



January 18, 2026
Series: Week 3
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“You Have Heard It Said...But I Say...” (Part 1) - Matthew 5:17-32

Beginning thought... Good stories include elements of **Conflict**, **Context**, **Conclusion**, and lessons to **Consider...**

Jesus Declares His Purpose, and the Practices of the Kingdom (Matthew 5:17-20)

Conflict... (Write your question/concerns below...)

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Context...

“The law of Moses and the writings of the Prophets” (Matt. 5:17) - **“Torah”**

-Known to refer to the **first five books**, but also shorthand for the **Hebrew scriptures as a whole**.

-It was also **the Story** of God’s faithful love for His people, and His instructions for how to live righteously in the world.

-The Laws that God revealed to Moses held **Timeless** moral principles for God’s people (e.g. Ten commandments).

-There were also specific instructions for the people of that time and place, certain **Temporary** rules to use to practice the Timeless truths (sacrificial system, ceremonial system, food, clothing, etc.).

“Righteousness” (Matt. 5:20) - **“Dikaiousune”** - Living in right relationship with God, other people, and all creation.

Conclusion...

-We can be “Justified” because of the finished work of Jesus. (Matt. 5:17-18, Romans 3:23-24)

-We can be “Sanctified” because of the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit. (Matt. 5:20, 48, Romans 8:30-31)

In Summary...“The Law sends us to Christ to be justified, and Christ sends us back to the Law to be sanctified.” John Stott

Jesus lays out six-case studies, revealing the true heart behind the “Torah”. Today, we will cover the first three...

Case Study #1...Murder, Anger, Harsh Words (Matthew 5:21-26)

Conflict... (Write your questions/concerns below...)

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Context...

-Jesus is using hyperbolic, overstating language to make His point. (5:21-22)

-Jesus uses two parables to teach - - making right with a brother (23-24) and making right with an enemy. (25-26)

Conclusion...

“The Law sends us to Jesus to be justified...”

-Our harmful words and unrighteous anger, speak to our interior perspective of pride jealousy, etc. (James 3:1-12)

-We must confess our sin and humbly receive His forgiveness and cleansing. (1 John 1:8-10)

“Jesus sends us back to the Law to be sanctified.”

-Through the ongoing help of the Holy Spirit, we can work to be articulate with our language, using our words to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15), and to demolish lies and strongholds of the enemy. (2 Cor. 10:4-5)

Consider... Have you spoken words with the intent to demean, devalue, or destroy another person? Is it time for you to make amends with a brother/sister, or even to make amends with an enemy?

Case Study #2...Adultery and Lust (Matthew 5:27-30)

Conflict... (Write your question/concerns below...)

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Context...

“looks at a woman with lust”(v. 27) - not just observing, appreciating, but devaluing, dehumanizing, objectifying.

-Jesus is specifically addressing men in this case study. This does not mean that men are the only ones who lustfully objectify, but Jesus is certainly aware of this inborn, and historically, repeated habit.

-This does go even deeper than a man’s lust for a woman. This has to do with all of our temptations to use other people specifically, but any created thing more broadly, as our hyper-focused source of desire and satisfaction.

Conclusion...

"The Law sends us to Jesus to be justified..."

- The Bible is clear that God sees all of our actions and words, but also our thoughts. (Psalm 139:4)
- All of us have used His good creation to satisfy our unrighteous desires, through fantasies and in reality. (Rom. 1:21-23)

"Jesus sends us back to the Law to be sanctified."

- Through the finished work of Jesus, and the ongoing help of the Holy Spirit, we can receive "renewed thoughts and attitudes." (Eph 4:21-24)

Consider... Do you need the help of the Holy Spirit to "renew your thoughts and attitudes"? Has He illuminated a work of "cutting off" that is necessary for this process to take a next step? Who are brothers/sisters that you can ask for accountability in this good work?

Case Study #3...Divorce (Matt 5:31-32)

Conflict... (Write your question/concerns below...)

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Context...

- The majority of Teachers of the Law were pushing out the practice of Rabbi Hillel's teaching that a man could divorce his wife for anything that displeased him, and it was being taken advantage of widely.

-Ancient Historians, like Josephus, tell us that women were being cast out of their homes for burning their suppers, for their appearance changing, and for any number of petty, terrible reasons.

Let's have this context when we hear the best understanding of the translation of the following phrases (v. 32):

- "causes her** to commit adultery " (NLT) – more rightly understood as **"makes her the victim** of adultery"
- "whoever marries a divorced woman also commits adultery"** (NLT), more rightly understood as **"...commits adultery against her."** Tim Mackie, Bible Project

Conclusion...

"The Law sends us to Jesus to be justified..."

- Marriage is not to be taken lightly.** (Matthew 19:3-12 - a broader teaching on the same "trap" question)
 - Jesus affirms God's ideal for marriage is seen in the Garden of Eden story, where man and woman become one, **joined together by God**, in a bond that is **exclusive** and **permanent**, quoting from Genesis 1 and 2. (Matt. 19:4-6)
 - He declares that divorce was never a desired process, but was a concession made by God because of the brokenness of humanity (Matt. 19:8), and that **for any marriage to succeed, "requires God's help"**. (Matt. 19:11)
 - Singleness can be a blessed choice** that can be made **"for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven"**. (Matt. 19:12)
- All systems of oppression are reflections of the deeper sin issues of the human heart.** (Hosea 10:13, Ezekiel 9:9)

"Jesus sends us back to the Law to be sanctified."

- In His Kingdom, Jesus calls for all people to be seen as having intrinsic worth and value, created purposefully by God. Because of this, every life should be honored and respected.
- We are to work for "Peace" (Matt.5:9) with all people, holding equally to both "Justice" (Matt. 5:6) and "Mercy" (5:7).
- With God's help, we can step into each day of our lives, whether we are single or married, with the intention of loving God and others.

Today's topics are so difficult, and should lead us to further study and to surrendered prayer.

In closing, **Consider** the following questions, and if you agree with the prayerful responses, declare them with faith:

Is perfection necessary in order to be in the kingdom of God? **"Yes. Help me, Lord Jesus."**

Can we accomplish perfection on our own? **"No. Help me, Lord Jesus."**

Did Jesus live the perfect life? **"Yes. Thank you, Lord Jesus!"**

Does Jesus freely extend His perfection to us in exchange for our sinfulness? **"Yes. Thank you, Lord Jesus!"**

Does God accept the perfection of Jesus as justifying the debt of our sin? **"Yes. Thank you, Lord Jesus!"**

Does Jesus call those who have been justified to live out His perfect Kingdom practices? **"Yes. Thank you, Lord Jesus!"**

Does the Holy Spirit help us to live out Jesus' Kingdom practices, being sanctified and matured in the process?

"Yes. Thank you, Lord Jesus!"

Will I see Jesus, face-to-face, in His forever Kingdom, where He will make all things New, Healed, and Perfect?

"Yes. Thank you, Lord Jesus!"