

February 24, 2020
Matthew 5:17-48
The First Church of
Squantum
Rev. Doug Gray

I. Overview and
Introductions

II. Teaser: As a child did you have a family rule that you loved to break?

III. Matthew

A. The tax collector called by Jesus (see Matthew 9)

B. The Good News for a Jewish audience — Lots of scripture quoted, a “new Torah”

C. Probably writing sometime after the destruction of the Temple (ca 70–75 AD)

Things to Watch for

1. “You have heard it said...but I say to you...”

2. How is Jesus the “new Moses”?

3. Tale of Two Kingdoms—The Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of This Age

4. The role of Peter is prominent (incl. he's given the keys of the kingdom)

Structure

Introduction

First Triad

Love is reconciling.

On anger

**Love is not predatory.
On lust
Love is empathetic.
On divorce
Second Triad (“Again,
you have heard it
said...”)
Love is truthful. On
oath-making**

**Love exceeds
expectations. On
oppression
Love reflects God. On
enemies
Conclusion**

**Words and Phrases to
Watch for**

- **Pharisees — Prominent, religious group in Jesus' day. Were trying to take God seriously in their lives, trying to make God part of every moment of every day. This was a lay movement.**

- **Scribes/Teachers of the Law — Trained for decades to meticulously copy the text of the Bible. Widely respected for their knowledge of the Bible.**
- **Abolish...Fulfill — Jesus' intent is not to**

demolish the Law, but that it might be completed, find its true meaning and purpose. Jesus was a Jew who wanted life with God to be a full and meaningful relationship, more than rules and trying

to earn our way into heaven.

- **Righteousness — Right relationship with God. As opposed to wickedness, which is knowing What God wants and deliberately choosing otherwise.**

- **Raca — Aramaic term of contempt. Sometimes translated as good for nothing.**
- **Sanhedrin — The Jewish ruling council in Jerusalem made up of 70 elders. This is the group who initially**

**tried and convicted
Jesus.**

- **...while you are still
with him on the way...
— The courts were in
Jerusalem, and
adversaries would
frequently have to
travel together from
their small town.**

- **...give her a certificate of divorce. — In Jesus' day, a man could divorce a woman very simply by just saying in public three times, "I divorce you!" According to Jewish tradition, a woman could have a**

certificate to prove it. Jesus highlights the human cost of that practice.

- **Oath-making was a common practice in Jesus' day. An oath typically called in a divine witness to the**

oath. A vow is a promise.

- **“Eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.” — Exodus 21:24. Leviticus 24:20. Deuteronomy 19:21. Most commentators indicate that the practice of revenge-**

taking before Jewish Law was one that often got out of hand and became overly punitive.

**Tying Things Together
Finding the inflection points**

**What's speaking to
you?**

**What does this say
about our life
together?**

**Questions for
Reflection**

**To whom is Jesus
speaking in this**

passage? Why this group and not just the disciples for instance?

In what way do the terms, Raca (see above) and “you fool” do violence to someone?

In Jesus' mind, is anger wrong? Why or why not? How do we reconcile this with Jesus clearing the Temple?

How does reconciling fit into the teaching on anger?

Does Jesus intend his teaching on adultery to be taken literally? Why do you think Jesus casts it in these extreme terms? Does Jesus think divorce is wrong? Why or why not? Does Jesus recognize that

divorce sometimes is necessary? (See Jesus' teaching in Matthew 19:1ff)

How Does This Apply to Today?

How does Jesus define "righteousness," a

**right relationship with
God?**

**Are these a new set of
rules for us?**

**Does Jesus expect us
to be able to do these
things? Why or why
not?**

Matt. 5:17 “Don’t ever think that I came to set aside Moses’ Teachings or the Prophets. I didn’t come to set them aside but to make them come true.

18 I can guarantee this truth: Until the earth

**and the heavens
disappear, neither a
period nor a comma
will disappear from
the Scriptures before
everything has come
true.**

**19 So whoever sets
aside any command
that seems**

unimportant and teaches others to do the same will be unimportant in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever does and teaches what the commands say will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

20 I can guarantee that unless you live a life that has God's approval and do it more faithfully than the experts in Moses' Teachings and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Matt. 5:21 “You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, ‘Never murder. Whoever murders will answer for it in court.’
22 But I can guarantee that whoever is angry with another believer^a

will answer for it in court. Whoever calls another believer an insulting name will answer for it in the highest court.

Whoever calls another believer a fool will answer for it in hellfire.

**Matt. 5:23 “So if you are offering your gift at the altar and remember there that another believer has something against you,
24 leave your gift at the altar. First go**

away and make peace with that person. Then come back and offer your gift.

Matt. 5:25 “Make peace quickly with your opponent while you are on the way to court with him.

Otherwise, he will hand you over to the judge. Then the judge will hand you over to an officer, who will throw you into prison. 26 I can guarantee this truth: You will never get out until you pay

**every penny of your
fine.**

**Matt. 5:27 “You have
heard that it was said,
‘Never commit
adultery.’**

**28 But I can guarantee
that whoever looks
with lust at a woman**

**has already
committed adultery in
his heart.**

**Matt. 5:29 “So if your
right eye causes you
to sin, tear it out and
throw it away. It is
better for you to lose
a part of your body**

**than to have all of it
thrown into hell.**

**30 And if your right
hand leads you to sin,
cut it off and throw it
away. It is better for
you to lose a part of
your body than to
have all of it go into
hell.**

Matt. 5:31 “It has also been said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife must give her a written notice.’

32 But I can guarantee that any man who divorces his wife for any reason other than

unfaithfulness makes her look as though she has committed adultery. Whoever marries a woman divorced in this way makes himself look as though he has committed adultery.

Matt. 5:33 “You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, ‘Never break your oath, but give to the Lord what you swore in an oath to give him.’

34 But I tell you don’t swear an oath at all.

**Don't swear an oath
by heaven, which is
God's throne,
35 or by the earth,
which is his footstool,
or by Jerusalem,
which is the city of
the great King.
36 And don't swear an
oath by your head.**

After all, you cannot make one hair black or white.

37 Simply say yes or no. Anything more than that comes from the evil one.

Matt. 5:38 “You have heard that it was said,

‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’

39 But I tell you not to oppose an evil person. If someone slaps you on your right cheek, turn your other cheek to him as well.

40 If someone wants to sue you in order to

take your shirt, let him have your coat too.

41 If someone forces you to go one mile, go two miles with him.

42 Give to everyone who asks you for something. Don't turn anyone away who

**wants to borrow
something from you.**

**Matt. 5:43 “You have
heard that it was said,
‘Love your neighbor,
and hate your enemy.’
44 But I tell you this:
Love your enemies,**

**and pray for those
who persecute you.
45 In this way you
show that you are
children of your
Father in heaven. He
makes his sun rise on
people whether they
are good or evil. He
lets rain fall on them**

**whether they are just
or unjust.**

**46 If you love those
who love you, do you
deserve a reward?
Even the tax
collectors do that!**

**47 Are you doing
anything remarkable if
you welcome only**

**your friends?
Everyone does that!
48 That is why you
must be perfect as
your Father in heaven
is perfect.**

Matthew 19:1-12

Matt. 19:1 When

Jesus finished

speaking, he left

Galilee and traveled

along the other side of

the Jordan River to the

territory of Judea.

2 Large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.

Matt. 19:3 Some Pharisees came to test him. They asked, “Can a man divorce his wife for any reason?”

Matt. 19:4 Jesus answered, “Haven’t you read that the Creator made them male and female in the beginning 5 and that he said, ‘That’s why a man will leave his father and mother and will remain united with his wife,

and the two will be one'?

6 So they are no longer two but one. Therefore, don't let anyone separate what God has joined together.”

Matt. 19:7 The Pharisees asked him,

“Why, then, did Moses order a man to give his wife a written notice to divorce her?”

Matt. 19:8 Jesus answered them, “Moses allowed you to divorce your wives because you’re heartless. It was

never this way in the beginning.

9 I can guarantee that whoever divorces his wife for any reason other than her unfaithfulness is committing adultery if he marries another woman.”

Matt. 19:10 The disciples said to him, “If that is the only reason a man can use to divorce his wife, it’s better not to get married.”

Matt. 19:11 He answered them, “Not everyone can do what you suggest. Only those who have that gift can.

12 For example, some men are celibate because they were born that way. Others

are celibate because they were castrated. Still others have decided to be celibate because of the kingdom of heaven. If anyone can do what you've suggested, then he should do it.”