



SERMON ON THE MOUNT

SERMON ON THE MOUNT WEEK 5: MATTHEW 5:33-48

Community Group Study Guide - Week of February 21, 2021

I. Introducing and Setting the Context of Matthew 5:33-48

- This passage contains the last three of Jesus' six "You have heard that it was said" statements
 - ✦ Jesus is challenging the rigid spirituality of the Pharisees who looked good on the outside, but were far from God on the inside
 - ✦ The hypocrisy of the Pharisees shows us that we sin when we do wrong AND when we do what is right with arrogance and pride in our our heart
- Jesus calls followers to perfection at the thought, speech and heart level not in order to become children of God, but because they are children of God (v.48)

III. Citizens of Jesus' Kingdom are Called to Humble Integrity (5:33-37)

- There are two problems with swearing oaths:
 1. Swearing oaths lacks integrity
 - ✦ The problem among the Pharisees, as depicted in Matt. 23:18, was that they viewed some oaths as breakable and some as unbreakable, depending upon the importance of the thing to which an oath was bound
 - ✦ Christ is saying to his followers that if our words are EVER misleading, we lack integrity and are hypocrites
 - ✦ Christ is not communicating that people shouldn't sign leases and contracts, but that followers in his kingdom should have integrity
 2. Swearing oaths is prideful and lacking in humility
 - ✦ Everything belongs to the Lord and is controlled by Him, so don't boast or make promises that you cannot keep (v.34-36)

IV. Citizens of Jesus' Kingdom are Called to Merciful Justice (5:38-42)

- People often misunderstand these verses in two ways:
 1. They think that Jesus is promoting pacifism and denouncing self-defense
 - ✦ If Jesus was promoting pacifism and self-defense, he would be contradicting scripture (Matt. 21:12-17; Romans 13:1-4; Acts 22:25-29; Luke 22:35-38)
 - ✦ Conclusion: Self-defense and just war is permissible at times, but the Kingdom of God is not advanced by the sword (John 18:36); Christians need to embrace the tension that arises while pursuing justice and mercy and seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit
 2. They take Jesus' words literally at the cost of analyzing the rhetorical devices that he uses to make his points
 - ✦ When saying to "turn the other cheek," Jesus is teaching that Christians should not retaliate when slighted or mistreated, but should react in a way that leaves room for reconciliation and peace; in a world of brokenness and division, this is how we can be salt and light; see Romans 12:17-21
 - ✦ Jesus uses hyperbole in order to call his followers to be radically merciful and generous in the same way that God has been radically merciful and generous to them

V. Citizens of Jesus' Kingdom are called to Prayerful Peacemaking (5:43-48)

- "If we are children of God, then we should expect the world to treat us the way the world treated God's son. And if we are children of God, then we are expected to treat the world like Jesus Christ treated us."-Pastor Shane; John 15:18-19; John 16:33; Romans 6:6-11
- Jesus doesn't call us to something that he did not do when he calls us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us in verse 44.
- Why be perfect? We have a heavenly Father who is perfect and loved us despite our sin.

DISCUSSION GOALS

Head

To understand that to be a child of God is to seek to resemble our perfect Heavenly Father in all that we think, say and do.

Heart

To trust God's will as we strive for righteousness in this life, regardless of the reception that we receive from the world.

Hands

To be models of humble integrity, merciful justice and prayerful peacemaking in this world as we seek to live up to our calling as children of God.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A **Membership 101** session will be held on **March 14 at 1PM**. Email admin@mosaicboston.com if you plan to attend.

Please go to <https://brookline.mosaicboston.com/serve> to **sign up for a service team**.

A **Baptism Seminar** will be held on **February 28, at 1:15PM** in the basement of the Temple. Email admin@mosaicboston.com if you plan to attend.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Read Matthew 5:33-48.

1. Can someone take a minute or two to summarize the key points of the sermon and connect these verses to the broader message of the Sermon on the Mount?
2. How has swearing an oath gotten you in trouble in the past?
3. Based on the systems of the Pharisees, some oaths were breakable and some were not breakable (see Matthew 23:18). What was ironic about this system?
4. Are there areas of your work or study where it is normal for people to be dishonest? How can you address these areas with more integrity?
5. If you heard someone say, "Jesus commands his followers to never act in self-defense when he tells them to turn the cheek," how would you respond?
6. What tensions and challenges arise when a Christian genuinely sets out to "do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly" with God (see Micah 5:6)?
7. What does Jesus mean when he says to love our enemies?
8. How do Christians have the ability to love their enemies and pray for those that persecute them?
9. Christ calls us to perfection in thought, word and deed because our "heavenly Father is perfect." What kind of response does this elicit in you?