

The Greatest Life Ever Lived

A Study in the Incarnate Life of Jesus Christ and An Exposition of the Four Gospels

LESSON XLII : THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT — PART I O: KINGDOM RIGHTEOUSNESS WITH RESPECT TO OTHER MEN

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	related passages
7:1-12		6:31,37-42		

Critical Self-Righteous Attitude

Matt 7:1,2 Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

Luke 6:37,38 Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

This verse (or a portion thereof) appears to be a favorite among the unsaved, used often to quiet the mouth of a believer witnessing to them of Christ. The sense in which they use it is “How dare you call me a sinner? — *judge not!*” This verse has even appeared on protesters’ placards as they march against capital punishment as if it is wrong to judge that a man is a murderer and worthy of death. Is Jesus teaching all manner of judgement is absolutely and without any qualification forbidden? Are we to never form and / or express any opinion towards our neighbor, especially an opinion which may not be favorable? **“Though it is true that we, on our part, cannot read what is in our neighbor’s heart as Jesus was able to do (Jn 2:24,25), so that our judgement must be more reserved and can never be final, there is nothing in the teaching either of Christ Himself or of the apostles after Him that relieves us of the obligation to form opinions about people and to act upon the basis of these opinions, which also implies that at times it will be our duty to express our judgements.”** [Hendriksen, *Matthew*] Consider the following which will form a proper balance to this verse:

Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment. (Jn 7:24)

For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? (1 Cor 5:12)

Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church. I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? (1 Cor 6:1-5)

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. (1 Jn 4:1)

If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed. (2 Jn 10)

Many verses may be brought forth which shows that such opinions were formed by Christ and His apostles, and were acted upon those opinions accordingly (e.g. Gal 1:8,9; Phil 3:2; 1 Thes 2:14,15; 1 Tim 1:6,7; Titus 3:2,10; 3 Jn 9; etc.). That we are *commanded* to form such judgements is obvious even in the context of the Sermon on the Mount: Christ tells us not to be as the hypocrites which would demand us judging what is hypocritical and what is not. Immediately following this verse we are told not to cast our pearls before hogs and dogs, forcing us to judge who are hogs and dogs. **This verse therefore may not be used as an excuse for the lost nor for the saved to be lax in church discipline.**

What did Christ mean then? Again, He is directing our attention to our attitudes. **“By a secret and criminal disposition of nature, man endeavors to elevate himself above others, and, to do it more effectually, depresses them.** His jealous and envious heart wishes that there may be no good quality found but in himself, that he alone may be esteemed.” [Clarke, *Commentary*] **“He means it is wrong for anyone to concentrate his attention on the speck in his brother’s eyes and, while thus occupied, to ignore the beam in his own eye (Matt 7:3-5). The Lord is here condemning the spirit of censoriousness, judging harshly, self-righteously, without mercy, without love, as also the parallel passage (Lk 6:36,37) indicates.** To be discriminating and critical is necessary; to be hypercritical is wrong.... This inclination to discover and severely condemn the faults, real or imaginary, of others, while passing lightly over one’s own frequently even more lamentable violations of God’s holy law, was common among the Jews (Rom 2:1f), especially among the Pharisees (Lk 18:9; Jn 7:49), and is common always and everywhere.” [Hendriksen, *Matthew*] “These words of Christ do not contain an absolute prohibition from *judging*, but are intended to cure a disease which appears to be natural to us all. We see how all flatter themselves, and every man passes a severe censure on others. **This vice is attended by some strange enjoyment: for there is hardly any person who is not tickled with**

the desire of inquiring into other people's faults. All acknowledge, indeed, that it is an intolerable evil, that those who overlook their own vices are so confirmed in practice of condemning their brethren." [Calvin, *Commentary*]

The standard of judgement by which we judge will be how others judge us: this could be negative or positive: "If we are harsh with our judgements on other people we generally find that they return the compliment and we find ourselves widely condemned, whereas if we do not pass judgement on others our neighbors are slow to condemn us. But the words apply also to more permanent consequences. The man who judges others invites the judgement of God upon himself." [Morris, *Luke*] "The habitual self-righteous faultfinder must remember that he himself can expect to be adversely criticized and condemned." [Hendriksen, *Luke*]

While not mentioned by Matthew, Luke continues the exhortation by bringing forth the positive in contrast to the negative. As we will be judged as we judge, we will as well be forgiven as we forgive and will receive as we give. **"Forgive,** literally, *release*. Christ exhorts to the opposite of what He has just forbidden: 'do not *condemn*, but *release*.'" [Vincent, *Word Studies*] Wuest: "*Be setting free, and you shall be set free.*" Jesus places no conditions or qualifications to our forgiveness nor does He confine this to us only forgiving believers. The **giving** mentioned by Luke is a picture of the Near East grain market, not dissimilar to other areas of the world. Obviously a bushel loosely filled provides less produce than one tightly-packed, shaken together and added until the grain runs over the edge of the container. The same principle is taught in 2 Cor 9:6, "*he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, he who sows generously will also reap generously.*"

The produce will be poured into our **lap**, into the pocket formed by his garment as it drops from the chest over the belt. That such a pocket could hold a considerable amount of grain is clear from Ruth 3:15. Wuest: "*Be constantly giving, and it shall be given to you, a generous measure that has been pressed down hard and which has been shaken thoroughly and which is running over shall they give into the pouch of your outer garment.*" "Almost all ancient nations wore long, wide, and loose garments; and when about to carry any thing which their hands could not contain, they used a fold of their robe in nearly the same way as women here use their aprons." [Clarke, *Commentary*]

"Pressed down: only here in New Testament. A common medical term for pressing strongly on a part of the body" [Vincent, *Word Studies*]

Luke 6:39 And He spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch? :

Palestine's rugged terrain was full of pits and holes in which people might fall. Jesus contrasts the teaching the people are used to receiving with that of His by explaining the Pharisees taught such because they were blind. **By rejecting the light they could not shed light on spiritual matters. By implication Jesus is teaching the people should not follow the blind guides.** "This appears to have been a general proverb, and to signify that a man cannot teach what he does not understand. This is strictly true in spiritual matters. A man who is not illuminated from above is utterly incapable of judging concerning spiritual things, and wholly unfit to be a guide to others. Is it possible that a person who is enveloped with the thickest darkness should dare either to judge of the state of others, or attempt to lead them in that path of which he is totally ignorant! If he do, must not his judgment be rashness, and his teaching folly? — and does he not endanger his own soul, and run the risk of falling into the ditch of perdition himself, together with the unhappy objects of his religious instruction?" [Clarke, *Commentary*]

Luke 6:40 The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master. : this is difficult, especially as we try to keep it in context. Possible explanations:

- as the Pharisees treated Jesus, so could His disciples expect to be treated (cp Matt 10:24,25: "*The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his Lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his Lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?*"). While this connects the similar phrases, it is difficult to fit that interpretation into this context.
- as Jesus just mentioned the danger of the blind following the blind, He now warns of what will happen if the people continue under the teaching of the Pharisees. As they progress in the school of such masters, the more they become like them and the closer they are to perdition. In such manner Jesus warned that the Pharisees searched all over for disciples to make them two-fold the children of hell that they are (Matt 23:15). Hendriksen objects to this because "the disciple is not above his master" is given positively and not as a negative warning.
- Jesus just said they were not to follow the blind guides which requires new leaders in the spiritual realms. How were they up to the task? How could those listening think they were comparable to the learned scribes and Pharisees? Jesus here is possibly reacting to the natural reaction of His disciples as well as the others listening. While they would never be able to outrank or surpass Him as their teacher, yet through training they could be "more like the Master" (as the song goes).

perfect: refers to one "*complete, to render fit*" and is used here to describe the disciple *fully taught*. In a day where libraries and the Internet were not available to the common person, the most a disciple could hope for was to be like the rabbi which he sat under. To be above his master was the height of presumption. "Every one who is thoroughly instructed in Divine things, who has his heart united to God, whose disordered tempers and passions are purified and restored to harmony and order; every one who has in him the mind that was in Christ, though he cannot be above, yet will be as, his teacher — holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." [Clarke, *Commentary*]

Matt 7:3-5 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

Luke 6:41,42 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye? 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.

This is a figurative description and warning to the carping critics of which Jesus has been speaking. **“In order to be useful in correcting another, a man must begin by correcting himself.”** [Godet, *Luke*] “While the hypocrites are too quick-sighted in discerning the faults of others, and employ not only severe, but intentionally exaggerated, language in describing them, they throw their own sins behind their back, or are so ingenious in finding apologies for them, that they wish to be held excusable even in very gross offenses.” [Calvin, *Commentary*]

The two articles here is a *mote* which is old English for a speck of dust. The Greek implies a small piece of straw or wood, a minute dry particle of chaff, wood, etc. This is contrasted with a *beam* which is a rafter-size heavy piece of timber used as a building support. “A speck of sawdust and a plank are identical in nature; they differ only in size.... **Christ was saying that what one is quick to judge in another is often a major concern in his own life.** Instead of dealing with the personal problem, the one who judges seeks to divert attention away from self to the problem as it exists in another.” [Pentecost, *Words and Works*] **We often detest in others that which we see in ourselves. How often has the Lord used another's sins to make us see our own. Sometimes the sins are outwardly different but still violate the same spiritual principle.**

“The question is: who is this would-be eye doctor? Answer: he is called a ‘hypocrite’, a word which Jesus uses to characterize the scribes and Pharisees of His day, a class of individuals whom the Lord describes as ‘those who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and who despised all others’ (Lk 18:9). **Any person with a Pharisaic disposition is meant,** therefore. Since in the hearts of all, including even Christ's followers to the extent in which grace has not yet fully transformed them, there houses a Pharisee, the conclusion follows that this passage applies to all, in the sense that all need to examine themselves (1 Cor 11:28), lest without self-examination and self-discipline they find fault with and strive to correct someone else. A person may be ever so good in his own eyes; yet if he is not humble then, as God sees him, there is a beam of self-righteousness in his eye. This makes him a blind eye-doctor who tries to perform an operation on someone else's eye!” [Hendriksen, *Matthew*] “Is he not a *hypocrite* to pretend to be so concerned about other men's eyes, and yet he never attends to his own? **Jesus is gentle, but He calls that man a ‘hypocrite’ who fusses about small things in others, and pays no attention to great matters at home in his own person.** Our reformations must begin with ourselves, or they are not true, and do not spring from a right motive.” [Spurgeon, *Matthew*]

The contrast Jesus makes is not between *seeing* and *failing to see* but rather between *seeing* the mote in your brother's eye (blepeis) with *choosing not to see* your own short-comings (ou katanoeis). “Ignoring, consciously overlooking. **The censorious man is not necessarily ignorant of his own faults but he does not let his mind rest on them. It is more pleasant to think of other people's faults.**” [Bruce, *Gk NT*] Wuest: “*Why do you contemplate the splinter of wood in the eye of your brother and do not put your mind upon the log in your own eye?*”

This is not teaching never to “remove the speck” from our neighbor's eye, rather Jesus teaches to make sure the beam is removed from our own eye first. Again, going along with the incorrect interpretation of “judge not”, Jesus is not discouraging mutual discipline but rather places guidelines to avoid the Pharisaical self-righteous hyper-criticism. When by the grace of God our own beam is removed, as a former fault-finder and as one “who's been there”, we will be able to see clearly enough to take the speck of dust from the brother's eye. **This speaks of true God-given humility, a spirit of gentleness, and the realization that aside from the grace of God I could be tempted in like manner.**

Matt 7:6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you. : the *dogs* Jesus speaks of are not the adorable house pets of our culture; rather they were wild, savage, ugly dogs which roamed the streets and could be seen everywhere. The Jews held them in low esteem as unclean and filthy (Prov 26:11; 2 Pet 2:22; Rev 22: 15), threatening (Ps 22:16,20), howling and snarling (Ps 59:6), greedy and shameless (Isa 56:11). To be eaten by dogs was a sign of God's special curse resting upon a person (1 Kings 14:11; 16:4; 21:24). *Hogs* in like manner were filthy and contemptible, unclean to the Jews, and the eating of swine's flesh was an abomination. For the prodigal son to be sent to feed the pigs was the lowest he could sink. Jesus uses “what is holy” (i.e., what is set apart from the common for use by the Lord) and “pearls” synonymously here. **“That which is holy, the holy thing, as of something commonly recognized as sacred.** The reference is to the meat offered in sacrifice. The picture is that of a priest throwing a piece of flesh from the altar of burnt-offering to one of the numerous dogs which infest the streets of Eastern cities.” [Vincent, *Word Studies*] The word for *pearls* is margaritas from which we get our names Margaret and Rita. These pearls came from the Persian Gulf or the Indian Ocean and were extremely expensive, far more than the average person could spend.

“Jesus is saying that whatever it is that stands in special relation to God and is accordingly very precious should be treated with reverence and not entrusted to those who, because of their utterly wicked, vicious, and despicable nature, can be compared to dogs and hogs. This means, for example, that Christ's disciples must not endlessly continue to bring the gospel message to those who scorn it. To be sure, patience must be exercised, but there is a limit. A moment arrives when constant

resistance to the gracious invitation must be punished by the departure of the messengers of good tidings.” [Hendriksen, *Matthew*] “Similarly, the truths that Christ taught, His pearls of great price, must not be broadcast *indiscriminately* to those who would ridicule and despise them, and become increasingly antagonistic. As has often been said, **‘want of common sense does great harm to religion’.**” [Tasker, *Matthew*] Using Christ as an example, we may see He was ever-so-patient with Thomas and Peter yet for Herod Antipas who had often been warned (Mk 6:20) and had not heeded any of the admonitions, Jesus had not one word (Lk 23:9). The ever-merciful Jesus pronounced a curse upon Capernaum for rejecting His teachings (Mt 11:23). He told His disciples to not stay too long where they were not wanted (Mt 10:14,15,23). As we look at Acts we can see the apostles carried forth their ministry under these guidelines.

This however may not be used as an excuse to not witness, for who immediately accepted God’s word? “Hence it is evident, how grievously the words of Christ are tortured by those who think that He limits the doctrine of the Gospel to those only who are teachable and well-prepared. For what will be the consequence, if nobody is invited by pious teachers, until by his obedience he has anticipated the grace of God? On the contrary, we are all by nature unholy and prone to rebellion. The remedy of salvation must be refused to none, till they have rejected it so basely when offered to them, as to make it evident that they are reprobate and self-condemned.” [Calvin, *Commentary*]

Refusing to obey this admonishment endangers the messenger as Jesus states there is a limit to what a sinful hardened heart will endure before it retaliates: *lest they trample them under their feet, turn and rend you*. Some have suggested Jesus is picturing pearls being thrown to hogs which think them to be peas or acorns. Upon finding them inedible the pigs trample the pearls under their feet and in anger turn to attack the one who had played such a trick upon them. “Swine in Palestine were at best but half-tamed, the hog being an unclean animal. The wild boar haunts the Jordan valley to this day. Small pearls, called by jewelers *seed-pearls*, would resemble the peas or maize on which the swine feed. They would rush upon them when scattered, and, discovering the cheat, would trample upon them and turn their tusks upon the man who scattered them.” [Vincent, *Word Studies*] Others suggest two classes of people are represented: some hear but ignorantly trample it under their feet in brute stupidity while others respond violently in rage.

It is unsure as to the limit of what the pearls and things holy represent. As given above, the gospel message itself is at least partially meant. Paul instructs not to entrust the ministry upon the unqualified. An early church interpretation makes this application (from *The Didache* or *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*): “But let no one eat or drink of your Eucharist [Lord’s Supper] except those who have been baptized in the Lord’s name. For concerning this also did the Lord say, ‘Do not give what is holy to the dogs.’” **“We must not treat all people alike**, and show our valuables, religious experiences, best thoughts, tenderest sentiments, to the first comer. Shyness, reserve, goes along with sincerity, depth, refinement. In all shyness there is implicit judgement of the legitimate kind. A modest woman shrinks from a man whom her instinct discerns to be impure; a child from all hard-natured people. Who blames the woman or child? It is but the instinct of self-preservation.” [Bruce, *Gk NT*] “When men are evidently unable to perceive the purity of a great truth, do not set it before them. They are like mere *dog*, and if you set holy things before them they will be provoked to *‘turn again and rend you’*: *holy things* are not for the profane.... When you are in the midst of the vicious, who are like *‘swine’*, do not bring forth the precious mysteries of the faith, for they will despise them, and *‘trample them under their feet’* in the mire. You are not needlessly to provoke attack upon yourself, or upon the higher truths of the gospel. **You are not to judge, but you are not to act without judgment.** Count not men to be dogs or swine; but when they avow themselves to be such, or by their conduct act as if they were such, do not put occasions in their way for displaying their evil character. **Saints are not to be simpletons; they are not to be judges, but, also, they are not to be fools.** Great King, how much wisdom Thy precepts require! **I need Thee, not only to open my mouth, but also at times to keep it shut.**” [Spurgeon, *Matthew*] “As a general meaning of this passage, we may just say: The sacrament of the Lord’s supper, and other holy ordinances which are only instituted for the genuine followers of Christ, are not to be dispensed to those who are continually returning like the snarling ill-natured dog to their easily predominant sins of rash judgment, barking at and tearing the characters of others by evil speaking, back biting and slandering; nor to him who, like the swine, is frequently returning to wallow in the mud of sensual gratifications and impurities.” [Clarke, *Commentary*]

Prayer

Matt 7:7,8 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. : considering the whole Sermon on the Mount flows as a whole, it would benefit us to see how this connects with what Jesus has been saying. Jesus has been telling us to not be hyper-critical and to abstain from self-righteously judging others, yet to be judgmental in the correct manner and time. We must be patient yet not too patient. Any Christian would therefore respond as to when to know what to do, and Jesus answers that question by exhorting us to pray. When do we hold our tongue? *Pray about it*. When should we speak in love to correct the errors of another? *Pray about it*. When do we share the gospel and the things of Christ? *Pray about it*. When is it time to withhold our witness to one and move on to another? *Pray about it*.

ASK: note there is a rising intensity: ask, seek, knock. Asking implies humility and a consciousness of need, picturing an inferior addressing his superior. Faith is also implied that the Person being asked is able to answer.

SEEK: seeking is **asking plus acting**. Earnest petitioning is implied but not alone; a person must be active in pursuing the fulfilment of his needs. For example, praying for knowledge of the word of God would also demand searching and examining the

scriptures. Praying for souls would also demand witnessing and visiting. Praying for our children would demand living the Christian life before them, taking advantage of every means of grace to see them come to Christ. Praying for our church would imply actively seeking places to be of service within the church.

KNOCK: knocking is *asking plus acting plus persevering*. The picture is what Jesus calls importunity (Lk 11:8), knocking again and again and again. This is implied throughout and could be translated as Wuest: *“Keep on asking for something to be given and it shall be given you. Keep on seeking and you shall find. Keep on reverentially knocking, and it shall be opened to you.”*

The promise given to *every one ... he that ... to him*. **God promises to respond to our prayers as we obey this admonition.** When we humbly ask in faith, doing that which is humanly responsible for us to do in accordance to our prayers, and we persevere in that attitude, God *will* answer that kind of prayer. “No soul can pray in vain that prays as directed above. The truth and faithfulness of the Lord Jesus are pledged for its success. — Ye SHALL receive — ye SHALL find — it SHALL be opened. These words are as strongly binding on the side of God, as thou shalt do no murder is on the side of man. Bring Christ’s word, and Christ’s sacrifice with thee, and not one of Heaven’s blessings can be denied thee.” [Clarke, *Commentary*]

Matt 7:9-11 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him? : the Lord argues from the less to the greater: what earthly father, although a sinner, would not respond to his children? *How much more then the infinite holy loving Heavenly Father!?* “If ye, then, being evil — who are radically and diabolically depraved, yet feel yourselves led, by natural affection, to give those things to your children which are necessary to support their lives, how much more will your Father who is in heaven, whose nature is infinite goodness, mercy, and grace, give good things to them who ask him? What a picture is here given of the goodness of God!” [Clarke, *Commentary*]

In the culture of Jesus’ day this **bread** represented the staff of life, the main dish. These did not look as our loafs of bread today but were circular. It would be possible to find stones which gave the appearance of bread. The **fish** was a common side-dish and abundant. Perhaps Jesus meant here that if one asked for a fish he would receive an eel? Regardless, the meaning is that such deception would be unthinkable.

Jesus does place a restriction upon the Father’s giving by stating He would only give **good things** to them that ask. In infinite wisdom God gives and withholds as is best for His children although that is often difficult for us to accept. **“Our heavenly Father will correct our prayer, and give us, not what we ignorantly seek, but what we really need....** It would be a terrible thing if God always gave us all we asked for. Our heavenly Father himself *‘knows how to give’* far better than we know how to ask.” [Spurgeon, *Matthew*]

Note the balance presented by the Lord throughout the entire Sermon on the Mount. Jesus says we are not to use *vain repetition* in our prayers, senselessly and without thought merely speaking words over and over (Matt 6:7), yet we are to persevere and continually ask the Father for our needs (Matt 7:7,8). Although God knows our every need even prior to our asking (Matt 6:8) He still wants us to ask for them (Matt 7:7,8).

The “Golden Rule”

Matt 7:12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Luke 6:31 And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

In areas of doubt as to how we are to respond, Jesus gives a “rule of thumb” to guide us. **The reason for us to obey and follow such a rule is that by doing so we are obeying the Heavenly Father, for this is the law and the prophets; meaning this sums the entirety of the OT teaching.** Jesus elsewhere equates this to the definition of love (Matt 22:37-40). This teaching in kernel form may be found in Lev 19:18, *“you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”* Elsewhere among the Jews was the apocryphal teaching *“what you yourself hate do not do to anyone else.”* (Tobit 4:15). The Jewish teacher Hillel stated it this way, *“what is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor.”* In one form or another equivalent sayings may be found in Plato, Aristotle, Isocrates, Seneca and Confucius, among others. “It seems as if God had written it upon the hearts of all men, for sayings of this kind may be found among all nations, Jewish, Christian, and Heathen.” [Clarke, *Commentary*] Rather than lessening what Christ is teaching, the universal acceptance of this truth undergirds it by showing even the unsaved recognizes its value.

Therefore links this with the large section which began in Matt 5:17. It also connects immediately with the preceding verses on prayer: *since we have a Heavenly Father who will give us over and above what we think or ask, we should therefore love our neighbor as we would desire they love us.*

“This is the sum of the Decalogue, the Pentateuch, and the whole sacred Word. Oh, that all men acted on it, and then there would be no slavery, no war, no sweating, no striking, no lying, no robbing; but all would be justice and love! What a kingdom is this which has such a law! This is The Code Christian. This is the condensation of all that is right and generous. We adore the King out of whose mouth and heart such a law could flow. This one rule is a proof of the divinity of our holy religion. The universal practice of it by all who call themselves Christians would carry conviction to Jew, Turk, and infidel, with greater speed and certainty than all the apologies and arguments which the wit or piety of men could produce. Lord, teach it to me! Write it on the fleshy tablets of my renewed heart! Write it out in full in my life!” [Spurgeon, *Matthew*]