

Lecture 8 – The Sermon on the Mount: Exposition of Matthew 5 - 6 (cont.)

Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Matthew 5:48 (NIV)

Key Terms

“Slough” of paganism, discourse analysis

Objectives

- *To understand the SOM’s teaching on oaths, loving enemies
- *To understand the differences between the righteousness of the Pharisee and the righteousness of the disciple

Lead Questions

- *Practice using the principles of discourse analysis on another section of the SOM.
- *What do you think is the best interpretation of the SOM’s teachings on oaths? How does your interpretation fit with the rest of Scripture? How might your interpretation work itself out in daily life?

The Sermon on the Mount: Exposition of Matthew 5 - 6 (cont.)

II. Jesus and the Law (cont.)

D. Second concept defining righteousness: beyond the tolerable to the ideal

1. The concept (Matt. 19:1-12), When Moses restrained divorce, he permitted (19:8) some divorce for shaky reasons, because Israel would tolerate no more. Today:
2. Arrow diagram.



- a. Divorce: from heedless divorce to restricted divorce (Moses) to God’s ideal.
- b. Turn cheek: from bloody, excessive vengeance, to restrained vengeance, to mercy.

E. Oaths: from rampant lying to restrictions on lying (Deut. 23:21-22) to the ideal: truth

1. Contradiction of the Old Testament (OT)? God Himself took oaths (Gen. 22:16-18, Ps. 132:11, 95:11, 119:106) and commanded Israel to take oaths in His name (Lev. 19:12, Num. 30:2, Deut. 23:21-23).
 - a. Why does Jesus forbid oaths? Consider contemporary device, the promise...
 - b. Goal: Our “yes” means “yes.” Then we won’t need oaths or promises.
2. Should Christians take oaths or not? What would each school of interpretation say?
 - a. Roman Catholic Church (Two-tiered ethic)
 - b. Anabaptist (Literal application and world withdrawal)
 - c. Early Luther, + Calvin, Zwingli (two kingdoms)
 - d. Later Lutherans (driving to cross)
 - e. Liberal theology (Go for the principle)
 - f. Reformed (analogy of Scripture, distinguish public and private situations)

Result: When we are in situation like that of Moses, where restraint of evil is a public issue, take oath if necessary. Still, the ideal should be applied literally where possible.

F. Love enemies

1. The commands of 5:31-48 require goodness for increasingly difficult people: 5:31-32, your wife; 5:33-37 perhaps a neighbor; 5:38-42 to one who has harmed you; 5:43-47 to enemies!

2. 5:48, Conclusion makes matters more difficult. “Be perfect as your father...” Meaning of Greek τελειος (*teleios*): mature or complete, not sinless. But who is so mature? So SOM sounds like legal demand after all! Yet if these be read as conditions for entry, Luther is right.
3. This is a command, yet the form gives hope. Observe Greek
 - a. ουν (*oun*, “therefore”) implies our goal is nothing less than perfection. What an aspiration!
 - b. εσεσθε (*esesthe*, “you will be”) is future indicative. A command, yet also a promise, “You will be perfect.”
 - c. You, υμεις (*humeis*, “you”) is emphatic. He speaks to us, His disciples! He has confidence in us.
 - d. ο πατηρ υμων ο ουρανιος (*ho pater humon ho ouranios*, “your heavenly Father”) suggest both nearness (Father) and distance (in heaven)

The highest requirement is that we be like our Father. Is this law or privilege? Both!

How is Jesus’ command to love our enemies an expression of God’s ideal above and beyond the standards of Moses (see Leviticus 19:18, for example)? How does Christ’s commands to love our enemies differ from His teachings on loving our neighbors?

III. Righteousness Exceeding the Pharisees, Matt. 6:1-18

A. Context: Theme of exceeding scribes and Pharisees continues (Matt. 5:20)

Matthew 6:1-18 returns to motives. Jesus already warned against satisfaction with external obedience. Now He warns against external obedience performed for others.

B. The issue and the referent: Who are those who fast, pray, and give as hypocrites?

1. Fasting, alms and prayer are the marks of a pious, observant Jew. The Pharisees strove to be the most observant Jews (Tobias 12:8, Matt. 23) and proudly sought recognition (Luke 14).
2. 5:20 provides the structure for 5:21-6:18. We have already heard how to exceed the scribes, so we are ready to apply this to the Pharisees.

C. Structure and main principles

1. Theme: “Be careful not to practice righteousness so as to be seen by men.”
2. Verbal echoes and refrains give tight cohesion
 - a. “When you..., do not..., as the hypocrites do... to [be noticed] by men.” Reward in full.
 - b. “When you...[conceal it from men]. Your Father, who sees... will reward.”
3. If you do works for man’s praise, you will receive it, and nothing else. If you do your righteous deeds in secret, God will see and reward. Practice righteousness for God’s sake.
4. “Holier than thou.” The reality, not the attitude, the pretense.

IV. Lord’s Prayer: First Non-Polemical Teachings on Disciples’ Righteousness

A. Nature of prayer

1. Public prayer is okay (see Acts), but private prayer is the essence, conversing with God.
2. Method without manipulation. Not repetitive.

B. The theocentric agenda

1. First petitions concern God’s name, K, and will. “Name” and its application to Christians.
2. Next petitions focus on our needs. Meaning of “daily bread.”

How should the Lord’s Prayer serve as an example for your personal prayer life? In what ways, if any, should it not?

V. Exposition of Matt. 6:19-24

A. Context

To do good to be praised by men is to store up a treasure on earth. 6:19-24 teaches where to store our treasures. 6:19-24 also continues kingdom theme, by pointing out rival kings.

B. Discourse analysis. See parallelism. Check *Getting the Message* appendix connections.

1. Part 1: 6:19-21 While we analyze the passage logically, recall it is poetry too.

“Mammon” = trusted thing

2. Part 2: 6:22-23 Text gives no overt sign that theme of v. 19-21 continues. What is the connection? Does text tells us to examine our heart? Or does it warns us about where we set our eyes?

The heart is the heart of the Sermon on the Mount