

# YE HAVE HEARD ... BUT I SAY

## MATTHEW 5:21-48

Text:

Introduction:

We come now to the beginning of another new section or point in this sermon. To understand this point of the sermon it is necessary for us to understand the connection between what the Lord begins to say in verse 21 and what and what has been said earlier.

Keep in mind that in the beginning of this sermon the Lord outlined clearly the principles of Christianity.

*Matthew 5:1-12*

*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, [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.*

After giving these principles He then gives us a picture or and illustration of a Christian.

*Matthew 5:13-16*

*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.*

We must keep these things in mind as we progress through this sermon. Keep in mind as we looked at several weeks ago at how the principles built one upon another.

After illustrating or giving the picture of what a Christian is to be, the Lord then stated that He did not

come to destroy the law but to fulfill it. In this point of the sermon Christ gives us the theme of this message.

*Matthew 5:20*

*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.*

The theme is our righteousness as compared to the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees.

The scribes and the Pharisees were the teachers of the law, and the religious things. They decided what was right and what was wrong.

The Lord begins this point of the message with this statement,

*Matthew 5:21-22*

*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.*

He repeats this expression or one similar to it another five times.

*Matthew 5:27-28*

*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.*

*Matthew 5:31-32*

*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.*

*Matthew 5:33-34*

*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:*

*Matthew 5:38-39*

*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.*

*Matthew 5:43-44*

*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;*

What point was the Lord was making here that He repeated this expressions six times?

The point is not so much in the details or the letter of the law but rather in the principles and attitude concerning the law.

## **1. PAST REFLECTION - “YE HAVE HEARD THAT IT HATH BEEN SAID”**

A. Who is it that has said?

The Lord was referring to the teaching of the scribes and the Pharisees.

Illustration:

The condition of the Jews in our Lord’s Day was remarkably like that of the people in this country before the reformation. Remember that in those days the Scriptures were not translated into English, but were read Sunday by Sunday in Latin to people who did not understand Latin. The results were that people

were entirely dependent for their knowledge of the Scriptures upon the priests who read the Bible to them who claimed to be expounding it. What the reformation did in a sense was to give the Bible to the people. It enabled them to read the Scriptures for themselves and to see the false teaching and the false representations of the gospel which had been given to them.

The position when our Lord was speaking here was very similar to that. The children of Israel during their captivity in Babylon had ceased to know the Hebrew language. Their language when they came back and at this time was Aramaic. They were not familiar with Hebrew so they could not read the Law of Moses. The result was that they were dependent for any knowledge of the law upon the teaching of the Pharisee and the scribes.

The result was that what these people thought of as the law was in reality not the law itself, but a representation of it given by the scribes and the Pharisees.

There had been added to the law various interpretations and traditions during the centuries that it was essential for the Lord to give to these people a true account of what the law really did say and teach.

Again the analogy of what happened in the country before the reformation will help us see the exact position. The Roman Catholic teaching before the reformation was a false representation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It said that an individual had to believe in the sacraments to be saved, and that apart from the Church and priesthood there was no salvation. That was how salvation was being taught and it still being taught in the Catholic church. Tradition and various additions had clouded the simple gospel.

## **2. PRESENT REVELATION - "BUT I SAY UNTO YOU"**

A. Who is it that is now speaking?

The Lord ... The author of the Bible

## **3. PRACTICAL RELEVANCE**

*Matthew 5:47*

*And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?*

- A. Go the extra mile.
- B. Turn the other cheek.
- C. Give not only the coat but also the cloak.

Close:

Our righteousness should exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.