

# **Dr. Bill Mounce, Sermon on the Mount Lecture 8, Matthew 5:31 and following, Acts of Greater Righteousness, Part 3**

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This is Dr. Bill Mounce in his teaching on the Sermon on the Mount. This is session 8, Matthew 5:31 and following, Acts of Greater Righteousness, Part 3.

You know, while Matt's doing that, I'm going to answer your question. I already forgot who asked it.

NIV. Oh, yes. You understand. Let me say something about the NIV and whether the teen IV has permanently affected it.

From the beginning, the NIV has in its charter to constantly update, and so the committee is met every single summer for at least a week, always. And so, the desire to update, what isn't something new, it's what they've always done. And somewhere back, well before I was on the committee, the argument was made that language is changing so much that we need to start looking at changing the NIV.

And they, in my mind, did a terrible job. It's the he and the man that they had to get rid of, so they switched to plurals. And so, Revelation 3.20 is a potluck.

I will come in with them and eat with them, and they will be with me. And they shifted things to plurals, I mean to second persons from third. I think they made a lot of mistakes.

So, when they were trying, and a lot of people said, well, what's the point? The point is that English is changing, and if you don't think English is changing, you really do not know what's going on in the English-speaking world. It may not be changing in your context, but it's changing everywhere. Don Carson was famous for saying, if I took the old NIV, Don Carson loves to go into secular schools and debate people.

He sets these huge debates up. And he said, if I read an NIV 84, who had a he and a him, I've lost the debate. It's all over.

My daughter, the PhD student, is always telling me the latest third declension pronoun someone's made up. Z is the next one. Z-H-E.

Stupid word. So, they did the TNIV, not because they're liberal, not because they're feminists. My goodness, Doug Moo is published profusely in a complementary position.

But there are all kinds of accusations of being liberal and feminist, and absolutely none of them are true. Absolutely none of them are true. They believe, and they have the evidence to prove it because I've seen the evidence that language is changing.

Worldwide language. NIV was always written for the world's English. Not southern English, not northern English, the world's English.

Well, the TNIV was just absolutely horrific. I was one of the original signers against it. It just, it was so bad.

And what happened in the debate is that people started questioning the translator's motives. You'd never question motives. You don't know what they are.

In an academic debate, it doesn't matter what the motives are. You have to deal with the facts. And so I'm the only person to get my name off that list of protesters.

I would take it off, so I'm going to put it back on. I'd take it off and put it back on. So when Moe Gerken, president of Zondervan, said the NIV is dying, we have to do something, here's what we're going to do.

We're going to kill it. We're going to kill the TNIV. And come October 1st, I don't care where the committee is, that's the 2011, we're going to come on the 400th anniversary of the King James.

So, they invited me in as a quote, friendly critic because I'd been 10 years on the ESV. My introduction to the NIV was three weeks locked up in Whistler; if you got to get locked up somewhere, Whistler in BC is a good place to get locked up, and you had to take care of all the gender language. And it was pretty harsh.

It was pretty harsh. But we did it, and then that became the 2011. There are people that love the 2011, there are people that hate it, it all depends upon how you handle the word they.

And English teachers don't like it. Zondervan spent a quarter of a million dollars with the Collins Dictionary people, and they asked the question in broad English: where is English going? And it is irrefutable evidence that they are becoming the pronoun of choice. I've seen the data, and it's unassailable.

Unassailable. It's becoming correct English, just like it was in Shakespeare's day. I use them all the time when I speak.

Nobody picks it up. I've used it with you guys, and I doubt you've even picked it up. Now, here's the problem.

Written language, spoken language is always ahead of written language. So, what we hear, when we see it, it can be a little more jarring. But we tend to handle them okay in written text.

You get a few places like, anyone who has ears to hear let them hear. There's the problem. Once you commit to them, you've committed to them.

Them's only plural. English has not shifted enough to make them indefinite. And so one of my proposals is, I'm going to go back and say, anyone who has ears to hear, let them hear.

In English, their only antecedent is the ears. It can't be anything else grammatically. But that's not what the text means.

It's anyone, let anyone hear, right? But because you have ears, plural, you hit them; the them goes back to ears. And there is no word themselves, although it will be created, I have no doubt. Now, in 10 years, this debate will be gone.

I mean, the rate of change in our language with pronouns is astronomical. Maybe down here, it'll definitely be, you all will be the last to change. I mean, all the numbers show that, all the numbers show that.

But man, if you want to communicate on a college campus, you go to Atlanta; you want to communicate on a college campus, you better not be saying ye because they will shut you down like that. And it's neither good nor bad; the language changes. Would it be nice if the language never changed? Absolutely.

Has there ever been a language in the history of the world that hasn't changed? Nope. Not even Chinese. I have always thought that Chinese has been the same for the last 3,000 years.

My Chinese friends just laughed at me. So, you really don't know Chinese at all. It's undergone massive changes.

The problem is that the TNIV was so poorly done, and there was what appeared to be lying and deceit, that it's carried over. The NIV is still the number one Bible in terms of sales. The NLT is really gaining ground because the NIV kind of plays this uncomfortable role between the ESV and the NLT.

NLT is what's called a natural language. They don't care at all how many Greek words there are, whether they're participles or whatever. They're just going to say it like you speak in English.

The ESV is that we don't care that much about meaning; we're just going to stick to the right words. There's value in both. The NIV is in an uncomfortable position.

So, for us, the question is, can we wait out the evolution in the language? Because guesses are in about 10 years, the language will have fully changed. We'll see. I could be wrong.

But so yeah, the TNIV costs out of it millions and millions and millions of dollars, no doubt. And it was a terrible translation, I think. Since the ESV claims to follow it, sometimes it's essentially good.

They are trying to take into consideration some of its facts, maybe not the pronoun facts, but the fact that the word means in today's language what it means. Yeah, there's some attempt of that. And in the RSV, there were a lot of times there would be the word man when there is no anthropos in Greek.

We got rid of a couple thousand male-oriented references in the RSV that weren't reflected in the Greek. So, the ESV tried to be sensitive, but it used what's called anaphoric he. It uses he to refer back to something regardless of its gender, which makes translation much easier.

But I mean, the ESV is designed for people that are willing to study. And the meaning is that if we thought that our translation was going to lead to misunderstanding, we were very quick to interpret. The most interpretive the ESV gets is those who were born of God do not, ESV says, continue in sin.

This is a perfectly legitimate translation of the present tense, but we were concerned enough about perfectionism that we didn't want to say sin and give fuel to that. But other than that, the ESV really tries to go as long as it conveys some meaning word for word. So, anyway, translation is an amazing process.

It's vastly more intricate than even I, as a Greek professor, ever knew. There are so many things you have to take into consideration. And the fragmentation of the English language right now is very, very difficult.

Very difficult. Answer your question. Tell him the TNIV was properly killed and buried, and it has no effect on the ongoing work on the TNIV. I have never once heard someone say, well, we did this in the TNIV in terms of gender language.

This is what we did in the TNIV, so we really should stick to it. I've never heard, I've been on the committee four years now. That's never been an argument.

There were a lot of good changes exegetically in the TNIV, unrelated to gender language. And most of those have been allowed to stand because they were good changes. But there's no push on the committee, because actually the people that pushed really hard, this is, am I being recorded, Matt? Okay.

Committees change over time, and I'm very comfortable in the TNIV right now. Let me give you an example of how hard translation is. Ehud.

Who is the judge who stabbed the fat guy? Ehud did the stabbing, right? Eglon was the king, and Ehud was the judge. Okay. I just said, and I forgot what you said. Eglon is the king, right? Do you know that Eglon wasn't fat? It is not what the word means.

It can't be what the word means because you know who also was described with the same Hebrew word? Daniel, vegetarian. The word means a stud.

It means a robust man. A man who can handle himself in a fight. Strong.

And see, that's really important because the judge didn't kill an obese slob kind of image. He switched sides, well, he was left-handed, so his sword was on the side they weren't checking. And he went after a warrior.

And he rammed him through, those knives are so long, about a foot and a half came out his back. Now, here's what makes it difficult. One is the tradition, everyone knows Eglon's fat, right? Everyone knows that.

But if you were in that day and age, if you were rich, would you be skinny? No. I remember going to Hawaii for the first time and a gal was talking, she was overweight by 20, 30 pounds, and she said, I know I look overweight, you know what? I'm just right in our culture. Just right.

Americans are fixated on anorexic physiques. But rich Old Testament warrior kings didn't have that fixation. So, did he have fat on him? Yes.

Here's the hard part. The fat that closed around the sword wasn't external fat; it was internal fat. It was his organs that closed around the sword.

Now you translate that. This is one of the more interesting illustrations, but it does show how phenomenally complicated translation work can become. And it's why I enjoy it so much.

Okay, you had asked about the Septuagint of Deuteronomy 24:1. It's kind of weird, but here, let me go word for word. But if anyone takes a woman or wife and lives with her, marries her, and it's got a verb here, we'll ignore it. And if she is not found grace before him if she doesn't curry favor in his eyes is the idea, and he finds in her a, and here's the word, shameful, unpresentable, indecent, or unmentionable.

That's what the word means—an indecent pragma, thing, then the divorces. So, the answer is the Septuagint is equally vague.

Eskimo means, again, it's generally used as something that is not done openly, displayed, or discussed in reserved society because it's considered shameful, unpresentable, indecent, or unmentionable. And it's often used relative to sexual activity. But again, it's a very, very broad term.

Okay. Hey, let me go through my last two pages of notes, and it'll be easier. Otherwise, I might be referring to them in the discussion.

And then we can talk about stuff. The point historically was to control divorce and a certain kind of remarriage. That's the thrust.

Well, the primary thrust was don't get divorced. Number one, it's only if there's some indecency in her. In other words, it is not a no-fault divorce state.

I've got a friend who, after a year of marriage, found out his wife is having an affair. He refused to, even though he could divorce her, he refused to. He was not going to end the marriage.

And she fought for five years to try to get him to divorce her. He absolutely refused to divorce her. She finally moved, I think it was to Missouri, so she could do a no-fault divorce and divorced him.

He never signed the papers. Okay. That kind of no-fault divorce is what Deuteronomy and Jesus is concerned about.

There has to be an indecency. And as I said, secondly, divorce certificate protects her from unjust charges. Understanding that that word in 1 Corinthians 7, that she is not bound, is a legal term that means divorced and eligible for remarriage.

In Roman law, if someone was going to get divorced and the husband wanted to say she was this kind of person and, therefore, nobody should ever marry her, it had to be stipulated in the divorce document. All the documentation for this is in David's book. So, when it says not bound, it means she is no longer married and is eligible for remarriage.

That is what the legal term means—a very, very important point. And again, the point that Jesus is making is the solemnity and seriousness of marriage.

You cannot move in and out of marriage, which is what the Deuteronomy passage is actually about, right? If you get married, you get divorced, you get married again, you get divorced, you can't go back and marry the first wife. So that actually is what Deuteronomy is about, prohibiting a certain kind of remarriage. So, this was the passage that the Pharisees had to deal with.

We talked about that. The translation in the ESV makes her commit adultery. Ah, I remember the discussion.

Take a step back. The old translation in the NIV 84 causes her to become an adulteress. Terrible translation.

Why? Because it describes her as living in an ongoing state of adultery. This causes her to become an adulteress. So, the ESV, we change it to make her commit adultery, a single act that is forgivable, not an ongoing state.

And then the new NIV changes it to being a victim of adultery, trying to get away from the idea that this act moves you into a perpetual, unforgivable state of sin. So that's not what Jesus is saying. Yeah, the end of the new NIV is anyone who divorces his wife except for sexual immorality, which makes her the victim of adultery.

So, we're not, and who was it? As you know, Quarles quotes Craig Blomberg's commentary at this point. He said there's a difference between the act of adultery and entering into that and then living in that condition. And he says this is not an unforgivable sin.

And there's a difference between committing adultery, in this case, committing adultery in remarriage, when you're still in your mind, married, in God's eyes, you're married to the first, and then living perpetually in a state of sin. That gal who called me at Gordon-Conwell was being told she lives perpetually in a state of sin. And that's, I just don't think that's what the Bible says.

Here's the real problem. How do we apply the exception clause, right? I mean, we can preach our hearts out about the sanctity of marriage. We can hire counselors to work in our churches to help people make stronger marriages.

We can bring in ministries that are really good at helping ministries. I mean, we can do all the positive stuff, but there's going to be divorce. What does that mean? And I am comfortable expanding out as long as it's sexual.

I will argue that point strongly that porneia is any kind of sexual activity that is outside the scope of marriage. Pornography clearly is a sexual activity, right? That's what's going on in pornography. I'm just looking at dirty pictures.

It is a sexual activity. The question then is, what about abuse? Verbal abuse, physical abuse, and whatnot. And my position on that, and I know it's a debatable point, is that the first stage is separation.

We have a good friend whose husband has been emotionally abusive for 10 years. He finally had an affair, and his wife had an affair, and his wife is free, biblically, to divorce him. But the question is, if he hadn't had an affair, would 10 years of abuse constitute a legitimate violation of the marriage covenant? And my counsel at that point was, that's what separation is for.

That women are so phenomenally abused. Men are phenomenally hand-picked. Women are phenomenally abused.

And when it comes to the issue of physical safety, that's what legal separation is all about. And I don't know how you feel about that, but it's one step short of divorce. It prevents the harm, and it jogs the husband into realizing he's now powerless.

And I think that has real value of saying, okay, I can't, I mean, this man was reading his wife's texts, was reading her emails, was absolutely controlling everything. Would not let her go anywhere without him. And I don't know what's going to happen in their marriage, but that's part of the advantage of separation, that it jogs the husband, he loses power, and he has to look at the situation a little more clearly.

So anyway. So, comments or questions? Difficult issue. When I was struggling with this, I called a very good friend of mine, he's got a PhD in New Testament, knows Greek a lot better than I do.

He's been a constant resource for me and had gone through a very, very ugly divorce, I was told. And I said, okay, surely if anyone, he would know how to handle the biblical data. So, I called him, and I said, okay, how do you handle the exception clause, blah, blah.

And he says, oh Bill, he said, the pain was simply so intense, you don't care. You just want the pain to stop. I said, so there was no sexual infidelity on your wife's part? No.

It was just a horrible marriage that was so painful that both of us just wanted the pain to go away. So, you know this, right? I mean, I'm not saying anything you don't know. Comments or questions? I think a straightforward reading is that if you're divorced for non-biblical reasons, you're still married in God's eyes.

So, when you remarry, you commit adultery. It's the act. That act, again, is interpretive; that act does, in fact, sever the marriage covenant of the first marriage. And so, a second marriage is not living in sin.

He needs to deal with what happened, ask for forgiveness, and move on. I think that's what the text is saying. It's really hard to put all the verses together, but that's the best I can come up with.

God does not care about our paper. And when you make your marriage vows, you're married until there's death or there's sexual infidelity. God does care about our work.

And when you break the covenant, you break your oath; you break your vow. I don't say that pretending that you did that. I mean, when you divorce, you're divorced whether you had a right to or not.

Well, I can't handle the text with that argument, though. Because if you get divorced for non-biblical reasons, then marrying a second time is not an act of adultery. And that's what our passage is saying, right? Marries another, commits adultery.

Isn't that what it says? Yeah. And so that has to be handled in how we do this. Well, that's the question.

What breaks the marriage covenant? That's why I think it's so fascinating. It's really hard to come up with a really ironclad argument as to what marriage is. Okay, here's the situation.

I worked my way through school taking wedding pictures, and I was taking pictures in the church, and we were downstairs afterwards during the reception, and the pastor came down and said, will you come up and take a picture for me? I went, okay. He said, yeah, there's a couple upstairs getting married and they want a picture. This is molding green.

I said okay. So, I went upstairs, and it was a young couple. She was pregnant.

They were, wow, they had to be 16. The pastor explained that she had just told her folks that she was pregnant. Her daddy went and bought a shotgun and is looking to kill him.

And they figure if they're married, he won't kill his son-in-law. And they needed a picture to prove that they were married. Okay.

Were those two married? I mean, if you go to Africa and go through a wedding ceremony, it's a village event, right? It goes for a whole week. There's a giant party,

and at the end of the party, you're married. They would look at that ceremony and go, of course, you're not married.

I mean, just because you said a couple of things, that doesn't make you married. And we look at the other ceremony and go, wait a minute, where's the saying? I mean, where's the vow or whatever? The shotgun means, yes, yes, yes. Yeah.

I think it's the vow. I think the vow is what creates the marriage covenant. The sex is certainly the sign of the oath.

But if you went through a ceremony, said your vows, and you were driving to Virginia Beach or wherever for your honeymoon, you got in a car accident and killed, would you die married? Yeah, I would say they were married. So, for me, it's the oath. So, he called the first five husbands.

Yeah, she definitely was having sex with the next man, but she wasn't married to him. I'm sure Hugenberger would have an answer to that, but I don't know what it would be. Yeah, until further notice.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Right, right, yeah. Yeah. Oh yeah, our culture is very, very confused with marriage.

But that's what happens when you kick God out. When I was listening on BT, biblical trading, when Bruce was doing the class on Proverbs, he made a fascinating point. He goes, until you have universal knowledge, you cannot have absolute knowledge.

That there is no absolute knowledge unless you know everything. And, of course, the only person who knows everything is God. That's what's wrong with us saying, well, here are two men; they love each other, and they should be able to get married.

They don't have complete knowledge. And therefore, they can't have absolute knowledge, saying it's okay. Only God has absolute knowledge.

Therefore, only God can state absolute knowledge. And you know, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden, that's what this is, right? It's God who decides what's right and what's wrong, what's good and what's bad. That's His call.

And the reason He can do that is He has absolute knowledge. He sees the whole picture. Therefore, we have to submit to His statements and His authority because we simply don't know enough to counter Him.

But in this day and age, that doesn't mean anything. Yeah, some people do. Some people do.

Yeah. You know, part of me thinks if a man and a man, or a woman and a woman, or a man and two women, I mean, you know these arguments, right? If the gay movement is okay, then why limit it to two? Why not three? Why not a boy? Why not a dog? I mean, once you throw out universal knowledge, you can have no absolute knowledge, and therefore, everything's wide open. So, what do you think about the divorce? What do you think about this? How wide are you comfortable going with a thing of indecency? Oh, oh.

Yeah, yeah. Okay, I'm sorry. It took me a second.

Yeah, that really wasn't. Too late. You said, yes, that's on tape.

Yeah, I mean, I keep thinking, I don't think most men understand the violence against women. I mean, I didn't until I had a daughter, and Kirsten's made me very sensitive to this. She went to a phenomenally liberal school, the University of Oregon.

My goodness. She came home talking about male-bodied and female-bodied people. Claimed she'd been taught that one out of 12 people's chromosomes are mixed up, and they're in the wrong body.

I went, oh, please. So, I called a doctor friend of mine and said that genetic abnormalities are one out of 147,000, and that includes people where there's no gender confusion. So, I told Kirsten, and she said, oh, I got snookered, didn't I? Yeah, you did.

But you know, this is what's being taught in California, right? If you're a first-grade boy, if you decide you're a girl, you can go in the girls' bathroom. Thank you, Jerry Brown. And you're all rushing to California, aren't you? I'm from California, so that's... Pardon? Which bathroom does he use? Yeah, yeah.

Yeah, which one does he use? Yeah. Yeah. It is this whole... Call it gender confusion isn't fair.

This is anything that God establishes in creation, and sin wants to destroy. I remember I was preaching once, and I was on that kind of Friday. This car drove by, and it gave me the perfect illustration for Sunday because the bumper sticker said rats have rights. You know, that's the law, and I believe... Where's Phoenix? Arizona.

I've been told, to be fair, I've been told that... And it's really weird in Arizona, of all places, where you could shoot them, but they still have rights. But when you find a rat, it has rights, and that means you got to get it out of the house or something like that. When I asked the people on Sunday, I said, do rats have rights? Well, of course not.

I said, why? It was remarkable. Most people don't know why rats don't have rights. Pardon? Oh, bats do, yeah.

You try to get bats out of a road, depending on what type they are, and you can't. Yeah. We... Seriously.

You know, I know, I know. We had a... The joke was that we had an empty lot across from us, and it gave us a great view of the whole Columbia Valley. We knew eventually they were going to build a house there, so I thought about going and finding some rare salamander and letting it loose because then they couldn't build there, because, you know, there were some... Rats don't have human rights because they were not created in the image of God.

They're not created in the apex of creation. And whether you accept that or not, at least I have a reason for why rats don't have rights. Now, should rats be treated well? Yeah, they're part of God's creation, and we were put here to take care of creation, and that includes rats and salamanders, you know, it does.

But they're not the same as you and me. But see, I think what the world is doing is it's trying to go against Genesis and trying to eradicate the difference of us being created in the image of God, and so it's trying to put everything on the same plane. So, on one hand, rats have rights.

On the other hand, unborn children don't have any rights. And so, there's, well, we're all just animals. In fact, I was shocked to hear it: Mickey Rooney, not Mickey Rooney.

The guy used to make silly commentaries at the end of 60 Minutes. Andy Rooney, thank you. Andy Rooney was talking about some statistics that came out about sexual activity, and I was just shocked.

He goes, I mean, you can't possibly expect men and women to have sexual control. I mean, we're just animals. I mean, I'm like, well, okay.

He doesn't believe in the image of God. I do. So, I think that's the attack, is to remove all of the distinctions that God created in Genesis.

Because after all, all theology comes out of Genesis 1, 2, and 3, right? Ultimately, everything goes back there. Everything. Every major thing, anyway.

See, Matt, I changed my mind on that. Who was the teacher at Gordon-Conwell who made that, the Old Testament prophet? He left before I got there. Do you remember? He argued that what you had in Genesis 1, 2, and 3 was a temple.

Yeah, Beale would have picked that up. There's an Old Testament—oh, Kline. Meredith Kline's argument was that.

Yeah, Genesis 1, 2, and 3 is a temple, and this is how we were created to live and to relate and to worship, and that temple was destroyed. And so that means—it's amazing how many times theology goes back to that. So as one guy says—what was Jerry Falwell's comment? God didn't make Adam and Steve.

God Made Adam and Eve. I've got to wonder, though—I'll just divorce that—I'm not—I mean, I believe in Scripture, and I follow Scripture, and I'm just kind of wondering if, you know, in fact, if we force it into place, don't we kind of have to stratify it? Don't we need to know that for Christians, there is a fair amount of authority, that you can have far greater expectations of them and place greater burdens on them than it does on Americans? But you're going to get a lot of people who come to me with a very—a concept of our understanding of America, and right now, I mean, it is virtually a contract, in the general context, and even among most of the Bible, it's still a contract.

I'm kind of wondering if we—it's really difficult to try to expect everybody to live up to the same standard. Do you see what I'm saying? So, the difficulty is, are we—can't we free to deal with people on an ad-hoc basis without being bound absolutely by thou shalt, this, this, and that? You know what I'm saying? Yeah, and my answer—the question is, do we have to treat everyone exactly the same? And the answer is, absolutely not. In my position paper on divorce, I made a big distinction about whether the person was a Christian or not when the divorce happened.

My general approach to ethics is that life is a journey, and you treat people differently where they are on the journey. For some people, not using the Lord's name in vain is about—that's the most they can work on, and that's all, you know, and they may be saying all kinds of things that, you know, would not be acceptable in church. But, you know, if they can get through the day without saying GD, they are as happy as any Christian could possibly be.

We're all on different places on the journey, and it doesn't mean the standards change, it means we're just on different places on the journey. That's how I would approach it. If I were dealing with someone who had been a Christian for 60 years and got divorced, I would probably treat them a little differently than if it was an 18-year-old that had gotten married because he got his girlfriend pregnant.

I just had the most interesting wedding of my life, by the way. I've never done a wedding with a six-month-old baby in the front row. It was really different.

You ever done that? Their baby was in the front row. Baby was six months old. They were not quite of marriageable age, and it was a fascinating situation.

A very good friend of mine was their counselor, so I knew they were getting good counsel. They weren't getting married just because they had a baby, and I got to spend some time with them. And I know the bigger story really well.

So, I agreed to do the wedding, and everyone knows they had sex because the baby's right there. So, I just wove the baby into the story, and I didn't talk about walking backward into the wedding, but I almost did. But we talked about the extra challenges there were going to be and what it was really going to mean for the husband to sacrificially love his wife and baby when he was barely out of high school.

He had all kinds of dreams of going to college, but I don't know if he was going to go to college. He has other things. So, it's kind of like I treated them radically differently than I would treat someone older.

But life is a journey. We're all on the difficult path. Some people fall off the path in different places.

We all fall off the path in different places, but that doesn't mean the standards change. We used to have a lot of cultural and social support for the Christian people.

So a lot of the problems, a lot of problems, because society now has zero. Yeah, but there's very little common grace of God left in our culture. So, it just makes it harder.

But you don't shift standards, but you, you know, there but for the grace of God go I, frankly. Yeah, you obviously, Hush, haven't had that issue come up yet in your life. It was fascinating because I had to know if they were repentant.

But I mean, they loved the little girl. The parents loved their first grandchild. And, you know, so you can't say, you know, are you sorry, you ever, you know, I mean, it just, it didn't fit the situation.

But they knew what they had done was wrong. She had not compounded it by aborting the baby, even though there'd been a lot of pressure from some people to kill the child. So, there was a lot of good mixed in with the bad.

It was just a very interesting, turned out to be, it was a great wedding. It was an encouragement. We'll see what happens.

I thought you guys would want to talk a lot more about this. Yeah, we could. All right.

It's okay. I don't need to, I don't need, I've got stuff to cover anyway. Let me look at my notes here.

Just a second. Yeah, adultery is not the unforgivable sin any more than ongoing greed and gossip or the unforgivable sin. I had, every once in a while I'd say things that, and I knew I was going to make the church frustrated with me.

My normal line was, you know, this problem to go away would just be persecuted. And most people didn't really like it when I said that. But I forgot where I was going now.

I said, we were talking, I don't know what we're talking about, but I said, you know, we so stratify sins that there are those that are acceptable. Those are the ones that I commit. And then there are ones that are not acceptable.

That's what you commit. And so, instead of loving you, I'm going to judge you. That's how the church functions often.

And then, oh, I said, if I were given the choice of having a church and preaching to a group of gay and divorced people or a group of gossips, I'll take the gay and divorced people in a second. And you ought to have seen the looks on their faces. They simply couldn't process it because they had made homosexuality, adultery, the remaining two sins, really the only two sins.

And they couldn't conceive of why I would think gossip was that bad. And I said, have you ever seen a church torn apart by the homosexual movement or adultery? Well, we've heard of stories, but have you ever seen it? And none of them had. I asked if I had ever been in a church torn apart. Have you ever seen God's body torn apart by gossip? I have.

I'd much rather preach to people who know who they are in Christ as forgiven sinners than religious Pharisees who think they're better because they're okay with their sins. That's a non-issue for me. Non-issue.

Okay, let's take a five or six-minute break, which means ten, and we'll look at these last three things in chapter five. If they're not, I got the elders. Is there anything I can do to help?

Anything you can do to help? Well, you broke me on my bias towards Priests, so, you know, maybe there's something else. No, let's go through.

It'll be good. You running, Matthew? Yeah. Okay, we are on to the third of the five examples of deep obedience, and my label on this one is rigorous honesty.

I don't know where I got the phrase from, but I really, really like it. Okay, verse 33. Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you made.

Okay? But I tell you, don't swear an oath at all, either by heaven, for it's God's throne, or by earth, for it's the footstool, his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it's the city of the great king. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. All you need to say is simply yes, no.

Anything beyond this comes from the evil one. Again, I thought that Quarrel's explanation of the ways, again, it's an entire tractate in the Mishnah of all the ways that you could take an oath and not have to fulfill it was fascinating. And again, it was kind of like the divorce passage, where it was like when it was done, I'd say, God, why don't you just kill us all? I mean, how can you have the patience to put up with people? I mean, it's really amazing that you know, these are God's people, chosen people, the chosen nation, and they're just elaborately trying to find a way to lie.

And it was amazing. I think he did a really, really good job. Jesus does not quote any one specific Old Testament passage, but it is certainly the basic teaching of the Old Testament law.

So, what you have is not a prohibition against oaths in the Old Testament, but you have a requirement to fulfill your oaths. And what do the Pharisees do? They start narrowing, narrowing, narrowing. Well, if we swear by Jerusalem, we don't have to keep it.

But if we swear facing Jerusalem, we have to because that's the city of God. That's the city of the great king. And if it's about God, then we have to keep it.

But if we could, you know, if we can cross our fingers and, you know, swear by Jerusalem, I don't have to keep my word. And so, it was just this elaborate way to be able to lie and get away. But see what they're doing? They're narrowing it.

And Jesus does, basically, the way the Pharisees work, if the introductory formula used God's name or in some way made a direct reference to him, you had to keep your promise. But if somehow it didn't directly affect God, then you don't have to keep your word. So Jesus says, well, what does it matter? If you swear by heaven, that's God's.

If you swear by earth, that's his footstool. If you swear by Jerusalem, that's the city of the great king, the Messiah. It's all God's.

It's all God's. So, you can't mince your oath based on your wording. God, we do the same thing, right? Today, we tell little white lies.

They're neither white nor little. They're lies. And we do, or we're purposely ambiguous, leaving ourselves loopholes.

Or we spin, if you're a politician or anyone else, you want to blur the edges so you can get away with not being held to what you say. You exaggerate. You make yourself better than you really are. Or we use words like, I just devastated me.

Really? Devastated? You mean I liked it? It may have bugged you, but it devastated you. See, I mean, these are all ways of fudging and blurring the edges so that we don't have to be rigorously honest. So, Jesus goes to the spirit of the law, and he says, look, when you say yes, mean it. When you say no, mean it.

Stott's line was great. When a monosyllable will do, why waste our breath by adding to it? Two stories. I have a very, very pretty sister, and everybody wanted to date my sister in high school.

And she and mom, mom and she, developed this little routine. A guy would call, and Mom would find out who it was. Communicate that to Terry, you know, by saying his name.

If she was interested in going on a date, she took the phone. If she was not interested in the date, she went out the back door. Mom would wait, and she'd say, she's not here right now.

She's not, right? She's on the back step, but she didn't bother to tell the guy that. One night at dinner, just out of the blue, my dad says, I wonder if a lie is saying something that's not true or giving the impression of something that's not true. Hmm.

I went back to eating his mashed potatoes. But Mom and Dad mom and Terry got the message very clearly. They weren't being rigorously honest.

Terry was doing it so she wouldn't hurt the guy's feelings. Not being rigorously honest. Do you know the story of Ray Kroc and McDonald's when it comes to honesty? This is a fabulous story, and it's true.

I had a friend who lived two doors up from me. He used to be one of the administrators at Azusa Pacific. He left Azusa to go work for the company that makes all the bread, the bread, you know, buns and whatnot, for McDonald's in the five-state area, including California.

So, it's a pretty big bakery. This was before McDonald's had moved into Europe. And they asked the bakery people to come in, so Tim went in with them, and he was the one who told me this story.

They talked about the desire to expand into Europe. McDonald's was concerned about consistency or quality. So, they wanted this bakery to go to someplace in the middle of Europe, spend five million dollars, and open a bakery for all the McDonald's that were coming to Europe.

The interesting thing about Ray Kroc is that he never signed a contract in his life. He absolutely refused. His word was his bond.

They talked about it, came to clarity, they shook hands, and Tim's company went out and spent five million dollars. Back when five million was really something. All because they knew that Ray Kroc's word was more binding than any contract could possibly be.

See, that's rigorous honesty, isn't it? Kroc was famous for loyalty. If he was working with a supplier and, you know, the sausage or something was not up to par, they wouldn't just dump him because he had made a commitment to work with them. So, McDonald's would send their people to the sausage factory, and they would whip the sausage factory into shape.

They would find the problems. They would fix the supply chain issues. Whatever it took, when Ray said he was going to work with... Ray, I don't know him.

When Mr. Kroc said that they were going to work with a supplier, they worked with a supplier because his word was his bond—rigorous honesty.

And I think that's what Jesus is getting at. That's the kind of people we should be. And, you know, when you meet some say, no, I promise, I promise.

What are they saying? Yeah, I know you don't normally trust me, but really this time you can. How much better to say, yes, yes, I'll do that. You know, is there ever a time to take an oath? Well, there are certain times when people say no.

Anabaptists, Moravians, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Quakers. Do Quakers still hold this position? Where's Frank when we need him? The cause of all problems in our life, Frank. Do Quakers still hold this position? Okay, you can affirm.

What does that mean? You're not saying, I swear to God, but you can affirm, yes, this is what I promise to do, kind of thing. Okay, okay. This group of people historically won't take a courtroom oath, they won't sign an affidavit, and they won't say the Pledge of Allegiance.

That gets history. Again, where are Quakers on this today? Well, nobody says Pledge of Allegiance. I saw Jesse Waters' World the other night as he was going around, kind of like what Jay Leno used to do, the man on the street, asking people to say, do they

know the Pledge of Allegiance? I don't think he found anyone that knew the Pledge of Allegiance.

It was really amazing. But will Quakers say the Pledge of Allegiance, or is that still a no-no? Okay, okay, all right. Anyway, there are people that say, no, that's what Jesus says, and so we're not going to take an oath.

My position is that I want to give a qualified yes. I think there are times when oath-taking is okay. Part of it has to do with the language of the Sermon on the Mount, just as I don't cut off my hands and gouge out my eyes.

I understand that Jesus is speaking to a culture that is a lying, deceiving culture, and he's trying to make a point. Look, just be honest, people. Don't cross your fingers on everything.

But God takes oaths. He took them never to destroy the world again after the flood. He sealed the covenants of promise, right? He sealed his promise to Abraham by putting him to sleep and walking between the slain animals.

Paul calls God a witness, which is, in essence, an oath. But I think the application that we can all agree on is that we should not be the kind of people who have to take an oath. We should be rigorously honest and known to be absolutely honest, and when Dave says yes, he doesn't mean maybe.

He means yes, and he's simply that kind of person. There may be times in which you want to affirm or use that language. I took an oath 32 years ago to love and cherish Robin above all else.

Marriage is an oath. It's an establishment of a covenant. So I vowed, I promised, and I don't think there's anything wrong with that.

But the thrust of it that is applicable to all is that we are so rigorously honest that all we have to do is say yes or no, and people will take us to our word. I think that's what's going on. Yeah, to tell the truth, as opposed to what you just said.

So rigorous honesty is wonderful. If you imagine, you know, the number one charge against the church is that we're hypocrites. Imagine if the church really were truly rigorously honest, how that would go away.

The world would find something else to grouse about, but at least we could get rid of that. Okay, so we move, yeah. Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, good point, yeah.

Yeah, situational ethics is one of those terms that have probably been created by the opponents, and you never want to let someone else define your position. Yeah,

Corrie, oh yeah, yeah, Corrie Ten Boom, this is the difference between Corrie Ten Boom and her sister. She decided that she would lie.

Her sister said that she wouldn't lie. Right, I think the answer is we all have a hierarchy of ethics. Among other things, a wife is told that she should have a submissive spirit to her husband, okay, but when the husband asks her to lie on taxes, she should say no, not because she's being rebellious, but because we have a hierarchy of ethics, and God's told us to be honest, and so we all have these hierarchies, don't we? And so that's the formal way to deal with that issue.

I don't know if I've ever been in a situation, yeah, there's one situation in which I always lie, and that's when I buy my wife a present. I've asked for permission to lie through my teeth when it comes to Christmas, because my wife can just intuit, just intuit things. So, I always buy her a Christmas present in June and then hide it.

So, I don't know, what would be some other situations in which the, I guess, if you were trying to protect an abused person against an attacker, that's a hierarchical, a higher ethic, and we need to protect the vulnerable. Yeah, if this dress makes me look fat because your hierarchy says permanence of marriage, you say no. Do you think I'm stupid? No, I would just lie.

Sacrifice. What are you going to do when you go up toward Jesse's house? I told Samuel he was concerned about the consequences. You take the pepper along, and if anybody asks, you say that you're going up to offer sacrifice.

Well, that means he didn't tell the whole truth. We are not obligated to tell the whole truth under all circumstances. God didn't think that Samuel was up to take the whole truth.

Yeah, as long as Samuel was doing what God told him to do. You know, a great, there's an example. Jesus is going into the home, the girl has died, everyone's wailing, and they say to him, he says, she's just sleeping.

And they go, no. He goes, and he raises her from the dead. Now, did Jesus just lie? I always thought that he did, and then I realized there actually was a much more fundamental theological truth at work, that Jesus doesn't view death like you and I do, and that she was at a very significant theological level, she was sleeping.

She was sleeping in death, but she was sleeping, and he was going to go wake her up. At a very significant level, he didn't lie at all. Now yes, he didn't want the people to know he raised her from the dead, because it would make preaching almost impossible, but it was interesting how he said it, I thought.

Rahab hid the spies. Yeah, Rahab hid the spies. Yeah, we all have situational ethics.

I've only met one person that insists that he doesn't and he would never lie under any circumstance, not to save his wife from being killed or anything, and I just think that given the situation, he would lie through his teeth, because he's a good person.

Okay, next one. The whole issue of Christian rights, 5:38 to 42. You have heard that it was said, oh, I forgot to point out, notice what Jesus is doing. He's not, he's dealing with the pharisaical interpretation, but where the Old Testament says oaths are okay as long as you keep them, he says just don't do it, and this is one of those indications that Jesus sees himself as supreme over the Old Testament, not just to give it the right interpretation, but potentially to overrule it. So, he doesn't say keep your oaths, he says yes, I know the Old Testament says you can take oaths, just don't do it.

Supremacy of Christ. Yeah, that'd be another example. Yeah, another example, yeah.

Good. Again, you have heard it said to the people long ago, do not, oh I'm sorry, you have heard the same thing. You have heard that it was said eye for eye, tooth for tooth, *lex talionis* is the technical term, but I tell you, do not resist an evil person.

Well, what does that mean? Let me give you four illustrations. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, that's the, you know, the translation here is backwards.

Take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. No, I'm sorry, no, it is right, I'm sorry. If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, the inner garment, hand over your coat, the outer garment as well.

If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you. This is a reflection of one of the oldest laws in the world, *lex talionis*, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, and its original intention was to limit the escalation of retaliation.

In other words, if somebody takes out my eye, the only thing I can do is take out their eye. Someone takes out my tooth, I can't take out two of their teeth; I can only take out one of their teeth. So, the original intention was to limit escalation.

It's in Deuteronomy 19:21. The interesting thing in the Old Testament is the prerogative of the judges. This was not an individual prerogative. This is what governed the judges doing their job in order to maintain order of society.

And again, it was restrictive. It was to break the cycle of increasing retaliation. Then along come the Pharisees, and what do they do? They want to change the intention of the law, and they move it from the realm of the state to the realm of the individual.

I have my rights. They removed it from being restrictive, no more than a tooth, to prescriptive. I have a right to take your tooth, and I'm going to take your tooth.

It was never intended to be obligatory, as far as I know. Now again, Quarles has a slightly different view on this, but my understanding is it was never intended to be obligatory, always to be restrictive. In understanding this passage, I say the only way I know to make sense of this passage is to understand it in light of the next passage because in the next passage, love your enemies.

And I don't know what to do with this paragraph, verses 38 to 42, unless you bring in the concept of love. So, I think Jesus knew where he was going in the discussion because it is love that helps us know how to put this paragraph into play. I think what Jesus is saying is that we must be willing to voluntarily limit our rights when it is an act of love; that's the next paragraph when it is an act of love for the other person.

Now again, love isn't in this paragraph, but it's the only way I can make sense of this. Eye for eye, tooth for the tooth. But I tell you, don't resist an evil person.

Well, when don't I resist an evil person? Was my daughter wrong to beat off the attacker? Absolutely not. She had every right to beat him to a bloody pulp. That's not what's going on in this.

What's going on in the scripture in this passage can't be what's going on. And so, my way of reading it is that how do I know when to do this and when not to do it? When is it an act of love? And I know I'm reading in love for the next paragraph. So, there are four illustrations of resisting an evil person.

The first one, if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other also. Now I disagree with Quarles on this point, because he emphasizes that this is the possibility of being hurt badly. All right.

And he's right. The word that is used here is used for beating with rods. I understand that.

But the key to it is the right cheek. Now, you know this, you never use your left hand, ever. Your left hand's for toiletry purposes, nothing else.

So, you just... Why do we shake with our right hand? Yeah, because this belongs in the bathroom and nowhere else. So, everything's done with the right hand. And so, how do you slap a person on the right cheek? It's a backhand slap.

So, he's not talking about physical abuse. He's talking about an insult. All right.

He's not talking about a punch to the nose. The only way I can get at Dave's right cheek with my right hand is to do that. So, it's primarily that he's talking about more an insult than physical pain.

Yes. Yeah, this is why he was able to stab Eglon. Yeah, because you pull the right sword off your left side.

He's left-handed, so his sword's over here. They're checking the wrong side. So that's how he got through the metal detector.

Wrong side. Left hand. I mean, that's why left-handed was viewed as a curse for years and years and years.

That's why David had an army, and one of the whole battalions, whatever the word is, was of left-handed slingers. It was so unusual. I used to tease my little brother, who was left-handed all the time, but he stopped thinking it was funny, so I stopped teasing him.

What does this not mean? This is not an ethic for non-Christian society. Non-Christian society is utterly incapable of turning the other cheek as a society. It's the sermons for disciples, not for society.

It's not discussing the role of the state. I don't think you can use this as a proof text for passivism. The King James translation is really unfortunate.

It says, do not resist evil. Well, we are to resist evil. This is the evil person.

And so, the question is, when do we resist the evil person? When do we, when they insult us by slapping us on the cheek, do we turn the other also? And I think it's when there's an act of love. But at a minimum, this passage is saying we must be willing to lay aside our personal rights if doing so would be an act of love. This is Bonhoeffer's famous line in the Discipleship.

The gospel bids you come and die. You die to your rights. You die to your rights.

Of course, does this mean we have to accept any form of physical or emotional abuse? Does it mean we don't protect ourselves? Of course not. The state exists to punish abuse. There are times when Paul insists on his rights.

The Philippians come in Acts 16 and say, okay, we decided you can leave. And he goes, oh really? Roman citizen, you imprison a Roman citizen without a trial, that would be a capital punishment. I'm not going anywhere.

And he made the leaders give him a ticket tape parade basically out of the city to protect the fledgling church. Yeah, Paul insisted on his right. God's going to strike you, you whitewashed wall.

Paul was not wrong to say that to the high priest. But again, we have examples of people, of Paul in this case, insisting on his rights for whatever be the purpose. Turn the other cheek is an illustration of a principle.

It's the principle of non-retaliation. When do we not retaliate? I think it's when it is an act of love. The story I tell, I wish I had heard the Fuller professor tell this story, but this was back in the '60s, and he was somewhere down here, somewhere in the, at least in the deep South, he told the story.

It was before integration, still black and white churches. I don't know your experience. We moved to Kentucky in 67.

There are still black-and-white bathrooms, black and white water fountains. So, I don't know what it was like down here. But he was a kind of a revolutionary young pastor, idealist young pastor at some small church down here in the South somewhere.

And he invited a black to church, an African American to church, way before you could ever do that. And next Sunday morning, right when he got up to preach, the back doors were flung open in the church, and a huge, very drunk white man came storming in the back of the church, screaming and yelling at the pastor about bringing an African American. I'm sure that's not what he was saying, but bringing an African American into this white church.

And it was obvious he was going to storm and beat up the pastor. The pastor sat there, and he said he was thinking about it; this pastor was the professor at Fuller who told the story. And he was sitting there thinking about what do I do? What do I do? Do I turn the other cheek? Do I not turn the other cheek? And his decision at that point in time was simply to drop his hands, and the guy just beat him to a bloody pulp.

Just beat the living daylights out of him. The irony in the story is that the pastor was a two-time Golden Gloves boxing champ. He didn't have to let the guy touch him.

I mean, he could have just annihilated the drunk. But he said in this, and he said, I'm not saying you should do this all the time, but for me in this situation, in this time, with the beginnings of the civil unrest, with the need for the church to take the lead, it was an act of love. And so, I dropped my hands, and I got beat up for it.

That's what this turn the other cheek business is about, I think. And we, our response, especially physically, is to insist on our rights and to protect and to retaliate. But we have to be willing to not retaliate.

And I don't think that; I think those these moments come, and there's no way to prepare for them. And you just say, Spirit, tell me what to do. Tell me what to do.

But this was his choice. Powerful story, I thought. Turn the other cheek.

This is the second illustration of deep obedience. If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. The shirt is the inner garment.

The coat is the outer garment that keeps you warm at night. It was considered so fundamental to life that even Jewish law made it an inalienable right. You could sue a man for a crime, and you could sue him for a person for everything except his outer coat.

No law would allow you to take the outer coat. Jesus is saying, "Don't resist the evil person." That means they sue you and take your shirt.

When they take your shirt, give your coat as well. Now, there's no way that Jesus would expect someone to simply take all of his clothes and run around naked. That's not what's going on, right? Unless you're in San Francisco.

Yeah, unless you're in San Francisco, okay. Yeah, what is Jesus not saying? He's not saying to leave the law court and only a loincloth. It's not saying we always ignore our legal protection.

The question is, are you willing to forgo your rights as an act of love, even if this means suffering loss of property? Third illustration, verse 41. If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. This is most likely a reflection of a Persian law that was adopted by the Romans, which is basically a form of conscription.

It's what happened to Cyrus, the guy who carried the cross. Simon of Cyrene, thank you—the guy who carried the cross.

A Roman soldier could force you to carry a pack one mile, take your horse, and use it for a mile. There was a limit on what they could do, but they had a right to do it. And that's probably the background to it.

And he's saying, are you willing to go two miles for the hated Roman soldier who's making you carry this phenomenally heavy pack? Well, I would say, is it an act of love? What is Jesus not saying? He's not saying I'm going to go the extra mile, but not one inch further. I have my rights. Kind of the old joke about turning the other cheek.

Okay, hit me on the cheek, turn, hit me on the cheek. Now, I can beat the living daylight out of you because I can. They're not saying go the second mile, not an inch further.

They're saying, are you willing to forgo your rights as an act of love? Even if this means suffering physical pain and the loss of dignity and time. Are you willing to do that? Are you willing to do that?

The fourth illustration is the final illustration of deep obedience. If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them I'm sorry, give to the one who asks you and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

There's a whole set of laws about loaning money to people, to other Jews, without, usury was illegal, you know, charging interest was illegal. A Jew could not charge interest on a loan to another Jew. And it doesn't mean they obeyed it, but the law is that way.

And there's this saying, you know if somebody needs to borrow money and probably what means that they were desperate, you need to be willing to lend to them. What is Jesus not saying? He's not saying we should give our money away indiscriminately. He's saying, are you willing to forgo your rights as an act of love? Even if this means letting go of your money, will you hold onto your money so loosely that it easily falls through your fingers as an act of love? Or do you clench your fists so tightly that no one could squeeze a dime out of them? And it's interesting, the somewhat parallel in Luke 6:35 talks about lending money to your enemies.

So, the whole point of this is lex talionis. Jesus is saying, in terms of an individual ethic, that if it is an act of love, we must be willing to forgo our rights if it's an act of love. Very un-American, very un-American.

I'm sorry, I'm getting my illustrations all confused. I heard in the news the other day about a politician's daughter who's suing someone for five million because she sprained her ankle. Yeah, well, I'm referring to the dad.

Yeah, well, that's a totally different issue, isn't it? I mean, what kind of person thinks this swollen ankle is worth five million dollars? We live in an age of rights and entitlement, don't we? We think we have rights. I mean, you listen to some of these things about the trillion dollars in university debt, and people are so upset that they have to pay it back. I shouldn't have to pay it back.

Really? Well, you signed a contract. You took the money. You spent the money.

How much is your call? We live in such a day and age of entitlement and rights, and we live in such a culture of ungrace, don't we? There's just so little, if any, grace around us. Because when you see it, it startles you. It was Relena.

It went to Biscuitville, and I had my glasses on, so I couldn't read the receipt. I was trying to find my number, and the guy next to me went, oh, let me help you. Oh, you're number 43.

Now, where I come from, that would never happen. I know that's part of Southern hospitality, and I've been missing it, but that was an act of grace. But the interesting thing is it shocked me because the guy came over, and I kind of jumped. What are you doing? And he was, oh, you're 43.

I'm not used to people treating me with grace. And that's the world, for the most part, we live in. Okay, so *lex talionis*, non-retaliation.

Let's go to the last thing. We've got a little bit of time left. We can finish.

This is a hard one, and again, the loving your enemies stuff, it's, if you start here, you'll fail every time, right? The only way to begin to learn about loving your enemies is to go back to spiritual depravity, isn't it? And when you realize that God loved you, even though you had nothing to offer, and you realize that God made peace, even though at that time it was something foreign to you, and you didn't have the ability to create peace, and when you go back to the beginning of the golden chain, and you see who you are, and who God is, and how God behaves, that's the path to loving your enemies. There's no other way to get there, is there? I don't know of anyone who can force themselves to love their enemies. It can't happen.

This is the end of a very long process throughout chapter five. Jesus has been pushing toward this paragraph since the first beatitude. To whatever extent our lives reflect the prior verses, we'll be able to love our enemies to that same extent.

Loving our enemies flows out of poverty, spirit, mourning over our sin, so forth and so on. I love this quote from Augustine. It was in Stott.

He goes, Many have learned how to offer the other cheek, but do not know how to love him by whom they were struck. That's really hard, isn't it? Probably if we didn't retaliate, we'd feel pretty good about ourselves, but that's not what's required of us. What is required of us is that we love that person.

We have to love those elders who fought to have you fired. We have to love the people that make our lives miserable. Are you just going to skip this paragraph? No, no, no, no.

All right. But you have heard that it was said, love your neighbor and hate your enemy. Okay, here's the clearest example that we're not dealing with the Bible, we're dealing with the Pharisees' interpretation.

The Bible says, love your neighbor, and in fact, a few verses later say, oh, by the way, that means loving your enemies. So, in this case, the Pharisees went flat-out contrary to the teaching of Scripture. You have heard what your rabbis say: love your neighbor and hate your enemy, but I tell you, you love your enemies.

And that means you're going to pray for those who persecute you. Why would you do that? Well, that makes you children or sons of your Father in heaven. In other words, this is what your dad does.

Your dad loves his enemies. As you love your enemies, you are becoming like your dad. Look at how he treats people.

He causes the sun to rise on the evil and on the good. He sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. I mean, this is how he does things.

There is a level at which he loves all people and treats them well. Because if you love those who love you, what reward do you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? In other words, if you love those that are easy to love, it's a big deal. That does not mean anything.

And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Of course, they do. Then, the culmination, not only this paragraph, but I am going to argue for 48 becoming a new paragraph. I do not know if I will get it in the NIV, but I am going to argue that I think 48 is not just the culmination of this last example of exceeding righteousness.

I think it is the culmination of the whole thing that we are called to be perfect, mature, and complete, just like our Heavenly Father is mature and complete. Again, what do the Pharisees do? They have this command in Leviticus to love your enemy, and they started narrowing the command. And so, who is the neighbor? Well, the neighbors are just Jews.

It is okay to hate the Gentiles. It is okay to hate the Greeks. It is okay to hate everyone else.

We just have to love fellow Jews. And that is not at all what the text is saying. There is something we hate, and that is evil.

We have all the imprecatory Psalms, and we are called to hate evil. We are not called to hate our enemies. Interestingly, we do not have time to get into this, but it is really common to hear the old adage, God loves the sinner, hates the sin.

What is the problem with that? It is really hard to separate them. It is not what the Bible says. Right? In the imprecatory Psalms, God clearly hates the sinner.

He clearly hates the sinner. Again, I went to Gary Breshears at Western one day, and I said, "We were talking about love the sinner, hate the sin." And he said, "That is too easy."

God hates both. How does that work? He goes on to say that only God has perfect love and perfect hatred. He is able to hate sin and the sinner and, at the same time, love the sinner and die for him.

I just kind of throw that out. Something to think about as we try to learn what it is to love our enemies. Yeah, the parallel in Luke really makes this point.

But what I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. What is your definition of love? That is a very important word. It's a very hard word, I think, to define.

I mean, this is what God calls it. This is the primary commandment, right? Love God, love our neighbor. What's love? I think I got this from Piper.

Love is joyfully putting the needs of others above your own. That's a good definition of love. Not just grudgingly putting the needs of others ahead of your own.

It is joyfully putting the needs of others ahead of your own. Blomberg defines it as costly self-sacrifice for another's good. But there has to be an element of joy; otherwise, it's not love.

If your child were completely and totally obedient and nothing else, could you say that your child loves you? I mean, if you pull the emotion, the joy out of it. If your spouse were perfectly obedient to you, would you say that your spouse loved you? No, you'd say that your spouse and your kids are terrified of you. Terrified.

What else would produce absolute obedience apart from joy? So, you've got to get the element of joy in there. And I'd heard definitions like thinking the other is more important than yourself. Well, Jesus thought we were more important to him because we're not more important than him.

So that's why I really like the definition, joyfully putting the needs of others above your own. And that love shows itself in our willingness to pray for them. Bonhoeffer

says, loving our enemies means we walk side by side with our enemy into the throne room of heaven to plead your enemy's case before your heavenly father.

I have no idea how to do that, but that's what Bonhoeffer says. Walk side by side with your enemy into the throne room of heaven and plead your enemy's case before your heavenly father. It doesn't mean we're... It's so late in the day, the nouns are... Gordon Fee said to me once, it's always the nouns that go first.

I don't know the background of that. Gordon has advanced Alzheimer's. The last time we were together, he had just been diagnosed with Alzheimer's.

And I was asking, he was almost done with his rewrite of his commentary, and I said, how are you doing with God? He's taking your mind away, of all people. Maybe it would be better to start with your body because there's so much in Gordon's head. And Gordon said that's been a good run.

Now, isn't that incredibly biblical? Second Timothy. Isn't that a great evaluation of life? It's been a good run. I'm ready to go.

It's been a good run. Then I asked him, are you going to get your commentary finished? And he goes, you know, Bill, it's the nouns that are the first to go. I can't think of a noun afternoon.

So, I said, "What do you do?" He said, "I get up at six, and I write until noon, and then I stop. If I write past noon, the next morning, I have to rewrite it all again." So that's the background.

It's the nouns that are the first to go. Anyway, I forgot what I was trying to say all together. Walk side by side with your enemy into the throne room of heaven to plead your enemy's case before your heavenly father.

It doesn't mean you're undiscerning, right? What love looks like is going to vary from person to person and situation to situation. The only loving thing to do with a sexually abusive husband who's molesting your daughter is to put him in jail or get him out of harm's way. What is the story? We had a friend we knew at an old church who had been in jail, had served his time, got out, and was re-arrested because he was meeting realtors in apartments, dousing them with gas, and burning them alive.

And he had just stood up in church at what we used to call a witness stand where he would give his testimony. That Friday, he tried to burn a gal to death and went back to jail. And when the worship pastor, who's especially close to him, went to see him in jail, he said, you know, I need to be here.

I'm not safe. I can't; I simply can't control my sickness. I need to be protected for myself.

I'm protected here. It's a pretty interesting comment. Started a jail ministry and witnessed to, led people to the Lord.

It wasn't safe for him to be out. For other people, it's not safe for their victims to be out. That's what I'm saying.

Loving your enemies is going to take all kinds of different forms. It doesn't mean you have to open yourself up to abuse. It means you have to be wise, you have to be discerning, but you have to willingly put the needs of the other person ahead of yourself, right? And the only way to do that is to understand that's what our Father did, and that's what we need to do if we want to be like him.

So, the final charge is be perfect. And again, we'll never be perfect till heaven, but we can grow in, so we were talking about earlier, in ever-increasing measures, we can grow in maturity and in wholeness and in completeness. Jesus is so patient with us, isn't he? He's so patient.

And he nudges, he nurtures, he disciplines, he pulls us along, he's with us when we fail, he pulls us up and empowers us to move forward, he spans us when we need to be spanked, kicks us when we need to be kicked, always moving forward. And that's the joy of the journey. And we're moving towards perfection.

Someday, when we die, we will be whole and complete because sin will be removed. We'll never be God, but we will be perfect, as perfect men and women, as perfect people. But I'm going to do everything I can by God's power to get as close to it as possible because the journey is really good.

Let me close by saying this about my daughter. Kirsten's an amazing person, and she's been through some very traumatic experiences. being attacked today is not at the top of her list, but it's up at the top of her list, I'm sure. And the amazing thing about Kirsten is that suffering either drives us away from God or drives us toward God. Isn't that the case? When I look at Kirsten and the things that have happened to her and whatnot, I see that the suffering has driven her to Jesus.

While this was a scary thing to happen, it will increase her faith because that's just who she is. It will also draw her closer. And yes, there may be triggers and things that concern us, but she's on the journey towards wholeness.

And God, as Johnny Erickson Tata says, sometimes God allows things he hates to accomplish things he loves. And he loves her, and he will work in the midst of

difficult circumstances to draw her to herself to ever-increasing wholeness. That's what this is about.

It's not a list of do's and don'ts. It's a list of what happens when we fully understand who we are, and who God is, and the journey that he pulls us on. So our prayer is that for all of us, that we enjoy the journey of moving toward perfection.

Okay? All right. Thank you all. I appreciate your prayers.

We will also get into prayer, another topic on which there are no theological questions. So, we'll probably just whip through prayer tomorrow. We'll see you tomorrow.

This is Dr. Bill Mounts in his teaching on the Sermon on the Mount. This is session 8, Matthew 5:31 and following, Acts of Greater Righteousness, Part 3.