be merciful.

Give benefit of the doubt. They probably didn't think. Might have had a distraction.

Who knows what could have happened. I hold no grudge. I bear no ill will.

I don't want a tooth in exchange for the tooth I lost having to do that work or expend my effort or be that person or handle that responsibility. Let it go. Disinvest.

This is the message of the Lord Jesus Christ. You're worried about consequences in this life. Well, I want somebody to do for me just as I've done for them.

This whole love thing is only going to work if people love me the way I love them. I can't have love just going one way. Oh, really? I'm pretty sure the Lord Jesus has sent a whole lot more love my way than I've ever sent His way.

I could never recompense. I could never balance the scale of God's love. Can you? So why do you expect that in the realm of one another we should achieve or expect or demand balance? Love and send it one way.

Just like God's Word doesn't come back void, following God's example will never come back void. And Jesus gives ample examples. He says you ought to be dancing for joy if you do a thing and nobody pays you back.

You ought to be hoping they don't pay you back. You ought to be doing stuff and hoping there's no way they can recompense it. Why? He says dance, rejoice, because that recompense is coming in the eternal future instead.

Which do you want? A little short-term favor done in return in this life? Or a reward crafted by God Himself that's going to last for eternity? If that's a reality to you, then that's what you fix your hopes on and you disinvest in this life. That's what Jesus is talking about. Well, that's going to set us up for chapter 6 next time.

Notice in verse 48 of Matthew 5, our last verse, you shall be perfect just as your Father in heaven is perfect. You shall be someone who loves without expectation of return just as your Father in heaven does. You will be a son of your Father.

You will be a representative of Him just the way the Lord Jesus was. The Lord Jesus was the fullness of deity and bodily form. He's gone.

Who represents Him now? You do. You are the Lord Jesus Christ. I am the Lord Jesus Christ.

We, the church at large, are Christ on this earth. We're supposed to be reflecting God the Father. If you want to be a son, you want to be a chip off the block, you've got to quit looking out for yourself.

Quit looking for the eye and the tooth. Quit looking at the short-term benefits or

negatives of behavior and look at its eternal consequence. That's going to set us up here for verse 1 of chapter 6. Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men to be seen by them.

Why would you want to be seen by men? What is the payoff for being seen and having your charity recognized? Think one step further. Be like somebody that plays chess well. Look a move ahead.

I want to do this. I want to be sure that somebody sees me do this good deed. Why? I will be looked on favorably.

I will gain something from it. I will be respected. I will be esteemed.

I will be invited. I will be favored in some way. If I do this thing, I gain an advantage by the observation.

I'm doing it for me. To be seen is to gain an advantage. Why is it that men love darkness rather than light? It's when their deeds are evil.

When you're doing an evil deed, you don't want to be seen. Why? That would be bad for me. Being seen doing a good deed will be good for me.

Well, that's where we're headed in chapter 6, but we've got plenty to reflect on, I think, in what the Lord Jesus has said here in Matthew and looking at the complementary, slightly different view that you get in Mark chapter 9 and in Luke chapter 6. Jesus said these things more than once. Why do you say something more than once? It's important, right? So we should take these things to heart. And the question is, okay, I get it, that I should have this heart be looking heavenward.

How do I do it? If you've been listening on Thursday nights in Psalm 119, how can a young man have his way be righteous? It's all in there. We've been seeing that in every stanza of Psalm 119, haven't we? Here is how you do it. Immerse yourself in God's statutes.

Dwell in the secret place of the Most High and abide in the shadow of the Almighty. Soak yourself in His Word. The Word of God has transforming power.

If I want my heart to change so that I am this kind of person, I can't just say, okay, I was skinny, but now I'm muscled. I was fat, but now I'm lean. There's a process, and it is given to us in the Word of God.

There is a way to be this person, and it's not willpower. It's practice. It's commitment.

It is habituating ourselves to reflection, meditation, and the concomitant transformation that comes from soaking our souls in the Word of God. Go back over Psalm 119. It's all in there.

How can a young man cleanse his way? My heart is in the Lord's camp because I follow His precepts, and I follow His precepts because I'm in the Lord's tent. I'm in the Lord's camp. I stay there all the time.

That's what makes me into that person. God's power accomplishes what we cannot. We'll pick up here next time.

Let's close in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word. Thank You that You have not only called us to a holy life and a righteous and fruitful and meaningful life, but You've given us the means to do so.

It is not by our might or by our power, but by Your Spirit and the light that is provided on our path and the lamp that is provided for our feet in Your Word. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress these things in our hearts, bring them to our attention at the point of pertinence and application so that we can redeem the time and be worthy reflectors of Your glory and stand in for the presence of the Lord Jesus in this life so that others will see us and glorify You and be drawn to You through the Lord Jesus. We pray these things in His name.

Amen.