

A black and white, upside-down photograph of a city skyline with various skyscrapers and buildings. The image is inverted, with the top of the buildings at the bottom of the frame.

MATTHEW

The Upside umog Kingdom

Matthew 5

Jesus did not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it



Matthew 5:17-20

**We need a greater righteousness
to enter the kingdom**

MATTHEW
The Upside down Kingdom



We need a greater righteousness to enter the kingdom

- Jesus did not come to give them a different law, He came to fulfill the law with His own life, death, and resurrection.
- The Pharisees even measured their spices to a perfect ten percent.
- Jesus revealed that the “righteousness” of the Pharisees was really for human approval, not for God’s (Matthew 6:1–8).



We need a greater righteousness to enter the kingdom

- Jesus made this statement: it takes a greater righteousness to enter the kingdom.
- He proceeded to defend it through the rest of the sermon, in His expositions of the law.
- In verses 21–48, Jesus reinterpreted their application of the Ten Commandments.



We need a greater righteousness to enter the kingdom

- Jesus' demands in the Sermon on the Mount were much more difficult than those of the Pharisees.
- Jesus didn't abolish the Law, He made it harder!
- He closed with "be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."



We need a greater righteousness to enter the kingdom

- Only Jesus lived a perfect, sinless life, which is what made Him able to be the perfect sacrifice for our sins (2 Corinthians 5:21).
- The Pharisees thought they could uphold the law well enough to earn their way into the kingdom, but no one can.
- No one can live a perfect, sinless life of complete righteousness.



We need a greater righteousness to enter the kingdom

- As believers, it is not our own righteousness that makes us worthy to enter the kingdom of heaven.
- We have to put on His righteousness like a covering over our sinful selves (Romans 3:22; 4:3–25; 1 Corinthians 1:30–31).
- Theologians call this imputed righteousness.



We need a greater righteousness to enter the kingdom

- We are declared righteous when we put on Christ's righteousness – that is justification.
- But sanctification is when the Holy Spirit works in our hearts to grow us more and more like Jesus every day.
- We are declared righteous and yet we grow in righteousness throughout our lives.



Matthew 5:21-37

**It's the heart behind the law
that really matters**

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It's the heart behind the law that really matters

- Jesus said the whole law could be summed up by two simple commands – love God and love others.
- The law showed His people what living out those two commands looked like practically for them.
- In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus reiterated this point by getting to the heart behind the laws God gave them in the Old Testament.



It's the heart behind the law that really matters

- Verses 21–22: Anger and Slander— It is not only committing the physical act of murder that is sin.
- Any inward “murderous” attitude of hatred or anger is just as sinful (1 John 3:15).
- Slander, in effect, is murdering someone with your words.



It's the heart behind the law that really matters

- Verses 23–26: Reconciliation— The righteous way to handle our anger is reconciliation.
- Verse 23 begins with a “therefore,” which connects this verse to the section before it. This is an application of anger.
- Because anger is just as bad as murder, you must reconcile before you come before the Lord in worship.



It's the heart behind the law that really matters

- Verses 27–30: Lust— This is the same point as Jesus' exposition about murder—it's not just the physical act, but the heart behind it.
- Lust is a particularly difficult sin to handle because our culture sees nothing wrong with it.
- Jesus often used hyperbolic statements to get people's attention. He didn't literally mean to cut out your eyes.



It's the heart behind the law that really matters

- Verses 31–32: Divorce— Jesus handled this quickly here but expounded on it more later.
- Moses allowed the people to divorce, Jesus said, but he only did it because of their “hardness of heart” and “it was not this way from the beginning” (Matthew 19:7–10).
- Jesus condemns divorce except in cases of adultery.



It's the heart behind the law that really matters

- Verses 33–37: Oaths— From talking about the the marriage vow, Jesus moved on to talk about oaths made to the Lord.
- The concern with swearing an oath by God's name is related to the third commandment, taking the Lord's name in vain.
- Breaking an oath in the ancient world was dangerous.



It's the heart behind the law that really matters

- All these comments by Jesus are about this “greater righteousness.”
- This is a higher level of integrity in the way we relate to other people, from our most intimate covenant of marriage to our everyday relationships.
- In every example, the difference is selfless love for others.



Matthew 5:38-48

**Followers of Jesus are defined by
unconditional love for all others.**

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Followers of Jesus are defined by unconditional love for all others

- “An eye for an eye” was part the justice of Israel’s legal code.
- Jesus was concerned with the inappropriateness of such a formula to personal ethics.
- In each of the three cases in which “an eye for an eye” was used in the Old Testament, the call was for a proportionate retribution.



Followers of Jesus are defined by unconditional love for all others

- Taking revenge was considered honorable in the ancient world.
- The phrase translated “do not resist” literally means “do not stand against” and was a phrase used to refer to an honor challenge.
- Slapping someone on the right cheek was not about violence, it was a show of dishonor.



Followers of Jesus are defined by unconditional love for all others

- “Forced to go a mile” was an example of how ancient peasants could be forced by anyone more honorable than themselves to give service without pay.
- Simon of Cyrene was forced to carry Jesus’ cross (Matthew 27:32), another public display of shame.



Followers of Jesus are defined by unconditional love for all others

- Jesus called us to love everyone, just as He did.
- Unconditional, self-sacrificing love for all people, whether their status is “equal” to ours or not, whether they be friend or enemy.
- The first part of the quote, “Love your neighbor,” is from the law (Leviticus 19:18), but the second half is not found anywhere in Scripture.



Followers of Jesus are defined by unconditional love for all others

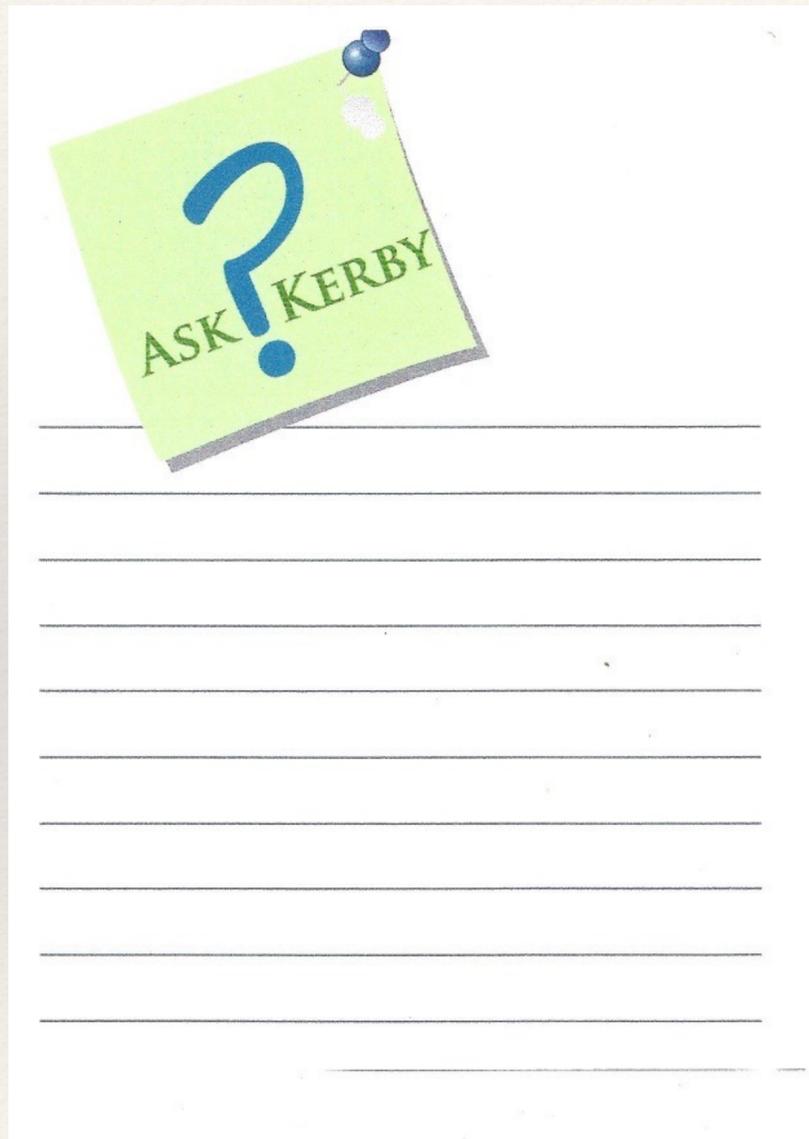
- Hatred of enemies such as the Romans, who oppressed the Jews, may have been taught by some religious leaders of the day, but hatred is nowhere condoned by God.
- What reason did Jesus give for loving our enemies and praying for those who persecute us? It's what God does.



Followers of Jesus are defined by unconditional love for all others

- In His infinite mercy, God loved us while we were yet His enemies, so much so that He sent His Son to die for us (Romans 5:10).
- Loving your family and friends and those who are nice to you is human nature but loving your enemies and those who mistreat you only comes from God (verses 46–47).

Ask Kerby



Questions about crime,
law, and order

Myths About Crime: Decriminalize

- Many attempts to reform the criminal justice system are bound to fail because they are based upon misinformation about crime.
- One significant distortion is the tendency for society to normalize criminal behavior. That is why Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan wrote his influential essay on, “Defining Deviancy Down.”
- Americans today have “normalized” crime. In many cases, they have accepted the decriminalization of all sorts of criminal behavior. They avoid bad neighborhoods and public parks. They lock their doors and windows, install burglar alarms, and live in gated communities.

Myths About Crime: Crime is Everywhere

- Violent crime usually happens in certain locations.
- Over half of all murders occur in 2 percent of the nation's 3,142 counties.
- Those murders are often associated with gang activity and drug activity.
- Most of these victims are males between the ages of 15 and 34.
- Another factor is a dangerous partner. One law journal found that people recently or currently involved with abusive partners were more likely to be victims of gun-related homicides.

Myths About Crime: Crime Doesn't Pay

- Crime unfortunately pays fairly well for many criminals who are never caught or convicted. Crime is not always an irrational act.
- Morgan Reynolds (Texas A&M) compiled interesting facts regarding expected punishment for burglary.
- He concluded that a potential criminal might expect to spend only 4.8 days in prison for each act of burglary.
- Put another way, stealing is profitable as long as the object stolen is worth more than five days behind bars.

Biblical Principles

- Two key biblical principles are retribution and restitution.
- Retribution is the act of punishing a criminal. This concept can be seen in the *lex talionis* principle found in such passages as Exodus 21:23–25 and Leviticus 24:17–21, and in other regulations in the Mosaic Law (Deut. 19:16–21; 22:24; 25:11–12).
- Restitution is repaying to the victim what was lost or stolen. The numerous fines described in Exodus 21:18–22:17 were not paid to the government. The offender paid the victim.

Capital Punishment

- According to Genesis 9:6, capital punishment is based on the sanctity of life:
“Whoever sheds man’s blood by man his blood shall be shed;
for in the image of God, has God made man.”
- This verse clearly established the principle of capital punishment: murder is to be punished by death because of the sanctity of human life.
- Humans are created in the image of God, and murder is an offense against man and an outrage against God.

Capital Punishment

- Romans 13:1–7 teaches that human government is ordained by God and that the civil magistrate is a servant of God. Paul used the image of the sword (verse 4) to support the idea of capital punishment.
- Rather than abolish the idea of the death penalty, Paul used the emblem of the Roman sword to reinforce the idea of capital punishment.
- The Greek word for “sword” refers not to the weapon the emperor carried as a symbol of the authority of his office, but to the one worn in Roman provinces by the magistrates who had authority to execute criminals.

Thou Shalt Not Kill

- The sixth commandment should best be translated “you shall not murder.”
- The Hebrew word is: רצח (pronounced *retzach*).
- We know it means murder because it is defined as “lying in wait.”
- This definition of killing implies premeditated murder.
- The Book of Numbers describes any killing anyone outside the context of war with a weapon, or in unarmed combat, as *retzach*.

Thou Shalt Not Murder

- Notice that the penalty for breaking the sixth commandment was the death penalty (Exodus 21:12; Numbers 35:16–21).
- Therefore, when the government took the life of a murderer, it was not itself guilty of murder
- Opponents of capital punishment who accuse the government of committing murder when implementing the death penalty fail to see the irony of using Exodus 20 to define murder while ignoring Exodus 21 which specifically teaches that government is to punish murderers.

How to Fight Crime

- First, place more police on the streets.
- We have an epidemic of crime in certain places in this country because the chances of being caught, prosecuted, and convicted are so low.
- The average criminal has no reason to fear law enforcement.
- The obvious solution is to increase the deterrent through more police and through swift and sure punishments.

How to Fight Crime

- Second, put violent criminals in prison.
- The premise is simple: a criminal in prison cannot shoot your family.
- The Justice Department's "The Case for More Incarceration" compared the cost of incarceration to the cost of letting a criminal out on the streets.
- Putting violent criminals behind bars keeps them off the streets and is less expensive to society than letting them back out on the streets.

How to Fight Crime

- Third, focus on habitual criminals.
- One study found people already in the criminal justice system commit most of the violent crimes.
- This statistic included those who have been arrested, convicted, or imprisoned, or who are on probation or parole.
- The chronic offender has had five or more arrests by the age of eighteen and has gotten away with dozens of other crimes.

How to Fight Crime

- Fourth, reconsider mandatory sentences, especially for non-violent offenders.
- The Trump administration recently passed criminal justice reform that focused on prison reform.
- Often people were thrown into prison for decades that were actually low-level nonviolent drug dealers not drug kingpins.
- They received little or no vocation training and little in the way of drug rehabilitation. That is one of the reasons the recidivism rate is so high.

