



PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

MATTHEW 5:17-18, 21-22, 27-28, 28-29, 43-44

A PERFECT KINGDOM — June 11, 2023

INTRODUCTION:

Jesus is still teaching the disciples and the multitude of people on the mountainside. He has just told them that they are the salt of the earth, and are the light of the world. If the salt loses its saltiness, where shall the earth be salted? And their light cannot be hid, for it gives light to all that are in the house. *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."* Light has the purpose to shine before men to show forth good works, and to stir men to glorify God

LESSON: I. THE LAW FULFILLED MATTHEW 5:17-18

5:17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. We say this verse all the time. Now let's break it down. ¹Jesus begins a long discussion of the law, and wanted to make it clear that He did not oppose what God gave Israel in what we call the Old Testament. The Law referred to four different writings to the Jews.

1. It referred to the *Ten Commandments*.
2. It referred to the *first five books of the Bible* that is *the Pentateuch*.
3. It referred to the *law and the prophets*, that is, all the Scripture of the Old Testament.
4. It referred to the *oral or the Scribal Law*.

God's Law, given in the Old Testament was not enough for the Jews to be saved. They reasoned that if the law was really God's Word, then it must include—have embodied within it—every rule and regulation for conduct. Therefore they took the great principles of the law and reduced them to thousands upon thousands of rules and regulations. These rules and regulations became the "*oral or Scribal Law*."

²The Law in the Old Testament, and in fact the Old Testament itself, is a type and shadow of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. The Word of God never changes. God's law (Old) is made more glorious in the New. The Old Testament constantly prophesied about Jesus coming to fulfill all prophecy. Jesus was the fulfillment. The Law was not bad, just misunderstood. When Jesus came, He fulfilled the law and reconciled us to God the Father. Jesus was not, and is not, a destroyer of the Law; He's a builder. He did not come to destroy the Word of God, but to free it from the way the Pharisees and Scribes had wrongly interpreted it. He does not release men from, the duty and responsibility of the law; He fulfills and strengthens and even enlarges the law. It means that a person is now free to serve God in the Spirit and Life of the Law, not just in the letter of the Law.

- To "**fulfill**" is to "**fill full**." The most significant way Jesus fulfilled the law was to complete its purpose. The law told what was right, and what was wrong before God. It let people know that they were sinners, not good enough to receive eternal life (Rom.3:19, 20). It was a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, by whom our sins are forgiven. When we come to Christ and are forgiven, the law is fulfilled. Its purpose is accomplished. And we are no longer under the schoolmaster (Gal.3:24-26).

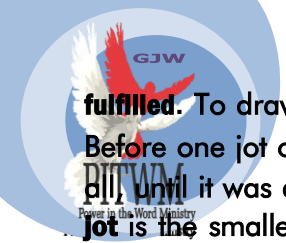
Consider one example of how to apply this principle. The law required a sinner to sacrifice an animal to atone for his sin. But the sacrifice of an animal is not enough to take away the sins of anyone. Such sacrifices were offered repeatedly until Jesus' death on the cross, through which sins really are taken away. Thus the law is fulfilled, and animal sacrifices are no longer necessary (Heb.10:1-18).

5:18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be

¹ <http://www.enduringword.com/commentaries/4005.htm>

² <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/matthew/11.html>





PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

fulfilled. To draw attention to the authority of His message, He says, verily, which means truly, certainly, or amen. Before one jot or tittle of the law fail, heaven and earth would have to pass away. There would be no change at all until it was all fulfilled. One jot or one tittle refers to the minutest marks and letters of the Hebrew alphabet. A **jot** is the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet, called *yodh*. A **tittle** is a small projection on the edge of certain Hebrew letters to distinguish them from one another—"Not one dot of an "i" or not one cross of a "t" will pass from the law till all is fulfilled. He explained that even the smallest statement in the law must be fulfilled, for He had come to fulfill the law and its fullest implications. WOW!

NOT APART OF THE LESSON: VERSES 19-20

5:19 **Whoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.** Everything that is in the Law is important. It is easy to keep some parts of the Law and to neglect other parts, however, the man that breaks the least commandment and continues and continues to break it, thereby teaching others to treat the law that way was unacceptable, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. Such continued disobedient behavior teaches that the commandments of God are not really all that important. But the one who teach men to live by God's law must also practice what they preach; then they will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. This simply means that God will reward the faithfulness and effectiveness of our lives and there will be varying degrees of blessing and reward in the kingdom.

5:20 **For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.** Note three facts:

1. Righteousness is necessary to enter into the kingdom of heaven.
2. The religionist, the Pharisees, and the Scribes had some righteousness. They just didn't have enough. They worked at obeying thousands and thousands of rules and regulations; however, they lacked the one essential thing: loving God so much that they would deny themselves and not seek their righteousness in His Son, Jesus Christ!
3. A person must have more righteousness than a strict religionist to enter heaven. What did Christ mean? Who can enter heaven if a strict religionist cannot?

³The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was outward, ritualistic, and not from the heart. It was an external righteousness. Human righteousness can never match God's righteousness. What the Savior demands is a kind of righteousness that is so godly that it cannot be the product of human effort but must be the gift of God. This righteousness Christ would establish, in His life and death, and would be made available as God's free gift. This is the righteousness that would exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees.

II. THE LAW INTERPRETED MATTHEW 5:21-22, 27-28

In communicating the depth of His message, Jesus used a series of contrasts between the outward demand of the law and the inner attitude of heart desired by God. Jesus now turns to what He does require for His kingdom (5:21-48). He selects six subjects to distinguish His teaching from that of the Scribes and Pharisees.

First illustration: Murder (5:21-26)

LAW	SPIRIT
Murder (vv21-26)	No anger
Adultery (vv27-30)	No lust
Divorce (vv31-32)	Commitment
Oath-taking (vv33-37)	Speak the truth
Retaliation (vv38-42)	Forgiveness
Hate your enemy (vv43-48)	Love your enemy

5:21 **Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, "Thou shalt not kill"; and whoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:—** The reference to killing is clearly understood in its context in both the Old Testament and New Testament as referring to an act of murder (the sixth commandment – Exo.20:13). Jesus identified wrong attitudes as triggering other sins. He is giving a fuller understanding of why God made that law in the first place. For example, when Moses said, "*Do not kill!*" it must be remembered that the God who commanded the children of Israel not to murder one another, also commanded them at times to kill an enemy in order to defend their nation. Jesus goes even further,

³ <http://versebyversecommentary.com/matthew/matthew-520/>
www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html





PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

"Don't even become angry enough to murder for then you have already committed murder in your heart." Jesus was not altering the terms of the law in any of these passages. Rather, he was correcting what they had heard—the rabbinical understanding of the law.

5:22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment:— Killing is a terrible sin, but anger is a great sin too because it also violates God's command to love. Christ is saying that man has a problem. Man applies it only to the outward act; in this case, to the act of murder. He fails to look inward—within himself—to the cause. Murder is deeper than just an outward act. It is also an inward act. Murder is born from within from an uncontrolled spirit, from an unregulated urge, from an inner anger. Anger itself is the real sin, the sin that breaks the law of God. Reasons why people get angry and develop feelings against others:

- To seek revenge and to hurt.
- To show ego or authority.
- To reveal passion or secure some end.
- To show hurt, resentment, and bitterness.
- To express disagreement and displeasure.
- To correct a wrong (a justified anger).
- To give warning.

Unresolved anger will fester and grow to become dangerous. It can become uncontrollable and give birth to murder.

Three steps in the growth of anger:

1. **When anger broods**, that is selfish, harbors malice; it will not forget; it lingers; it is a seething brooding bitterness; it wills revenge and sometimes seeks revenge.
2. **When anger holds contempt** (*raca*), despises; ridicules; arrogantly exalts self and calls another person empty and useless. This is an anger that is full of malice. It despises and scorns (*raca*). It arises from pride—a proud wrath (Prov.21:24). Such feelings of anger walk over and trample a person. It says that whatever ill comes upon a person is deserved.
3. **When anger that curses**, it seeks to destroy a man and his reputation morally, intellectually, and spiritually.

If a person has an angry nature—if he flies off the handle at the drop of a hat—he has a character flaw of which he must repent. If this is so, Jesus is saying that even getting angry—with or without a "justifiable" cause—puts one in danger of breaking this commandment! After reading those things, we surely don't want any of that to start growing in us. The Bible does permit anger against sin (*righteous indignation*) but not anger against another person. Even righteous indignation is always disciplined and controlled.

5:22b ...and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. "*Raca*" literally means empty-headed, a Hebrew or Aramaic expression of contempt, worthless one! When saying this to his brother, they are in danger of going before the Jewish religious council called the Sanhedrin in that day. "*Thou fool*" (*Gr mōros*) means stupid. We have developed the English word "*moron*" from this term. Those using such a malicious expression would be in danger of hell fire. "*Hell fire*" or "*Gehenna*" (*geenna*) is used eleven or twelve times in the New Testament, and in every case it is spoken by Jesus except in the Epistle of James. It illustrates the terrible truth of the second death, of man's final separation from God. Jesus pointed to the burning, repulsive dump outside the city limits of Jerusalem, and referring that it was exactly what hell was like. The dump was called Gehenna (in the Valley of Hinnom [Slaughter] which served as a public incinerator. Hanging over it was a layer of thick, smoldering smoke arising from what seemed to be an eternal flame).

The idea clearly seems to be that if one makes light of his fellow man he will be in danger of slander. But if one makes bitter, damning statements with reference to hell toward his fellow man, he shall actually be in danger of hell himself. **The point is:** violence is to be judged— not only before the councils of the world, but before the council of God. God's judgment will be just as swift on anger as it will be upon murder. Anger keeps us from developing a spirit pleasing to God. Self-control is good, but Christ wants us to practice thought-control as well—think before you speak! Jesus said we will be held accountable even for our attitudes.



PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

Second illustration: Adultery contrasted to lust (5:27-28)

5:27 **Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery.** Jesus says you've heard the seventh commandment Exodus 20:14, Deuteronomy 5:18 which is the law against immorality: "*Thou shalt not commit adultery*" meaning, having sex with someone other than your wife/husband; don't break the marriage vow.

5:28 **But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.**

But, Jesus clarifies the law about adultery: "*Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*" The Bible does not teach that sex is wrong, but that sex can be used wrongly, and the wrong use of sex is sin. If the act is wrong, so is the deliberate and repeated mental intention. To be faithful to your spouse with your body, but not your mind is breaking the trust of a strong marriage. There is a saying: '*Where the mind goes, the body follows.*' Proverbs 23:7 says "*For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.*" Read Romans 12:1-2

NOT A PART OF THE LESSON: VERSES 31-37

Third illustration: Divorce as contrasted to marriage (5:31-32)

Fourth illustration: Oath-taking as opposed to speaking the truth (5:33-37)

III. THE LAW OF LOVE MATTHEW 5:38-39, 43-44

Fifth illustration: Retaliation as opposed to forgiveness

5:38 **Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:—** This is saying, you've heard that the judicial penalty stated in Leviticus 24:20 as a means of ending feuds, the Mosaic Law says "*An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.*" It had been misused and abused.

- This law was not a command that had to be executed.
- The law was given to the courts to guide the judges in the execution of justice.
- The law could be satisfied with money or some other ransom or payment deemed just.

Although this type of retaliation **an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth** when wronged to get back at them is not for the Christian.

5:39 **But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.**

Jesus gave four illustrations of kinds of incidents they would face: slap (v.39), take your shirt (v.40), go two miles (v.41), or borrow some kind of personal wealth (v.42). The disciples would run into much opposition and harassment when they proclaim the Kingdom of Heaven, so, Jesus said turn the other cheek if one is being slapped, that is, accept physical injury. Jesus taught them that for the sake of the gospel they should not retaliate; they should not be distracted by demands of their possessions, time, or money, but should be flexible, helpful, and generous. Jesus is not saying to resist evil ever, for in Jesus' day, He says to His disciples to struggle not against evil. Jesus resisted evil when it came to spiritual matters, but He did not resist evil when it came to physical matters. Jesus accepted physical injury. Well, I can see that retaliating can escalate the matters worse. The example that comes to mind is a robbery. We're always told to give over what they ask, so you won't get killed.

Sixth illustration: Love thy neighbor contrasted to love thy enemy.

5:43 **Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy—**Well, the law is what you have heard—The Mosaic Law. The first half (Thou shalt love thy neighbour) is found in Moses' Law (Lev.19:18). The second part (and hate thine enemy) was found in how the Scribes and Pharisees explained and applied that OT command. Jesus' application was exactly the opposite of hate, resulting in a much higher standard. Love for one's neighbors should extend even to those neighbors who are enemies. Nowhere did the law teach hatred for one's enemies.

The law said, "*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*" (Lev.19:18). Israel made two fatal mistakes in interpreting this law.



PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

1. They said neighbor meant only the people of their own community, religion, and nation. They did not include anyone else. They did not include the uncircumcised as neighbors, but as enemies.
2. They inferred they were to hate their enemies. God said, "*Love thy neighbor*"; therefore, they reasoned and added, "*Hate thine enemy*." It is the natural reason of man at work. It is not God's best for the world.

5:44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies— The word "*But*" is saying "*quite the contrary to what has just been said*." All people are our neighbors including our enemies. Jesus is acknowledging that we will have enemies, yet we are to respond to them in love, trusting God that we come out the better. The real meaning of the law to love involves four very practical acts:

1. **Love your enemies:** respect and honor all men (1Pt.2:17). Every human being has something that is commendable, even if it is nothing, but the fact that he is a fellow human being with a soul to be reached for God.
 - a. Loving our enemies is against human nature. The behavior of human nature is to react, strike back, hate, and wish hurt. That's human nature! The root of human reaction against enemies is self and bitterness (Self-preservation is not evil of itself).
 - b. There is one thing a believer can have for his enemy: mercy or compassion. If he does not have compassion for those who hate him, he has gained nothing of the Spirit of Christ (Lk.6:36). When Christ said "*Love your enemies*", He could have used any one of four words:
 1. "*Eros*" love—this love arises from passion, infatuation, and sexual attraction. It is the love (passion) of a man for a woman.
 2. "*Storge*" love—this love arises from affection, the affection of family love. It is the love and natural affection between parent and child.
 3. "*Phileo*" love—this love arises from affection. It is an affection that fills a person's heart with warmth, tenderness, preciousness, and a deep consciousness of really loving and really being loved; those who are very near and very dear to one's heart.
 4. "*Agape*" love—this love wishes well. It is a love that demonstrates kindness, benevolence, and esteem. It is the love of choice; the act of our will. It is a sacrificial love, that is, a love that cares, gives, and works for another person's good—no matter how the person may respond or treat one. Loving your enemies is agape—the love that must be willed. Note:
 - a. The Christian's love for his enemy is different from the love he holds for his family. It would be impossible to love an enemy with affection. Christ knew this.
 - b. The Christian sacrifices himself, bears all in order to work for his enemy's good.
 - c. The Christian's love (agape love) is not complacent acceptance of open wickedness and license. It is not sitting back and allowing a person to do as he pleases. It is restraint, control, discipline, and even punishment when it protects the offender from himself, and protects those whom he hurts (i.e. a parent controlling a child for his own good, and for the good of those who love him).
 - d. A Christian can have agape love only as he allows God to love through him.

5:44b ...bless them that curse you— The second act of the real meaning of love:

2. **Bless those who curse you.** To "*bless*" means that a person has to speak. Christ is saying to speak softly to the curser (Prov.15:1). Use kind, friendly words; when face to face, be courteous; when behind his back, commend his strengths. Do not render railing for railing, that is, do not condemn or attack him in bitter or abusive language (1Pt.3:9). The curser has two major problems:
 1. The curser has a weak self-image. He feels the need to assert himself to come across as strong and forceful to fit in. One sign of a weak self image is the acceptance of cursing as a normal part of conversation.
 2. The curser either does not know the Lord or else is very immature and weak in the Lord.



PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

5:44c ...do good to them that hate you— We can overcome evil with good— The third act of the real meaning of love:

3. Do good to them that hate you. Doing good goes beyond words. It does things for the person who hates. It reaches out to him through his family or friends, employment or business. It searches ways to do good to him, realizing that he needs to be reached for God. If no immediate way is found, then the Christian patiently waits for the day when he will face one of the crises that comes about in life (i.e. sickness, accident, death). And then the believer can go and do good, ministering to him as Christ Himself would minister.

5:44d ... and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; — The fourth act of the real meaning of love:

4. **Pray for those who persecute you.** Three things need to be prayed about:
 1. For God to forgive the persecutor.
 2. For peace between one's self and the persecutor.
 3. And for the persecutor's Salvation or correction.

Prayer for the persecutor will greatly benefit the believer. It will keep the believer from becoming bitter, hostile, or reactionary. When we continuously pray for our enemies, especially those who does spite against us and persecute us, we will find it easier to love them. It is God who does the changing in us. We might not see a change in them right away but the change is coming through us. It is taking the "poison" out of our attitudes. Hallelujah! This challenge is only done through the grace of God which is a sacrificial love.

SUMMARY:

⁴Jesus begins a long discussion of the law, and wanted to make it clear that He did not oppose what God gave Israel in what we call the Old Testament. The Old Testament constantly prophesied about Jesus coming to fulfill all prophecy. Jesus was the fulfillment. When Jesus came, He fulfilled the law and reconciled us to God the Father. He did not come to destroy the Word of God, but to free it from the way the Pharisees and Scribes had wrongly interpreted it. Before one **jot** or **tittle** of the law fail, heaven and earth would have to pass away. He explained that even the smallest statement in the law must be fulfilled, for He had come to fulfill the law and its fullest implications (**5:17-18**).

Jesus used a series of contrasts between the outward demand of the law and the inner attitude of heart desired by God. So what does He begin with...? What is the most condemning sin you can think of? Murder: *"Thou shall not kill shall be in danger of the judgment."* Jesus expounds on this and says that wrong attitudes and words count the same as murder. How could that be? Murder begins with anger, unforgiveness, hatred, contempt, envy and bitterness. All of it is sin. To be full of such things reveals a heart condition that is condemning, and will be in danger of the judgment, even saying **"Raca"** to your brother would be in danger of the council, and calling someone a **"fool"** would be in danger of hell fire. Think before you speak or be held accountable (**5:21-22**).

Jesus says you've heard the seventh commandment Exodus 20:14, Deuteronomy 5:18 which is the law against immorality: *"Thou shalt not commit adultery"* meaning, having sex with someone other than your wife/husband; don't break the marriage vow. But, Jesus clarifies the law about adultery: *"Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."* If the act is wrong, so is the deliberate and repeated mental intention. To be faithful to your spouse with your body, but not your mind is breaking the trust of a strong marriage (**5:27-28**).

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PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

Many have heard that the judicial penalty stated in Leviticus 24:20 as a means of ending feuds, the Mosaic Law says "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." Although this type of retaliation when wronged, to get back at someone is not for the Christian. ⁵Jesus taught His disciples to treat their enemies differently than the current religious leaders taught. Jesus is not saying to resist evil ever, for in Jesus' day, He says to His disciples to struggle not against evil. Jesus resisted evil when it came to spiritual matters, but He did not resist evil when it came to physical matters. Jesus accepted physical injury. The illustration Jesus gives is a slap on the cheek, then turn the other also (**5:38-39**).

The law is what they have heard, love your neighbor and Hate your enemy. But Jesus says, Love your enemies. Jesus is acknowledging that we will have enemies, but bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you. It's taking the "*poison*" out of our attitudes (**5:43-44**).

APPLICATION:

Come to Jesus to be taught as the disciples and the crowds did. Whatever builds our character blesses us for a reward. The reward is here and forever. It is so important when things run smoothly, and that can only be done by the choice of our will—the choice to settle matters quickly; the choice to forgive; and the choice to love. We all may not want to quickly forgive or love, but if we want a right relationship with God, we must humble ourselves to the Will and Way of God. When we are in the Will of God, and bring our gift to Him in the right manner, we have right fellowship with Him! Please don't give up on God, cause He won't give up on us!

⁵ <http://www.spokanebiblechurch.com/study/Matthew/Matthew5.13-48Summary.htm>
www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html