

CITYWEST CHURCH

DEEP DIVE - SOTM #3

YOU HAVE HEARD IT SAID...

“Don’t misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose. 18 I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God’s law will disappear until its purpose is achieved. 19 So if you ignore the least commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But anyone who obeys God’s laws and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

20 “But I warn you—unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven!

Teaching about Anger

21 “You have heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.’^[c] 22 But I say, if you are even angry with someone,^[d] you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot,^[e] you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone,^[f] you are in danger of the fires of hell.^[g]

23 “So if you are presenting a sacrifice^[h] at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, 24 leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.

25 “When you are on the way to court with your adversary, settle your differences quickly. Otherwise, your accuser may hand you over to the judge, who will hand you over to an officer, and you will be thrown into prison. 26 And if that happens, you surely won’t be free again until you have paid the last penny.^[i]

Teaching about Adultery

27 “You have heard the commandment that says, ‘You must not commit adultery.’^[j]
28 But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 So if your eye—even your good eye^[k]—causes you to lust, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. 30 And if your hand—even your stronger hand^[l]—causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

Teaching about Divorce

31 “You have heard the law that says, ‘A man can divorce his wife by merely giving her a written notice of divorce.’^[m] 32 But I say that a man who divorces his wife, unless she has been unfaithful, causes her to commit adultery. And anyone who marries a divorced woman also commits adultery.

Teaching about Vows

33 “You have also heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not break your vows; you must carry out the vows you make to the LORD.’^[n] 34 But I say, do not make any vows! Do not say, ‘By heaven!’ because heaven is God’s throne. 35 And do not say, ‘By the earth!’ because the earth is his footstool. And do not say, ‘By Jerusalem!’ for Jerusalem is the city of the great King. 36 Do not even say, ‘By my head!’ for you can’t turn one hair white or black. 37 Just say a simple, ‘Yes, I will,’ or ‘No, I won’t.’ Anything beyond this is from the evil one.

Teaching about Revenge

38 “You have heard the law that says the punishment must match the injury: ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’^[o] 39 But I say, do not resist an evil person! If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also. 40 If you are sued in court and your shirt is taken from you, give your coat, too. 41 If a soldier demands that you carry his gear for a mile,^[p] carry it two miles. 42 Give to those who ask, and don’t turn away from those who want to borrow.

Teaching about Love for Enemies

43 “You have heard the law that says, ‘Love your neighbor’^[q] and hate your enemy. 44 But I say, love your enemies!^[r] Pray for those who persecute you! 45 In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike. 46

If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. 47 If you are kind only to your friends,^[5] how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that. 48 But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Matt 5:17-48 (NLT)

Well, here we are in week 3 of our Deep Dive into the Sermon on the Mount.

We started with the Beatitudes, where Jesus flipped the script on what it means to be blessed. Then we were reminded that we're called to live visibly—salt and light—in a world that's decaying and dark.

Now Jesus shifts gears.

This next section, Matthew 5:17–48, is intense. Let's be honest—it's not the kind of stuff you put on a coffee mug. It's the part where Jesus says things like:

- *"You've heard it said... but I say..."*
- *"If you're angry, you're guilty."*
- *"If you look at someone with lust, you've committed adultery."*
- *"Love your enemies. Pray for those who persecute you."*

*Jesus takes the law and doesn't water it down—He **turns the volume up**.*

And this is exactly what makes this part of the sermon so vital for us at Citywest, especially as we ask: What does it mean to say "Here I am, send me" in the everyday?

"Here I am, send me."

What kind of people does God send?

Not just informed people, but **transformed people**

Let's get into it.

1. ANGER → RECONCILIATION

“You have heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.’^[c] 22 But I say, if you are even angry with someone,^[d] you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot,^[e] you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone,^[f] you are in danger of the fires of hell.

Matt 5:21-22 (NLT)

The world says: “Just don’t kill anyone, and you’re doing fine.”

Jesus says: “Let’s deal with the anger underneath the surface.”

How many of us carry unspoken anger? Passive aggression? Silent bitterness?

Jesus says, Go. Reconcile. Break bread, share a meal Leave your gift at the altar if needed.

Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires.

James 1:20 (NLT)

2. LUST → PURE HEART

“You have heard the commandment that says, ‘You must not commit adultery.’^[g] 28 But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Matt 5:27-28 (NLT)

Again, Jesus goes deeper. It’s not just about what you do—but what you desire.

He’s not demonizing attraction—He’s confronting objectification.

Jesus is calling us to treat people as sacred, not consumable.

Jesus pulls us back to the Genesis story here, its not how far can I go before I get in trouble, but that all people are of inherit value, made in the image of God.

People are not a means to an end.

3. DIVORCE → COVENANT FAITHFULNESS.

“You have heard the law that says, ‘A man can divorce his wife by merely giving her a written notice of divorce.’ 32 But I say that a man who divorces his wife, unless she has been unfaithful, causes her to commit adultery. And anyone who marries a divorced woman also commits adultery.

Matt 5:31-32 (NLT)

*In Jesus’ day, **divorce had become casual**—especially for men. Some rabbinic schools allowed divorce for virtually any reason: burning dinner, showing disrespect, or even aging. As long as a man gave a certificate, he was considered justified.*

*But Jesus challenges this **consumer mindset** toward relationships.*

*He speaks into a broken system, not to shame people, but to **restore the value of covenant**. He lifts marriage out of cultural convenience and puts it back in the category of **sacred commitment**.*

*Jesus doesn’t ignore the pain of broken relationships—He knows betrayal, unfaithfulness, and sin damage trust. But what He confronts is the **attitude that treats people as disposable**.*

He calls His followers to mirror God’s faithfulness in their relationships.

We are called not just to avoid divorce—but to embody covenant faithfulness in a culture of convenience.

4. OATHS → SIMPLE INTEGRITY.

“You have also heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not break your vows; you must carry out the vows you make to the LORD.’ 34 But I say, do not make any vows! Do not say, ‘By heaven!’ because heaven is God’s throne.

Matt 5:33-34 (NLT)

Jesus says, let your yes mean yes.

In other words, live with such authenticity that people trust you without needing extra promises.

You don’t need to add: “I swear on my life” or “I promise this time.”

Let your character speak louder than your claims.

Your words carry weight when they are followed through.

This is a key to living a simple life.

5. RETALIATION → RADICAL GRACE.

“You have heard the law that says the punishment must match the injury: ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’^[Q] 39 But I say, do not resist an evil person! If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also.

Matt 5:38-39 (NLT)

*Jesus isn't asking us to be doormats—He's calling us to **interrupt the cycle of revenge**.*

He's saying: Respond with such mercy that it disarms hostility.

You don't have to clap back. You don't have to win the argument. Sometimes, the most powerful witness is quiet grace.

Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.

Romans 12:21 (NLT)

6. LOVE FOR FRIENDS → LOVE FOR ENEMIES.

“You have heard the law that says, ‘Love your neighbor’^[Q] and hate your enemy. 44 But I say, love your enemies!^[Q] Pray for those who persecute you!

Matt 5:43-44 (NLT)

Jesus closes this section by expanding love beyond comfort and beyond logic.

This is the heartbeat of the Kingdom.

Love that goes farther than culture expects.

Love that looks like Jesus on the cross.

In closing:

“The Sermon on the Mount is not a list of requirements, but a description of the life of a people gathered by and transformed by grace.”

— Dietrich Bonhoeffer

But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Matt 5:48 (NLT)

What God **commands and demands**, He **empowers and enables** that it might be accomplished. As one person has phrased it...

You can't. He never said you could.
But He can and He always said He would.

CONNECT GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think Jesus focuses so much on what's going on in the heart—not just outward actions? How does that challenge the way we evaluate ourselves and others?
2.)“Love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!”) What might it look like to actually live this out today? Is there someone you find it hard to love—and how could you start praying for them?
3. Why do we sometimes feel the need to over-explain or over-promise? What helps build trust in our words?

