

**Mt. Traveler Missionary Baptist Church, Waverly, Alabama**  
**Synopsis of Sermon Preached by Rev. B. C. Datiri, Pastor**

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**SERMON ON THE MOUNT**

February 7, 2016

6. Divorce and Remarriage

Matthew 5:31-32

Statistics indicate that the divorce rate among all married couples in the United States stands at an alarming rate of 50%. This rate is no difference among Church goers as well as in many parts of the world. The implication is that one in every two married couples would divorce. Most of these divorces stem from infidelity or unfaithfulness of spouses. However, among those couples who faithfully obey the Word of God, and avoid infidelity, the divorce rate is nil or negligible. This is because Biblical teachings by both Jesus and the inspired apostle Paul indicate that marriage was intended to be permanent until death doth part and then thereafter remarriage is permissible. Let us consider these biblical teachings in the following declarations on this subject: In Mark 10:11-12, Jesus answered, “Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery.” In Luke 16:18 Jesus is quoted again, saying, “Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery, and the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.” So it seems like each time a careless divorce occurs, there is propagation or proliferation of adultery.

In Romans 7:2-3 the apostle Paul taught that “...by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man.” The apostle Paul continued his teaching in 1 Corinthians 7:10-13, 27, 39: “To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife. To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord): If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him ... [27] Are you married? Do not seek a divorce. Are you unmarried? Do not look for a wife ... [39] A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord.”

Again, Jesus’ teaching on divorcing for marital infidelity (and remarriage after divorce in such cases) is detailed in Matthew 19:3-9: “Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?” “Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.” “Why then,” they asked, “did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?” Jesus replied, “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.” This implies that Jesus did not recognize the validity of divorce and remarriage “for every cause” (KJV). He annulled the fairly broad permission to divorce that was given to the Israelites by Moses “because [their] hearts were hard” (vs. 8). But Jesus did leave one exception — “except for marital unfaithfulness,” which is derived from the Greek word *porneia* (same root word used for fornication). One whose spouse is unfaithful may divorce and remarry, because

**the unfaithfulness has destroyed the one-flesh marriage bond in the eyes of God. This exception in Jesus' final statement in this passage shows that divorce (and remarriage thereafter) by the innocent spouse is allowed under the circumstances of marital infidelity. Simply putting away one's wife in no way can be construed as committing adultery. It is the putting away and remarrying that becomes adultery — unless the cause of the divorce was the adultery that was already committed by the spouse being put away. In this latter case — that is, divorcing one's spouse for that person's adultery — the one-flesh relationship has been tragically violated, and the marriage bond is dissolved in this specific instance of biblical divorce. The innocent one is then permitted (although certainly not obligated) to enter into another marriage.**

**In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus Christ proved that He came as the spiritual Lawgiver to amplify and magnify the laws of God as stated in Isaiah: "The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness' sake; He will magnify the Law and make it glorious" (Isa. 42:21). The Gospel accounts of Jesus' life and ministry reveal that God requires obedience to His commandments not only in the letter of the Law, but in the spirit of the Law as well. Throughout His ministry, Jesus taught repentance from sin—which is clearly defined as the transgression of the laws of God (I John 3:4).**

**In spite of Jesus' clear teachings which magnify the laws and commandments of God, most professing Christians have been taught that Christ came to abolish the laws of God. Jesus, however, emphatically denounced this idea with His statement, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished" (Matt. 5:17-18). Today we shall continue to consider how Jesus amplify and magnify a few of the laws of God which dealt with human relationships in order to help His followers become not only obedience to the letter of the Law but more importantly obedient to the spiritual intent of the Law to meaningful loving Christ-like relationships among His followers. Today our focus is on a very sensitive issue that plagues our society that Jesus had to address it in the Sermon on the Mount and that is: "Divorce and Remarriage".**

**Thus our text of the day states, "It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' [Deut. 24:1] 32 But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her the victim of adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery" (Matthew 5:31-32).**

**Jesus taught His disciples the spiritual meaning and application of every one of God's laws and commandments. On the Law that one is allowed to divorce his wife by providing her a certificate of divorce, Jesus amplified and magnified it by teaching its spiritual meaning and application when He said, "But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her the victim of adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery" (Matt. 5:32). Thus, every individual is held accountable for his or her adulterous thoughts and acts that contribute to a divorce because marriage is a commitment for life! The hope that the believer has is that under the New Covenant, true worship and love toward God is made possible by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who enables the believer to reverence God and obey Him from the heart so as to remain true to the marriage commitment. Through deep faith in Jesus Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the believer learns to obey every command of God in the full spirit and intent of the Law, as magnified by Jesus Christ. This is the manner in which every true believer will keep the laws and commandments of God, because he or she loves God the Father and Jesus Christ with all heart, mind, soul and strength. And as the believer prays,**

**fellowships, worships and obeys God through the understanding of the spiritual meaning, application and intent of the Law, he is protected from engaging in adulterous lifestyle that subsequently lead to careless divorces and remarriages.**

**Finally brothers and sisters, I admonish us to believe God's word and heed Jesus' warning not to "teach for doctrines the commandments of man ... making the word of God of none effect through your (our) tradition" (Mark 7:7, 13). Truly, God in His bible lists certain scriptural divorce and remarriage situations. Let us obey the word of God in this critical area of people's lives and have the same compassion on God's people that He Himself has demonstrated. The principles stated in Moses' Law and in Jesus' teaching in Matthew 19:3-9 applies in our relationships. Any divorce obtained under biblical conditions actually dissolves the marriage, and subsequent remarriage is permissible. And the two biblical grounds for divorce and remarriage are: 1. Marital infidelity (sexual unfaithfulness) by the spouse. In this case, the innocent party may divorce and remarry. 2. A Christian's unbelieving mate departs (or leaves) from the Christian. If so, the divorced Christian is free to remarry. Otherwise, God hates divorce ["For I hate divorce," says the Lord, the God of Israel (Malachi 2:6)] because marriage is until death separates you, then you are free to remarry. However, I also believe that if your divorce and/or remarriage was prior to your salvation, your past sin of divorce and remarriage for whatever reason is forgiven at the time of salvation because the Scripture declare: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17, NKJV).**

**Mt Traveler members, as we conclude today, the following are some main points to remember: The Sermon on the Mount is the most famous sermon Jesus ever gave and perhaps it is the most famous sermon ever given by anyone. In it Jesus taught us:**

- The Beatitudes – are virtues in life which will ultimately lead to reward in this life and the life thereafter.**
- Using the metaphors of Salt and Light – to explain the roles of believers in the world**
- He has come to fulfill the Law**
- About sin of adultery which starts with lust in the heart**
- About divorce and remarriage**
- And let the church say, "Amen!"**

**To have the ability to practice the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount that expound on virtues that ultimately lead to the reward of eternal life, you must first know Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and savior and then allow the Holy Spirit to lead you in this pilgrim's journey to eternity with God. If you have not, we invite you to come, repent, and humbly accept Jesus Christ into your heart and life by faith. I hope you will make room in your heart for Him today! Then confess with your mouth your faith in Him that He died and rose again to save you from your sin through the shedding of His blood on Calvary, and you will be saved and become part of God's family and kingdom. Then ask Him in prayers to empower you through the Holy Spirit with wisdom, courage and boldness to do the work of the Church to cause the continual growth of God's kingdom as you practice the Beatitudes. May God bless you as you humbly open your heart to provide room for Him as the choir leads us in a song!**

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**SERMON ON THE MOUNT**

**February 14, 2016**

**7. Oaths**

**Matthew 5:33-37**

Today is Valentine's Day. So we say, happy Valentine's Day to all of you. Hope this day will remind you of the love of God towards mankind that is sincere. Albeit, our present world has become a world of deceitfulness where people are deceiving and being deceived. Trust has now almost become obsolete even among Christians because we operate on a notion of doubting what truth about others is. People are full of falsehood including bearing false witness against others on things they know nothing about and often, they literally swear or take an oath so others can believe them. An oath is a solemn promise, often invoking a divine witness, regarding one's future action or behavior: "they took an oath of allegiance to the king". Traditionally an oath is either a statement of fact or a promise with wording relating to something considered sacred as a sign of verity. A common legal substitute for those who conscientiously object to making sacred oaths is to give an affirmation instead. Nowadays, even when there's no notion of sanctity involved, certain promises said out loud in ceremonial or juridical purpose are referred to as oaths. To swear is a verb used to describe the taking of an oath, to making a solemn vow. Usually oaths have referred to a deity significant in the cultural sphere in question

The essence of a divine oath is an invocation of divine agency to be a guarantor of the oath taker's own honesty and integrity in the matter under question. By implication, this invokes divine displeasure if the oath taker fails in their sworn duties. It therefore implies greater care than usual in the act of the performance of one's duty, such as in testimony to the facts of the matter in a court of law. A person taking an oath indicates this in a number of ways. The most usual is the explicit "I swear," but any statement or promise that includes "with God as my witness" or "so help me God," with 'God' being something or someone the oath-taker holds sacred, is an oath. Many people take an oath by holding in their hand or placing over their head a book of scripture or a sacred object, thus indicating the sacred witness through their action: such an oath is called corporal. However, the chief purpose of such an act is for ceremony or solemnity, and the act does not of itself make an oath.

In Jewish tradition the concept of oaths is deeply rooted within Judaism. It is found in Genesis 8:21, when God swears that he will "never again curse the ground because of man and never again smite every living thing." This repetition of the term never again as explained by Rashi, the pre-eminent biblical commentator, serves as an oath, citing the Talmud Shavous 36a for this ruling. Eliezer, the chief servant of Abraham, was the first person in the biblical tradition to take an oath, when the latter requested of the former that he not take a wife for his son Isaac from the daughters of Canaan, but rather from among Abraham's own family. The foundational text for oath making is in the "When a man makes a vow to the Lord or takes an oath to obligate himself by a pledge, he must not break his word but must do everything he said" (Numbers 30:2). According to the Rabbis, a neder (usually translated as "vow") refers to the object, a shvua (usually translated as "oath") to the person. The passage (Bamidbar 30:2-17) distinguishes between a neder and a shvua, an important distinction between the two in halacha: a neder

changes the status of some external thing, while a shvua initiates an internal change in the one who swears the oath.

In Modern law, oaths are made by a witness to a court of law before giving testimony, and usually by a newly appointed government officer to the people of a state before taking office. In both of those cases, though, an affirmation can be usually substituted. A written statement, if the author swears the statement is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, is called an affidavit. The oath given to support an affidavit is frequently administered by a notary officer, who will certify the giving of the oath by affixing her or his seal to the document. Willfully delivering a false oath (or affirmation) is the crime of perjury.

However, there is often confusion between oaths and other statements or promises. The current Olympic Oath, for instance, is really a pledge and not properly an oath since there is only a "promise" and no appeal to a sacred witness. Oaths are also confused with vows, but really, a vow is a special kind of oath

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus Christ proved that He came as the spiritual Lawgiver to amplify and magnify the laws of God as stated in Isaiah: "The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness' sake; He will magnify the Law and make it glorious" (Isa. 42:21). Today we shall continue to consider the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount that amplify and magnify a few of the laws of God which dealt with human relationships in order for His followers to become not only obedience to the letter of the Law but more importantly obedient to the spiritual intent of the Law and develop meaningful loving Christ-like relationships among each other. The focus on today's sermon is Jesus' amplification of the law on Oaths.

Thus our text of the day states, "Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.' 34 But I tell you, do not swear an oath 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 All you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one" (Matthew 5:33-37).

On the Law about oaths, Jesus amplified and magnified it by teaching its spiritual meaning and application when He said, "Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.' 34 But I tell you, do not swear an oath 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 All you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one" (Matt. 5:33-37). Therefore everyone is held accountable for his or her thoughts, words and actions! The hope that the believer has is that, under the New Covenant, true worship and love toward God is made possible by the indwelling Holy Spirit who enables and empowers you to be truthful and simply say "Yes" or "No".

Furthermore, in Christian tradition Christian tradition, various religious groups have objected to the taking of oaths, most notably the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) and Mennonites. This is principally based on Matthew 5:34-37, especially the Antithesis of the Law on oaths. Here, it is written of Christ to have said, "I say to you: 'Swear not at all'". The Apostle James

the Just likewise stated in James 5:12, "Above all, my brothers, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your "Yes" be yes, and your "No," no, or you will be condemned." Beyond this scriptural authority, Quakers place importance on being truthful at all times, so the testimony opposing oaths springs from a view that "taking legal oaths implies a double standard of truthfulness" suggesting that truthfulness in legal contexts is somehow more important than truthfulness in non-legal contexts and that truthfulness in those other contexts is therefore somehow less important. Not all Christians interpret this reading as forbidding all types of oaths, however. Opposition to oath-taking among some groups of Christian has caused many problems for these groups throughout their history. Quakers were frequently imprisoned because of their refusal to swear loyalty oaths. Testifying in court was also difficult; George Fox, Quakers' founder, famously challenged a judge who had asked him to swear, saying that he would do so once the judge could point to any Bible passage where Jesus or his apostles took oaths. (The judge could not, but this did not allow Fox to escape punishment.) Legal reforms from the 18th century onwards mean that everyone in the United Kingdom now has the right to make a solemn affirmation instead of an oath. The United States has permitted affirmations since it was founded; it is explicitly mentioned in the Constitution. Only President Franklin Pierce has chosen to affirm rather than swear at his inauguration. Finally, I admonish you my brothers and sisters to be sincere in your thoughts, deed and words so that you do not need to swear by simply telling truth at all times such that Yes is always yes and No is always no.

Mt Traveler members, as we conclude today, the following are some main points to remember: The Sermon on the Mount is the most famous sermon Jesus ever gave and perhaps it is the most famous sermon ever given by anyone. In it Jesus taught us:

- The Beatitudes – are virtues in life which will ultimately lead to reward in this life and the life thereafter.
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- Oath and extension or amplification of taking oaths unnecessarily so that your Yes is yes and No is no.
- And let the church say, "Amen!"

Do you know this Jesus who transforms you to be truthful always?. If you have not, we invite you to come, repent, and humbly accept Jesus Christ into your heart and life by faith. I hope you will make room in your heart for Him today! Then confess with your mouth your faith in Him that He died and rose again to save you from your sin through the shedding of His blood on Calvary, and you will be saved and become part of God's family and kingdom. Then ask Him in prayers to empower you through the Holy Spirit with wisdom, courage and boldness to be always truthful to cause the continual growth of God's kingdom as you practice the Beatitudes. May God bless you as you humbly open your heart to provide room for Him as the choir leads us in a song!

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**SERMON ON THE MOUNT**

February 21, 2016

8. Eye for an Eye

Matthew 5:38-42

**An eye for an eye is the natural physical phenomenon of responding to offenses and is the law of retaliation that pays one back in the same coin of his offense. It is a reactionary response without deeper thoughts and/or poise and purpose. How many times have you been tempted to retaliate with the same coin with which you were meted? Did you ever stop for a moment to think about your actions or did you just react swiftly without composure?**

**The concept of “an eye for eye,” sometimes called jus talionis or lex talionis, is part of the Mosaic Law used in the Israelites’ justice system. The principle is that the punishment must fit the crime and there should be a just penalty for evil actions: “If there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise” (Exodus 21:23–25). Justice should be equitable; excessive harshness and excessive leniency should be avoided. However, there is no indication that the law of “an eye for an eye” was followed literally; there is never a biblical account of an Israelite being maimed as a result of this law. Also, before this particular law was given, God had already established a judicial system to hear cases and determine penalties (Exodus 18:13–26)—a system that would be unnecessary if God had intended a literal “eye for an eye” penalty. Although capital crimes were repaid with execution in ancient Israel, on the basis of multiple witnesses (Deuteronomy 17:6), most other crimes were repaid with goods—if you injured a man’s hand so that he could not work, you compensated that man for his lost wages.**

**Besides Exodus 21, the law of “an eye for an eye” is mentioned twice in the Old Testament (Leviticus 24:20; Deuteronomy 19:21) and each time, the phrase was used in the context of a case being judged before a civil authority such as a judge. “An eye for an eye” was thus intended to be a guiding principle for lawgivers and judges; it was never to be used to justify vigilantism or settling grievances personally. Thus this Law of retaliation was given to deter people from acting evil and to encourage building good relationships. However, current self-indulgence has taken advantage of this law to just retaliate to any and every thing. As such there is usually much harm, hurt and humiliation that comes along with retaliation which subsequently leads to disgrace. Whereas forgiveness provides purpose, poise and peace leading to dignity which subsequently builds better relationships. In most sports, it is not usually the person that first commits an offense but the one who retaliates and gets caught that often gets penalized quite severely (sometimes a disqualification from the game). As Christians we must be careful about our reactions or retaliations less a disqualification from entering and/or inheriting the Kingdom of God be obtained.**

**In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus Christ proved that He came as the spiritual Lawgiver to amplify and magnify the laws of God as stated in Isaiah: “The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness’ sake; He will magnify the Law and make it glorious” (Isa. 42:21). Today we shall continue to consider these teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount when He amplified and magnified a few of the laws of God which dealt with human relationships in order for His followers to become not only obedience to the letter of the Law but more importantly obedient to the spiritual intent of the Law and develop meaningful loving Christ-like relationships among each other. The focus on today’s sermon is Jesus’ amplification of the law retaliation.**

Thus our text of the day states, “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth’ [Exodus 21:24; Leviticus 24:20; and Deuteronomy 19:21]. 39 But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. 40 And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. 41 If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. 42 Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you” (Matthew 5:38-42).

On this Law of retaliation or vengeance, Jesus amplified and magnified it by teaching its spiritual meaning and application when He said, “But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. 40 And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. 41 If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. 42 Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you” (Matthew 5:38-42). In the New Testament, it seems the Pharisees and scribes had taken the “eye for an eye” principle and applied it to everyday personal relationships. They taught that seeking personal revenge was acceptable. If someone punched you, you could punch him back; if someone insulted you, he was fair game for your insults. The religious leaders of Jesus’ day ignored the judicial basis of the giving of that law.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus counters the common teaching of personal retaliation: “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ But I tell you . . .” (Matthew 5:38–39). Jesus then proceeds to reveal God’s heart concerning interpersonal relationships: “Do not resist an evil person. In giving this “new” command, Jesus is not nullifying the Old Testament law (Matthew 5:17). Rather, He is separating the responsibility of the government (to punish evildoers justly) from the responsibility we all have on a personal level before God to love our enemies. We should not seek retribution for personal slights. We are to ignore personal insults (the meaning of “turn the other cheek”). Christians are to be willing to give more of their material goods, time, and labor than required, even if the demands upon us are unjust. We should loan to those who want to borrow, love our enemies, and pray for those who persecute us (verses 43–48). Enforcing “an eye for an eye” is the magistrate’s job; forgiving our enemies is ours. We see this played out today every time a victim stands up in court to publicly forgive a convicted criminal—the forgiveness is personal and real, but the judge still justly demands that the sentence be carried out.

Jesus’ limiting of the “eye for an eye” principle in no way prohibits self-defense or the forceful protection of the innocent from harm. The actions of duly appointed agents of the government, such as police officers and the military, to protect citizens and preserve the peace are not in question. Jesus’ command to turn the other cheek applies to personal relationships, not judicial policy. The principle of “an eye for an eye” is meant as a judicial policy, not as a rule for interpersonal relationships. The believer in Christ is guided by Jesus’ words to forgive. The Christian is radically different from those who follow the natural inclination to respond in kind. Does it imply you are to act stupid and foolish? Certainly not! What Jesus was advocating was forgiveness. Even when someone forces you to do certain things against your will do not resist such an evil person because engaging in an ugly, ungodly argument does not build meaningful loving Christ-like relationships but forgiveness does. You should be able to say like Jesus and the apostles, “forgive such a one for they know not what they are doing” and really mean it. In other words, it is wise and best to seek quick reconciliation than retaliation



Finally, the apostle Paul admonished the Christians in Rome, saying “Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19 Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” [Deut. 32:35] says the Lord. 20 On the contrary: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.” [Prov. 25:21-22] 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:17-21). And the apostle Peter concluded, “For, it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God. 20 But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. 21 To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. 22 “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.” [Isaiah 53:9]. 23 When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. 24 “He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.” 25 For “you were like sheep going astray,” [Isaiah 53:4-6 (see Septuagint)] but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls” (1Peter 2:19-25).

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- **The Beatitudes – are virtues in life which will ultimately lead to reward in this life and the life thereafter.**
- **Using the metaphors of Salt and Light – to explain the roles of believers in the world**
- **He has come to fulfill the Law**
- **About sin of adultery which starts with lust in the heart**
- **About divorce and remarriage**
- **Oath and extension or amplification of taking oaths unnecessarily so that your Yes is yes and No is no.**
- **Forgiveness rather than retaliation (an eye for an eye, etc.)**
- **And let the church say, “Amen!”**

**Do you know this Jesus who transforms you to be truthful always?. If you have not, we invite you to come, repent, and humbly accept Jesus Christ into your heart and life by faith. I hope you will make room in your heart for Him today! Then confess with your mouth your faith in Him that He died and rose again to save you from your sin through the shedding of His blood on Calvary, and you will be saved and become part of God’s family and kingdom. Then ask Him in prayers to empower you through the Holy Spirit with wisdom, courage and boldness to be always truthful to cause the continual growth of God’s kingdom as you practice the Beatitudes. May God bless you as you humbly open your heart to provide room for Him as the choir leads us in a song!**

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SERMON ON THE MOUNT

February 28, 2016

9. Love Your Enemies

Matthew 5:43-48

One of the most challenging commands given to followers or believers by Jesus on two occasions is the command to “love your enemies” as recorded in (His sermon on the mount - Matthew 5:43-44 and His sermon on the plain - Luke 6:27-28, 35). It is a difficult task, yet when taken to heart and applied properly, loving your enemies can bless and transform your own life and truly make this world a better place.

Now who is your enemy? Your real enemy is the devil but he uses people. If so, who is your enemy in the physical realm (in humanity)? It is ANYONE WHO CURSES YOU and Who speaks ill about you or to you (Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:28), someone like Shimei who did this to David (2Samuel 16:5-8,13); ANYONE WHO HATES YOU and Who for some reason despises you (Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:27) for either racial, political, religious, or personal reasons (e.g., John 15:18-19); ANYONE WHO SPITEFULLY USES YOU and Who abuses, treats spitefully, or falsely accuses you (Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:28) or mistreats you in any way, like they did Jesus (Matthew 27:27-30); and/or ANYONE WHO PERSECUTES YOU and Who prosecutes and pursues you with repeated acts of enmity (Matthew 5:44) like Saul of Tarsus (Paul) did the Christians (Acts 8:3; 9:1-2; 22:4; 26:9-11; Galatians 1:13. As such our enemy can be a family member, neighbor, co-worker, fellow-citizen, or government representative (local or foreign). In other words, just about anyone who does not like us!

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus Christ proved that He came as the spiritual Lawgiver to amplify and magnify the laws of God as stated in Isaiah: “The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness’ sake; He will magnify the Law and make it glorious” (Isaiah. 42:21). Today we shall continue to consider these teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount when He amplified and magnified a few of the laws of God which dealt with human relationships in order for His followers to become not only obedience to the letter of the Law but more importantly obedient to the spiritual intent of the Law and develop meaningful loving Christ-like relationships among each other. The focus on today’s sermon is Jesus’ command to “Love Your Enemies”.

Thus our text of the day states, “43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor [Leviticus 19:18] and hate your enemy.’ 44 But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be children 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 own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matthew 5:43-48).

#### WHY LOVE YOUR ENEMY?

The believers or followers of Jesus Christ are to love your enemies

- A. TO BE LIKE GOD as sons of our Father in heaven (Matthew 5:45,48) Who is kind to evil and unthankful men (Luke 6:35-36; cf. Romans 5:8,10; Colossians 1:21)

- B. TO BE UNLIKE SINNERS** who love those who love them (Matthew 5:46-47; Luke 6:32-33) which is human nature, but we are to be partakers of God's divine nature (2Peter 1:4; Ephesians 5:1-2)
- C. TO OVERCOME EVIL** by doing good and Not letting evil overcome you (Romans 12:20-21) just like the following great men displayed quality of character in the statements they made:
- a. "I will never let another man ruin my life by making me hate him." - George Washington Carver
  - b. "Those who hate you don't win unless you hate them - and then you destroy yourself." - Richard Nixon
  - c. "Am I not destroying my enemies when I make friends of them?" - Abraham Lincoln
  - d. "Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into friend." - Martin L. King, Jr.
- D. TO BE PERFECT AS YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER IS PERFECT**

Therefore, the ultimate goal should be to transform our enemies into brethren (Romans 10:1). Is that not what God did with us?

#### **HOW DO YOU LOVE YOUR ENEMY?**

##### **A. BY BLESSING THEM...**

1. As commanded by Jesus, Paul, and Peter - Matthew 5:44; Romans 12:14; 1Peter 3:9
2. The word "bless" here means to "speak well of" or "speak well to" - Barnes

##### **B. BY DOING GOOD TO THEM...**

1. As taught in both Covenants - Exodus 23:4-5; Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:27; Galatians 6:10
2. Which has the potential of transforming our enemies – Proverbs 25:21-22; e.g., 2Kings 6:22-23

##### **C. BY PRAYING FOR THEM...**

1. As Jesus taught - Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:28
2. As Jesus and His disciples exemplified - Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60; Romans 10:1

##### **D. WITH ACTIVE GOOD WILL...**

1. Which is the meaning of the word "love" (Gr., agape)
2. Beautifully defined by Paul - 1Corinthians 13:4-8 (imagine treating enemies like this!)

**For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. - Titus 3:3-7**

### **AN ENEMY WHO PERSECUTES YOU**

**--Matthew. 5:43-48 – “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 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. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”**

**A. Even the best of Christians are going to have some enemies.**

**1. Jesus said, “Beware when all men speak well of you.”**

**2. Gal. 5:11 says that the gospel is going to offend some people.**

**3. But not all of our enemies are because of the gospel**

**a. Romans. 12:18 – If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.**

**b. Some people are just mean, nasty, and hateful**

**--Not much you can do about it but be a good servant of Christ and to pray for them**

**B. Jesus said, treat your enemies with compassion.**

**1. Your instinct tells you to lash out and do to others before they do it to you.**

**2. But you are to be distinctive**

**--Romans. 12:20-21 – On the contrary: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.**

**a). If an enemy refuses to speak to you, smile and speak anyway.**

**b). If an enemy cuts at you behind your back, you be positive in return.**

**c). If someone tries to hurt your reputation, you respond with kindness.**

**d). If an enemy tries to undermine your business, you find some way to help him.**

**3. Hate is such powerful thing.**

**--It destroys your life both inside and out.**

**a. Hate should not be a common thing in your life.**

**--We should hate evil. We should hate sin. I personally hate sickness and pain. It is not wrong to hate those things.**

**b. But we must never hate people.**

**1). We must never hate those who are evil or those who are committing the sins.**

**2). I realize it's sometimes a difficult distinction to make but we must make it.**

**4. Loving an enemy means choosing to let our love OVERRIDE our feelings of disgust. --Not all forms of love are the same.**

**a. Jesus calls us to agape love --the kind of love that actively seeks the other person's highest good**

**b. Granted we do not love our enemy the same way we love God, our spouse, our children, our fellow church members, or our friends, but we must love them..**

**5. That word "perfect" there causes us a lot of problems because we think of something "perfect" as being without any flaw or blemish. --And no matter how hard we try, we know that there are going to have flaws & blemishes in our life.**

**a. But the Greek word that is used here literally means "mature, fully equipped, ready & able to do the job that needs to be done."**

**b. And I believe that that is what Jesus expects from us in putting into practice God's love in this world.**

**6. When you show mercy and grace, you'll remind people of your Father in heaven.**

**-- Some time back, I read a story about a burly platoon sergeant who had at one time lived a life of drinking, cursing, swearing, and sexual immorality. He could be arrogant and rude to his soldiers. However, he had become Christian and turned his life around. When asked about what made the difference, he told about a private in his platoon that was courageously Christian in his outlook and behavior.**

**This private was frequently harassed by others but was faithful to Christ. One night the private came into the barracks quite late. It was a very rainy night. Before getting into his bunk, he knelt, as was his custom, to pray. The sergeant in a foul mood picked up one of his own boots, which was heavy with wet mud, threw it across the room and hit the private in the side of the head. The private said nothing. He wiped the mud from his face and crawled into bed. The next morning, however, when the sergeant woke up, he found his muddy boots cleaned and polished by his bedside. He said: "It broke my heart."**

**7. Jesus requires us to pray for those who behave like enemies toward us**

**a. Luke 6:28 – "Bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. Pray for you enemies."**

**b. Charles Spurgeon: "Prayer is the forerunner of mercy. "**

**8. We're also told to forgive one another**

**--Ephesians 4:31-5:2 – "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved**

children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.”

#### **CONCLUSION:**

**A. Jesus Himself is the perfect example for us to follow.**

- 1. He was arrested, roughed up, insulted by the police.**
  - 2. The authorities spat on Him, blindfolded Him, and slapped Him in the face.**
  - 3. Then the Roman soldiers mocked Him by crowning Him with thorns and putting a purple robe on Him, and a weak reed in His hand as a make-believe scepter.**
- They jeered at Him, “Hail King of the Jews!” Then they scourged Him.**

**B. Jesus had the power to strike them blind, to paralyze their hand, to choke them on their own spittle, to condemn them to hell, but, with the divine dignity, He held His peace. 1 Peter 2:23 reads: When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly”. Also, Jesus prayed as He was crucified, “Father forgive them.”--He didn’t return evil for evil, but He silently turned the other cheek. Yes He did all that for you so that you can follow in His steps.**

**Mt Traveler members, as we conclude today, the following are some main points to remember: The Sermon on the Mount is the most famous sermon Jesus ever gave and perhaps it is the most famous sermon ever given by anyone. In it Jesus taught us:**

- The Beatitudes – are virtues in life which will ultimately lead to reward in this life and the life thereafter.**
- Using the metaphors of Salt and Light – to explain the roles of believers in the world**
- He has come to fulfill the Law**
- About sin of adultery which starts with lust in the heart**
- About divorce and remarriage**
- Oath and extension or amplification of taking oaths unnecessarily so that your Yes is yes and No is no.**
- Forgiveness rather than retaliation (an eye for an eye, etc.)**
- And let the church say, “Amen!”**

**Do you know this Jesus who transforms you to be truthful always?. If you have not, we invite you to come, repent, and humbly accept Jesus Christ into your heart and life by faith. I hope you will make room in your heart for Him today! Then confess with your mouth your faith in Him that He died and rose again to save you from your sin through the shedding of His blood on Calvary, and you will be saved and become part of God’s family and kingdom. Then ask Him in prayers to empower you through the Holy Spirit with wisdom, courage and boldness to be always truthful to cause the continual growth of God’s kingdom as you practice the Beatitudes. May God bless you as you humbly open your heart to provide room for Him as the choir leads us in a song!**

**If you are reading this on the Internet why don’t you pray asking Jesus Christ to be your Lord and savior, then write us at [pastordatiri@mttraveler.org](mailto:pastordatiri@mttraveler.org)? If you are a child of God and this message has blessed or helped to you, please write and tell us also.**

