

**Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ**  
**SoM, Part 17: Greater Righteousness, Part 5**

Last time...4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Topics of Greater Righteousness: Oaths and Vengeance

Be men and women of our word, just as is our Father in heaven

The Bride of Christ has a ministry of reconciliation...not vengeance

1. Turning the other cheek
2. Steering clear of man's corrupt systems of justice, even to our own hurt
3. Going the extra mile

We are dead to the world  
We are to die to Self daily  
We are dead to sin and alive in Christ  
Dead men have no rights

We are in the world but not of the world  
We are new creatures in Christ  
Not our will be done but God's will be done  
We have surrendered our "rights" to Jesus Christ

4. Helping, not harming

Man's "help" is harmful ("Intervention")  
God's help is not harmful

Last week...the Great Change – Resurrection from the Dead

The Lamb of God laid down His life...and took it up again 3 days/nights later

Jesus Christ's sacrifice of Himself was the complete Satisfaction of the legal requirement  
of God and the Ultimate Fulfillment of what is next

This time...love your enemies

v43 Ye have heard:

Ye...plural “you”,

all who hear His Voice, in that time and place and in this time and place

have heard...as taught by men, the teachers of Israel, the interpreters of the Law

Thou...singular “you”

The audience is all but the accountability for obedience is personal,  
upon the individual

love thy neighbor...Lev 19:18

love = “have affection for”

neighbor = “a fellow who is near/close”

interpreted by the scribes/Rabbis as

- those who live nearby
- friend
- of one’s “kind” i.e. fellow Israelite...  
”the children of thy people” in Lev 19:18

never interpreted to include Gentiles

the letter of the Law, as interpreted by man

hate thine enemy

hate = “detest, persecute”

enemy = “adversary, one who is actively hostile toward you”

Where does the Law teach us to hate our enemy?

The Word of God speaks of Israel’s enemies hating them but  
never of God commanding Israel to hate her enemies

The god of the nations has a nature of hate

The God of Israel has a nature of love, grace, and mercy

This is a teaching of man, NOT a teaching of God

“If X is true, then the converse of X must also be true.”

Israel was taught a “man-made” addition to the Word of God by the  
teachers/interpreters, the scribes and Rabbis

Are the words of God true?

Always

Are the words of man true?

Only when they agree with the words of God

v44 But I say unto you:

Direct, Personal teaching from the Lawgiver Himself

The Spirit of the Law

The Greater Righteousness that reveals God's heart and is required to enter into the kingdom of heaven

Love your enemies:

love = "agapao"

God's love...God-centered, others-centered, selfless, self-last,

for the benefit of another even to the harm of yourself

not man's selfish, self-centered "me first and gimme gimme" love

enemies: them that

- curse you...speak evil of you
- hate you...detest you
- spitefully use you...insult, slander, and falsely accuse you
- persecute you
- Jewish context: Gentiles, most obviously the oppressive Romans

Loving one's enemies is manifested by:

a. bless

Speak well of vs evil of someone who speaks evil of you

Prov 25:21-22 If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee.

Note: the scribes' teaching in v43b is contrary to the Word of God

b. do

as God the Father (Matt 19:17) does – good

as God the Son Jesus Christ did...sacrificial love on the Cross

c. pray

intercede to God on their behalf, for their good

Love our enemies by a Christ-like reaction, an action not in kind

These words express the mind of God, not the mind of man

These words "capture" the mind of Christ

Phil 2:1-8

Loving even our enemies with the mind of Christ, we reflect God's nature...and...

v45 That ye may be the children of your Father:  
God's desire for us (plural "you") is...that we would be His children

- in relationship with Him (based on trust)
- bearing the Family resemblance
- being of His "kind", His nature...love/agape  
1 John 4:8b-9 God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.
- not our nature or the nature of the adversary the devil

Our Creator takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked  
He desires that none perish but that all come to repentance

Our Father's nature is evident in His blessings (sun, rain) upon

- evil/hate-filled and good/love-filled
- just/innocent/righteous and unjust/guilty/unrighteous

v46 If...reward...more:  
If we love only those who love us...if we love merely with man's love...  
what reward/wage can we expect from God?  
Insinuation: nothing

The publicans were

- traitors
- money-grubbing mercenaries of the hated Romans
- thieves hated by the Jews
- "low lifes"

Even they loved those who loved them

What is the reward for loving others...  
even enemies such as Romans and their lackeys the publicans...  
as God loves?

Sonship, given the power to be made the children of God

John 1:12

Luke 6:32-35

v47 salute your brethren only, what do ye more:

If we embrace only our brothers and sisters, how are we different?

Even the hated publicans embraced brothers and sisters

Jesus Christ is teaching that the citizens of the Kingdom of heaven are different than the citizens of the world

His disciples/learners/followers are in the world but not of/like the world

We are of a different “kind”...of/like the One Who is gracious and delights in mercy

His disciples are called to “more”

- “beyond measure”
  - the antidote of [Gal 1:13](#) is love beyond measure
  - Acts 9:4
  - [1 Cor 15:8-10](#) grace is love beyond measure (Rom 5:20)
- “abundantly above”
  - [Eph 3:20](#) do/love above all that we think
- “superior”
  - SoM: superior Kingdom and Constitution
  - Colossians: the superiority of Jesus Christ
    - [Col 3:1-4](#)
    - [Col 3:5-15](#)
    - [Col 4:5-6](#)

Since the Creator loves us (mankind), who are we to hate each other?

Hate is

- the nature of the devil
- man’s sin nature
- of the spirit of antichrist

Love/agape is

- the nature of the Creator God
- the nature of the children of God, those born-again of the Spirit of God
- manifested in the mind of Christ
  - Love > reaction
  - Love = initiative
  - Rom 5:8
  - [1 John 4:10-12, 19](#)

God is gracious, merciful, kind, compassionate, slow to anger  
 He is the God Who delights in mercy  
 God is Love  
 God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked but desires all to come to  
     repentance and eternal life in Jesus Christ  
 He is gentle and patient, teaching those who oppose themselves  
     (by opposing Him) that they might receive by faith His gift of repentance  
     and be delivered from the trap of the devil (2 Tim 2:24-26)

God sees and hears the wicked things people say and do to each other...  
     and to Him  
 From His vantage point so far above ours (Is 55:8-9), God hears cries for help to  
     escape the bondage of sin and Self, even in malicious hurtful actions  
 He sees more, does more, loves more  
     His children are to also

v48    Be ye therefore perfect:

Jesus is calling His disciples, the citizens of the Kingdom of God, to be as  
     The Father – perfect = “complete”

Mindful of the errors of man in v43

- love thy neighbor: narrow, man-centered interpretation of the words
- hate thine enemy: an addition to the Word of God by man  
     that is contrary to the Word of God

we can only be complete “in” Christ...words, deeds, spirit

Since we cannot complete ourselves and only God can complete us,  
     The Holy Spirit is the Teacher...man is NOT  
     Scripture interprets Scripture...man does NOT

The “sum” of v44-47 is v48...the Spirit of v43a (love thy neighbor)...  
     from the mind of God vs the mind of man...therefore His definitions

God’s definition of “neighbor”: mankind, “fellow” in its broadest terms  
     Parable of the Good (hated) Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37)

God’s definition of “enemy”: those who do not believe/obey/worship Him

2 Tim 2:24-26

POWs vs enemies

Eph 2:1-4

we all at one time opposed God

Eph 6:12

we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against...

2 Cor 10:3

though we walk in the flesh we do not war after the flesh

1 Peter 5:8

the adversary is the devil

Enemies do not believe/obey/worship, are unjust

God's definition of "love":

Eph 2:4-9 grace is love beyond measure

Luke 23:34 Father forgive them

John 6:44 drawn by...love

John 17:23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

1 John 4:12 If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

The Law made nothing perfect (Heb 7:19)

Therefore we cannot be perfect/complete in and of ourselves

As the Son of God and the Son of Man, only Jesus is perfect/complete (John 10:30)

Jesus made believers perfect/complete as Mediator of a better covenant (Heb 12:23-24)

We are perfect/complete because of the Person and work of Jesus Christ  
Now, we are to walk in His love as citizens of His Kingdom

Please bow your heads and close your eyes

If you want to give your life to Jesus Christ and ask Him to come live in you,

- Look at me (so I see you...but God sees you)
- Raise your hand

Now let's break into Closing Prayer Groups."

Pray for someone you do or had considered an "enemy"

Pray to bless vs curse

Pray about that which "registered" in our hearts

Let us leave here in one accord with the Lord God Almighty

Closing Song