

General Comments on Matthew 5-7

Jesus refers to the Father repeatedly through these chapters, three times in ch. 5, twelve times in ch. 6, and two times in ch. 7. Note the manner in which Jesus refers to him, mostly "your Father", once "our Father", and once "my Father". Jesus is emphasizing Israel's connection to God their Father, and his own connection to Him, which is the same connection they have (cp. John 5:18, John 10:33).

This was a radical thought for Jews of that time, and Jesus was clearly eager to have them understand this was the case. Even among Christianity in general today, the idea of God as our Father is taken in an abstract or metaphorical way, with His nature being an incomprehensible mystery. Yet, here is Jesus stating repeatedly in a very plain fashion that God is our Father in the same way He is His Father. Of course, Jesus is the Only Begotten in the flesh, necessarily leaving God the Father to be the Father of our spirits. This connection gives God the loving fatherly compassion Jesus describes in 5:3-10, and that is entirely Jesus' intention.

The Sermon on the Mount is Jesus' attempt to transform society and change culture. He has every intention of His disciples changing the world, with His teachings propelling that change. What is Jesus fighting against? He is fighting against the Judaism of the Pharisees and Sadducees, which reeks of hypocrisy. He is fighting against the culture of Rome and Greece. Jesus wants His disciples to start a new culture that focuses on the spiritual intent of the Law of Moses and the change in behavior that goes with it.

General Comments on Matthew 5

This chapter comprises what is probably the most famous of Jesus' discourses. Herein, Jesus presents the spiritual ideal (v. 3-12), and tells his disciples they are expected to live it (v. 13-16). He then presents the physical minimum imposed by the Law of Moses and the spiritual ideal implicit in the Law (v. 17-47). Jesus closes the discourse with a paraphrase of Lev. 19:2 (v. 48), wherein he tells them to be like God.

There is relatively little overlap between the Matthew 5 and Luke 6 accounts. Both have significant original material not present in the other. They are apparently two different

events with different settings (contrast Matt. 5:1 and Luke 6:17-19, Luke 7:1) that happened relatively close to each other in time. The Matt. 5 account is clearly Jesus talking specifically to his disciples only, and not to general populations who were following him as is the case in Luke 6. Matt. 5 contains specific instructions for how he expected his committed followers to behave, and what he wanted them to teach others in their missionary efforts. The [IV/JST on Matt. 6](#) makes this even more clear. The Luke account appears to have been a public discourse to any and all present.

Verses 17-47 are Jesus' midrash, or commentary, on the Law. It isn't that obvious from the KJV, but [taking a look at the NASB](#), it is more obvious that is what Jesus is doing (note in the NASB the quotes of the OT are in all uppercase). In these verses he takes various points from the Law and comments on them extensively, drawing out the spiritual underpinnings to the physical act. In doing so he makes it clear both he and the Law require the observant to adhere to the spiritual precepts of the Law. This is commonly called "the spirit of the law" as opposed to the "letter of the law". Some think the spirit of the law is more flexible and less demanding than the letter of the law. Nothing could be further from the truth, as the Sermon on the Mount indicates. The spirit of the law requires the individual to completely reconcile their will to the Spirit and maintain a godly walk such that there is no need for any physical law to govern their behavior (a subject Paul addresses, cf. Rom. 7:6, Rom. 8:2, Gal. 5:8).

The style of Jesus' discourse is drawn directly from the Law of Moses. The beatitudes (v. 3-12), or "blessed are" statements, are drawn from Lev. 26:3-12, only the statements here are primarily spiritual where those in Leviticus are primarily physical. The "blessed are" statements also echo Psalmic passages, cf. Ps. 84:4-5, Ps. 119:1-2. Additional "blessed are" statements subsequently appear in both Matthew and Luke as well, cf. Matt. 13:16, Luke 11:28, Luke 12:37-38. The various points of law and final command to be perfect (v. 17-48) are drawn from Lev. 19, especially cp. v. 48 with Lev. 19:2.

The reader should note that from this point on Jesus is no longer deliberately avoiding crowds. Prior to this Jesus leaves whenever large crowds throng him. Here, when the crowds appear, Jesus is presented as teaching them using various object

lessons, parables, and discourses. Perhaps the Sermon on the Mount indicates a shift in Jesus' approach to the crowds. Rather than avoiding the sign-seekers, he takes to challenging them, a prime example being the events in John 6.

In the other Synoptic Gospels Mark omits the Sermon on the Mount altogether, and Luke's account is overall shorter but with some additions. Most notably different in Luke's version is the insertion of woes, or curses, after the blessings (cf. Luke 6:22-26). This follows the Lev. 26 formula of blessings (cf. Lev. 26:3-12) then curses (cf. Lev. 26:14-45). The Inspired Version (IV, a.k.a. JST) of Matthew's account has substantial differences from the KJV, which generally parallel the 3 Ne. 12 account of the Sermon.

There is some discussion among scholars as to whether Matthew's and Luke's accounts are of the same event or whether Jesus taught the sermon several times when people congregated. It seems likely Jesus wouldn't have just taught this sermon only once given its gravity. We are informed throughout the Gospels that Jesus teaches in the synagogues and in and around the Temple both before and during his three year ministry. Precisely what he taught is not explicitly documented, but it is likely his doctrine and general message remained consistent. It wouldn't be surprising that Jesus taught the content of the Sermon on the Mount on more than one occasion, and so Matthew's and Luke's accounts might simply differ because they were given at different times to different audiences.

The Inspired Version (IV) differs from the KJV significantly in a number of places in this chapter:

KJV

1 And seeing the multitudes,
he went up into a mountain:
and when he was set,
his disciples came unto him:
2 And he opened his mouth,
and taught them,
saying,

IV

1 And Jesus,
seeing the multitudes,
went up into a mountain;
and when he was set down,
his disciples came unto him;
2 And he opened his mouth,
and taught them,
saying,
3 Blessed are they
who shall believe on me;
and again,
more blessed are they
who shall believe on your words,
when ye shall testify
that ye have seen me

Matthew 5.3

and that I am.

4 Yea, blessed are they
who shall believe on your words,
and come down into
the depth of humility,
and be baptized in my name;
for they shall be visited with fire
and the Holy Ghost,
and shall receive a remission
of their sins.

5 Yea,
3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: blessed are the poor in spirit,
who come unto me;
for theirs
is the kingdom of heaven.

4 Blessed are they that mourn: blessed are they that mourn;
for they shall be comforted.
for they shall be comforted.

5 Blessed are the meek: 7 And blessed are the meek;
for they shall inherit the earth. for they shall inherit the earth.

6 Blessed are they 8 And blessed are all they
which do hunger and thirst that do hunger and thirst
after righteousness; after righteousness;
for they shall be filled. for they shall be filled
with the Holy Ghost.

7 Blessed are the merciful: 9 And blessed are the merciful;
for they shall obtain mercy. for they shall obtain mercy.

8 Blessed are the pure in heart: 10 And blessed are all the pure in
heart; heart;
for they shall see God. for they shall see God.

9 Blessed are the peacemakers: 11 And blessed are all the peacemakers;
for they shall be called for they shall be called
the children of God. the children of God.

10 Blessed are they which are 12 Blessed are all they that are
persecuted for righteousness' sake: persecuted for my name's sake;
for theirs is for theirs is
the kingdom of heaven. the kingdom of heaven.

11 Blessed are ye, 13 And blessed are ye
when men shall revile you, when men shall revile you,
and persecute you, and persecute you,
and shall say all manner of evil and shall say all manner of evil
against you falsely, for my sake. against you falsely, for my sake.

12 Rejoice, 14 For ye shall have great joy,
and be exceeding glad; and be exceeding glad;
for great is your reward in heaven: for great shall be your reward in heaven;
for so persecuted they for so persecuted they
the prophets which were before you. the prophets which were before you.

13 Ye are the salt of the earth: 15 Verily, verily, I say unto you,
but if the salt I give unto you to be the salt of earth;
have lost his savour, but if the salt
wherewith shall it be salted? shall lose its savor,
it is thenceforth wherewith shall the earth be salted?
the salt shall thenceforth

Matthew 5.4

good for nothing,
but to be cast out,
and to be trodden
under foot of men.

14 Ye are
the light of the world.
A city that is set on an hill
cannot be hid.

15 Neither do men light a candle,
and put it under a bushel,
but on a candlestick;
and it giveth light
unto all that are in the house.

16 Let your light so shine
before men,
that they may see your good works,
and glorify your Father
which is in heaven.

17 Think not that I am come
to destroy the law,
or the prophets:
I am not come to destroy,
but to fulfil.

18 For verily I say unto you,
Till heaven and earth pass,
one jot or one tittle
shall in no wise pass from the law,
till all be fulfilled.

19 Whosoever therefore
shall break one of these
least commandments,
and shall teach men so,
he shall be called the least
in the kingdom of heaven:
but whosoever shall do
and teach them,

the same shall be called great
in the kingdom of heaven.

20 For I say unto you,
That except your righteousness
shall exceed the righteousness
of the scribes and Pharisees,
ye shall in no case enter
into the kingdom of heaven.

21 Ye have heard that it was
said by them of old time,
Thou shalt not kill;

be good for nothing,
but to be cast out,
and to be trodden
under foot of men.

16 Verily, verily, I say unto you,
I give unto you to be
the light of the world;
a city that is set on a hill
cannot be hid.

17 Behold,
do men light a candle
and put it under a bushel?
Nay, but on a candlestick;
and it giveth light
to all that are in the house.

18 Therefore,
let your light so shine
before this world,
that they may see your good works,
and glorify your Father
who is in heaven.

19 Think not that I am come
to destroy the law,
or the prophets;
I am not come to destroy,
but to fulfill.

20 For verily I say unto you,
Heaven and earth must pass away,
but one jot or one tittle
shall in no wise pass from the law,
until all be fulfilled.

21 Whosoever, therefore,
shall break one of these
least commandments,
and shall teach men so to do,
he shall in no wise be saved
in the kingdom of heaven;
but whosoever shall do
and teach these

commandments of the law
until it be fulfilled,
the same shall be called great,
and shall be saved
in the kingdom of heaven.

22 For I say unto you,
Except your righteousness
shall exceed that of the
scribes and Pharisees,
ye shall in no case enter
into the kingdom of heaven.

23 Ye have heard that it hath been
said by them of old time that,
Thou shalt not kill;

Matthew 5.5

and whosoever shall kill
shall be in danger of the judgment:

22 But I say unto you,
That whosoever is angry
with his brother
without a cause
shall be in danger of
the judgment:
and whosoever shall say
to his brother,
Raca,
shall be in danger of the council:
but whosoever shall say,
Thou fool,
shall be in danger of hell fire.
23 Therefore

if thou bring thy gift
to the altar,
and there rememberest that
thy brother hath ought
against thee;
24 Leave there thy gift
before the altar,
and go thy way;
first be reconciled to thy brother,
and then come and offer thy gift.

25 Agree with
thine adversary quickly,
whiles thou art
in the way with him;
lest at any time the adversary
deliver thee to the judge,
and the judge deliver thee
to the officer,
and thou be cast into prison.

26 Verily I say unto thee,
Thou shalt by no means
come out thence,
till thou hast paid
the uttermost farthing.

27 Ye have heard that
it was said by them of old time,
Thou shalt not commit adultery:

28 But I say unto you,
That whosoever looketh on a woman
to lust after her
hath committed adultery with her
already in his heart.

and whosoever shall kill,
shall be in danger of the judgment
of God.

24 But I say unto you
that whosoever is angry
with his brother,

shall be in danger of
his judgment;
and whosoever shall say
to his brother,
Raca, or Rabcha,
shall be in danger of the council;
and whosoever shall say to his brother,
Thou fool,
shall be in danger of hell fire.

25 Therefore,
if ye shall come unto me,
or shall desire to come unto me,
or if thou bring thy gift
to the altar,
and there rememberest that
thy brother hath aught
against thee,
26 Leave thou thy gift
before the altar,
and go thy way unto thy brother,
and first be reconciled to thy brother,
and then come and offer thy gift.

27 Agree with
thine adversary quickly,
while thou art
in the way with him;
lest at any time thine adversary
deliver thee to the judge,
and the judge deliver thee
to the officer,
and thou be cast into prison.

28 Verily I say unto thee,
Thou shalt by no means
come out thence,
until thou hast paid
the uttermost farthing.

29 Behold,
it is written by them of old time,
that thou shalt not commit adultery.

30 But I say unto you
that whosoever looketh on a woman
to lust after her,
hath committed adultery with her
already in his heart.

31 Behold,
I give unto you a commandment,

Matthew 5.6

29 And if thy right eye
offend thee,
pluck it out,
and cast it from thee:
for it is profitable for thee
that one of thy members
should perish,
and not that thy whole body
should be cast into hell.
30 And if thy right hand
offend thee,
cut it off,
and cast it from thee:
for it is profitable for thee
that one of thy members
should perish,
and not that thy whole body
should be cast into hell.

31 It hath been said,
Whosoever shall put away his wife,
let him give her
a writing of divorcement:

32 But
I say unto you,
That whosoever shall put away
his wife,
saving for the cause
of fornication,
causeth her to commit adultery:
and whosoever shall marry her
that is divorced
committeth adultery.

33 Again,
ye have heard
that it hath been said
by them of old time,
Thou shalt not forswear thyself,
but shalt perform unto the Lord
thine oaths:

34 But I say unto you,
Swear not at all;

that ye suffer none of these things
to enter into your heart,
for it is better that ye should
deny yourselves of these things,
wherein ye will take up your cross,
than that ye should be cast into hell.

32 Wherefore,
if thy right eye
offend thee,
pluck it out
and cast it from thee;
for it is profitable for thee
that one of thy members
should perish,
and not that thy whole body
should be cast into hell.

33 Or if thy right hand
offend thee,
cut it off
and cast it from thee;
for it is profitable for thee
that one of thy members
should perish,
and not that thy whole body
should be cast into hell.

34 And now this I speak,
a parable concerning your sins;
wherefore, cast them from you,
that ye may not be hewn down
and cast into the fire.

35 It hath been written that,
Whosoever shall put away his wife,
let him give her
a writing of divorcement.

36 Verily, verily,
I say unto you
that whosoever shall put away
his wife,
saving for the cause
of fornication,
causeth her to commit adultery;
and whosoever shall marry her
that is divorced,
committeth adultery.

37 Again,
it hath been written
by them of old time,
Thou shalt not forswear thyself,
but shalt perform unto the Lord
thine oaths.

38 But I say unto you,
Swear not at all;

neither by heaven;
for it is God's throne:
35 Nor by the earth;
for it is his footstool:
neither by Jerusalem;
for it is the city
of the great King.
36 Neither shalt thou swear
by thy head,
because thou canst not
make one hair white or black.
37 But let your communication be,
Yea, yea; Nay, nay:
for whatsoever is more than these
cometh of evil.
38 Ye have heard
that it hath been said,
An eye for an eye,
and a tooth for a tooth:
39 But I say unto you,
That ye resist not evil:
but whosoever shall smite thee
on thy right cheek,
turn to him the other also.
40 And if any man
will sue thee at the law,
and take away thy coat,

let him have thy cloke also.
41 And whosoever shall
compel thee to go a mile,

go with him twain.
42 Give to him that asketh thee,
and from him
that would borrow of thee
turn not thou away.
43 Ye have heard
that it hath been said,
Thou shalt love thy neighbour,
and hate thine enemy.
44 But I say unto you,
Love your enemies,
bless them that curse you,
do good to them that hate you,
and pray for them
which despitefully use you,
and persecute you;
45 That ye may be the children
of your Father which is in heaven:

neither by heaven,
for it is God's throne;
nor by the earth,
for it is his footstool;
neither by Jerusalem,
for it is the city
of the great King;
neither shalt thou swear
by thy head,
because thou canst not
make one hair white or black.
39 But let your communication be
Yea, yea; Nay, nay;
for whatsoever is more than these
cometh of evil.
40 Ye have heard
that it hath been said,
An eye for an eye,
and a tooth for a tooth.
41 But I say unto you
that ye resist not evil;
but whosoever shall smite thee
on thy right cheek,
turn to him the other also.
42 And if any man
will sue thee at the law,
and take away thy coat,
let him have it;
and if he sue thee again,
let him have thy cloak also.
43 And whosoever shall
compel thee to go a mile,
go with him a mile;
and whosoever shall compel thee
to go with him twain,
thou shalt go with him twain.
44 Give to him that asketh of thee;
and from him
that would borrow of thee,
turn not thou away.
45 Ye have heard
that it hath been said,
Thou shalt love thy neighbor,
and hate thine enemy.
46 But I say unto you,
Love your enemies;
bless them that curse you;
do good to them that hate you;
and pray for them
that despitefully use you
and persecute you;
47 That ye may be the children
of your Father who is in heaven;

for he maketh his sun to rise
on the evil and on the good,
and sendeth rain
on the just and on the unjust.
46 For if ye love them
which love you,
what reward have ye?
do not even the publicans the same?
47 And if ye salute
your brethren only,
what do ye more than others?
do not even the publicans so?

48 Be ye therefore perfect,
even as your Father
which is in heaven
is perfect.

for he maketh his sun to rise
on the evil and on the good,
and sendeth rain
on the just and on the unjust.
48 For if ye love only them
which love you,
what reward have you?
Do not even the publicans the same?
49 And if ye salute
your brethren only,
what do ye more than others?
Do not even the publicans the same?
50 Ye are therefore commanded to
be perfect,
even as your Father
who is in heaven
is perfect.

Comments on Matthew 5

1 AND seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: 2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

v1-2 Luke's account (cf. Luke 6:17-19) informs us that previous to the Sermon on the Mount Jesus was healing people and casting out devils. This resulted in a large group of people who gathered to him out of all Judea, which Jesus takes the opportunity to teach.

The IV inserts two verses after v. 1-2 which parallel the 3 Ne. 12:1-2 account of the Sermon. The insertion necessarily implies the disciples should be actively proselyting, and that repentance, baptism of water and Spirit, and remission of sins is part of accepting Jesus and therefore discipleship.

3 Blessed [are] the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 Blessed [are] they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. 5 Blessed [are] the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. 6 Blessed [are] they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. 7 Blessed [are] the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. 8 Blessed [are] the pure in heart: for they shall see God. 9 Blessed [are] the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. 10 Blessed [are] they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are ye, when [men] shall revile you, and persecute [you], and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great [is] your reward in heaven: for so

persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

v3-12 The Beatitudes, which are blessings resulting in perfect or exalted happiness. Luke's account (cf. Luke 6:20-23) is considerably shorter and appends a series of woes upon the wealthy and popular (cf. Luke 6:24-26) in sharp contrast to the blessings upon the poor and unpopular.

The Beatitudes are arranged in four complimentary pairs in a poetical climax. The pairs present two similar or related behaviors with two types of reward or fulfilment, one reward more temporal and one more eternal. The climax starts out in a rather undesirable situation and then moves on to get better and better for the individual until the climax in D2, as follows:

A1 - (v. 3) Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

A2 - (v. 4) Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

B1 - (v. 5) Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

B2 - (v. 6) Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

C1 - (v. 7) Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

C2 - (v. 8) Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

D1 - (v. 9) Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

D2a - (v. 10-12) Blessed are they

b - which are persecuted for righteousness' sake:

c - for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

a - Blessed are ye,

b - when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

c - Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

By way of summary, the subjects are as follows (the "T" is for the more Temporal promise, and "E" is for the more Eternal promise, these promises do overlap into both aspects of our existence but lean more to one or the other):

- A - Condition: depressed and mourning
Promise: kingdom of heaven (E), comforted (T)
- B - Condition: meek/submissive, hungering after righteousness
Promise: inherit earth (E), filled/satisfied (T)
- C - Condition: merciful and righteous
Promise: receive mercy (T), see God (E)
- D - Condition: peace-loving despite persecution
Promise: children of God (T), heavenly kingdom (E)

Note the climax in D2 is repeated and expanded for emphasis, and repeats the promise from pair A of enjoying the kingdom, and contrasts the condition of pair A of being depressed and mourning by telling the person to "rejoice and be exceeding glad!" The disciple who has worked through the stair-steps of progression herein may go from one extreme to the other, from mournful depression to rejoicing happiness even under extreme adversity.

v3-4 The first pair addresses people who are unhappy. Those who are unhappy who come unto Christ will be comforted.

v3 "poor in spirit", the KJV reads:

Blessed are the poor in spirit:
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

This is an obscure passage. As an alternative reading, the Concordant Literal NT (CLNT) offers:

Happy, in spirit, are the poor,
for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.

This changes the reading from "poor in spirit", to spiritually happy while physically poor. However, the IV maintains the KJV translation and makes the condition "who come unto me" upon it:

Yea, blessed are the poor in spirit,
who come unto me;
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

The IV rendering favors the KJV "poor in spirit" over the CLNT

offering. But what does "poor in spirit" mean? Compare passages which use similar statements:

And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, which were on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel. (Joshua 5:1)

And it shall be, when they say unto thee, Wherefore sighest thou? that thou shalt answer, For the tidings; because it cometh: and every heart shall melt, and all hands shall be feeble, and every spirit shall faint, and all knees shall be weak as water: behold, it cometh, and shall be brought to pass, saith the Lord GOD. (Ezek. 21:7)

These passages make it clear being "poor in spirit" is a Semitism meaning your feelings of courage or zeal have been drained away and you are instead feeling depressed and hopeless (also cp. Joshua 2:11, D&C 56:17-18). Thus, Jesus is saying, "Blessed are the depressed who resort to me, theirs is the kingdom of heaven." If one's unhappiness drives them to humility and repentance, and therefore into the arms of the Lord, then it, in the long run, is a good thing, cf. Alma 32:13.

"theirs is the kingdom of heaven", entering into and obtaining the kingdom of heaven means you are in God's presence and are therefore exalted, cf. D&C 137.

v4 "those who mourn", those who are empathetic and sympathetic to the plight of others, cf. Jer. 12:4, 2 Ne. 32:7, Jacob 2:31. These are the soft-hearted who are sensitive to other's needs and conditions. However, also consider those who are mourning over their own condition. From experience and from the scriptures it is plain that personal unrighteousness causes the individual to be unhappy, cf. Isa. 57:21, 2 Ne. 2:23, Alma 4:3, Alma 28:13-14, Alma 41:10, Hela. 13:38, Moses 7:41. These are people who's mourning over their own condition motivates them to repent.

With regard to the present condition and the future promise, the CLNT renders this verse:

Happy are those who mourn now,
for they shall be consoled.

The KJV omits the "now". Throughout the Beatitudes the present condition, which is sometimes unpleasant (e.g., depressed, mourning, hungering after righteousness, persecuted), is offset by the promise of consolation or vindication. It is often the present difficult situation which motivates people to repent and yearn for a better relationship with God (cf. Alma 32:12-16), with the consolation typically coming after the trial of one's faith (cf. Ether 12:6). But even beyond this, half of the promises of the Beatitudes deal with things that will not be achieved until after mortality, because discipleship is dealing with eternal sorts of things.

v5-6 The second pair of blessings are upon those who are submitting themselves to God and hungering after righteousness. These two verses appear to be drawing on Deut. 8:3-6.

v5 "the meek", the Greek is "prau" and can be translated to meek, mildly submissive, gentle, or humble. But in what way are they meek? Taken in context with v. 6, these are people who are submitting themselves to the chastening of God so they may be made righteous, cf. Deut. 8:5, Job 5:17, Prov. 3:11, Isa. 26:16, Hebr. 12:5-11, James 4:7, Mosiah 3:19, D&C 101:5. Also, Ether 12:26 defines "meek" as those "that...shall take no advantage of your weakness".

v6 "those who hunger and thirst for righteousness", physical food is commonly used as a symbol for things spiritual, the origin of which is Deut. 8:3. Just as one must eat food to live, so must one feed themselves spiritually or die spiritually, cf. Isa. 55:1-2, 2 Ne. 32:3.

"they shall be filled", with the spirit, as the IV on this verse makes explicit, cf. John 4:14, John 7:37-39.

v7-8 The third set of verses deals with mercy and justice, two common scriptural pairs which describe godly qualities, cf. Ps. 89:14, 2 Ne. 2:12, 2 Ne. 11:5, Jacob 4:10, Alma 26:20, Alma 42, 3 Ne. 26:5, Morm. 6:22, D&C 88:40. Mercy without Justice is

permissive, Justice without Mercy is utter destruction. Both must be present and in balance in the Atonement.

v7 "the merciful", the Greek is "eleos" and means a moderation in the severity of justice. While mercy cannot rob justice (cf. Alma 42:25), it can overpower it at times when the measure of justice is fulfilled (cf. Mosiah 15:9, Alma 34:15-16).

"they shall obtain mercy", we are told "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Matt. 7:1-2). Those who are merciful will be dealt with mercifully, those who judge mercilessly will be mercilessly judged. Naturally, this has a "what comes around goes around" application to daily life, but the eternal consequences are obvious as well.

v8 "the pure in heart", this phrase is the equivalent of saying "righteous" or "just" but more specifically speaks of one's desires and motivations, cf. Ps. 24:4, 1 Tim. 1:5, D&C 56:18, D&C 97:16. In a negative context cp. Jacob 3:3, Alma 5:19, and especially note in D&C 97:21 the pure in heart of Zion are contrasted with the wicked of the world.

"they shall see God", seeing God or seeing God's face has both a literal and figurative application in the scriptures. The literal interpretation is obvious (cf. Exod. 3:6, Exod. 24:9-11, Exod. 33:11), the figurative interpretation means God's face is inclined towards you so you are in His good favor (cf. 2 Chron. 7:14, Hosea 5:15, Dan. 9:17). In a temporal setting, few people see God literally (e.g., Moses, Enoch, Smith, etc.).

v9-12 The final pair of "Blessed are..." statements. Those who are working to increase and spread peace, despite persecution, will be inheriting the Kingdom.

v9 "sons of God", while this sounds like a promise with eternal applications, it is in fact mainly aimed at mortals, cf. Gen. 6:2, Hosea 1:10, Romans 8:14, Philip. 2:15, D&C 25:1. It isn't exclusive though, cf. Job 38:7, Dan. 3:25, D&C 76:58.

v10-12 Note the tight parallelisms, "for righteousness' sake...for my sake" and "theirs is the kingdom of heaven...your reward in heaven". The IV changes the "for righteousness' sake"

to "for my name's sake" which makes the parallelism even stronger.

The promise of the kingdom echoes the first promise of the same in v. 3, but the admonition to rejoice and be exceedingly glad is just the opposite of the condition described in v. 3-4.

These verses say those being persecuted should rejoice, which seems somewhat paradoxical, but nonetheless consistent with other scriptural passages along the same vein, cf. Acts 5:40-41, 2 Cor. 12:10, 1 Peter 4:13-14.

In Luke's account, after the "Blessed are..." statements, he includes a series of woes upon the wealthy and popular which are omitted in the present version, cf. Luke 6:22-26.

13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. 14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

v13-16 Jesus then tells the disciples it is their responsibility to proselyte the rest of the world and be saviors to them. The elect are called to minister to the rest of the world, cf. 2 Tim. 1:9, Mosiah 8:18, Moroni 7:31, D&C 29:4, D&C 46:9, D&C 93:46, D&C 84:48. They are to be a light to the nations, even as Israel was called to be anciently, cf. Isa. 49:6.

v13 "salt", the Easton's Bible Dictionary entry for salt follows:

Salt - used to season food (Job 6:6), and mixed with the fodder of cattle (Isa. 30:24, "clean;" in marg. of R.V. "salted"). All meat-offerings were seasoned with salt (Lev. 2:13). To eat salt with one is to partake of his hospitality, to derive subsistence from him; and hence he who did so was bound to look after his host's interests (Ezra 4:14, "We have maintenance from the king's palace;" A.V. marg., "We are salted with the salt of the palace;" R.V., "We eat the salt of the

palace").

A "covenant of salt" (Num. 18:19; 2 Chr. 13:5) was a covenant of perpetual obligation. New-born children were rubbed with salt (Ezek. 16:4). Disciples are likened unto salt, with reference to its cleansing and preserving uses (Matt. 5:13).

Salt at that time was well known for what we have come to see as antibiotic properties and was therefore used as such in preserving meats as well as in wounds to prevent infection. It is also an essential nutrient for humans and cattle. Salt was a valuable export commodity and therefore a source of revenue for the Israelites. Roman soldiers were, at times, paid their wages in salt, showing the value salt held in the ancient world.

"good for nothing...cast out...trodden under foot", anciently, inferior salt not suitable for human or animal consumption was used as fertilizer or as an additive to dung to hasten its decomposition (paraphrased from Smith's Bible Dictionary).

v15 "a bushel", i.e., a bushel basket, or peck-measure.

17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. 19 whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach [them], the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed [the righteousness] of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

v17-47 These verses comprise a commentary on the Law of Moses by Jesus wherein he presents the spiritual intent of the Law and informs his disciples they are required to live it. Verses 17-20 form the introduction, v. 21-47 address six specific Laws, and v. 48 is the conclusion.

v17-20 Jesus states emphatically what he is teaching is not in conflict with or contradictory to the Law of Moses. His intent is not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it (v. 17, cp. 3 Ne. 15:5-9). All things temporal will pass away, but the Law is eternal and not even the tiniest detail will be ignored, even

until the fulfilment of all things (v. 18). Those who break and teach others to break these commandments will be lowest (or not be saved in, according to the IV) in the kingdom, while those who keep and teach others to keep them will be the greatest in the kingdom (v. 19). Jesus then tells his disciples that unless they avoid the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and scribes they will not be obtaining the kingdom of heaven (v. 20).

v18 Note the IV changes the second line from "till heaven and earth pass" to "Heaven and earth must pass away, but...." Jesus' intent is to present the spiritual component of the Law as eternal, where temporal things will pass away.

While the physical ritualistic aspect of the Law of Sacrifice and the Law of Moses have an end in the ministry of Jesus, the spiritual precepts they forward are eternal and are not done away. These spiritual precepts are the ones Jesus is telling his disciples they must observe, and they are in force so long as the earth and its inhabitants are in the temporal sphere.

Taken in the immediate context of the contemporary setting, the Law of Moses was still in force. It was not until after the Crucifixion and Resurrection of the Son that the physical aspects of the Law was fulfilled and the people were told to no longer observe them, cf. 3 Ne. 1:24-25, 3 Ne. 15:4-8.

v19 Degrees of glory in heaven. Jesus states plainly there will be those who are lesser and those who are greater in the kingdom. Those who break the commandments and teach men to break them will be the least (Telestial), and those who keep and teach others to keep the commandments will be the greatest (Celestial).

However, the IV changes the verse to say those who break and teach men to break will not be "saved" in the kingdom of heaven, which we would equate with the exaltation of Celestial glory.

v20 "scribes and Pharisees", when Herod the Great came to power he had the Sanhedrin, which was composed of local participants, largely executed. He then replaced them with Babylonian Pharisees. In doing so, he created a group of Jewish religious rulers who owed their position of power to him, and would therefore be subservient to him. Naturally, those who would participate in such an institution would place their private agendas before their religion, and so hypocrisy was rife among

these ruling Jews.

However, the vast majority of the local Jews and local Pharisees (with the exception of those who were known as Herodians) wanted nothing to do with either Herod, or his children who subsequently ruled, or the Romans, or this Babylonian Jew extracted puppet Sanhedrin.

Thus, Jesus is addressing a specific group of people in his criticisms, the present ruling elite among Judah. There were certainly local Pharisees who were Jesus' disciples, but these would have been divorced from the ruling elite. For example, Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, was probably a Pharisee, but if so was a local one not affiliated with the Sanhedrin.

v21-47 Six Laws are addressed: killing (v. 23-28), adultery (v. 29-34), divorce (v. 35-36), oaths (v. 37-39), exploitation (v. 40-44), and enemies (v. 45-49). Four of the six parallel commandments from the Ten Commandments. These six must have been the most problematic issues to the Jews at this time.

Note each one starts out with the "it hath been said" formula. Jesus is addressing the present views of the time regarding these Laws and then contradicting the popular minimalist approach to these Laws. The views Jesus is contradicting are those of the "scribes and Pharisees" referenced in v. 20. They used the Law to justify the bare minimum and discover loopholes to justify violating the spirit of the Law. Jesus takes the same Law and presents the spiritual ideal. This spiritual intent was ever present in the Law, but the popular oral traditions around the written Law were at times minimal in spiritual requirement.

The IV on v. 27, 31, and 33 alters the "it hath been said" formula to an "it hath been written" formula. This makes it explicit what is only implicit in the KJV, that Jesus is making reference to the written Law, passages of which are quoted in each of the six points he addresses.

To paraphrase Jesus, "You have heard the scribes and Pharisees selectively quote snippets from the Law that minimize spiritual requirements in attempt to falsely justify what the Law forbids."

21 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: 22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool,

shall be in danger of hell fire. 23 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; 24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. 25 Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. 26 Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

v21-26 Killing, or more specifically murder, is addressed. Jesus quotes Exod. 20:13. The bare minimum approach is "you shall not murder", so as long as you do not actually murder people then you are righteous. Jesus contradicts this bare minimum approach to say the spiritual intent of the Law goes well beyond the act of murder and address hate, anger, and adversarial relationships as well. Jesus goes so far as to say that when one goes before the Lord (he explicitly refers to himself in the IV on v. 23) at the Temple altar they should first be sure to have made amends for any offenses previously committed.

v22 Jesus warns people off from the subjectivity and emotional morass of anger and hate. In such a condition it is easy to let pride creep in and leave the one seemingly in the right an offender. Thus, whoever is angry is putting themselves in a precarious position and could end up in danger of judgment. We are simply better off not letting things get to that point.

"without a cause", this seeming justification for anger is omitted in the IV.

"Raca", an Aramaic term meaning "empty head". Resorting to demeaning personal attacks is the height of irrationality. The problem is no longer being addressed, the person is via an ad hominem argument, in a destructive manner. This is precisely the opposite of the advice given in D&C 121:43.

v25-26 Whenever difficulties arise we should be actively working to humor or make friends with the one we are fighting with immediately. Why? To avoid stewing over it, and letting the bad feelings mix with pride. Jesus then warns that doing so is a good idea because it may just turn out you are at fault, and then your adversary will be justified in getting you into

whatever trouble you are guilty of (v. 25).

Jesus appears to be warning us of the unforgiving nature of people in general. He is saying that since people are generally unforgiving, we need to take this into account beforehand in order to avoid difficulties with them. If a problem arises and the other party is determined to fault you, then you have to be equally determined to leave the other party nothing to fault you with. And if you do, then they will get you for it, and suffer the consequences (v. 26).

27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: 28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. 29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast [it] from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not [that] thy whole body should be cast into hell. 30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast [it] from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not [that] thy whole body should be cast into hell.

v27-30 The command to abstain from adultery is quoted from Exod. 20:14. The IV adds two verses to this section, commenting on keeping one's heart pure, and explaining the parable of purging one's sins.

Jesus makes it clear people are responsible for the desires they entertain in their heart. If one desires to commit adultery and looks upon another with lust, then they are of the condition that they would commit adultery given the opportunity (v. 28). Spiritually, they are the same as though they had committed the act. And so, in the IV, Jesus admonishes his disciples to deny themselves such thing.

He offers a parable where he compares these very serious sins to surgeries, wherein it is better to live maimed without an eye or hand than to continue on with the eye and hand and have the entire body be killed by the infection (v. 29-30). So serious is the sin of adultery that it will spiritually destroy the individual who participates in it (recall adultery was a capital offense according to the Law as well, cf. Deut. 22:22). And, in the IV, Jesus closes off the parable saying the amputation of the hand and eye is to be likened to their sins, which they must dispose of or risk Hell.

v29-30 Similar imagery is employed in IV Mark 9:40-48 in a different context. Here it is used to represent personal sins

which must be removed. There it is used to represent keeping company with sinners, and says that one must separate themselves out from the unrepentant.

31 It hath been said, whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: 32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

v31-32 Jesus comments on divorce, an ongoing problem for Judah, cf. Mal. 2. Jesus quotes Deut. 24:1 and states divorce is only justified in the case of the discovery upon marriage that the wife had previously fornicated (cf. Deut. 22:13-21, also cp. Matt. 1:19). There was no divorce for adultery in marriage as that was a capital offense, cf. Deut. 22:22.

v32 "her that is divorced", apparently a reference to the woman who is justifiably divorced because of fornications referenced in the preceding lines, as opposed to a woman who is divorced unjustifiably. The Law according to premarital fornications is that they were to be married, cf. Exod. 22:16-17, Deut 22:28-29. So if she had fornicated, then the one with whom she fornicated with is to be the husband. And if she marries another, and they are both aware of the fornication, then they are deliberately violating the Law and committing adultery. This is what Jesus is prohibiting.

33 Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: 34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: 35 Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. 36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. 37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

v33-37 Jesus comments upon making oaths. In v. 33 Jesus makes a compound quotation of Lev. 18:12 and Deut. 23:21 (see also Num. 30:2 for a related passage), and then tells people not to swear oaths at all in their dealings with one another (v. 34-35). Rather, let each one speak honestly and forthrightly (v. 37). Because, regardless of how many oaths are uttered, they are just empty words (v. 36).

Naturally, oaths with the Lord in covenant making are not

being prohibited here, and neither is invoking the Lord's name in exercising the Priesthood. What is being addressed is people trying to add credibility to their less than honest statements or oaths by invoking the name of the Lord.

38 Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: 39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have [thy] cloke also. 41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. 42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

v38-42 Jesus quotes Exod. 21:24 (the same formula appears in Lev. 24:20 and Deut. 19:21) in dealing with exploitation. This "eye for an eye" regulation is for recompense in the case of offenses or injuries, the value of an eye if an eye is damaged, the value of a tooth if a tooth is damaged, cf. Exod. 21:1-22:15, Num. 5:5-10 (eyes were not literally poked out or teeth pulled). As such, this Law was not given to address exploitation, but it had become used as such popularly to falsely justify retribution.

In the various examples Jesus states that when people exploit or oppress you, you should not respond in kind. If you do, then you are no better than they and are guilty of exploitation and oppression yourself. Rather, you are to set a good example to the exploiter and oppressor by willfully obliging them. In doing so, hopefully, their behavior will change and yours certainly will not be debased.

In Luke's account, the Golden Rule of "Do unto others..." is included, cf. Luke 6:31.

43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. 44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; 45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? 47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more [than others]? do not even the publicans so? 48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

v43-47 In dealing with enemies, Jesus quotes Lev. 19:18 and then adds the popular addition "and hate thine enemy" which is clearly not scriptural (v. 43). Jesus contradicts this popular addition by telling his disciples to love and serve their enemies (v. 44) and in doing so befriend them. By loving their enemies they will be like God, because He does the same (v. 45). If they only do good to those who do good to them, then they are no different from the self-serving (v. 46) and heathen Gentiles (v. 47).

Luke's account varies slightly and adds some text, cf. Luke 6:33-35.

v46 The reference to "reward" and "publicans" is more intended to address self-serving behavior than it is to attack publicans. A better translation on these two terms is "wages" and "tax collectors". Jesus' intent is to say that if all you are doing is being nice to people who are nice to you, then it is a selfish relationship where people are in it only for what they can get out of it, just like tax gatherers are there to earn their wages. He is not condemning tax gathering, he is saying that people should treat each other in the manner in which tax gatherers approach their profession.

v47 The second reference to the publicans in this verse is a poor translation in the KJV. It should be "Gentiles" or "nations".

v48 Jesus closes off the midrash by paraphrasing Lev. 19:2, an admonition to be holy as the Lord is. Luke's account has "merciful" instead of "perfect", cf. Luke 6:36, and cp. Exod. 34:6, Deut. 4:31, Joel 2:13, Jonah 4:2.

Jesus' intent is to admonish his disciples to maintain a godly walk, as is advocated in v. 45, and to adhere to the spiritual precepts of the Law.

His selection of Lev. 19:2 to close with is certainly deliberate as Lev. 19 is a series of prohibitions based upon the physical minimum requirements. Herein, Jesus uses the same statement but combines it with the spiritual ideal.

There is much discussion on the matter of making oneself perfect in the sense of utterly sinless, sanctified, and having one's calling and election made sure. It is unlikely that is

Jesus' intent here. His intent is to aim his disciples at a spiritual and godly life. Yes, these things lead to sanctification and so forth, but that is not what Jesus is primarily commenting on here.

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