

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, December 2, 2020 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study



LIVING A LIFE OF INTEGRITY
Matthew 5:33-48

READ: Matthew 5:33-48

³³ “Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.’ ³⁴ But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne; ³⁵ nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. ³⁶ Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. ³⁷ But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one. ³⁸ “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ ³⁹ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. ⁴⁰ If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. ⁴¹ And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. ⁴² Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away. ⁴³ “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, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father 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 have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? ⁴⁸ Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

How can a genuine believer in Jesus Christ today... a true Christian, truly have an impact on this tough, hard world we live in? What possible influence could the people described in Scripture as “poor in spirit,” “meek,” “humble,” “thirsty,” “mourners,” “merciful,” “persecuted” (see the Beatitudes) exert in a society overrun with competitive, aggressive, stubborn, often hostile individual?

“Before you can impact the life of another for Christ, you must have been impacted by Christ in a personal and life-changing way” You can’t be a world changer if your world hasn’t been changed by Him to start with. Jesus’ “Sermon on the Mount” actually teaches us how we may impact our world and the lives of those around us for Christ. We have been adding these important keys to impacting your world from Jesus’s sermon. Let’s review where we’ve been and add another one in our study as we proceed through Jesus’ “Sermon on the Mount.” Here are 5 important keys to impacting your world...

6 Important Keys to Impacting Your World: (From the Sermon on the Mount)

1. To impact your world for Christ you must **KNOW CHRIST PERSONALLY** = *Matthew 5:1-12, “The Beatitudes”*
2. To impact your world for Christ you must **REFLECT CHRIST** to the **WORLD** (others) = *Matthew 5:13-16, “Salt and Light”*
3. To impact your world for Christ you must **LEARN** to **LIVE** by the **WORD** of God daily = *Matthew 5:17-21, “Fulfilling and Living by the Word”*
4. To impact your world for Christ you must **RIGHTLY RELATE** to **OTHERS** = *Matthew 5:22ff*
5. To impact your world for Christ you must **GUARD YOUR HEART** = *Matthew 5:27-30*
6. To impact your world for Christ you must **BUILD STRONG CHRIST- CENTERED MARRIAGES AND HOMES** = *Matthew 5:31-32*
7. To impact your world for Christ you must **LIVE A LIFE OF INTEGRITY** = *Matthew 5:33-48*

That last stated key for impacting your world is where we are going to be in this study. As you will discover in Scripture, Jesus did not share the skepticism of some who may have felt like His meek and humble follower could not possible impact this tough cruel world. Rather, He emphasized the reverse. He declared that His true followers... genuine Christian were sources of indispensable ingredients that preserve and illumine a planet looking for hope, peace, and truly meaningful life... we truly can make a difference! But how? That has been the direction of this study on the Sermon on the Mount, and certainly everything we have looked at up to this point is part of the believers ability to impact their world, but if we could just get to the heart of the matter... and perhaps the problem with our impact, it may be that the reason we fail to have the impact on our world like we ought is because of the inconsistencies that often exist in our own Christian walk. We profess it, but do we really live it. The “integrity” of the life of a believer/Christian couldn’t be more important.

WHAT JESUS CONFRONTED IN THE LIVES OF THE RELIGIOUS OF HIS DAY?

Jesus said in Matthew 5:20, “²⁰ For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.”

We are continuing in our study on the Sermon on the Mount, and this evening we continue with a section of Jesus’ sermon where He is continuing to teach us particularly what it looks like for our “righteousness to exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees” (v.20). In the Beatitudes Jesus taught us about a Christian’s character. In the salt and light section Jesus taught us about a Christian’s influence. And now we are in a section where Jesus taught us about a Christian’s righteousness... and Jesus has been giving us these six contrasts in confronting the lives of the religious leaders of his day up against what He calls us to as believers in this

“righteousness” that exceeds their self-declared “self-righteousness.” Here is our chart reminding us of these “six contrasts” in Matthew 5:21-48...

THE SIX CONTRASTS

“You have heard it said... but I say to you!”

THE COMMAND	THE PRINCIPLE/INTENT
1) Do not murder	Do not even allow anger in your heart
2) Do not commit adultery	Do not even allow wrongful lust in your heart
3) Let divorce be done legally	Do not divorce except for sexual immorality
4) Do not swear falsely	Let you “yes” be “yes” and your “no” be “no”
5) Equal retribution is okay	Go the extra mile for your adversary
6) Love your neighbor and hate your enemy	Love your enemy and pray for them

But this isn’t the only place in Scripture where Jesus pointed out the gross inconsistencies of these who claimed to be “religious” yet weren’t living it, and therefore their lives were no only not having the impact they should have, but were in fact an affront to God and a turn off to others. Later in Matthew’s gospel, Jesus would confront this inconstancy with some pretty harsh words. Turn to Matthew, chapter 23 with me and notice Jesus words here... pay particular attention to Jesus words condemning what He observed in their lives. These just may give us a clue to that a lack of integrity looks like (as a warning for our own lives)

READ: Matthew 23:1-7 Boiled down, Jesus was confronting the lack of integrity in their faith-life and a lack of consistency on the part of these who professed to follow God...

3 Marks of a Life that Lacks Integrity and Consistency: (according to Matthew 23:1-7

1. A life that doesn’t practice what it preaches lacks integrity
2. A life that lack genuine compassion lacks integrity
3. A life that seek only the praise of men lacks integrity

WHAT JESUS CALLS FOR IN THE LIVES OF GENUINE BELIEVERS TODAY DAY?

➡ The highly and esteemed Hindu leader, **Mahatma Gandhi** was famous for having said about the lives of believers and Christianity, **“I like your Christ, I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ.”**

What do you think Gandhi was saying? Is he right or wrong? Why? How would you respond? What is the problem, do you think? How may be remedy this?

➡ Here is another important quote from Christian author/minister/leader **Brennan Manning** (Ragmuffin Gospel). Folks this is a pretty powerful quote. Brennan Manning said, **“The greatest single cause of atheism in the world today is Christians, who acknowledge Jesus with their lips and walk out the door, and deny Him by their lifestyle. That is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable.”**

What do you think Brennan Manning is saying here? Is he right or wrong? Why? How would you respond? What is the problem, do you think? How may be remedy this?

These statements can't help but give us pause in our own lives... to examine ourselves. It should cause us to take a long look at our own life and see the ways in which we may fall short of our word... or what we profess. How can I grow to be better? Do I live a life of integrity?

It made me think of something I read recently in **1 Chronicles 29:17 (NIV) **I've been reading in 1&2 Chronicles...I'm in 2 Chronicles now 1 Chronicles 29:17 (NIV), "I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things I have given willingly and with honest intent. And now I have seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you."***

If integrity pleases God, then it must be something He wants for our lives. Well what is "integrity"... what does that look like in our lives?

It is what Jesus is speaking too in the remainder of chapter 5 of Matthew in His "Sermon on the Mount" and it has a lot to do with our ability to impact our world (if those two quotes I shared say anything, it is that the integrity of our lives as believers matters much, if we hope to have an impact on the world we live in and those around us.

What is integrity?

I was interested to see what our modern-day culture has to say about the topic, so I turned to my ever-present assistant, Google. In an article on the true meaning of integrity listed in the Huffington Post, integrity is defined as **"the concept of consistency of actions, values, methods, measures, principles, expectations, and outcomes. In ethics, integrity is regarded as the honesty and truthfulness or accuracy of one's actions."**

I happen to agree with Huffington (something I rarely do is agree with anything in Huffington Post) and like this definition, especially as it points to accuracy of one's actions vs. one's words.

A good definition of "integrity" – "The concept of consistency of actions, values, methods, measures, principles, expectations, and outcomes. In ethics, integrity is regarded as the honesty and truthfulness or accuracy of one's actions." –Huffington Post

Very close to "integrity" is the word "character." We often speak of Christian having "character"... not necessarily being "a character" which might indicate more of a personality trait like "ornerness", but rather Christians are to exhibit character in their behavior and actions, their attitudes and spirit... called Christian character.

➡ **Dwight L Moody** once said, **"Character is what you are in the dark."**

What do you think Brennan Manning is saying here? Is he right or wrong? Why? How would you respond? What is the problem, do you think? How may be remedy this?

You cannot see your morals, your character, or integrity, these are only shown as your values and in you live your life...

But, what does God say about integrity? Let me give you three good Bible verses/passages that speak on “integrity” and let’s see if we can begin to grasp something of what God says... thinks about... desires of in the area of “integrity”... just a little hint – this may clue you a bit to what Jesus, Himself, has to say on the subject in our passage in Matthew 5:33-48

3 Important Bible Verses on Integrity:

- (1) **Proverbs 11:3 (NIV)** – The wise writer of Proverbs said, ***“The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity.”*** What is he telling us about the importance of integrity in a life and the absence of it?
- (2) **Luke 16:10 (NIV)** – Jesus, Himself said in Luke 16:10, ***“Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.”*** What does this say to you as a believer about integrity? What do you think Jesus meant by “trust with much?” What might He be referring to and how far does this extend?
- (3) **2 Corinthians 8:21 (NIV)** – The Apostle Paul wrote, ***“For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of man.”*** What was Paul telling us about his life and why do you think that is so important? IMPACT

3 Implications of these verses for our lives:

- (1) If we are destroyed by our “duplicity” or deceitfulness, then living a life of consistency and honesty will **protect us**.
- (2) If we can be trusted with a little, God will bless us with the opportunities for **increased blessings**.
- (3) If we strive to keep our word and do what is right, then people will see us working for God and not man; they will see the **light of Christ** in our **lives**.

WHAT JESUS CALLS BELIEVERS TO IN THE GREATEST SERMON EVERY PREACHED?

Now with that foundation laid from God’s Word on what God thinks and says and demands from the lives of believers, up again what God in the flesh saw when He came to earth and lived among us and observed the lives of those who claimed to be religious and said to us “your righteousness needs to exceed theirs” if you are going to be all I called you to be and impact your world for my kingdom... here it is again in our passage in Matthew 5:33-48, ³³ ***“Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.’³⁴ But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne;³⁵ nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.³⁶ Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black.³⁷ But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.³⁸ “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’³⁹ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.⁴⁰ If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also.⁴¹ And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.⁴² Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.⁴³ “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, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute***

you, ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father 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 have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? ⁴⁸ Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.”

Again, Jesus is still in these “you have heard it said, but I say to you” statements, where he has talked purity and the home and family, fidelity in the home, and those relationship closest to us, but now he closes out these statements but speaking of how we relate particular to other... those on the outside... those who need to see Jesus/God... a God who loves them and cares for them and desire to draw them to Himself. Our job is to live lives that would make other want to know God and come to him... lives of integrity and his character that reflect who God is and the difference He has made in our lives. And Jesus points out what that looks like with these last three statements.

In this text, Jesus calls us to a new and different way of living! Jesus is calling his followers to be people of integrity. Again the word **integrity**, by the way, means: "wholeness" or "consistency." Some synonyms for integrity would be: credibility, character, fidelity, honesty, reliability, and morality. **A person with integrity is consistent in what he says and what he does.** His word is his bond. Having integrity means in your life there is no gap between the way things are and the way things ought to be. It has to do with how you treat and respect other... loving other, even the hard to love, those we disagree with and who may disagree with us, things like turning the other cheeks, and giving till it hurts, loving even our enemies. These are all supernatural things that must be done with something beyond ourselves, but Jesus in contrasting the lives of the religious leaders of his day, show us what that consists of in three short sections.... what Christian and living a life in integrity looks like. The person of integrity keeps his word even when it cost them greatly to do so.

3 Simple Truths:

- (1) Your word is trustworthy and dependable**
- (2) Your giving and forgiving is sacrificial and self-less**
- (3) Your love is far-reaching and unconditional**

Let's look at each of these briefly. Again, Jesus is showing us what a life of integrity, Christ-like character really looks like and if you desire to live a life of integrity that reflect Christ impacts our world for His Kingdom you must be this kind of person.

Here are three keys to being that kind of person and living this live of integrity:

3 Keys to Being the Kind of Person that Lives a Life of Integrity that Impacts Your World for Christ:

- 1. Be a person who speaks the truth to others (5:33-37)** – Let your “yes” be “yes” and your “no” be “no.” This text in Matthew calls us to a radical honesty. Today we live in a world of “alternative facts.” The idea that a man’s word is his bond is quaint, but it is not realistic. This reality is not new. It was alive and well in Jesus’ day. Unfortunately, the religious

teachers and spiritual guides assisted the people in their duplicity and hedging of the truth. They had developed a rather elaborate system of oaths.

2 Reasons you should speak truth to others:

- (1) **Everything you say is witnessed by God (vv.33-36)**
- (2) **Everything you says should be true and good (v.37)**

2. **Be a person who servers other sacrificially (5:38-42)** - Our words and our actions often go together. What we say and what we do are often traveling companions in life's journey. Perhaps no passage of Scripture makes this more clear than **Proverbs 6:17-19** where the Bible weaves together in a tragic tapestry the evils we speak and the evils we do. There God's Word says, *"The Lord hates six things; in fact, seven are detestable to him: arrogant eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that plots wicked schemes, feet eager to run to evil, a lying witness who gives false testimony, and one who stirs up trouble among believers."* Words and actions are a duet seldom separated. Both are before the constant gaze of our all-seeing, all-knowing God. Having dealt with the importance of our words in verses 33-37, Jesus moves to address the importance of our actions in the remainder of chapter 5. The issue of retaliation is the concern of verses 38-42. There are 5 principles our Lord puts before us to guide what we do as citizens of His kingdom called to serve others.

5 Principles to Guide us in Serving Others Sacrificially:

- (1) **Don't retaliate against evil with violent aggression (v.38)**
- (2) **If someone slaps you, turn the other cheek (v.39)**
- (3) **Where demands abound, let grace abound even more (v.40)**
- (4) **Always be willing to go the extra mile (v.41)**
- (5) **Be ready to help those in need (v.42)**

3. **Be a person who seeks to love your enemies (5:43-48)** - Returning evil for good is satanic. Returning good for good is simply human. Returning good for evil, now that is divine! That is certainly the perspective of the Word of God and our Lord. Matthew 5:43-48 contains the 6th and final contrast in the Sermon on the Mount that began on up in verse 21. They inform us of the kind of righteousness that supernaturally flows from the poor in spirit (5:3), the meek (5:5), the merciful (5:7) and the pure in heart (5:8). It is a righteousness that supernaturally emerges from within citizens of the Kingdom of God who are the salt of the earth and the light of the world (5:13-16), citizens who are on the way to being perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect (5:48). All of this is a work of divine grace not human effort. This especially becomes evident when responding to the command to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute you (5:44). Grant Osborne is quite helpful in laying a foundation for our study of these six verses. He writes, *"Love for neighbor was the epitome of Old Testament ethics (see Matt. 22:39-40), but Jesus deepens that in a startling way. We are to love our neighbors even when they are hostile and do evil acts against us. Love for enemies, moreover, is not restricted to feelings of benevolence but meant to be shown in acts of kindness. The model for this difficult activity is nothing less than God himself, our Father. Like obedient children we must emulate our Father and act toward evil people as he does. If God can be merciful to wicked as well as good people, so must we"* (Matthew, ZECNT, 214). We will walk through our text making four overarching observations on what is,

without question, one of the most difficult commands in all of the Bible to obey. Honesty here is at a premium. To truly love my enemy and persecutor is not human. It really is divine.

➡ Martin Luther King, Jr. was on to something when he said, ***“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”***

4 Observations on Loving Others, Including Your Enemies:

(1) Loving your enemies shows others that **God is our Father** (vv.43-44)

(2) Loving others without discrimination is to **act like God our Father** (v.45)

(3) Loving others without discrimination sets us apart from those who **do not know God as Father** (vv.46-47)

(4) Loving our enemies conforms us to the **likeness of God our Father** (v.48)

CONCLUSION

Loving our enemies is to treat others like Jesus has treated us. As Paul says in **Romans 5:8**, ***“While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*** Loving our enemies is to treat others like the Father has treated us. Paul adds in **Romans 5:10**, ***“while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son.”***

➡ Andy Davis says, ***“When we love our enemies we will imitate our heavenly Father and grow towards the perfection that salvation in Christ will eventually complete in us (Matt. 5:48)”*** [Revitalize, 98]. Then he wisely, and correctly I believe, connects loving our enemies to humility and provides ten good reasons we should be humble towards our opponents. There is excellent food for thought here as we conclude this study.

Why Be Humble toward Opponents? Ten Good Reasons

- 1) Because God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble (1 Pet. 5:5).
- 2) Because we are sinners too (1 Cor. 4:7).
- 3) Because God is motivated to fight for those who do not fight for themselves (1 Pet. 2:23)
- 4) Because Paul was willing to trade his salvation to rescue his enemies (Rom. 9:1- 4).
- 5) You cannot tell the wheat from the weeds (Matt. 13:29).
- 6) You are not the issue; God’s glory is (1 Cor. 10:31).
- 7) A humble response to attacks will motivate church members to join you (Rom. 12:9-21).
- 8) Your enemies may be right...about something (Ps. 139:23-24).
- 9) Humility will adorn the gospel for outsiders to see (Matt. 5:16).
- 10) Suffering well grows you in Christlikeness (Rom. 5:3).

Practical Advice

- 1) Make it a point to obey Jesus’s command to pray for those who oppose and insult you. Pray for them by name.
- 2) Bring all criticisms back to God in prayer. Where you are convicted that you have wronged someone, be humble enough to go back to that person and seek forgiveness.
- 3) Practice good listening skills with people who disagree with you.
- 4) Ask the Lord in prayer to give you a discerning heart to know when to fight like a lion and when to be humble and yielding.
- 5) Get prepared for potentially contentious meetings, especially before the whole church (like in church conferences), by praying in great detail about what 14 you’re about to face, putting on the

spiritual armor Paul lists in Ephesians 6:10- 17, and by reading many Scripture verses on humility.

6) Be especially wary of gossip and slander when gathered with passionate supporters of your efforts...Understand how sinful it is to act as though you could never commit the same sin as others.

7) Ponder the example of the Pharisee and the tax collector in Jesus's parable of humble prayer (Luke 18:9-14).

8) Understand that some opponents really are children of the devil and will never be reconciled to biblical doctrine. But also know that some of the bitterest enemies right now could become staunch allies later.

9) Be very wary of lawsuits. Read Paul's prohibition passage in 1 Corinthians 6:1- 8 and submit to God's wisdom.

10) As you proceed in the Christian life, be more and more zealous for Christ's glory than for your good reputation among others.