

## Episode #724 Matthew 5 Part 7-Kingdom Justice

I. The purpose of the gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel. It is another grand treatise like John to prove to Israel Who Jesus really is. It is the book of being “in Israel,” in contrast to believers today who are “in Christ.”

II. The Lord was teaching His disciples on a mountain, what is commonly called the “Sermon on the Mount.” His teaching was for His disciples, every one an Israelite, and regarded the conduct of a disciple and in light of God’s coming kingdom. After assuring them that He had not come to abolish the law but to fill full every part of it, He began to contrast what was taught “of old” in the law with His Own teaching. We saw He was talking about what the Old Testament said about justice and “an eye for an eye.”

III. Demanding Justice: Of Old Versus the Lord’s Teaching.

- A. Verse 38. This was said in Exodus 21:24, Leviticus 24:20, Deuteronomy 19:21. This is not talking about revenge, as is often mistakenly believed, but justice. When you pay for \$5.00 worth of merchandise you expect to receive \$5.00 worth of merchandise. This is “an eye for an eye.” When our government demands that the punishment fit the crime, that is an eye for an eye.
- B. Verse 39. This is ideal conduct under an ideal government. When you have a government that is taking care of all evil you will not need to resist it. But when we lock our doors we are resisting evil. The time is coming when God will do all the resisting of evil. For the disciples, the Lord was there to stop it.
- C. Verse 40. The tunic is the outer jacket. The cloak is a long robe or mantle with short sleeves. The disciples had left everything behind to follow the Lord, so they didn’t have anything but the coat on their backs. If anyone took that away, the Lord was there to provide another one.
- D. Verse 41. This was being pressed into service. Roman soldiers had a right to do this whenever they wished, which many Israelites objected strongly to. A mile is a *milion*, a thousand paces, mile meaning thousand. This was eight stadia, slightly less than our mile, 1.5 km.
- E. Verse 42. Under His government, God will be taking care of both the borrower and the lender. If we tried this today we would be in bankruptcy very soon! The disciples would not have much trouble doing this. Others could not borrow much, because they didn’t have much.

IV. Love and Hate: Of Old Versus the Lord’s Teaching.

- A. Verse 43. Leviticus 19:18. “Love” is *agapao*, to love self-sacrificially. Hate is *miseo*, hatred that causes misery or harm. Like *agapao* means actions, not just feelings.
- B. Verse 44. “Bless” is unclear in English, and translates two Greek words. This one is *eulogeo*, “to speak well of.” To “curse” is to speak against or imprecate. Otis Sellers: “I have great difficulty loving my enemies, so I just try to do right by my friends. Anyone who could love his enemies has reached a goal few could ever reach.”
- C. Verse 45. To be a “son” means to show forth the character of the Father. Note that the loving things God does for the wicked are **actions** (sending sun and rain on them), not feelings.
- D. Verse 46. These tax collectors were usually Jews who collected for the Romans. They were considered traitors by their own people, since they used their knowledge of the people to get the taxes from them. Were also often thieves, collecting more than

required for their own benefit. The Lord uses them here for those considered the lowest of the low. Today we say there is honor among thieves. There is love among publicans as well.

E. Verse 47. Greet is also to welcome, or receive joyfully.

F. Verse 48. One who is “perfect” has reached an end, or a level of maturity. If we are active believers in the Lord Jesus Christ we have reached a goal in this. If we have a love for the truth then we have reached a goal. Granted, there are many goals in Scripture that we have not reached. We probably cannot say we always truly love our enemies, so this is a goal we have not reached. In the future God will bring us to total maturity in Christ.

V. Conclusion: The Lord spoke of what was said “of old” in the Scriptures, then added His words to it as of equal authority! The Lord’s words are of equal authority because He is the God Who wrote all the Scriptures, the Living Word of God Who gives us the Written Word of God. Rather than striving for justice, the Lord told His disciples to be generous to their adversaries. Rather than loving your friends and hating your enemies, the Lord told His disciples to love their enemies. This was conduct for His disciples, and ideal conduct under ideal government. We can learn from these things, but we cannot simply apply this all to ourselves today.