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Luke 6:20 - 6:49



Gospel of Luke - Steve Gregg

Steve Gregg examines Luke's version of the Beatitudes in Luke 6:20-49, suggesting that while the poor may be blessed, Jesus does not teach solely on economic circumstances. Rather, Jesus commands that individuals love God and love others, even their enemies. Gregg argues that those who follow Jesus' teachings may be excluded or face persecution, but true followers will have the kingdom of God. The speaker emphasizes the importance of living righteously and resisting societal norms, even in a secular world.

Transcript

Alright, now we come to Luke's Sermon on the Plain. At the end of our last session, I gave some introductory comments, considering the similarities and dissimilarities between this and the Sermon on the Mount that's given in Matthew. I, myself, am undecided as to whether this is a different sermon or simply a different version of the same sermon.

I guess I incline to the view that it's the same. Now, there are some differences that would have to be explained. For example, let us read these Beatitudes.

Verse 20 Verse 21 Now, here we have 8 statements. I mentioned that Matthew has 8 statements also at the beginning of Beatitudes. There are 8 Beatitudes in Matthew.

Here there are 4 Beatitudes and they are mirrored by 4 Woes. Obviously, Blessed are you poor is mirrored by Woe to you rich. Blessed are you who hunger now is by those of you who are full.

Those of you who weep is mirrored with those who laugh and you will weep. And then, of course, Blessed are you when men hate you and exclude you is mirrored by Woe to you when men speak well of you. All men speak well of you.

And because those who are blessed for being spoken evil of are in the company of the prophets and those who are spoken well of are in the company of the false prophets, he says. So, these are the parallels. But, even the 4 Beatitudes that Luke gives are not necessarily identical to the ones in Matthew, though they resemble 4 of them.

Because Matthew has Blessed are the poor in spirit and Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness sake. Now, obviously, those are spiritual conditions. Hunger for righteousness, poor in spirit.

Yet, from Luke's version of these Beatitudes, you get the impression he's talking about economic circumstances. Those who are poor, those who are hungry. Those who weep, those who are persecuted.

These terms could all refer to social status and economic circumstance. And, no doubt, we are not to divorce these from those conditions because Luke, especially in his Gospel, does concentrate on the plight of the poor and the contrast between the poor and the rich. And, especially, Christ's standing up for the poor as opposed to the rich.

In chapter 1 of Luke, in the Magnificat of Mary, Mary speaks up about how God has come to the aid of the poor and turned away the rich and the wealthy, or empty. We have, in chapter 12, which we haven't come to yet, a parable of a rich fool in Luke. Luke 12, 16 through 21, the rich fool says, I've got plenty laid up for the future.

I'll just eat. I'll just lay back and take my ease. And Jesus said, that man's a fool.

He's rich in the things of this world, but not rich toward God. And his soul was required of him that day. In chapter 14, in verse 12, Jesus said, When you have a feast, don't invite your rich friends.

They'll just repay you. Invite the poor. They can't repay you and you'll be repaid in the resurrection of the just.

In Luke 16, 1 through 14, we have the parable of the unjust steward who obviously mismanaged money. And, although he's commended for his shrewdness, he was not really a good man. Lazarus and the rich man in chapter 16, verses 19 through 25 or 26.

Lazarus, the rich man is, of course, a contrast between a poor man and a rich man. The poor man went to be with Abraham and the poor man, the rich man went to be in the flames. We have the rich young ruler in chapter 18, who is told to sell all he has and give to the poor.

We have Zacchaeus, a rich man, but rich by dishonest means. He's in Luke 19 and he says, I'm going to take half my goods and give them to the poor. And Jesus said, well, salvation has come to this house now.

And then we have the story about the rich people who put a lot in the temple treasury and the poor widow who just put in two mites in Luke 21, 1 through 4. And this is, of course, contrasting how the rich people didn't make much of a sacrifice and don't receive a commendation from Jesus. But the poor widow put in all she had and she gets special commendation from Jesus. So Luke has included a great number of statements

and stories and so forth that show that the poor are often more to be favored than the rich.

And this fact is also sometimes stated in the Proverbs that a man is not commended to God or beloved to God because he's rich. In fact, that can be harmful. The rich young ruler, Jesus said, it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

Here he says, woe unto you rich in verse 24. And this seems to be in contrast to poor in verse 20, which suggests that poor is an economic circumstance here. He is speaking about poverty.

Now, Matthew speaks of the poor in spirit in the Sermon on the Mount, which we have to decide, well, we don't have to decide, but we have to recognize that a decision exists between two options. Either Jesus gave two sets of beatitudes on different occasions. On one occasion, speaking to those who are physically poor, and on another occasion, pronouncing a blessing on those who are poor in spirit.

That's a possibility. It could be two different beatitudes given on different occasions, both of which are valid. Or it could be that Jesus said, blessed are you poor, but Matthew, being an apostle and inspired, clarifies that it's not simply the act of being poor that Jesus thinks is a blessing.

After all, many poor people are not good people. Many poor people are wicked people, and they don't have the kingdom of God, but rather a spiritual state that Jesus implied by the use of the word poor. I think it probable that there are two different beatitudes, really, because Jesus certainly would mean one thing entirely different when he says, blessed are the poor in spirit, then blessed are you poor in contrast to you rich.

So we won't concern ourselves with the poor in spirit beatitude, since it's not in Luke, but we will look at this. It would appear that Jesus is commending people who are poor, but not necessarily all people who are poor. He said, blessed are you poor.

Now, he's addressing his disciples, and therefore he may be saying simply this, although you are poor, you are blessed, because you have the kingdom of God. Not that being poor itself is a great blessing, but you people happen to be poor, and yet you are blessed. Most people would think you're not blessed if you're poor, but you can be.

You can be poor and blessed too. Certainly, you can be poor and cursed as well, because you might be a poor, wicked, unbeliever, a rebel against God, who also happens to be in poverty. Jesus would not teach that economic circumstances alone commend a person to God, because there are actually some rich people that loved Jesus and followed him.

It's very difficult, he said, for that to be the case, but there are some. And therefore, he's not saying all rich people, because they are rich, are cursed, and all poor people are

blessed because they're poor, as if their economic circumstances are the only factor. But rather, what we know to be true is that poor people often are the ones who have nothing to fall back on except God.

And the pious often are poor. They may be poor partly because they're persecuted, and as persecuted people, they are marginalized in the business world and in the world in general, and they sometimes miss out on opportunities that unscrupulous people will seize. And therefore, many times, the person who will not compromise ends up less profitable financially than somebody who is compromising and is dishonest.

But in any case, however the riches are gained, the possession of riches, Jesus indicates, provides something of a barrier or a hurdle to get over if you want to be a follower of his, because those who have riches have very great difficulty avoiding the tendency to trust in riches. And likewise, the person who is poor is much more inclined by nature to look to God since he has nothing else to lean upon. In the case of these disciples, their poverty may well have contributed to their openness to become followers of Jesus, to forsake all.

But they weren't extremely poor before he called them. The tax collector, Matthew, probably wasn't a poor man. Even Peter and his companions had businesses and we don't have any reason to believe they were exceptionally poor.

But they certainly became poor when they left all. They left their job. Now they had to trust Christ for their provision and they just followed him around.

And now they were certainly depriving themselves of the world's profits and so forth. And yet they were blessed because they had a profit that the world doesn't know. He said, Blessed are you poor for yours is the kingdom of God.

Now consider what James says in James 2 and verse 5. James 2.5 says, Listen, my beloved brethren, has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to those who love him? Notice God has chosen the poor to be heirs of the kingdom. Jesus said, Blessed are you poor, yours is the kingdom of God. It seems this is one of about 19 or 20 places in the book of James that I found where James alludes to the Sermon on the Mount or the Sermon on the Plain, one or the other.

The Sermon on the Mount is seemingly the text from which James expounds when he writes his epistle. In five chapters of James, I found approximately 20 allusions back to the Sermon on the Mount. And this is seemingly one of them.

James is saying that the congregation he's addressing tends to show favoritism toward the rich, the man with the gold ring and fine clothing. He gets the seats of honor in the church or the synagogue is actually the word that James uses. If there comes into your synagogue a rich man in good clothing and a gold ring, well, you usually give him the

seats of honor, but the poor man in vile clothing, you say, sit over here, sit on my footstool.

He says, you're judges of evil hearts. You are evil-hearted judges, in other words, because God has chosen the poor and not the rich. Now, chosen does not refer to some kind of Calvinistic idea of election because obviously God has, in that sense, in terms of people who are saved, there are some rich as well as poor.

But he says God has chosen the poor in the sense that there's a category of people that God has actually chosen. It may be that he's chosen them to be poor, that the circumstances in which they have come, that poverty is God's choice for them because it caused them to be rich in faith, James says. God's chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs to the kingdom.

No doubt James' commentary on this particular beatitude. The next beatitude, verse 21, blessed are you who hunger now, sounds a little bit like the beatitude in Matthew that says blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. But again, Luke's version sounds like he's simply talking about economic circumstances, people who don't have enough food.

Contrasted with verse 25, woe to you who are full, for you shall hunger. All he's saying in both of these is that your roles will be reversed. You who are hungry now will eventually be filled.

You who are filled now will eventually hunger. There is a sense in which this may be looking forward to the transition that's coming that would change all the circumstances in Israel, namely the destruction of Jerusalem in which the poor who follow Jesus and at some expense to themselves, perhaps even suffering deprivation and persecution because of it, they will eventually be filled when they escape from Jerusalem and Jerusalem is destroyed. The rich who have rejected Christ and who are full and partying now and oblivious to the danger, when the Romans come in, they'll be hungry, they'll be starving in the city because people did starve in the city, in Jerusalem when it was besieged.

He may be looking forward to the anguish they'll be experiencing now, rejecting him in favor of temporal short-term gratifications. They will have their time to weep. They'll have their time to be hungry.

That is very possible because his disciples, of course, were those who did escape that Holocaust and many of those who didn't escape it were the comfortable and the rich and the ones who didn't see any reason to follow Jesus. So he may be predicting this change of circumstances that was not so far off or he might be speaking more spiritually that you'll receive your reward in heaven or whatever. Remember Jesus said in Matthew 6 which is in Matthew's version of the Sermon on the Mount that when you do alms to the

poor, don't do it before men like the Pharisees.

The hypocrites do it to be seen by men. That's the reward they seek and that's the reward they have. They have the reward.

People see them. That's all they want. But he says when you do it, do it not to be seen so that your father will reward you and you'll have reward from your father in heaven.

So there is a reward to suffering and sacrifices that we make in this life for Christ in the next life. But it's also true that Jesus' listeners were facing a crisis not too far off which would be a total reversal of fate for most of the people who he's saying woe to here and a vindication as it were by the survival of those who have followed him. And he says and blessed are you who weep now for you shall laugh.

You weep now. We don't know why they're weeping. In Matthew it's blessed are you who mourn for you shall be comforted.

Slightly different wording, slightly different promise but obviously kind of similar. Those who mourn being comforted in Matthew probably refers to again a spiritual condition like poor in spirit and hungry for righteousness and so forth. In Matthew probably mourning is mourning over their soul, over their sin.

Repentant, grieving, maybe grieving over their sins or over the sins of society. In other words, they're like Lot who in Sodom vexed his righteous soul day by day with the unlawful deeds of the people of Sodom. He was so at odds with it that it grieved him to see it.

And no doubt when Jesus said those of you who mourn will be comforted, you mourn perhaps because you're persecuted, you mourn because of your own sin, you mourn because of the state of society, you're mourning out of sympathy with God. In Ezekiel chapter 9 when Ezekiel saw the vision of the six men with slaughter weapons in their hands that were going to go out and judge Jerusalem, he said go out and he had another guy who had an ink horn that went out. He says go out and put a mark on the foreheads of those who sigh and cry over the abominations done in the city.

That is the righteous remnant, they saw the abominations done in Israel and they sighed and they cried and they mourned over it. These are the ones who had moral sympathy with God. He said well, you'll have your comfort.

Paul says that God is the God of all comfort who comforts us in all our affliction that we may be able to comfort others. He says in 2 Corinthians chapter 1. And so, this, however, talks about weeping and later laughing. That is you are you're suffering enough to be crying about it but you'll be celebrating later on.

Once again, this doesn't necessarily have quite the same spiritual tone that the mourn

and comfort seems to in my opinion, but it does talk about a reversal of circumstances. Those who are following Jesus now and if we say now, we mean in his time. Those who were his disciples were those in Israel who were going to be having occasion to laugh later when everyone else was groaning and weeping and screaming in terror.

And then he says, Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and revile you and cast out your name as evil. Now, they exclude you and hate you. Exclusion from society because you're a Christian is one of the things Jesus tells them to anticipate.

Rejection from men is one of the hardest things to accept as a disciple of Jesus. Although we want Jesus, we also want people to like us. Especially we want some people to like us and some people that we might like to like us, won't like us if we take a stand for Christ and therefore we risk by faithfulness to him, exclusion from company we'd rather be included in.

And that's just something Jesus said you're going to have to deal with. You're going to be excluded. You're going to be reviled even.

That means, you know, slandered and criticized and so forth. Because you're a Christian. Even your name will be cast out as evil.

Because you're a Christian. You know, that's interesting. Because Christians are people who stand for what's good and righteous.

Why would anyone speak of a good Christian and cast out his name as if he's evil? And yet, that's exactly what's going on in our society at the moment. If you speak out for righteousness, you're called a hater. You're an evil person.

You're a danger to the progress of society. You need to be eliminated. You need to be reeducated.

You need to be made more sensitive or whatever. You're a bad person if you stand up for what has always been regarded as righteous. Because the society is going in another direction.

You're going to be excluded, reviled and your name cast out as evil. I'm not saying you need to just count on it. But he said, blessed are you if that happens.

Because that's exactly how the prophets were treated by their generation. He says, rejoice in that day and leap for joy. Now, here he says your reward is great in heaven.

You're not necessarily going to get a reward or a reversal of this situation here. Your entire life you may suffer persecution. But there is another life as well.

And there are rewards there to be considered and they certainly make it worthwhile. The

prophets of old were killed for the most part by their countrymen, certainly rejected and therefore you're in the company of such people when you are rejected for righteousness sake. Now the opposite of that of course is verse 26, woe to you when all men speak well of you.

Now there's nothing wrong with having people who think well of you but when all men speak well of you, you're compromising somewhere. You know if you do live a seamlessly righteous life it's not going to make sinners comfortable. Sinners are much more comfortable when it looks like everyone's like them because at one time sinners had a conscience.

Sometimes they've dulled it so much they no longer feel it but it's still probably in there and there's something that nags them at times and says you know this isn't really right but as long as everybody around them is doing the same thing they think that makes it easy. You know I don't feel like this is completely right but hey nobody does any different. I'm just doing what everyone else does.

I mean by implication God can't really judge me. He'd have to judge everyone. He couldn't you know there's no one who does different than me.

No one's better than I am. Certainly God's got a grade on a curve and yet then someone shows up who doesn't do those bad things, who is living righteously, who's following Jesus, who's uncompromising. That's not welcoming.

I mean they don't want, sinners don't welcome that. The light appears and they hate the light. They love the darkness.

They don't want their deeds exposed and the very presence of righteous people shows that not everyone does do these wicked things and suddenly the contrast is convicting it and usually people lash out and persecute those who are exposing their evil ways. So count on it he says. But when that happens, when they do throw out your name and persecute you and so forth, he says that you should leap for joy when that happens, when people persecute you.

But woe to you when no one does that, when no one finds fault with you. All right he continues then verse 27 But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you. To him who strikes you on the one cheek, offer the other also.

And from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who asks of you and from him who takes away your goods, do not ask them back. And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise.

But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them, and if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that

to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back, but love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return. And your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the highest, for he is kind to the unthankful and evil.

Therefore, be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful." Now this section is presented in Matthew 5 with only one section, or one exception, which is the statement of the Golden Rule that he states in verse 31 as found in Matthew 7, but still in the Sermon on the Mount. But Matthew 5 couches this teaching in a slightly different context. Matthew 5 has a series of sayings of Jesus where he said, you have heard that it was said, and then he quotes something that they've heard said, usually something out of the law, and it says, but I say to you, in which case he expands on what they've already heard.

Now by the way, when Jesus expands on it, he doesn't contradict it, unless he's contradicting the part that a man made up. For example, when he says, you've heard it was said you should not murder, well, he doesn't reject that. He adds to it.

He says, well, true, you shouldn't murder, but you shouldn't hate either, or be angry at your brother without a cause. He says, you've heard it was said don't commit adultery. He doesn't deny that's true, but he says you've got to go further and recognize that adultery can be something in your heart, not only physical acts.

He says that you should, the law says you've heard that you should, if you divorce your wife, give her a writing of divorcement. Well, no doubt if you've divorced your wife, you really should do that still. But he said, but you shouldn't divorce her except for the cause of fornication.

You need to make sure you don't divorce her wrongfully. He said, you've heard in the law that if you swear in, you know, in the name of God, you should keep your oaths. He says, well, you certainly should.

If you swear in the name of God, keep your oaths. Well, I think you should just do without the oaths altogether. You don't need to take oaths.

You should be honest enough that it doesn't require an oath to keep you honest. And then he says, you've heard that it was said an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. This is all in Matthew five.

And he says, I say, how about turning the other cheek? How about giving to the people who ask you? How about going a second mile? Now, by the way, the give to those who ask you is also in this section here. But the love your enemy, which is what this is about, beginning of verse 27, is in the sixth instance in Matthew five, where Jesus said, you've heard that it was said, you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say you

need to love your enemy.

Okay. Now, this is the first of those cases where Jesus contradicts what they've heard. But the thing he contradicts is something that's not in the law.

The law did say, in fact, love your neighbor, but it did not say hate your enemy. That was a rabbinic addition. They had heard it taught that they should hate their enemies, but it wasn't what God said.

And so Jesus corrected that. Notice that all the times that Jesus said, you've heard it said, but I say. The first five, everything they had heard was law, and he didn't contradict it really.

He basically said, there's a principle behind this that goes further than you're thinking. I'll tell you what that principle is and how far it really goes. But then the last case was, you've heard you should love your neighbor and hate your enemy.

Well, that's not what the law says. It says, don't hate your enemy. You need to love your enemy.

So this material we've just read is found in that connection. Now Luke puts it in a slightly different connection because he's just said earlier, blessed are you when men basically persecute you, when men do harm to you, when they exclude you, when they cast out your name as evil. Now you're blessed, but you need to know what to do about those situations.

How do you treat people like that? And so he follows up on those beatitudes and those curses with this. I say, love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you.

You're blessed if they hate you, so don't harm them back. Do good to them. They're actually, in a sense, doing something that could be regarded at one level as good.

They're putting you in the right category. You know, to be hated for righteousness sake is a flattery. If bad people think you're good enough for them to hate and enough unlike them to make them uncomfortable, that's kind of a flattery.

Oh, you must be better than you may have thought. You know, it says in Acts that when the disciples, John and Peter were beaten by the Sanhedrin and let go, it says they left there and they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus. Well, who counted them worthy of that? Well, at one level, probably God did, but the Sanhedrin did.

The Sanhedrin counted them worthy to suffer for Jesus' sake. The Sanhedrin were so anti-Jesus and they were so pro-Jesus that they were enough Christian to be an offense to the Sanhedrin. If the Sanhedrin didn't persecute them and hated Jesus, that's kind of a

letdown in a way.

I mean, if people who hate Jesus don't find anything about you to hate, then they don't count you to be enough like him to be a problem to them. Now, it doesn't mean we should desire to be hated, but we know there are people who are violently opposed to Jesus, and if they peacefully coexist with us and don't find anything offensive about us, then that should tell us something. I guess I'm not very much like Jesus because what they hate in him, they don't see it in me.

They should hate it in me too, presumably. And so, in a sense, it's a flattery. If someone, if certain bad people hate you, you say, well, it's coming from you, that's a flattery, you know, because if you liked me, that might mean I'm too much like you, you know.

You don't say that, but that's really what he's implying. They're blessing you by counting you with the prophets, by counting you with Christ, by finding the same objections to you that they find in him. So you bless those who curse you.

Pray for those who spitefully use you. He says, to him who strikes you on the one cheek, offer the other also. Now, in Matthew, it specifically says if anyone strikes you on the right cheek.

Here it just says on the one cheek. And actually, the word one is not even there. It just says to him who strikes you on the cheek.

But in Matthew, it's more specific. He strikes you on the right cheek, and that's important because the right cheek is when you're facing a person, this cheek that corresponds to his left hand. Now, if a man is going to attack you to try to really hurt you, the assumption in Scripture is most people, the vast majority, are right-handed.

So if a man's going to want to take you out, his right hand is going to be what strikes you. But if he's facing you, that right hand is going to hit you on the left cheek. Therefore, when Jesus says if he strikes you on the right cheek, he's picturing a situation where someone's striking you with the back of their hand.

If I'm facing you and I strike you with my right hand and it hits your right cheek, I have to do so with the back of my hand. So this is a reference more to an insult than an injury. This is a matter of not so much avoiding the instinct of self-preservation as avoiding the instinct of saving your dignity.

If someone insults you, those are fighting words, well, not for you. Let them insult you. Let them slap you across the face.

To a Jew, that's extremely insulting to touch a man's face at all, to slap it more so. So this is a picture of a person who hates you and he wants to insult you and slaps you across the face. It may hurt a little bit, but it's not going to injure you.

But it still injures your pride. But Jesus is saying here, swallow your pride, accept the insult, and don't retaliate. And he says, and from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold your tunic either.

This is no doubt a hyperbole, but he's saying, in Matthew, it says if a man takes you to court to get your cloak, give him your tunic too. Instead of fighting it out in court, give him what he wants. Give him more than what he wants.

There would be times when you would literally probably do this, but at times it's not necessarily literal. The idea is you should be more concerned about him and his claims than you are on you and your self-claims. You're supposed to put others ahead of yourself, or at least on your level.

So if he really wants that cloak, maybe he needs more than that. Give him your tunic as well. Put his interests above your own.

Give to everyone who asks you. Now this is truly a hyperbole because it would be wrong to give to everyone who asks you. For one thing, if you listen to Christian radio all day, you'd go broke before the day is over because everyone's going to be asking you for money.

But on the other hand, there are beggars that you shouldn't give to in all likelihood. And certainly, parents shouldn't give everything to their kids that they ask for. That would not be good for them.

Paul himself said, there are those who don't work and should not eat. And therefore, if somebody's refusing to work, giving them money would be a violation. So when Jesus says, give to everyone who asks you, he's not really being absolutely literal.

Every time someone asks you, you have to give them something. But rather, you should give indiscriminately. You shouldn't only give to your friends.

You shouldn't only give to people you like. You should give to anybody. Let's talk about loving your enemies as well as your friends.

If your enemy needs something, don't withhold it because he's your enemy. You might readily give something to your children or to your friends, but he's your enemy. You think, I don't think I'm going to help him.

No, give to everyone indiscriminately. He doesn't mean every individual case because there would be cases when you'd even not want to give to your children or your friends. But rather, don't be prejudiced against certain people in terms of your showing love and practical help to them when they have needs.

And from him who takes away your goods, do not ask them back. I believe that all of

these are hyperbole, frankly. I mean, when he said, if someone slaps you on one cheek, turn the other to him.

Well, there's other things you can do. You can walk away. You can, you know, you can talk to him.

You can, there's, there's different things you can do. Just to simply say, here, hit this one too, doesn't necessarily mean, I mean, to follow to the letter, you'd have to literally hand him the other cheek and say, take that one as well. Now, there's nothing wrong with doing that.

I've only been hit one time and it wasn't a slap. It was a punch, but I, I knew nothing to do except to turn the other cheek. And I did, and I didn't get hit again, fortunately, but I literally turned the other cheek because that's what Jesus said.

But I could certainly see situations where somebody is hurling insults at you or even planning to attack you and hurt you where walking away is the right thing to do. Turn those other cheeks to him. Other times you could, you know, speak peaceably to them or whatever.

There's different things you can do. Jesus is simply presenting a model of a different kind of response to people who hate you and who do wrong to you and who want stuff from you and whom you might be otherwise inclined to neglect in your charity, but don't neglect them in your charity because they're your enemies. Okay.

And he says, but he says, as men want, as you, as you want men to do to you, verse 31, you also do to them. Likewise, in Matthew 7, 12, Jesus gave the same rule and he followed by saying, for this is all the law and the prophets. It's another way of saying, love your neighbors.

You love yourself. What you want them doing to you, you do it to them. And he says, but if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.

And if you do good only to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. Now, this corresponds with something near the end of Matthew 5, where Jesus is, even the publicans do that.

If you greet somebody who's your friend, well, you're doing nothing more than publicans do. If you show kindness to somebody who's one of your friends, you're even the worst of people. The publicans do that.

You need to go beyond that. You need to love people who aren't your friends and so

forth. And that's what Jesus is saying here.

He says, but love your enemies. Do good and lend, hoping for nothing in return, and your reward will be great. And you will be the sons of the highest, for he is kind to the unthankful and the evil.

Therefore, be merciful, just as your father also is merciful. Now, this last line also is the end of this discussion in Matthew 5, except the last line in Matthew 5 says, be perfect as your father in heaven is perfect. And this line in Matthew has been very difficult for people because they say, Jesus is presenting an impossible standard.

We can't be perfect like God is perfect. Some have even used that as an excuse for saying, we're not really supposed to keep the seraphim out. It presents an impossibly high standard.

What Jesus is doing by giving this standard is simply letting us know that we can't be obedient at God's level of requirement. And so we're supposed to despair of ever being obedient and just count on the grace of God. This line, be perfect as your father in heaven is perfect, at the end of Matthew 5, gives them reason to suggest, okay, I get it.

These rules Jesus has given, they're just not realistic. He's making us compare ourselves with God and we compare unfavorably with God and can't do any better. So we must have to, he's teaching us to rely on grace, not on words.

This is a very common explanation of the Sermon on the Mount by certain evangelicals, which is a huge mistake because Jesus makes it clear he does expect them to do what he says in the Sermon on the Mount. At the end of the sermon, he says, anyone who hears these sayings of mine and does not do them is like a foolish man who builds his house on sand. And a man who hears these words of mine and does do them is like a wise man.

He expects them to be done. He expects this to be done. But how can you be perfect as your father in heaven is perfect? Well, this is where Luke helps us out.

Luke paraphrases that, be merciful as your heavenly father is merciful. Now, how is that relevant? How is that the same thing? Well, both statements are made at the end of this discussion about don't just be kind to your friends, be kind even to your enemies because God does that. In Matthew, he says your heavenly father causes the sun to rise on the evil and the good and he causes the rain to fall on the just and the unjust.

That is, God is indiscriminately kind. And he says that here too. Your father is kind to the unthankful and the evil.

Obviously, he means in addition to others. That is to say, God is not restrictive in his love for people. He's comprehensive.

The word perfect in Matthew would speak of being comprehensive or thorough, complete. Be complete in your love, not narrow in your love. Be like your father is.

Be merciful as he is. Be perfect. That is comprehensive in your mercy and your love, not just to those that are your friends.

The publicans do that. You need to be different from them. Don't be like the publicans.

Be like your father in heaven. Perfect, complete, thorough, unrestricted in his love. He loves even the wicked and the unjust.

He sends the rain and the sun on them. He's kind to the unthankful and the evil. So what Jesus is saying is the publicans and sinners, they are thankful and kind to their friends, but not to their enemies.

God is kind and loving to all. So I'm telling you to be like him. And that's not impossible.

It's difficult. It might even be impossible without the Spirit of God, but we don't live without the Spirit of God. We're supposed to be manifesting the fruit of the Spirit, which includes love, which is not restricted to only our friends.

It's supernatural. Now, I will make a comment on this one line in verse 35, lend, hoping for nothing in return. Does that mean we should never be paid back for what we lend to people? Now, there is a difference between lending and giving, but it makes it sound like here lending and giving are the same thing.

You give someone a gift, you don't expect it back. But you lend normally, you do expect it back, and that's the difference between lending and a gift. So why would you lend and not expect anything in return? I think what he's saying is assuming the person who's borrowing is a needy person.

Almost all lending was done to poor people in those days. They didn't have banks that would capitalize loans for businesses and things like that. That's what most lending is in this society.

But lending was done to a poor person who was in desperate need and said, can you give me a break here? I'll pay you back. I'll be glad. I'll pay you back Thursday for a hamburger today.

Well, you say, I'll tell you what, I'll buy you the hamburger. If you can pay me back, that's fine. If you can't, that's fine too.

Now, in your mind, you're releasing it because you know he may not be able to pay you back and you're not going to impose that burden on him. If he's that poor, he may need to borrow again Thursday instead of pay you back Thursday. You never know.

His needs may go on and on. You don't come bearing down and say, you owe me. You lend it and you release your claim on it.

It's like a gift, but you're not saying... Here's the thing. Some people would rather lend and pay back than receive a gift. There's more dignity in it.

There's more dignity in saying, you know, I'm just a little short right now, but I can handle this. If you just give me a couple of days, I'll pay you back. And there's some dignity in saying, you know, I'm not a beggar here.

I'm just getting a little help up here for a few days and I'm going to handle it. I'm responsible. Receiving charity is more humbling.

And so a lot of times, instead of giving charity, you can say, here's a loan. But in your heart, it's charity. In your heart, if he never repays it, you're not going to worry about it.

You're not going to burden him with it. But he, on the receiving end, should count himself responsible to pay. You see, if you borrow money from another Christian, you don't say, oh, he's got to expect nothing in return, so I won't pay him back.

No, your obligation as the borrower is different than his as the lender. As a borrower, you should be scrupulous about paying all your debts because you said you would and Christians should do what they say they're going to do. When you loan someone, you take a loan out, you are promising to repay.

Now, if you can't repay, then that person may wish to show charity to you. But it should be on your heart, I'm going to pay because I said I would. I'm not going to lie.

I'm not going to default on this. So the person who receives should always be committed to repaying. But the person who lends has to be prepared not to be repaid and not to make an issue of it.

Of course, this is talking about helping the poor. Now, if you're helping someone buy a new car or something like that or some luxury, those would be different principles involved because it's not the situation Jesus is really envisaging or anyone in his day would be envisaging. Different principles there, no doubt.

Though still, if it comes down to it, you might have to just forgive the loan. Okay, verse 37, judge not and you shall not be judged. Condemn not and you shall not be condemned.

Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and it will be given to you. Good measure, press down, shaken together and running over will be put into your bosom.

For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you. Now, this teaching is given at the beginning of Matthew 7 with a little less detail. Just the judge not

that you be not judged because the same measure you use will be measured back to you. This give and it'll be given to you, forgive and you'll be forgiven.

These are really pretty much expanding on the same principle in some slightly different situations. The way you treat other people, you can expect to be reciprocated that way. If not by them, then by God.

If you give, they'll give back to you, although the one who you give to might not do so. But God will give back to you. God will repay you.

This is what Luke says, or Jesus says in Luke 14, a little later on here. In Luke 14, at this parable or this teaching, he gives about the verse in 12, Luke 14, 12. Then he also said to them who invited him, when you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives and your rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back and you be repaid.

Don't look to them to repay you for your hospitality. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and you'll be blessed because they cannot repay you. For you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.

So if you give to the poor, they can't repay you. And that's good. That's because if they do, you've been repaid.

You go on to the judgment and nothing owed to you. If you do generous things to people and they don't repay you, then God counts that as his debt and he'll repay you at the resurrection. Much better to receive repayment from God.

No doubt it comes with interest. And so give and it'll be given to you. Forgive and you'll be forgiven.

Many places in Jesus' teaching make that point. But what of this judge not, that you be not judged? This is certainly the most misunderstood scripture by unbelievers, at least, because every time you say that something is wrong that they're doing, they say, judge not, that you be not judged. You Christians aren't supposed to judge.

Well, wait a minute. The Bible commands us to judge in many places. We're told to judge.

In fact, in John's gospel, I believe it's in chapter 7, if I'm not mistaken. Yeah, John 7, 24, Jesus said, do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment. There's two places Jesus says do not judge.

One of them is in the Sermon on the Mount. The other is here. Do not judge according to appearance.

But then he says, but judge righteous judgment. There's as much a command to judge

as there is a command not to judge. There's different kinds of judgment.

Some are forbidden, not others. Some forms of judgment are forbidden. Some are commanded.

We're obliged to judge some things righteously. So what kind is forbidden? Well, surface judgment, judging by appearances, is a mistake because often what appears to be the case has a deeper truth behind it in what's going on, what the motivations are. There's circumstances you don't know about.

Don't make snap judgments about things just from what you've seen. But you should make righteous judgments. And there's many places in the Bible, a bunch of them in 1 Corinthians, that tell us we should judge.

He that is spiritual judges all things, Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2. He says, I speak to you as to wise men. Judge what I say. He says, let the prophets speak two or three and let the others judge.

And many other places where we're told to judge. So what does judge not that you be not judged mean? Well, it's obvious in the context. He says the measure you use will be measured back to you.

You don't want to judge using a measure that would condemn you if it was measured back to you. If you say, well, it's wrong, you know, to go to movies and then you go to movies. Well, then the same standard using judge others condemns you.

In Matthew's version, after Jesus says that, judge not that you be not judged, he says, if your brother has a speck in his eye and you say, let me remove that speck from your eye, but you have a beam in your own eye, you're a hypocrite. This is a hypocritical judgment where you're acting like you're better than them and you're really worse than them. You're judging them by a standard that if they judge you by that standard, you'd be in bad shape.

But he does say in Matthew 7, first remove the beam from your eye and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. There is a time when you can be useful in assessing and critiquing someone else's behavior and judging them profitably. Constructively, but only after you get the beam out of your own eye.

Jesus assumed that is possible. He said, get it out of your eye, then you can see clearly. So Jesus is not saying you should never judge, but you should not judge in a way that is so hypocritical based upon a standard that would condemn you.

That's exactly what he's saying in both places here. Verse 39, and he spoke a parable to them. Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into the ditch? A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.

And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, brother, let me remove the speck that is in your eye, when you yourself do not see the plank that is in your own eye? Hypocrite, first remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck that is in your brother's eye. This business of moving the speck and so forth is introduced by the statement, how can the blind lead the blind? If you are judging someone, you're presumably telling them which way they should be going and which way they shouldn't be going. You're not supposed to do that, you're supposed to do this.

You're providing guidance, but if you've got a beam in your eye, you're as blind as they are. And so it's good to give guidance to people. It's good to tell them what's right and what's wrong if you happen to get it right, if you're not blind yourself.

If you're not blind to your own defects, then you are in a position to give guidance to other people. Verse 43, for a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit.

For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from bramble bush. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good, and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.

Now there is something like this in Matthew 7, but this exact teaching is found in Matthew 12. In Matthew 7, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, Beware of false prophets, which come to you dressed as sheep, but they are inwardly ravening wolves. You will know them by their fruits.

He says a good tree can't produce bad fruit, a bad tree can't produce good fruit. So he gives this in the context of recognizing a true from a false prophet, the fruit they produce. Here he says nothing about true and false prophets, but he does indicate there is a correct way to judge.

You can judge a tree by its fruit. So his statement, judge not, certainly is not absolute. There's other cases you have to judge.

In fact, in the parallel in Matthew 7, he goes on to say, Don't give what is holy to dogs, or cast your pearls before swine. Well, certainly observing that requires you make some judgments. Who's a pig? Who's a dog? I have to make a decision about that before I can decide if I'm supposed to cast my pearls before them.

Many judgments have to be made, and many of them are even implied in the same chapter, Matthew 7, that begins with judge not, that you be not judged. Certainly to take that judge not in an absolute sense is to make a mistake. Now verse 46, But why do you call me Lord, Lord, and you do not do the things which I say? Now, this statement is sort

of a shortened version of a statement that falls in the same place at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus said, Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that does the will of my Father in heaven.

We have the same elements, saying, Lord, Lord, but not doing what the Father's will is, which here Jesus identifies as what he says. What he says is what the Father's will is. Jesus goes on there to talk about those who say, Lord, we cast out demons and propheesy, and so forth in Matthew.

Here, that part is left out. But why do you call me Lord, Lord? Doesn't Lord mean owner? Doesn't Lord mean somebody who owns slaves? Doesn't my calling him Lord mean I'm a slave? If I'm not a slave, why do I call him Lord? And if I am a slave, why aren't I obeying him? It's really quite simple. There's no reason to call someone Lord unless you're saying, I'm your slave.

And if you're saying, I'm your slave, then there's no reason not to obey. Why do you say, Lord, Lord, and you don't obey? It's like a disconnect. And yet, how many Christians don't even think it their obligation to obey Jesus.

They think they're saved without any kind of obedience on their part. It's just a matter of grace through faith, and there's no good works involved, as far as they're concerned. There's no obedience required.

They think obedience is salvation by works. No, obedience is simply having a Lord. And salvation is from having a Lord.

You have a Lord, you have salvation. Paul said in Romans 10, 9, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you'll be saved. You are saved when you have a Lord.

You're not saved until you do. But if you say, Lord, Lord, then you ought to be obeying, too. So obviously, obedience to Jesus is not optional.

And he can't even imagine why people would even use the term Lord in speaking to him if they're not seeing that as obliging them to be obedient to what he says. Whoever comes to me and hears my sayings and does them, obeys them, I will show you whom he's like. He's like a man building a house who dug deep and laid the foundation on a rock.

And when the flood arose and the stream beat vehemently against that house and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. But he who heard and did nothing, heard what? Heard Jesus' teachings here. And did nothing, that means he didn't do it, is like a man who built his house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently and immediately it fell.

And the ruin of that house was great. Now, the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7 ends with this same, I guess we could call it a parable. It's more like a metaphor or analogy.

But he talks about people who've heard his words, but ignore them, don't do them. And those who hear his words and do do them. Again, those who think that the Sermon on the Mount is not intended to be obeyed, but it's simply intended to convey the idea that we can't obey and we must therefore be saved by grace instead, are not paying attention.

Jesus, why do you call me Lord and you don't do what I say? Oh, Lord, I thought you're trying to tell us we can't do what you say. I thought that was the whole point of the sermon. No, that's not the point of this sermon.

The point of the sermon is I am your Lord and you're supposed to do these things. And if you don't do them, you're a fool. You might as well build houses on sand without foundations.

If you are wise and want to build a house that lasts, you'll hear and do what I say, namely the things he says in this sermon. So it's clear that obedience is expected and obedience is wise. Jesus isn't legalistic, just handing out arbitrary rules just to see if you'll obey or not.

He's telling you how to live in harmony with reality. And God is the principal reality. The principal reality of which most people on earth are oblivious is God.

And if you're going to live in harmony with reality, you better live in harmony with God and his teachings tell you how to do that. What is it God wants people to do? What he designed people to do? What he can approve and what he can't approve. Now, if a man builds his house on sand, he's not living in touch with reality.

There are streams, storms, floods. Anyone who builds a house, unless he's a very great fool, realizes that there's got to be something more solid than sand to build it on. And yet, if someone did that, he'd show himself to be very unwise indeed.

And so also anyone who lives his life neglecting what Jesus said is as much out of touch with reality, the reality of God, as a man is out of touch with the realities of nature and weather and house construction. The man who builds his house on a rock is simply observing the laws of physics, the laws of nature, the way weather works, the way construction works. They're just basically following reality and not defying reality.

So a person who hears what Jesus says and doesn't do them is defying reality. The principal reality is there's a God and the upshot of that, as Matthew brings out more than Luke in this case, is there's a judgment from God. In fact, the context of Matthew giving this particular story may suggest that the falling of the house or the standing of the house has to do with what takes place to the individual at the day of judgment.

It says in Psalm 2 that the wicked will not stand in the judgment. They will be in the judgment, they won't stand, they'll fall. Likewise, in the judgment of the last day, those who follow Christ will stand.

Those who don't will fall. Now, in this case, it might even be referring to a more near-term flood and storm. Once again, AD 70 was upon them and it was going to be a storm in a big way and it was going to challenge each person's life.

Some would fall under the condemnation of God's wrath, others would survive that. And the difference between those that would stand and those that would fall is the difference between those who were his disciples and who obeyed his words and those who were not. So, this is a rather large, for Luke, this is a fairly large specimen of Jesus' teaching.

There are actually larger ones in Luke. And again, I cannot resolve the problem of whether this is the same sermon as the Sermon on the Mount or a different one. It hardly matters.

It's a true sermon and whether it corresponds with another one or it stands alone, its teaching is still binding upon those who would be disciples of Jesus. And so, we come to the end of this session.