

## ASTONISHED prt 10

Matthew 5:33-48

MPS: **inward transformation results in outward demonstration.**

### PRAYER TIME:

**Psalm 109:30–31 (ESV) 30** *With my mouth I will give great thanks to the LORD; I will praise him in the midst of the throng. 31* *For he stands at the right hand of the needy one, to save him from those who condemn his soul to death.*

**Vs 30** *With my mouth I will give great thanks to the LORD; I will praise him in the midst of the throng.*

Lord, I give great thanks to you for \_\_\_\_\_

**Vs 31** *For he stands at the right hand of the needy one, to save him from those who condemn his soul to death.*

Lord, I am needy, help me/us with \_\_\_\_\_.

### SERMON:

#### INTRO:

- We are in a series we've called, Astonished.
- Kingdom themed teaching from Jesus
- 6 times Jesus says, "You have heard that it was said..." or at least a variation of it. (6 number of man). Some scholars have called this the six antitheses.
- You've heard that it was said... FROM MAN; now you get to hear from GOD – The author of the law astonishes His people with the intent of the law.
- **OPEN:**  
In the late 1960s, a young Russian man named Sergei Kourdakov led a special KGB squad whose job was to hunt down and brutally beat secret groups of Christians. One girl in particular kept showing up at these underground meetings. Her name was Natasha. Time after time, Sergei and his men beat her severely. But every time they returned, she was there again — bruised, but still bowing her knees to the Father, beaten but still believing, suffering yet still singing, reviled yet still refusing to deny Jesus.
- One night after beating her ruthlessly, Sergei looked at this broken girl and asked her, **"How can you keep coming back?"**
- Natasha's radical inward transformation led to an outward demonstration – a demonstration of faith that is counter intuitive and counter cultural.

## Inward transformation results in outward demonstration.

- Jesus is teaching disciples and future disciples on the premise that radical transformation was coming to them – and they needed to know how to live by and thus demonstrate these kingdom principles.
- “Years later, after defecting to the West, Sergei became a Christian. In his book *The Persecutor*, he wrote these haunting words: “Natasha, largely because of you, my life is now changed... Thank you, Natasha.”
- Its always about loving God and loving others – her **Inward transformation resulted in an outward demonstration** which led to another’s transformation.

### 1. Demonstrate truth telling

**Vs 33-37** “Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.’ **34** But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, **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 take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. **37** Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil.

**Leviticus 19:12 (ESV) 12** You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD.

- What is an oath? An oath is when you take God’s name — or something that belongs to God (like heaven, earth, or Jerusalem) — and use it to guarantee that what you’re saying is true.
- In Jesus’ day, people would make casual oaths like “I swear by heaven” or “I swear by my head”
- They were using God’s name to prop up their integrity instead of just being honest.

ILLUSTRATION: School play: From the audience, the scenery looks impressive — a grand palace, a solid throne, a beautiful garden. But if you walk backstage, you see the truth: it’s all cardboard cutouts, held up by wooden sticks and duct tape. The whole thing is flimsy and fake, but the cardboard makes it look real from a distance.

- It’s great and works well for theater – but trying to prop up a flimsy character with God’s names is actually lying.

- The Ten Commandments include a law against bearing false witness (Exodus 20:16).
- Some have understood Jesus' prohibition of oaths to be universal, but Jesus Himself submitted to an oath (Matthew 26:63) and Paul invoked God as his witness in Rom. 1:9. God Himself takes an oath so that we might be encouraged (Heb. 6:17)
- What Christ is forbidding here is the flippant, profane, or careless use of oaths in everyday speech. In that culture, such oaths were often employed for deceptive purposes.
- We do this today by saying "I swear to God"

**James 5:12 (ESV) 12** *But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your "yes" be yes and your "no" be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.*

- Jesus' disciples are not to swear **at all**. Instead, their character should be of such integrity that their words can be believed without an oath,

**Titus 1:2 (ESV) 2** *in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began*

Why do people lie?

- a. **We lie out of fear** — we're afraid of losing face, losing respect, losing power, or losing something important if the truth comes out.
  - b. **We lie out of pride** — we want to look better than we are, protect our image, or manipulate what others think of us.
- But the gospel gives us a far deeper reason to always tell the truth: In Christ, we are already gained eternity and fully accepted.
  - We don't have to prop up our reputation because our identity and acceptance are secure in what *Jesus* has done for us — not in what other people think.
  - The cross frees us from both the fear of man and the need to impress others. Because we are justified by grace, we can afford to be honest, even when it's costly.
  - You've been freed up to tell the truth.
  - "Truth without love is brutality, and love without truth is hypocrisy." Warren W. Wiersbe
  - We see it lived out in Jesus as well:

- **Before Pilate (John 18:37):** When on trial for His life, Jesus declared, “For this purpose I was born... to bear witness to the truth.” No exaggeration, no manipulation — just pure, honest testimony.

**Kingdom takeaway:** Kingdom people don’t need oaths or clever wording to prop up their integrity. Their character makes their word enough.

## 2. Demonstrate restraint

**Vs 38-42** *“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ 39 But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. 41 And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. 42 Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.*

- The original intent and design of ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ was to ensure that the punishment in civil cases fit the crime. It was never meant to sanction acts of personal retaliation.
  - It was meant to be a restraint on justice, not a license for personal revenge.
  - It was meant to stop people from doing something crazy like chopping off a man’s arm because he knocked out one of your teeth.
  - The problem in ancient days was the law had been interpreted that if someone does something against you, then you are commanded to retaliate. “They had twisted ‘an eye for an eye’ into God’s version of ‘he hit me first!’ — like kindergarten rules, but with divine approval.”
- Jesus applied this principle of non-retaliation to insults against:
  - A. One’s dignity** **39** *But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.*
    - A slap on the right cheek was not a physical assault as much as a backhanded insult — a demeaning gesture used by a superior to put an inferior in their place; Jesus is commanding His followers not to retaliate or defend their honor, but to absorb the insult.
  - B. Lawsuits to gain one’s personal assets** **40** *And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well.*
    - The “tunic” (chiton) was the inner garment – like a shirt; Jesus is picturing a poor person being sued for the clothes off their back in a court of law, and He

tells them to respond by voluntarily giving their outer coat (himation) as well —

- a radical act of generosity that would leave the person naked and publicly shame by the oppressor.

**C. Infringements on one's liberty. 41** *And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.*

- Roman soldiers had the legal right to compel a Jewish civilian to carry their gear for one mile; Jesus commands His followers to go the extra mile voluntarily, transforming a moment of oppression and humiliation into an opportunity to show freedom and love.
- **Forces** - The word speaks of coercion or compelling. The NT picture of this is when Roman soldiers "compelled" Simon the Cyrene to carry Jesus' cross (27:32).

**D. Violations of property rights 42** *Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.*

- Jesus is calling His people to radical, open-handed generosity even toward those who may take advantage of them, rejecting the natural instinct to protect our resources and rights, and instead living with open hearts that reflect the generosity of the King.
- Think about how Jesus demonstrated restraint leading up to the cross and on the cross.
- **In the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:51-53):** When Peter pulled out a sword and cut off the high priest's servant's ear, Jesus immediately stopped him and said, "Put your sword back... Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?" He restrained His power and submitted to arrest.
- When insults are hurled against you, Jesus is calling for a full surrender of all personal rights. But that doesn't mean the same when you take up for others who are being insulted, harmed or abused.

**Proverbs 31:8–9 (NIV) 8** *Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. 9* *Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.*

- Vengeance belongs to the Lord our God... He will justly handle every harm and sin committed against you one of two ways: On the last day to the unrepentant or on Jesus via the cross.

**Kingdom takeaway:** Kingdom people don't insist on their rights or repay evil with evil. They respond with restraint and trust God for justice.

### 3. Demonstrate love

**Vs 43-48** *“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

**Proverbs 25:21 (ESV) 21** *If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat, and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink,*

- This doesn't mean to have deep affectionate feelings for your enemies... that is not the definition of love.
- Love is to give yourself away sacrificially for the sake of another without expecting anything in return.
- God's common grace is shown here as well... maybe a reflection of how we are to love others – common grace is to everyone, salvific grace is not.
- Notice this: Jesus says that our Father “makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.”
- The same sun that melts the ice also hardens the clay.
- The same love and kindness that softens one heart can actually harden another. The difference is not in the sun — it's in the substance. In the same way, when we love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us, we are imitating our Father. We are not responsible for whether their heart becomes softer or harder. We are simply called to shine the same consistent, sacrificial love that God shines on the world.
- To be 'perfect' is the use of the GK word *teleios* which means “maturity.” We are to be mature in Him.
- You may be saying to yourself: “This is just too much for me... how do I love my enemy who did such terrible things to me or me and my family?”
- “Let me remind you that this is God's universe, and He is doing things His way. You may think you have a better way, but you don't have a universe.” **J. Vernon McGee**

- **On the cross (Luke 23:34):** While being crucified by His enemies, Jesus prayed, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” This is the ultimate picture of loving and praying for those who are harming you.

**Kingdom takeaway:** Kingdom people reflect the perfect love of the Father by loving even their enemies—in action and prayer. Jesus didn’t wait for people to become lovable; He loved first.

## CONCLUSION

Jesus didn’t just teach us to love our enemies—He did it while we were still His enemies. On the cross, while we were rebelling against Him, He prayed, “Father, forgive them,” and gave His life for us.

Because He loved His enemies (us) to the point of death, we are now reconciled to God

**Inward transformation results in outward demonstration.**

### QUESTIONS FOR GROUPS:

1. (Focuses on Truth-Telling + Character):

“Jesus says our ‘yes’ should be yes and our ‘no’ should be no — that our character should be so trustworthy that we don’t need oaths or exaggeration to prop it up. When are you most tempted to stretch the truth, add ‘I swear to God,’ or use clever wording to make yourself look better or protect yourself? What would it look like for the gospel to free you to tell the truth even when it’s costly?”

*(This question gets at the fear and pride Jesus addresses and invites personal confession and gospel application.)*

2. (Focuses on Restraint + Loving Enemies):

“Jesus calls us to radical restraint — turning the other cheek, going the extra mile, and even loving and praying for our enemies instead of retaliating. Which of these situations feels most impossible to you right now: absorbing an insult, giving up your rights in a conflict, or praying for someone who has hurt you or your family? How does the example of Jesus on the cross (and Natasha’s story) challenge or encourage you to respond differently?”