

Sermon on the Mount - Part 7

by David Servant

Jesus emphasizes the importance of living a life of true righteousness, prioritizing relationships over rituals, and reconciling with others before standing before God.

Duration: 28:30

Scripture: Matthew 5:21-26, Matthew 5:43-48, Matthew 18:15-17, Matthew 25:31-46, James 2:14-17

Topics: "Christian Relationships", "Righteous Living"

Description

This sermon delves into the importance of maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships, emphasizing the need for reconciliation and love among believers. Jesus raises the bar for righteousness, highlighting the significance of loving one's neighbor and addressing issues of anger and hatred within the Christian community. The message stresses the seriousness of broken relationships among true followers of Christ, warning of potential consequences like being guilty enough to go to hell or being thrown into a metaphorical prison until reconciliation is achieved.

Transcript

Well, welcome back to the region of the Sea of Galilee where I'm sitting right now, and probably within a quarter mile or so, and maybe even closer, who knows, to the place where Jesus gave the original Sermon on the Mount. Catholic and Orthodox Christians believe that that spot was up the coast here a little ways, whereas many Protestants believe that it's back here on a mountain to my right, kind of behind me. Some believe it was right on this mountain right here.

This is Mount Arbel. This is a beautiful cliffs here and so forth. Lots of history in this area.

Really enjoyed doing some exploration while we're here. But I'm glad that you're here with me, and looking forward to our continued study of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. We currently are in chapter 5, and today we're going to begin right around verse number 23.

Well, Jesus has dropped a bomb that day in Matthew chapter 5, verse 20, as is recorded there. He told his new disciples, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you're not going to enter the kingdom of heaven. And from there on, he begins to elaborate upon that, showing where the scribes and Pharisees fell short, and then telling his disciples how they could do much better, and should do much better.

And the very thing that he begins to talk about from the outset is interpersonal relationships. That shouldn't surprise us. That's extremely important to God.

The second greatest commandment is to love your neighbor as yourself. God loves everybody, and so he wants us to love everybody. Now, there's lots to be said on that subject, but the scribes and Pharisees apparently didn't have a very high standard when it came to their interpersonal relationships.

And Jesus said to the crowd that day, you heard it read in the synagogues, don't commit murder. And of course, they heard that read right from the scrolls of the Old Testament in the synagogues all their lives. Of course, the scribes and Pharisees and the rulers of the synagogues added their own commentary, and they said, whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.

Jesus says that is a little bit too low for what I intended when I originally gave that commandment. I'm not only concerned about the act of murder, I'm concerned about a heart that has allowed something in there that could lead you to murder. I'm concerned when you become angry, and particularly, it's very grievous to God when you become angry with your brother, because you have now joined a sacred, holy family that above all else is supposed to be loving each other even as Christ has loved us.

And that is of paramount importance to God. And so Jesus said, I'm going to raise the bar, and you're going to have to go a lot further. You're going to have to do a lot better than the scribes and Pharisees in this one, or you won't even enter the kingdom of heaven.

And I explained that last time in great detail. I know that sounds like salvation by works. No, this is all salvation by grace that leads to good works that prove that you have the faith that saves.

Faith without works is dead, James said. And a lot of what James wrote is a commentary on what Jesus said in this very sermon. So Jesus said, I'm raising the bar.

Whoever shall be angry with his brother, you're guilty already in God's court. If you allow that anger to grow and develop to where you say a derogatory remark, you call a name to your brother, you call an empty head, well, you're guilty before the Supreme Court. Now, a lot of Christians say, well, as long as I avoid calling anybody raka and fool, I can call them anything else I want to.

Well, you're doing pretty good at keeping the letter of the law, but you're miserably failing at keeping the spirit of the law. The actual words, the terminology is not really the important thing. What it comes down to is what is coming out of your mouth that stems from your heart that's derogatory and demeaning towards a brother or sister in Christ.

Okay? And then lastly, he said, whoever shall say you fool, again, to his brother shall be guilty enough to go into the hell of fire. That's where we left off on our last broadcast. Now, that sounds shocking.

And I think too many people think Jesus is just joking there, just trying to shock us a little bit. He doesn't really mean that. But as we will see, he does really mean that, that there is indeed the chance, not a guarantee, but there is the chance that if you allow a relationship with a brother or sister in Christ to deteriorate to the point where that relationship is broken because of your venomous words of hatred, where you actually hate your brother, well, then you're guilty enough to go into the hell of fire.

You think about this for a second. John wrote in his epistle, we know we pass from death to life because we love the brethren. He that does not love abides in death and abides in darkness and so forth.

And the truth is not in him, all these things. And so John was trying to help his readers see and understand who's saved and who's not saved, who's in the kingdom and who's not in the kingdom. And he repeatedly lists three tests whereby one can tell whether or not he is in the kingdom or out of the kingdom.

And one of those three very important tests is, do you love the brethren? If you don't love the brethren, well, then you're not in the kingdom, you're not in the light. Well, Jesus is speaking to people here who are his disciples. That's what it said at the beginning of this sermon.

They were his disciples. He's warning them of hell. Now that's kind of contradicts a lot of teaching we're hearing today that if you're once saved, you're always saved, there's nothing you can do to forfeit your salvation.

Christ is warning his disciples that they could be guilty enough to go to hell. And so I'm going to stick with Jesus. I'm not going to follow anyone else.

If someone else says you can't lose your salvation, Jesus says you can, I'm going to stay with Jesus. I'd advise you to do the same thing and guard your heart against this type of thing. Now, a lot of Christians immediately, true Christians will become very concerned when they hear this interpretation.

And it's not an interpretation really, I'm just reading. All I've done is read what Jesus said, taking him honestly and seriously. And I'm going to keep on reading what he said and he reemphasizes this.

And they'll say, oh my goodness, I've allowed anger in my heart and I have some broken relationships. Well, remember what Jesus said, if your brother sins against you, go to him. And if he doesn't receive you, take one or two with you.

You know, those various steps of reconciliation found in Matthew chapter 18. But I don't want to go into that right now. But what I want to go into is this.

There have been a lot of broken relationships within the church world as a whole, because we have such a mixture of sheep and goats within the church. And the reason we have such a mixture is because the gospel has been so watered down. The bar has been lowered so low, oh my goodness, that everybody who's ever prayed a little prayer is sure that they're saved, sure that they're going to heaven.

And so we're just supposed to accept anybody in the church as if surely they're a Christian because they go to church. Oh yeah, they sing the songs with us and so forth. But they have really no real righteousness.

They've really never been born again and they persecute the sheep because they're the goats. They're really unrighteous. They're really unholy.

They don't really have the truth of the gospel. And so, believe me, true believers have difficulty relating to unbelievers. Why? Because the unbelievers hate the believers.

They persecute them. Now, we do our best to walk in love towards them, to be conciliatory, to walk in peace, to make peace with them. But if they're goats, they're goats.

And so there's going to be a conflict. Now, you'd think that this conflict would all happen outside the circle of the church and that's where it really ought to be happening, because we're supposed to expect persecution. Christ already said that.

Blessed are you when men persecute you and revile you. That happens from the world. You'd never expect that would happen within the church.

But again, the problem is the church is a mixture nowadays of sheep and goats. And the sheep are the sheep. They love Jesus.

They love each other. They're trying to love everybody. And oftentimes they're confused because the goats hate them so much.

The goats are so nasty. And they think to themselves, what is the problem here? Jesus says, boy, if I have this anger towards my brother, boy, there's these people that are just giving me a hard time in the church. I've tried to reconcile with them.

I can't reconcile with them. What's the problem here? You need to understand that phenomenon. And if you're in a church as Christ intended, which there are not as many of those as we'd like to see, the pastor is preaching the gospel.

He's preaching the truth. He's calling people to repentance. He's teaching sometimes from the Sermon on the Mount, setting the standard where Christ set the standard.

And those kinds of pastors tend to drive out the goats. Maybe you're blessed to be in a house church or something. And everyone there is an on fire, dedicated Christian.

Well, I just want to share with you that if you're not on fire and dedicated, you're not a Christian. So when we say, oh, he's an on fire Christian, that's kind of like double speak. You're saying the same thing twice.

That's like saying pizza pie. Pizza means pie. In Italian, I understand, it's like saying pie pie.

Well, an on fire Christian is like saying the same thing twice. Christians are on fire. If you're not on fire, you don't love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength.

You're not a Christian. You're going to hell. You're a goat.

So if you're blessed to be in a small fellowship, a church, or maybe a large church, I don't know. There are a few of those large churches where there's a whole lot of sheep there and there's a whole lot of spiritual activity and so forth going on there. You're very blessed and you're going to have sacred relationships with a lot of people.

You're going to just have deep, rich fellowship. If you're in a nice little Bible study or home fellowship where everybody is truly a sheep, true Christian, it's going to be a sacred relationship. In fact, read this in context of that thought.

Think of how sacred those relationships with those people are. If anything entered in, any little bit of anger, oh, you would be so alarmed. If your brother sinned against you, oh, you would rush to your brother and say, oh, you know, I value our relationship so much, but something has come between us.

We need to work this out and so forth. You'd be quick to reconcile. That's how it just almost automatically works in the true Church of Jesus Christ.

So please, please, please, please read this in that context. You've got to have it within that framework to have it make sense to you because so many of us, sheep, gracious, we've had conflicts with goats and there's been no reconciliation. Okay, well, we're going to take a little break here.

We'll be right back after this short side trip and we'll continue right on in Matthew chapter five. Directly behind me is the Mount of Olives. That's the mountain where Jesus ascended to heaven to the astonishment of his disciples who watched him go.

Jews believe that the Messiah is going to descend upon the Mount of Olives and so do Christians. We believe his name is Jesus, but we all believe it because of Zechariah 14 verse four, which says, and in that day, his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives will split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.

And that's why pious Jews want to be married on the Mount of Olives because when the Messiah comes back, they believe they'll be resurrected from their tombs and then they'll be led by him across the Kibben Valley into the Golden Gate to retake Jerusalem. Okay, welcome back. Let's continue in Matthew chapter five and keep reading now.

What Jesus said as he elaborated on this subject of our relationship with our brothers, he's raising the bar and he's warning us that if we would allow hatred in our hearts that would be verbalized out our mouths with venomous words towards a true brother or sister in Christ, he said, now listen closely, you shall be guilty enough to go into the hell of fire. So clearly that's a statement that shows how displeased God is when a relationship between brother and brother, sister and sister, brother and sister, I'm talking about spiritual family of Christ now, the true sheep, not the goats, the true sheep, if a relationship like that would deteriorate to that point, then you are in danger of going to hell and it's that serious in God's eyes. Okay, now in the previous segment we talked about how, don't be confused, he's not talking about relationships between sheep and goats.

No, Jesus told us we're going to have plenty of conflict with those who are not sheep and we're going to be persecuted and so forth and it's such a strange situation when you're persecuted by people within the church because you're an on fire Christian and they're not an on fire Christian, reality is you're a sheep, they're a goat. So you got to put it in that context as I said last time. But again, if there's no danger of a true believer forfeiting his salvation, then why would Jesus have ever said what he said right there? Okay, and he doesn't just stop there.

Listen, he elaborates, he says, if therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother and then come and present your offering. All right, what's he saying? He's saying you need to prioritize what God prioritizes.

What is important to God? Well, yeah, bringing your sacrifices is something that God said to do under the old covenant law. He said, but there's something more important. The second greatest commandment is to love your neighbor as yourself.

And so the scribes and Pharisees whom Jesus has already condemned just a few sentences earlier were really big on the sacrifice thing. And all the ritualistic aspects of the law, they made those the only things and they ignored all the moral and ethical aspects of the law that are so important to God. And so Jesus is

trying to say, don't be like the scribes and Pharisees.

They are straining out gnats and they're swallowing camels. What does he mean by that? You're making the primary thing secondary. You're making the secondary things primary.

If you find a little gnat in your soup, you get all excited and say, oh, there's a gnat in my soup. Waiter, waiter, get this gnat out of my soup. But if you find a camel in your soup, you just pick up the camel and swallow him whole.

Just ignoring the big things, which you shouldn't ignore and focusing on the little things. And so here's a reordering of the priorities of the disciples who have been watching the poor example of the scribes and Pharisees all their lives. And how does that apply to us? Well, we're not bringing animal sacrifices under the new covenant, but we are bringing, for example, the New Testament says a sacrifice of praise unto God.

That's one sacrifice we're bringing to him. We're also presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice unto him, holy and acceptable unto God and so forth. But let's use an example.

We're not going to the synagogue any longer. We're not going to the temple to present an offering, but many of us go to churches to present an offering of praise to God. Well, if on your way there, let's just say you're already in the church and as you're singing to God, oh, I love you, God, I love you, God, I love you, God.

But the whole time, you've got hatred in your heart towards a fellow believer, another true sheep within the church. Well, Jesus says, stop your singing and go to your brother right now and be reconciled. Let's say you're putting your tithe or something in the offering plate as it goes by saying, well, aren't I great? I'm bringing my tithe now before God.

And yet there's someone sitting in a pew on the other side of the church whom you refuse to sit near because of strife between you and that person. And you just hung up the phone in that person abruptly the other day. She says, you got the wrong priorities, man.

Forget about your tithe. Get over there and be reconciled to your brother. And again, please, please, please, I beg you, keep this one within the context of the true brothers of Christ.

Think about somebody that you are absolutely certain is a true follower of Christ. And I'm assuming that you are. But think of those that you're sure of.

Now, I know we don't want to judge everybody and write everybody out. But I'm just saying, judge them at least to this degree. Think of the person that you're absolutely certain you have no doubt this person's a sheep, this person's not a goat, this person's a true follower of Christ.

And you have a relationship with that person. Think about how sacred that relationship is. And if anything comes between you and that person, you are very quick to reconcile, are you not? Yes, because you value that relationship.

You realize it's a sacred relationship between two children of God. When you keep it in that context, it helps you an awful lot because we have all this confusion. Now, listen to what he says in verse 25, and we're going to read it contextually.

Not just read this verse by itself, but within the context of what we've just read. And only then does it make sense. Jesus says, make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you're with him on the way, in order that your opponent may not deliver you to the judge and the judge to the officer and you'd be thrown into prison.

Truly, I say to you, you shall not come out of there until you've paid up the last cent. Well, what is he saying? Well, within the context, he's already been talking about being guilty before the court, obviously God's court. He talked about being guilty before the Supreme Court, obviously not man's Supreme Court, but God's Supreme Court.

And then being guilty enough to be cast into the hell of fire. Well, who's the one who casts people into hell? It's God. People think, well, that's not God.

Oh, it is God. Jesus said, don't fear the one who can just kill your body. I'll tell you whom to fear.

Fear the one who after he is killed, can cast your body and your soul into hell. God throws people into hell. And so Jesus then is telling us how important it is to be reconciled.

That is, if you're at the altar presenting your offering, leave the offering there, go be reconciled to your brother first of all. And now verse 25, in that context, when he's talking about your opponent at law, it can only mean a brother with whom you have enmity, a brother with whom you need to reconcile. And he's trying to emphasize, it's important to reconcile before you stand before the judge.

Because when you get to the judge, your opponent, that is your brother with whom you have enmity, whom you have hatred in your heart against, he might deliver you to the judge and the judge to the officer and you'll be thrown into the prison. Well, that doesn't sound like heaven. And he's already warned about being guilty enough to be cast into hell because of the venomous words you spoke from your heart of hatred towards your brother, calling him a fool.

And then he says, truly I say to you, you shall not come out of there. Come out of where? Come out of that prison, whatever that prison is. Again, it doesn't sound like heaven to me.

And so if it's hell, he said, you won't get out of there until you've paid what you owe. Well, that reminds me of that parable Jesus told one time of the unforgiving servant, really quickly. You remember, guy owed this immense debt to his master.

His master forgave him when he begged for mercy. And that guy who had been forgiven him so much went out. He refused to forgive a brother.

When his master heard of his unforgiveness, he said, shouldn't have you had mercy on your fellow servant because I have so much mercy on you. And then he reinstated his formerly forgiven debt. He handed him over to the torturers until he would repay what he could never repay.

And then Jesus said, so shall your heavenly father do to you if you don't forgive your brother from your heart. Well, he's talking to true believers. Only true believers have God as their heavenly father.

So shall my heavenly father do to you if you don't forgive your brother. Well, if it's your brother, that means your spiritual brother in Christ. If you don't forgive him from your heart, this is what's going to happen to you.

God's going to be so angry. He's going to hand you over to the torturers until you repay what you can never repay and reinstate all your formerly forgiven debts. That's what he's saying here.

And just in other words, if you stand before the judge and you've got hatred in your heart towards a brother in Christ and that relationship is broken, well then you could be guilty enough to be thrown into the hell of fire. And here's the second warning. You could be thrown into the prison and you won't get out of there until you've paid up the last cent.

Maybe this is the place where some people get the idea of purgatory. But I'm telling you what, if you have to pay for all your sins, you got a long time in purgatory. And I don't believe in purgatory because it's not in the Bible.

There's a heaven and there's a hell. And I don't see anybody getting out of hell. So when he says you won't get out of there until you've paid the last cent, it doesn't look good.

Okay. So let's think about this as we close now. If there's a brother or sister in Christ with whom your relationship has been broken, again, again, a true brother or sister in Christ, then you need to work immediately towards reconciliation and go to that person.

And if they're a true brother and sister in Christ, they also will want to reconcile. If they refuse to meet with you, well, that's not a good sign for them in light of the things that Jesus has told us here. Okay.

And again, I'm sorry to say this, but I think that the gospel has been so watered down, the bars lowered so much that we've got so many goats mixed in the sheep. So many people who think they're going to heaven who are not going to heaven, and people have these relationships with their brothers and sisters in Christ, and they're not really relationships with brothers or sisters in Christ at all. And that's why there's so much strife and enmity and factions within churches, so much hatred, so many words spoken against each other.

Oh my goodness. That's the real problem. It's the foundations all wrong.

And so you've got to read this in context. The Bible says, live at peace with all men so far as depends upon you. So in other words, our enemies, we're going to love them.

We're going to pray for those who persecute us and so forth. But you can't be reconciled to them. They don't want to be reconciled.

If you go to an unbeliever and say to them, hey, you've sinned against me, and I want to talk to you about it. And they refuse to listen to you. You say, well, I'm going to take you.

I'm going to get one or two people from my church. They're going to say, sorry, buddy. I'm not interested in your church or anybody from your church.

You don't like it? It's my way or the highway. And then they're gone. So you can't reconcile with people who don't want to reconcile.

But here's my point. True followers of Christ, especially those who have read what we're just reading here, who understand how important it is before God to love each other. If there is something that comes between them, they want to reconcile.

And if they don't want to reconcile, oh, something is wrong. So go to that person humbly and say, look, there's something between us. We need to talk and say it in such a way that you don't offend them.

Say it with humility and with love. And if they're a true brother, they're going to listen to you. And you'll be glad that you did.

And you'll be particularly glad you did when you stand before Jesus. As what we've just read here is so obvious from that. Okay.

Thanks so much for joining me until next time. Keep following Jesus with all your heart. God bless you.

Hey, there's a whole lot more happening to the ministry of heaven's family than just this teaching broadcast. Heaven's family consists of three divisions. The first of which is shepherd serve.

And through the ministry of shepherd serve, we are literally equipping thousands of hungry pastors around the world with a vital biblical truth every single year. We do that in two ways. First of all, by pastors conferences.

They're happening almost every single month somewhere in the world. And secondly, through the translation and publication and distribution of a 500 page equipping manual called the disciple making minister. Pastors are just loving this book because it's full of information that helps equip them to be more fruitful for the Lord Jesus Christ.

That in a nutshell is the ministry of shepherd serve. The second division of heaven's family is known as orphans tier. And through the ministry of orphans tier, we are meeting the very pressing needs of over a thousand Christian orphans in over six different developing nations through a sponsorship program that is absolutely wonderful.

For just \$20 a month, you can provide food, clothing, shelter, school fees, and Christian nurture for a little follower price somewhere in the world. Hey, why don't you check out orphanstier.org. There's probably someone waiting there just for you. The third and the final division of heaven's family is known as I was hungry.

Obviously taken from the words of Jesus in Matthew chapter 25, where he warned about the future judgment of the Christ followers around this world in very poor nations. We're helping widows, orphans, lepers, refugees, victims of disasters. You can read all of our current projects at I was hungry.org. You can make a real difference.

If you'd like to get involved in all three of the divisions of heaven's family, you can invest in what is called the heaven's family mutual fund. It's a great idea. You can read about it at all three of our websites.

Thanks so much. God bless you.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/-O0lzGVHNoo.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-servant/sermon-on-the-mount-part-7/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net