

Six Contrasts

Matthew 5:21-48

Luke 6:27-36

Luke 6:39-42

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Texts:

Matthew 5:21-48,

21. You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’

22. But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.

23. Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you,

24. leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.

25. Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison.

26. I tell you the truth, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

27. You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’

28. But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

29. If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

30. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

31. It has been said, ‘Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.’

32. But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery.

33. Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.’

34. But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God’s throne;

35. or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King.

36. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black.

37. Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

38. You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’

39. But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.

40. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well.

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

42. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

43. You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’

44. But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

45. that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

46. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?

47. And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?

48. Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Luke 6:27-36,

27. But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you,

28. Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.

29. And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other, and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also.

30. Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.

31. And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

32. For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? For sinners also love those that love them.

33. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? For sinners also do even the same.

34. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? For sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

35. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.

36. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

Luke 6:39-42,

39. And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? Shall they not both fall into the ditch?

40. The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master.

41. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

42. Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

Commentary:

I. The Decalogue said, **“Thou shalt not kill.”** Serious penalties were to be visited upon all who violated this command.

A. Jesus, as God’s son, modified this command, one of the ten commandments. This must have astounded the Jewish zealots.

B. Exodus 20:13, “You shall not murder.”

C. Deuteronomy 5:17, “You shall not murder.”

D. While killing (murder) was forbidden, hate that leads to murder was not forbidden.

E. To be in danger of the judgment a disciple needs only to hate his brother making hate equal to killing in the view of Jesus.

F. Disparaging others by calling them names such as “Raca” (Aramaic: empty head) or “fool” would place people in danger of the council (Sanhedrin) and hell fire respectively.

G. All such insults are sinful and spring from a corrupt heart.

H. In the matter of our loving, respectful regard for others, Christians are definitely different from the world around us.

I. What are other questionable expressions common to our society?

J. In view of what Jesus had just said, it is now ordered that if any who are at worship realize that they hate or have done another wrong, that they leave worship and make things right with those with whom they are not in harmony and then return to worship acceptably.

K. To render acceptable worship to God we must be in harmony with other people.

1. Quarreling ruins (literally “throws off track”) everyone who hears it.

2. **2 Timothy 2:14, Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no prophet, but to be subverting of the hearers.**

L. Making things right with others takes precedence over worship, because we cannot love God while hating our brothers.

M. Matthew 18:15-17, “If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

N. Galatians 6:1, Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.

1. That is, tempted to feel superior to your struggling brother.

O. We are to agree with our adversary quickly lest the dispute exacerbate and become more and more complicated involving arrest, trial and prison.

P. Settling disagreements and healing inter-personal conflicts are priority matters so we can get back to God's work of loving each other.

Q. Attitudes of conciliation should characterize all Christians.

R. The world sorely needs conciliatory attitudes. Reference the inter-personal conflicts discussed on each newscast.

S. Conciliation in an attempt to be a peacemaker is not equal to capitulation to evil.

T. The Lord stated that to fail to be conciliatory may result in the adversary exacting from you the maximum legal penalty.

II. The seventh commandment of the Decalogue stated, "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

A. Jesus also, to the shock and dismay of the Jews, modified another of the ten commandments.

1. Matthew 7:38, 39, When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

2. The law said, but I say unto you! Jesus overrode the ten commandments!

B. Everyone who is looking at another in lust has already committed adultery with that person in her or his heart.

C. Women lust after men. Men lust after women.

D. Jesus addressed the heart (attitude) as well as the act.

E. Sex is exploited on television and other media to sell everything.

F. We are to exercise utmost effort to control our hearts and actions, as we attempt to live up to the name we have been given by the Father: "Children of God."

G. Giving up cherished sins is likened to plucking out an eye or cutting off the right hand to save the body from being further invaded by a cancerous lesion.

H. Matthew 18:8, 9, If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.

I. There were two schools of thought about divorce in the Rabbinic Age,

A. The school of Rabbi Hillel taught that a man could lawfully divorce his wife for just about any reason.

1. The chief student of Rabbi Hillel was Gamaliel.

2. Paul was a student of Gamaliel.

B. The school of Rabbi Shammai taught that a man could legally divorce his wife only for some kind of indecency or lewdness or sin against the marriage relationship.

1. Evidently, it was something less than adultery because the penalty for that was death for both parties.

a. **Deuteronomy 22:22, If a man is found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shall thou put away evil from Israel.**

J. Jesus stated that divorce, except for the cause of sexual immorality, was sinful.

K. John 8:1-11, But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of

adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “If any one of you is without sin. Let him be the first to throw a stone at her.” Again he stopped down and wrote on the ground. At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” “No one, sir,” she said. “Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”

L. Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more.”

M. If America stoned adulterers, the population would be greatly reduced!

1. But would Jesus approve? Where would we find the sinless person to throw the first stone?

III. The ninth commandment of the Decalogue stated, “Thou shalt not foreswear thyself, but shall perform unto the Lord thine oaths.”

A. Scriptures:

1. Exodus 20:16, You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

2. Exodus 23:1, Do not spread false reports. Do not help a wicked man by being a malicious witness.

3. Deuteronomy 5:20, You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

B. Jesus' audience believed they could lie if they were not properly sworn. They used all manner of devices to circumvent being legally sworn.

C. Jesus stripped away all these devious devices and said, **“Swear not at all! . . . just tell the truth.”**

D. **Matthew 23:22, And he who swears by heaven swears by God's throne and by the one who sits on it.**

E. **Hebrews 6:17, Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath.**

F. Speaking the truth in love is a badge of true discipleship.

IV. The Old Testament taught, **“An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.”**

A. Scriptures –

1. Exodus 21:24, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,

2. Leviticus 24:20, fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. As he has injured the other, so he is to be injured.

3. Deuteronomy 19:21, Show no pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

B. This Old Testament law seems cruel to us, but it was an improvement over the heathen code of that day which held, “If you kill my child, I’ll kill all your children.”

C. Jesus taught a major revision of this principle of an eye for an eye.

1. “Resist not him that is evil, but whoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.”

2. This teaching appears to be very difficult to accept. Jesus taught many “hard” things.

3. Turning the other cheek takes joy from an abusive bully.

4. Is there a time to say, “Enough is enough,” and then to fight back?

D. Jesus here again taught going out of our way, going the second mile, to establish and maintain harmony with others.

1. Turn the other cheek.

2. Settle out of court.

3. Do more than required.

4. Give to those who ask or would borrow from you.

5. These are the essence of Christian ethics. However, these principles do not require that Christians be plundered.

V. The Old Testament and traditional beliefs held, “Love your neighbor. Hate your enemy.”

A. Leviticus 19:18, “Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.”

B. Note that this passage says, “**Love thy neighbor.**” It does not say, “Hate your enemy.” Tradition added the “hate your enemy” part.

C. Tradition had yoked in this teaching “an ox with a donkey.”

D. Loving those who love us is nothing unusual. Loving those who hate us is a real test of Christian character.

E. We are to be like our Father in heaven who certainly loved his enemies in giving his Son on the cross.

F. Publicans, the hated and despised tax collectors, loved those who loved them and saluted their friends.

G. Jesus demands of his followers, “Do more than others!”

H. The ultimate goal of Christian conduct is to be perfect as God in heaven is perfect.

1. This is the ultimate high standard!

2. No one will ever be perfect on this earth, but it is the goal for which we strive.

a. In the New Testament, the Greek word often translated “perfect” is probably closer to our word “mature” or “grown-up”.

3. 1 John 1:8, 9, If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

4. Colossians 1:28, 29, “We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.

5. Perfection is possible only in Christ!

Six Contrasts

Questions

1. What is the Decalogue? _____

2. Moses said, "Thou shalt not kill." Jesus said, "_____

3. According to Matthew 18:15-17 what steps are we to take to be reconciled with our brother? _____

4. _____ of _____ should characterize all _____ . Settling _____ and _____ - _____ conflicts are priority matters.

5. Moses said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Jesus said, "_____

6. When should we cut of four hand or foot or out our eye? _____

7. Moses said, “Thou shalt not foreswear thyself, but shall perform unto the Lord thine oaths.” Jesus said, “_____

8. _____ the _____ in _____ is a badge of true _____.

9. Moses said, “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.” Jesus said, “_____

10. Moses said, "Love your neighbor. Hate your enemy." Jesus said, "

_____."

11. Jesus demands of his followers, "
_____."

12. Can the blind lead the blind? _____

13. Give examples of people you know who have tried to remove motes from other people's eyes while having beams in their own eye. _____

14. Be _____ as your _____ also is _____.

15. Is it sinful to divorce a spouse who has been sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole? _____

