

Congregation Yeshuat Tsion
Bible Study in Matthew 11/30-12/7/11

e. Yeshua draws out the true intent of the Torah (5:21-48).

i. On one hand, Yeshua's purpose is to demonstrate that the Torah can only be kept by faith (trusting obedience/ faithfulness) **because it is impossible to keep the Torah legalistically** (self-righteous, self-power). This is another one of Yeshua's radical statements—there is no one who does not break the commandments of the Torah (5:19).

ii. On the other hand, He demands that **his disciples/ citizens of the Kingdom of God must be “perfect”** as G-d is “perfect.” That is an *apparent* contradiction: it is impossible to keep the Torah vs. we must be perfect.

α. This takes us to Leviticus 19:2, “**Be holy** as I, your Lord am holy.” “Holy,” (kadosh=שׁוֹדֵךְ) means “to be set apart for him,” (e.g. Zech. 14:20-21), i.e. “to be designated as belonging to God.” Consequently, it is reflected in our daily behavior.

β. “Perfect” (telei-oi= τέλειοι, 5:48) does **not refer to the ideal** of wholeness/completion (shalem=שָׁלֵם), but the process of spiritual maturation/development. The writer of Hebrews uses this concept several times (Heb. 6:1—“let us press on to perfection,” also 2:10; 7:1; 10:1, 14)—Yeshua's atonement is able to perfect/complete our conscience.

iii. Yeshua addresses those who are self-righteous (Pharisees, 5:20) who are convinced that they keep the major commandments as well as the minor ones (“least of these commandments”). He now will demonstrate to them that they in fact do not even keep the major ones (the Ten Commandments).

α. He addresses several of the major ones:

“do not murder,” (5:21-26)

“do not commit adultery,” (5:27-32)

“do not break your oath,” (5:33-37)

“an eye for an eye,” (5:38-42)

“love your neighbor and hate your enemy,” (5:43-47)

β. Two of them come from the 10 commandments; 2 of them come from other regulations/commandments in the Torah. The last one is somewhat controversial because there isn't an explicit statement in the Torah like that. Rather, Yeshua is responding to a popular misconception that blended Lev. 19:18 (“Love your neighbor as yourself”) and Ps. 139:21-22 (“I hate those who hate you, O Lord”). Scripture does not teach us to hate our enemies.

iv. Yeshua begins with the most obvious of the ten commandments.

α. According to Jewish tradition, this is the 6th commandment, because the rabbis consider, “I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery,” (Exod. 20:2) as the first commandment (JNTC). Christian tradition considers it only a declaration, so that the first commandment is, “you shall not have any other gods,” (Exod. 20:3).

β. This commandment predates the Torah, going back to the Noahic Covenant (Gen. 9:5-6). The rationale for the prohibition of murder is that God created man and that He alone has the right to “murder,” (unless He gives authority to do so).

γ. Yeshua refers to “judgment,” and “council,” (Sanhedrin). The religious/civil law of the land was administered by the Sanhedrin—local ones had 3 or 23 judges; the supreme Sanhedrin in Jerusalem had 70 judges. The only exception were capital crimes which could only be administered by the Roman government.

δ. Yeshua “hooks” his listeners who would say, “no brainer” to his initial statement (5:21). The listeners would be complacent in stating that they were not murderers.

ε. Then, he goes to point out the deeper meaning of the Torah (“filling/ **establishing the true intent** of the commandment) by explaining that **the act itself begins with a murderous thought**/ hatred of one's fellow man. This is in keeping with the rest of Scripture that states that God is concerned about our inner/private

life (I Sam. 16:7; Ps. 139:23-23; Prov. 4:23).

ζ. What does it mean to be “angry” at one's fellow man ?

-Anger is a healthy emotion. It is appropriate to get angry at evil.

-God becomes angry. Man has given God ample reason for him to be angry. Scripture (in Hebrew) has 8 words that describes different shades of his anger.

-Yeshua is referring to inappropriate anger, perhaps anger that is baseless, or anger that is out of control. Self control is part of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:23).

-Paul refers to the appropriate anger (it is an imperative [command], perhaps meaning “when you are angry, this is how it needs to be expressed, NIV). “Do not sin,” clearly refers to “nursing” one's anger (CJB, Eph. 4:26).

η. Yeshua makes the same point. Inter personal conflict (out of control anger) has to be addressed in a timely fashion). He expresses vividly the consequences for not doing so:

-Being **outraged** with one's brother without cause--results in “**judgment**,” (generic/non-specific)

-Insulting one's brother with the Aramaic “Raca” (literally, “empty/air-head, worth spit”)--deserves judgment before the Sanhedrin (in Jerusalem)

-Saying to someone, “You fool,” [moros=μωρος] can land someone in Gehenna (fires of God's judgment). Scripture describes “the fool” [naval=נבל] not as someone who is mentally, but spiritually deficient (Ps. 14:1; 53:1-illustrated by Mr. Fool=Nabal, I Sam. 25:1-39).

By Yeshua's definition, all of us are worthy of hell because of our hateful/disrespectful attitudes towards other people. None of us are guiltless in how we express anger towards others.

θ. Yeshua does not leave the listeners hopeless. He provides the answer from the Torah and intensifies it.

-He refers to the “offering/gift,” the peace/fellowship offering (zevach sh'lamim=זֶבַח שְׁלָמִים) which was purely voluntary and brought either as thank offering [for deliverance from evil], a fulfillment of a vow, or a free will offering [Lev. 7:12, 19].

-His instruction (torah) is radical. He commands his followers to put a very high priority on the reconciliation with others-so much so, that they must **interrupt an act of worship to address conflict**. “Before the altar,” clearly implies being in God's Presence.

-For Yeshua's listeners, this was particularly radical because a worshipper may have devoted an entire week to come and bring a gift offering to the Lord. “Before the altar,” clearly implies being in God's Presence.

-We see this set of priorities in another sacrifice, the “guilt offering” or “offering of compensation” (asham=אָשָׁם. defined in Lev. 6:1-7). The asham (against a person) required that restitution be made before an offering be brought to the Lord.

ι. Rabbinic Judaism incorporated that principle into its observance of Yom Kippur (Yoma 8:9). The rituals of YK today only apply to sins committed against God. Sins committed against one's fellow man have to be addressed prior to YK.

λ. This is one of Yeshua's very pointed instructions (often ignored by his disciples) on the primacy of restoring broken relationships (Mt. 18:15-18; Lk. 17:3). The rest of the NT devotes much attention to the need for healthy relationships.

μ. Yeshua also points out that it is **good common sense to restore broken relationships in a timely fashion.**

v. This area is a very crucial one-we can either learn to apply the principles of Scriptures and receive the healing/maturation we need, or, we can choose to stay unhealed and retard our inward growth. This **crucial principles are now summarized:**

1. The facts need to be laid out-this is what I have been experiencing (Lk. 17:3->"rebuke your brother" means lay out the facts before him/her). "You offended me by doing xyz," (Mt. 18:15). This will be a challenge-none of us like to hear how we offended someone else

2. The truth needs to be communicated in love, as best as you can (Eph. 4:15). "Love" in this context means wanting God's best for the other person.

3. The goal is not just to get things off your chest, but "to win your brother over," (Mt. 18:15). That means

attacking the problem, not the person.

4. We approach the discussion with humility—none of us have all the right on our side. We are fellow strugglers. The only one who has all the facts is the Righteous Judge (Rom. 14:4, 13, 19).

5. Yeshua demands that we commit to forgiving each other (Mt. 18:21-22). We ask for forgiveness where we have sinned; we grant forgiveness where we have received an offense.

6. Timeliness-Yeshua requires that interpersonal conflict receive a very high priority (Mt. 5:24; also Paul in Eph. 4:26). This is true, regardless whether we are the offended party (Mt. 18:15; Lk. 17:3), or, whether we are the offenders (Mt. 5:24).

7. The result=Shalom (peace, completion, relational wholeness, prosperity, health--inside and out