

Matthew 5:

5:1-2. When he saw [not only saw them, but took an estimate of the situation] the multitudes, he went up into a mountain [unknown], and when he was seated, his disciples came to him. And having opened his mouth, he kept on teaching [the imperfect means that he repeated many times] them, saying [the content of his teaching]

The multitudes contained a large group of people possibly as high as 100,000 people. In order to properly handle such a large group as this, Jesus would have to organize and train a team. So, Jesus Christ realizing that he needs a trained team separates himself from the crowds. And he does so by going up into a mountain with his disciples. (It would be impossible for a large crowd to follow a person quickly into a mountain.)

Jesus Christ undoubtedly not only taught his disciples about the Mosaic Law, but also about the transitional period of His 33 years and even some information about the Church Age since they would need to understand the transition from the Law to Grace (John 1:17: more is given to the Church Age believer than to the Old Testament believer).

Jesus sat down to get comfortable that he might be able to teach under the best possible conditions. He then taught his disciples as if he were carrying on a conversation with them (His method was firm, dogmatic, but did not contain ranting or shouting. Furthermore, Jesus did not clown around, but taught accurately using illustrations and parables to communicate his point.

By way of application, it is not the pastor's responsibility to handle the administration of a local church, but to study and teach and to establish policy. It takes a team to accomplish God's task on earth in the Church Age. This is why God the Holy Spirit gives different gifts to different people.

The grammatical organization of the first two verses:

Aorist participle "saw" followed by an aorist indicative "went."

Aorist participle "seated" followed by an aorist indicative "came."

Aorist participle "opened" followed by an imperfect indicative "kept on teaching."

Can you see the pattern established? One would expect the last verb in this group of verbal forms to be an aorist, but it isn't. This breaking off from what is expected puts emphasis on the imperfect indicative "he kept on teaching." All this action was designed for one thing namely to teach his disciples.

5:3. “Blessed are [happineses to] the destitute ones in spirit [unbelievers who realize the need for salvation] because theirs is the kingdom of heaven [after their response to the gospel message].

If a person desires salvation, the first step is to realize that he is destitute of spiritual assets or any assets which would qualify him to enter into a relationship with God. The subordinate clause in this verse “because theirs is the kingdom of heaven” implies that these believers realized that they were destitute and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as their savior. “Change your thinking [about Christ and believe in Him] for the kingdom of heaven [eternal salvation] is near” (Matthew 4:17b).

5:4. “Blessed are [happineses to] those who mourn [experience sorrow, a form of undeserved suffering] for they shall be comforted [by application of the appropriate truths or doctrines to their suffering].

5:5. “Blessed are [happineses to] the humble [great Jewish believers] because they will inherit the Land [of Israel in the Millennium].

Daniel 12:13, “ But you [Daniel is about 90, but will live even longer] go your way [keep on living your life] till the end be [of your life]; for you shall repose [great happiness and tranquility in dying: dying grace], and shall stand [in resurrection body] in your lot [a special piece of land that is allotted him in accordance with the Abrahamic Covenant], at the end of the days [end of the Great Tribulation].”

5:6. “Blessed are [happineses to] those who hunger and thirst for righteousness [to learn and execute the spiritual life and so produce experiential righteousness] because they shall be made full. [If the believer desires God’s word, God will provide whatever it takes to satisfy this desire.]

5:7. “Blessed are [happineses to] the ones showing mercy [applying grace to others] because they will receive mercy [the future expressing logical progression: grace in action from God].

The believers who apply grace to both the unbeliever and other believers have the capacity to receive an increase in blessing from the Lord. This is not tit for tat. The Lord does not bless on the basis of doing good, but on the basis of one’s capacity. Obviously, the believer who is grace oriented has the capacity to receive more blessing from the Lord.

5:8. “Blessed are [Happineses to] the pure in the heart [in the mentality of their

souls] because they shall see God [develop a great relationship with God].

Pure in the Mentality of the Soul:

1. The believer has metabolized doctrine circulating in his stream of consciousness (doctrine in his frame of reference, memory center, categorical and vocabulary storage, wisdom department and good norms and standards in his conscience) from which comes, right thinking and motivation.
2. The believer is free of blackout and scar tissue of the soul. (Ephesians 4:18)
3. The believer is free of garbage in his subconscious, not like the Exodus generation who projected from their subconscious, hatred and murder lust toward Moses. Psychologically, self-righteous people repress their mental attitude sins and lusts into their subconscious, and then accuse someone else of their very own sins and lusts. This little psychological trick is called “projection.”

5:9. “Blessed are [happineses to] the peace makers [mature believers who evangelize both by the life and by the lip] for they will be called the Sons of God [recognized and rewarded with a special title].

Arrogant believers may evangelize by the lip, but they are unable to evangelize by their lives for the unbeliever can see through their façade of self-righteousness. Only the advanced believer has the integrity and virtue to impress the unbeliever, and so many unbelievers are willing to listen to the gospel message presented by such a believer.

5:10. “Happy are [happineses to] those who are persecuted because of righteousness [the underserved suffering of a mature believer] because theirs is the kingdom of heaven [He will live with the Lord in great blessing and happiness in the eternal state].

The mature believer has the capacity and motivation to handle any kind of suffering that may come his way. He also knows that passing these tests of suffering advances him spiritually and will qualify him for greater blessing in time and in eternity. You may want to read “Christian Suffering” by R. B. Thieme Jr.

5:11. “Blessed are [happineses to] you when people insult and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.

The mature believer shares in the suffering of Christ. As Christ was persecuted so the mature believer will also be persecuted. Evil unbelievers and believers will persecute the great believers. (Saul, a believer sought David’s life). True

happiness is not based on the circumstances of life, but on the believer's relationship with the three members of the Trinity. If the believer has love for God the Father, the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus Christ, he will also possess the happiness of God.

5:12. "Rejoice and be exceedingly happy for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way, they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

The persecution of great believers is nothing new. Satan does like believers who reach occupation with Christ. So, he will motivate those who are under his authority to persecute the mature believers.

5:13. "You [the advanced or mature believer] are the salt of the Land [Israel], but if the salt has become tasteless [insipid], how [by what] can it be made salty again? It is no longer good [has ability] for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.

Just as salt has the ability to preserve and to add flavor to food, so the mature believer is the basis for the blessing and preservation of his nation. Just as salt which has lost its ability to preserve and to savor food is worthless so the mature believer who enters into reversionism becomes worthless to his nation and to those around him. Rather than being a preserver of his nation, he becomes the basis for God to judge his nation. Rather than being a blessing to others, he becomes a basis for cursing by association. In the ancient world, insipid salt was thrown out onto the street and trampled under the foot by those who passed by. Like insipid salt which is trampled underfoot, so the reversionistic believer will experience self-induced misery and be the recipient of divine discipline.

The Lord Jesus Christ as the one who controls history uses his power to bless and preserve a client nation if that nation has a sufficient number of mature believers. In other words, the Lord blesses peoples, groups and nations because of their association with great believers. Elijah once complained that only he was faithful to the Word. However, the Lord reminded him that there were 7000 who had not bowed a knee to Baal and for that reason Israel would be preserved (1 Kings 19:10, 14, 18). Moses was so great that the Lord delivered the Jewish people from the Egyptian bondage. 1 Corinthians 10:1-2 presents the baptism of [identification with] Moses, "For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into [identified with Moses and so delivered] Moses in the cloud and in the sea." Moses was identified with the cloud or Jesus Christ, and the people were identified with Moses. Later at Mount Sinai the Lord threatened to destroy all the Jews and to make a new nation from the loins of Moses, but Moses interceded on behalf of the Jews and the Lord changed his

mind (listened to the intercession of Moses) about destroying the nation (Exodus 32:7-14). Again after the Jews had heard the report of the reconnaissance team, they refused to go into the land of milk and honey. Again the Lord promised Moses that after destroying all these Jews to a man that he would make a new nation from the loins of Moses, but again Moses interceded on behalf of the Jews and the Lord pardoned them because of the intercession of Moses (Numbers 14:11-20).

5:14. “You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden.

Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness [live under Satanic thinking], but will have the Light of life [eternal life]” (John 8:12). Jesus Christ is appointing his disciples as lights of the world, the ones who will be responsible to give the light (the gospel) to the lost of Israel.

Jesus is called the light of the world because his thinking illuminates. This illumination begins with the gospel and continues with Bible teaching. When an unbeliever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ as his savior, he receives some light into his soul. As the believer learns the word of God under the Filling of the Spirit, he acquires more and more light [more and more divine thinking].

If the believer is going to effectively give out the gospel to the unbeliever, he must have light (knowledge about the Lord Jesus Christ) in his soul. He must be constantly “walking in the Light” that is learning God’s Word under the authority of God the Holy Spirit. A lighted city on a mountain at night can be seen for miles around and is very beautiful. So it is with the mature believer. By contrast a believer without metabolized doctrine in his soul is darkened and cannot be seen. The reversionistic Christian (the ignorant believer constantly living out of fellowship) has little if any light in his soul to properly witness either by mouth or by his life.

5:15: nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket [a large clay pot], but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all who are in the house [by analogy the world of unbelievers].

An advanced believer living the spiritual life is a light on a lamp stand which light is radiated. From such a believer, the unbeliever will hear the gospel clearly presented, and also when in contact with such a believer be the recipient of impersonal love.

By contrast the believer in reversionism is a lamp under a basket giving out no

light. The apostate believer is either self-righteously legalistic or some type of hell raiser. If this type of believer does evangelize, he will usually present the gospel incorrectly. However, even if he should get the gospel correctly presented, his life will not impress the discerning unbeliever.

5:16. “Let your light shine before men in such a way [by continued advance in the spiritual life] in order that they [the unbelievers] may see your good production [the unbeliever can see to some extent the true capacity of the mature believer], and glorify your Father who is in heaven [by believing in Christ].

This is an exhortation to advance spiritually. When the believer advances into the adult stages of the spiritual life, his light will shine before all by lip and by life for not only will he will give out the gospel correctly, but also the unbeliever will see to some extent this believer’s humility, integrity, unconditional love, stability and happiness. So, unbelievers desiring the truth will be encouraged to listen to the gospel.

This passage is not talking about the good deeds produced by the Christians who are under the clay basket, the ones who are progressing through the eight stages of reversionism. In religiosity, many times these believers produce a lot of good deeds which are in effect are wood, hay and stubble. In self righteousness they show off their good deeds before the unbeliever, hoping to impress him. The smart unbeliever is not impressed by the self-righteousness of this type of Christian.

Although this passage is dealing with the unbeliever, by principle it can apply to the believer in apostasy. Sometimes such a believer upon seeing the greatness of a mature believer will be motivated to recover from his apostasy by getting back into fellowship and advancing spiritually. Their recovery also will glorify God the Father who is in heaven.

5:17. “Do not presume that I came [in the 1st Advent] to abolish, abrogate the Law [The Mosaic Law] or the prophets [the rest of the Old Testament]. I have not come to destroy but to fulfill.

The Greek word “nomizo” is often the type of thinking connected with the ego and with pride. Apparently, some thought that Jesus Christ would do away with the Old Testament. To the contrary, he explains and enhances the Mosaic Law in Matthew verses 21-47. Furthermore, he was the only person in history who has ever kept the Mosaic Law perfectly as well as all the mandates found in the Prophets and on the cross was the fulfillment of the animal sacrifices.

When the Church Age officially began on the Day of Pentecost in June of 30 A.D, the Levitical Priesthood along with its function of sacrificing animals etc. in the Temple should have ended since it no longer had a legitimate purpose (In the Church Age only the royal priesthood is authorized to function). Forty years later in August of 70 A. D. the Levitical Priesthood was forced to shut down when Jerusalem and its temple were destroyed, and Israel was removed as a Client Nation. At the same time Herod's Temple was destroyed, the Jewish temple in Alexandria was shut down. The Levitical priesthood stopped functioning and will not function again until the 2nd Advent of Christ.

5:18. "For truly [idiom: important point of doctrine] I say to you [the disciples], until heaven and earth [the universe in its present state] have passed away [after human history has been brought to completion], not the smallest letter [a reference to the Hebrew *yod*, the smallest Hebrew letter] or stroke [a reference to the Hebrew *vav* which is made with one stroke] shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished [Human history comes to an end; fallen angels and unbelievers are cast into the Lake of Fire; the new heavens and earth along with the New Jerusalem are created.].

The New Testament is not in focus here since it has not yet been written. This verse is saying that there will be no changes in the Old Testament (the Law and the Prophets) until human history will have been brought to completion. Obviously, in the eternal state most of what is in the Old Testament will not be relevant.

5:19. "Whoever then annuls [infringes on] one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Until Jesus Christ fulfills the Christology of the Law (The Lamb of God takes away the sins of the world.) and until the Church Age would begin on the Day of Pentecost, the Law would remain in operation along with the Levitical priesthood. After the Church age would begin the Old Testament will be used as instruction, but the spiritual life of the Church Age believer will be drawn from the New Testament epistles.

Keeping the commandments of the Law and teaching others to do likewise, implies that the believer is executing his spiritual life as found in the Age of Israel. On the other hand, disobeying these commandments and teaching other to do likewise, implies that the believer is not executing the spiritual life. In any dispensation, if the believer executes the spiritual which execution develops capacity of soul, he will be rewarded, if not, he will lose his rewards.

All believers in all of history are given imputed righteousness at salvation. This divine righteousness imputed to the believer is the basis for God loving the believer, and whom God loves, he wants to bless. However, the Lord cannot bless the believer beyond his capacity of soul which capacity only comes through the believer's execution of the spiritual life given to him.

5:20. "For I say to you that if [3rd Class conditional Greek clause] your righteousness does not surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees [very righteous], you will never ever enter [subjunctive of emphatic negation] the kingdom of heaven [the eternal state].

The 3rd Class conditional Greek sentence puts emphasis on the person's volition. If the person believes in the Lord Jesus Christ so that he receives the imputation of divine righteousness, his righteousness will exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees. If not, it won't. The subjunctive of emphatic negation makes it very clear that no member of the human race will ever become a member of the kingdom of heaven without imputed righteousness.

5:21. "You have heard that it was said by men of old, 'you shall not commit murder [Exodus 20:13]' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable for punishment [from the government].'"

Verses 21-47 explains and amplifies the Mosaic Law. The disciples are going to the lost sheep of Israel, and so they must understand the Law well for they will have to deal with people like the rich young ruler, a self-righteous religious unbeliever (Matthew 19).

In this verse we will have a citation of the 6th commandment and later its amplification in verse 22. So, the Mosaic Law not only stated that certain overt actions were sins, but also implied that certain erroneous thoughts were sins as well.

Usually the instrumental of agency is expressed by the Greek word "hupo" plus the genitive. However, sometimes the simple dative (dative without a preposition: by the ancients; by men of old) is used to express agency especially when the verb is in a past tense and impersonal as it is here (it has been said). These men of old were the writers and communicators of God's word in the Old Testament. In Israel, murderers whether believer or unbeliever, were to be executed as per the Mosaic Law (Exodus 21:12).

Murder is one of the 6 worse sins mentioned in Proverbs 6:16-18, "There are six sins which the Lord hates, yes, seven which are an abomination to Him.

Haughty eyes [pride], a lying tongue, and hands which shed innocent blood [murder]. A heart that devises wicked plans [thinking which rejects, is against, and attacks authority], feet that run rapidly to evil [since there were no phones one had to run someplace to malign], a false witness who utters lies [perjury], and one who spreads strife among brothers [gossip].”

This verse does not say “You shall not kill.” To the contrary, in the defense of one’s life or the lives of one’s loved ones and one’s own nation, the believer is commanded to kill. For example if a believer is not willing to fight for his nation when his nation needs him, it is a sin. Initially, the young fighting men of the tribes of Reuben and Gad did not want to assist their brethren in conquering the land on the west side of the Jordan. Moses then warned them that if they were unwilling to fight and kill the enemy that it would be a sin against the Lord for which they would be punished (Numbers 32:1-23). Numbers 32:23, “But if you will not do so [kill the enemy], behold you have sinned against the Lord, and be sure your sin will find you out [you will be punished].”

5:22. “But I say to you that anyone who is angry [“orgizo”] with his brother shall be liable for punishment [from God], and whoever says to his brother, ‘You bastard’, [calling someone “raka” usually led to a fight] shall be liable to the Sanhedrin, and whoever says, ‘You imbecile [you, mentally retarded believer] shall be liable [to go] into the Gehenna of fire [expression used for the Lake of Fire].

The Greek word “orgizo” means to become angered, enraged, hostile because someone has injured your arrogant pride or to be enraged because of your envy. Anger is a mental attitude sin, and all such sins are punished by God. Furthermore, anger puts the believer out of fellowship with God and so the believer will also be punished for that state of being (grieving and quenching the Holy Spirit).

The Greek word “raka” is a Hellenized Aramaic term for utter contempt of a person. In English, it would be equivalent to calling a person a bastard or a “son of a bitch”. If a person called another person “raka”, it would usually result in a fight. If such a fight resulted in damage or personal injury, it would be brought before the Sanhedrin for litigation.

Many Jewish unbelievers would call those who communicated the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ or those who had believed in the Lord Jesus Christ especially family members “morons” mentally retarded or mentally ill. They did this to discourage evangelism and also as an expression of their opposition to and hatred of the truth. If this attitude continued in their souls, they would die as

unbelievers and would be cast into the Lake of Fire after their trial at the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:1-15).

Prior to the reign of Josiah, the Jews worshiped false gods in the Valley of Gehenna. At times they even sacrificed their children. When Josiah became king he wiped-out these evil demonic temples and turned it into a dump for all kinds of garbage. This garbage would then be burnt. So, whenever a Jew would look toward Gehenna, he would see these fires burning. Because of this, Gehenna became a synonym for the Lake of Fire.

5:23. “Therefore, if [3rd class conditional sentence] you are presenting your gift [food, animal, money etc. offering] at the altar [a part of worship in the previous dispensation], and there you [with anger etc.] remember that your brother [a fellow Jew] has something against you [because he is the object of anger or hatred etc.],

This is a third class conditional sentence which means it is a hypothetical situation which provides us with an illustration. Bringing a gift or a sacrifice to the altar was a system of worship. (In the Church Age we would say, ‘If you come to a worship service.’) In this verse, the Jewish believer suddenly remembers that he is guilty of committing some sin of antagonism against a fellow Jewish believer. He possibly has some hatred or bitterness toward another believer. So, being out of fellowship he was not able to worship God.

5:24. leave your offering there before the altar and go; [follow a course of action or procedure] first be reconciled to your brother and then come and present your offering.

The believer must take the initiative in his confession of sins. Usually, this involved confessing his sin or sins before a Levitical priest. Many times this was enough since naming ones sins of antagonism toward a brother is reconciliation (the barrier of antagonism was removed) and so he would not have to physically go to his brother. However, other times reconciliation involved going to the fellow Jewish citizen (a brother) to solve the conflict that existed.

Verses 23 and 24 deal with a worship; verses 25 and 26 deal with a lawsuit.

5:25. “Have kind thoughts [a relaxed mental attitude] toward your adversary quickly while you are with him on the way [while you have contact with him] so that your opponent may not hand you over to the judge and the judge to the officer, and you will be thrown into prison.

This is a case where you are right and your opponent is wrong. All the same, if you remain hostile, you may end up in jail. However, with a mental attitude of impersonal love, you may be able to resolve the problem and stay out of jail (application of the 6th commandment in the form of a mental murder).

At this time in Palestine, the economy was based on agricultural. Most were either farmers or in related professions. Just before a planting season, the farmer would usually go to the bank to borrow money in order to buy seed, and so he would remain in debt until the harvest at which time he would normally pay-off that debt. If the crop was a failure his enemy (Someone the farmer had become antagonistic and angry toward: mental murder.) could go to the bank and purchase the farmer's paper of indebtedness and if that farmer were unable to pay, he could find himself in a very unpleasant situation. In such a case, if the farmer remained hostile toward the one who now possessed the paper of indebtedness, he more than likely would be taken to court and thrown into jail. If on the other hand, the farmer's anger and antagonism toward the other person was removed through getting back into fellowship and applying grace-forgiveness, then that farmer would have a better chance of making some type of deal with the one holding the note of indebtedness and so to stay out of prison.

5:26. "Truly I say to you, you will not come out of there until you have paid up the last cent [nearly impossible in prison].

In this case a believer with a bad mental attitude (out of fellowship through mental sins of bitterness, anger, hatred etc.) ends up in prison because he refused to forgive the person to whom he was hostile.

5:27. "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery [Exodus 20:14];'

In verses 27-30 the seventh commandment is used to reveal self-righteousness. Self-righteousness is a sin which has tremendous arrogance associated with it. Wherever religion dominates as was true in Judea at this time, great self-righteousness is produced. Though being extremely arrogant, religious people are always the first ones to condemn overt acts of sin. Should they commit an overt sin, it would always be on the sly. The Jewish religious leaders actually enjoyed stoning to death those caught in adultery; it was an outlet for their cruelty and killer-lust. Most of the religious leaders wouldn't think of committing overt adultery, but they in their religious finery would take a quick look at a beautiful woman and then quickly turn away as if they were beyond such a temptation. In fact, after turning away, they would then commit mental adultery with her. After their mental adultery had been completed, they would

then go around and condemn those who had committed overt adultery. This was unadulterated hypocrisy.

5:28. but [amplifies the 7th Commandment and takes it beyond the overt act] I [the final authority] say to you for your advantage that everyone who [the male Pharisees, scribes and Sadducees were the worst offenders in Israel at this time] looks [a quick glance to get an image of the woman] at a woman with lust [when the person gives the nod to lust from the sin nature, the sin nature gains control of the soul and develops mental fantasies, creating images] has already committed adultery with her in his heart [in the mentality of his soul].

5:29. “If your right eye makes you stumble and it does [1st class Greek conditional clause: assumed to be true: the basis for mental adultery], tear it out and throw it from you [making a point through hyperbole]; for it is better for you [the unbeliever can produce so much scar tissue which in turn destroys faith and so cannot believe in Christ] to lose one of the parts of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into Gehenna [used for the Lake of Fire].

The right eye is the master eye, the one doing all the work, of a right handed person. Since most people are right handed, the right eye is the illustration here. Just as overt sexual sins produce a lot of scar tissue in the soul of the individual committing them so do mental sexual sins.

The method of teaching here is teaching by shock. No one who has committed mental adultery is going to rip out his eye that is if he is normal. Also, no normal person is going to cut off his hand (in the next verse) who has committed overt adultery. The Bible does not advocate self-mutilation. Furthermore, mutilation does not stop a person from functioning under lust and committing sins, rather a spiritual solution is required.

Certain sins produce a lot of scar tissue in the soul. This is why certain criminals and terrorist can mutilate and murder a person without any feeling or pity at all. They are totally hardened through their crimes. Scar Tissue (hardness of the heart; stiff necked) is very destructive to the soul; it can even destroy one’s ability to exercise faith. If an unbeliever cannot exercise faith, he cannot believe in Christ even though he may desire salvation at some point. Not only do sexual sins produce scar tissue, but also the sin of rejecting the gospel as well. Esau is a good example. Though Esau undoubtedly heard the gospel many times in his youth from his parents and others as well, he rejected the message. However, when Esau became old, he sought it along with the accompanying eternal blessings, but he did so through tears, not through faith in the gospel message. Hebrews 12:17, “For you know that even afterwards (in

his old age), he desired to inherit the [eternal] blessing [through salvation], he was rejected for he found no place for a change of thinking [The Greek word “metanoia:” to change one’s thinking (about Christ)], though he sought for it [salvation with its eternal blessing] with tears [No one is saved through emotion].

Since all sins were judged on the cross. Sin in itself cannot send anyone to the Lake of Fire. (This would violate the law of double jeopardy). Hypothetically, if adultery could send a person to the Lake of Fire, then both Abraham and David, two of the greatest believers of the Old Testament would be already be in Torments, but they are not.

As these disciples go to the lost sheep of Israel, the greatest barrier to the gospel message will be Jewish self-righteousness developed to the maximum through Judaism. Self-righteous unbelievers are hard to evangelize since they think that they are already righteous enough. Learning that anger is murder, and mental adultery is adultery may help to break through this wall of self-righteousness.

5:30. “If your right hand makes you stumble [overt adultery], cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body than you to lose one of the parts of your body than for your whole body to go into Gehenna.

5:31, 32. “It has been said [introduces a quotation], ‘Whoever sends his wife away [divorces his wife], let him give her a [legal] certificate of divorce [Deuteronomy 24:1];’ but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the cause of adultery [clarification of ‘uncleanness’: a moral uncleanness: a reference to the reason for divorce as found in Deuteronomy 24:1], causes her to receive adultery [she is not guilty of adultery]; and whoever [the 2nd husband] marries a divorced woman [based upon this gimmick of using ceremonial uncleanness] commits adultery [since she is still Biblically married to the first man].

The man is responsible for the marriage, and so if a man marries a woman who is still married, he commits adultery. So, if a man should marry a woman who has been divorced on the basis of ceremonial uncleanness, he in effect commits adultery.

When a man takes a wife and marries her and it comes to pass [after an elapse of time] that she finds no favor in his eyes [hatred or mental murder] because he has found some uncleanness in her [The religious leaders distorted the true meaning of uncleanness here and so issued this

man a certificate of divorce for his wife's ceremonial uncleanness as found in the Mosaic Law], then let him give her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out from his house. And she leaves his house, she may go and become another man's wife, and if the latter [the 2nd husband] husband turns against [hates] her, and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it into her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband [2nd husband] dies who took her to be his wife. Then her former [1st] husband who sent her away is not allowed to take her again to be his wife, since she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the Lord and you shall not bring sin on the land which the Lord your God gives you as an inheritance (Deuteronomy 24:1-4).

Remember that the Sermon on the Mount in part clarifies and amplifies the Mosaic Law. Since Jewish husbands were using ceremonial uncleanness as a gimmick for divorce, the Lord explained "uncleanness" as used in Deuteronomy 24:1 as fornication, not ceremonial uncleanness.

5:33. "Again [another case regarding the Mosaic Law and giving its proper interpretation], you have heard [when the disciples were taught the Mosaic Law] that the ancients were told [a reference to the Old Testament], 'You shall not make false vows, but you shall fulfill [discharge your obligations] your vows to the Lord' [a reference to Exodus 7:20 and Leviticus 19:12].

Never make a statement in the name of something or someone that is reliable and try to make that something or someone that is reliable stand responsible for your statement. In other words, don't use someone reliable [like God] to support your false statements. For example, in a church business meeting some deacon, a pillar in the church as it were, may say regarding some matter, "I have prayed about this for a month and so, I know that it's God's will (or God has made known to me) that we should do it this way etc." How does that person know that his plan is God's will? It is pure arrogance for a person to state that God supports his plans. Christians are generally so ignorant of God's word that they are afraid to oppose anyone who brings in God as a co-signer to their plans.

A statement is no stronger than the person making it. If a person says I love you by God (by Jerusalem, by his dear departed mother etc.) it still is no stronger than the stability and responsibility of that person. If a person is unstable and irresponsible, his statement is meaningless.

Some don'ts: Don't make a promise that you do not intend to keep. Don't say you are going to do something because it is convenient to do so and then weasel out of it later. Don't tell someone that you love them when you don't. Don't

perjure yourself by attempting to cover up a lie with an oath by God. On the other hand, a Christian should always keep his word no matter what it cost him. He should always be honest for it is part of his testimony as an ambassador of the Lord.

5:34 - 36. “But I say to you, do not make a promise with an oath at all, neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet [Jesus Christ controls history], nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King [the Lord made Jerusalem a great city and will rule from there in the Millennium]. “Nor shall you make an oath by your head [a Jewish system of taking an oath], for you cannot make one hair white or black [you cannot think red and suddenly have red hair etc.].

What you say or promise should be true without taking an oath (Colossians 3:17). Swearing by honorable institutions or people, holy cities etc will not add to your integrity or lack of it.

5:37. “But let your statement be, ‘Yes, yes’ or ‘No, no [let your ‘yes’ be yes and your ‘no’ be no; in other words keep your word];’ anything beyond these is out from the evil one [lies are from the father of lies].

5:38. “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’

An eye for an eye was a system of justice under the government of Israel. A judge in Israel after considering all the evidence and after listening to the eye witnesses would decide the sentencing, and if someone person destroyed the eye of another person, the judge would order his eye the guilty party removed. It was never to be used to justify retaliation and revenge as it was being used in Jesus’ day. Do not solve evil with evil. Two wrongs do not make a right. If you do, you have lowered yourself to the level of evil.

In verses 38-42 we have the vengeance case. The content of these verses in taken from three passages namely Exodus 21:24; Deuteronomy 19 :21, and Leviticus 24:20. Verse 39 gives us the true principle.

5:39. “But I say to you do not retaliate against an evil person, but whoever slaps you [someone who is antagonistic] on your right cheek [insults you], turn the other to him also [unconditional love: do not react, retaliate or take revenge].

As believers we put all hostility into the Lord’s hands, the faith-rest drill (Leviticus 19:18; Deuteronomy 32:35; Romans 12:19). We do not retaliate. If we do, we are lowering ourselves to the level of the wrongdoer. Two wrongs

do not make a right. Furthermore, by taking revenge, you are saying in effect that you are more capable than God. This is blasphemy!

In the ancient world if a King or dignitary entered a city, he would demand obeisance. If he didn't get it, he would have the person slapped until he did. If one is repeatedly slapped, either the person slapped would become angry and try to retaliate and be killed on the spot by the body guard or he would submit in his mentality and do obeisance. If he submitted, the king or dignitary had defeated the person mentally.

Reacting to being slapped illustrates reacting to the antagonism of another person. If someone slaps you, it is because that person is angry, possesses hatred etc toward you. If you slap the person back, it means that you are now angry. Bible doctrine in the mentality is stronger than the antagonism of people. Your mental attitude will dictate your overt action. If the Christian competes with the unbeliever on his level, he has lost his testimony. It is natural to respond to a slap with immediate anger. To avoid this natural reaction requires supernatural power in the soul.

5:40. "If anyone wants to sue you and take your open necked shirt with sleeves [the "chiton": went down to just above the knees], let him have your cloak [the "himation" was a mantel which went over the chiton] also.

This is a case in which someone is trying to get what belongs to you: using the court system to steal. (It is not a libel suit). Property is only a detail of life. So, if someone really needs it or just lusts for it, give it to him and even more. Today we would say, if he is suing you for your jacket, give him also your pants. Our life is our relationship with the Lord. Do not let your property hinder your testimony before the Lord.

The person suing you thinks that possessing these things will make him happy, but it won't especially when they are acquired in an incorrect manner. Your willingness to part with these things will alert him to something greater than possessions namely your relationship with the Lord.

Remember that the Lord is preparing the disciples to go out to the lost sheep of Israel. Later in Matthew 10, he will tell them to only take one set of clothing. It is not their possessions, but their message that is important.

5:41. "When you are drafted for a year of military service, serve two.

Some people think that this verse is saying that if someone asks you to walk a mile with them, you should walk two. So, someone demands that you walk

them home from a downtown area which happens to be a mile. Then as soon as you arrive at his home, you suggest walking another mile back to the downtown area. That would be hilarious. Rather, this verse is talking about public service.

The Greek word “angareuo” is taken from a noun “angaros” which means to draft someone into the Persian Army. At one time the Jews were living in the Persian Empire. The cognate noun to this verb is “angaros” which means a Persian officer or official. For example let’s say that Darius the Great needs some soldiers. He has troops on the Euphrates and is on his way to the Bosphorus. So he sends his “angaros” to locate some men. Let’s say that this officer is on his way to the Negev by way of Israel. On the way he sees a young farmer who has some good horses. He says to the young man, “You are now drafted into the Persian Army for a short period of time to accomplish a mission. You will deliver some supplies to such and such location a fifty mile journey.” The young Jewish man’s attitude should be that if he needs to go 100 miles or more, he would gladly do it. Believers should have a good attitude toward military service or any other public service required by their nation.

Jesus Christ is talking to his disciples. In effect he is telling them that as they go through the land they may be asked or commanded to fulfill some public service especially in time of disaster. They should do so. Sooner or later a person’s nation will face a crisis. It is a part of one’s Christian service to help his nation in such a crisis. (Roman 13:1-7)

5:42. “Give to him who asks of you (if you can of course), and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.

There are two kinds of believers who are going to be in poverty. One is simply going to ask for help; the other is simply going to try to borrow. The one who wants to borrow has some hope. So, loan him what he needs. The other one who asks in desperation is simply in a hopeless situation. So, you must give to him at the time of his desperation if of course you can. Your mental attitude must be of grace. How much you give is a matter of judgment.

God has blessed you so don’t forget that. The person needing help may be a real cluck and totally undeserving and even obnoxious. It is easy to resent someone who asks for help especially when that someone is a total idiot or mishandled money etc.

This passage is not dealing with the following though they may be legitimate:

1. A pastor who wants you to buy himself a car and so forth in order that he

may enhance his ministry.

2. An entrepreneur who wants help in funding his seminary project or other projects related to some ministry.

3. A lazy father who asks for help in supporting his family.

Verses 43-47 operation grace:

5:43. “You have heard that it was said [Leviticus 19:18], ‘You shall love your neighbor, [those you have contact with: only this part is in Leviticus 19:18] and you shall hate your enemy’ [what the Rabbis and Pharisees had been teaching to foment a revolution against the Romans].’

Legalism sponsors implacability, hostility, hatred etc. Since the shadow of the Romans was over Judah, the religious people had been encouraging jealousy, bitterness, hatred and other sins. These emotional and mental sins became so great that the Jews lost all common sense and reasonableness and so in 70 A.D., they revolted. They did not heed the command in the following verse.

5:44. “But I say to you, love [rather than hate] your enemies [someone who hates you] and pray [rather than maligning them] for those who persecute you [verbal persecution or violence],

The Law says love your neighbors; Christ added the command to love ones enemies. Impersonal love progresses as we move toward the Church Age. See R. B. Thieme Jr.’s doctrine on “Love.”

1. Verbal opposition: bless them who curse you
2. Mental opposition: do good to those who hate you
3. Overt opposition: pray for them

5:45. In order that you [the disciples] may become [obviously, manifestly] sons of your father [similar in thinking] who is in heaven for he causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous [believers] and the unrighteous [unbelievers].

The sun and rain speaks of blessing in an agricultural economy. Our Father in heaven is gracious to all mankind; we as his sons should manifest this graciousness.

In verses 46-48 we have a challenge to develop and apply impersonal love which requires a virtue which can only come from a great spiritual life. Read R. B. Thieme Jr.’s booklets, “Integrity of God” and “Christian Integrity.”

5:46. “For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same [most were unbelievers]?”

Generally it is true that people are able to love those who love them at least to some extent. If the tax collector the lowest on the social ladder was able to love those who loved him, then what merit is there in that? What reward should you expect from God if you are only able to do what the average unbeliever can do?

5:47. “If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?”

Some Christians make a big deal of smiling at and greeting other Christians as if that is a sign of spiritual greatness and emphasize socializing with other Christians as if somehow that advances a Christian spiritually when even the unbeliever can do that. What an unbeliever can do is not the spiritual life and certainly does not prove anything except that a lot of Christians are total idiots when it comes to the spiritual life.

5:48. “Then [When the Holy Spirit identifies them with Christ, the Baptism of the Holy Spirit beginning on the Day of Pentecost] you will be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect. [This verse anticipates the Church Age.]”

What is the difference between the Christian and the unbeliever? No unbeliever is in union with Christ. In union with Christ we are perfect which no one can see. The only way that this perfection (perfect virtue) can be manifested in part is through the spiritual life on earth. So, the believer in the Church Age can do something that no unbeliever could ever do namely to treat others with impersonal love namely to love his enemies and to pray for those who persecute him.