

**On the Mount, Part 3:
Turn the Other Cheek — Grace Over Just Desserts
Matthew 5:21-42**

Introduction:

- Today, we continue our journey through the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount.
- In this passage (Matthew 5:21-42), Jesus challenges us to rethink our approach to life's challenges and conflicts.
- In the Old Testament, we were taught an "eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," seeking retribution and what we believe we deserve.
- But Jesus invites us to a different path, a path of grace over just desserts.

Sermon Recap from Last Week:

- In our previous sermon, "Be the Light of the World - Live by Grace," we learned that grace is not in opposition to the law; it's the ultimate fulfillment of it.
- Our relationship with God is not a mere transaction but a deeply transformative experience.

I. Murder: Seek Grace Over Judgment (Matthew 5:21-26)

- When Jesus addresses the issue of murder, He goes beyond condemning the act itself and delves into the human heart.
- His words, "But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment," reveal that anger often conceals a desire for retribution.
- This teaching is not about external behavior; it's about a transformation of our innermost attitudes.
- Instead of seeking judgment, Jesus calls us to choose grace and reconciliation.

II. Adultery: Seek Grace Over Lust (Matthew 5:27-30)

- In addressing adultery, Jesus takes us beyond the realm of actions to the realm of desires and intentions.
- He declares, "But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."
- Lust is a rejection of the boundaries and guidelines that God has set for our good, and Jesus calls us to seek grace over lust.

III. Divorce: Seek Grace Over What You Deserve (Matt. 5:31-32)

- Jesus's teaching on divorce emphasizes the seriousness of this decision.
- According to Jesus's teaching, the one who causes adultery is the one who unjustly gives up his wife.
- In marriage and divorce, we must approach them with humility and grace rather than entitlement.

Important Note on Marital Unfaithfulness:

- Marital unfaithfulness includes any sexual activity outside the bounds of a committed marriage and behaviors that violate the established sexual trust and agreements within a marriage.
- Grace cannot be forced upon someone who chooses not to accept it, and walking away should be done with an attitude of grace and compassion (Matthew 10:17)

IV. Oaths: Seek Grace Over Self-Justification (Matthew 5:33-37)

- Jesus advises against making oaths that invoke God's judgment and warns against self-justification.
- Oaths often emerge from a deep-seated need to prove ourselves or to assert our righteousness.
- Jesus encourages us to live lives of integrity and let our words reflect the grace of God.

Practical Application: Living in Grace:

1. Examine Your Heart: Take time to reflect on your own heart. Are there areas where you've been holding onto anger, seeking judgment, or believing that you deserve something? Confess these attitudes to God, and ask for His grace to transform your heart.
2. Guard Your Desires: Be vigilant about your desires, especially in the realm of relationships. If you find yourself lusting after something you know is outside of God's plan, pause and seek His grace to redirect your desires toward what aligns with His will.
6. Share the Message of Grace: Lastly, share the message of God's grace with others. Let your life be a testimony to the world that grace triumphs over what we think we deserve. Share the good news that in Christ, we find forgiveness, transformation, and the gift of eternal life that none of us deserve.