

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

RLJ-1910

JOHN S. TORELL

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PART 16: PRACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS

HONESTY

Honesty was in short supply among the Jews at the time of Jesus. This was particularly true for the Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes and the politicians. There were formal contracts filed in the court system, but most of the everyday business among Jews was sealed with “I swear by ...”

In the United States, for a variety of reasons, some people hire a lawyer to write a contract that can be broken in the future. The Jews were experts on such matters, and when they swore an oath, it was with the intention to break it. Different oaths meant that the contract was more trustworthy and there were objects to swear by such as heaven, the earth, Jerusalem, your life, the temple, the gold in the temple, etc. Some had more value than others. Jesus cut through the deception and told the Jews that it was simply enough to say “yes” and keep the commitment. **Matthew 5:33-37**

Two days prior to the crucifixion, Jesus ripped into the Pharisees and the scribes when teaching at the temple. He scolded them for their practice of swearing and swindling people out of their money. **Matthew 23:16-22**

LAW OF MEEKNESS

There had been 400 years of bitter fighting to push out enemies in their struggle to hang on to the land since returning from captivity in Babylon. People had become hardened and vengeance became the unwritten law of the land.

The people around Galilee where Jesus spent most of His ministry years tolerated the teachings of the God-man because of the miracles He performed. When the Son of God started to talk about meekness, that was not something the people wanted to hear.

Jesus rejected the old saying, “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.” He told them not to resist evil people, but to allow them to smite your cheek again. **Matthew 5:38-39**

Courts were used to file lawsuits against an adversary or to punish an enemy. Jesus broadsided this custom and told the people that if they were sued for a coat, give them your outer garment as well. **verses 5:40**

Roman law stated that if a soldier needed help carrying equipment, a Jew was mandated to walk one mile with the burden. Obviously, this was inconvenient for the Jews. If a man was traveling west, he could be forcibly stopped and ordered to carry a burden east for a mile, then have to walk a mile back west from where he was hijacked. The Jews hated this Roman law and Jesus struck a raw nerve when He implored them to go the extra mile. **verse 41**

Then the God-man hit the Jews where it hurt the most – their wallet! They were not to turn away any person who asks for monetary help. While there weren't a lot of drug



addicts, there was an abundance of poor people who were oppressed by the rich. Jesus said not to turn away any person who seeks a loan. **verse 42**

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

When Jesus taught about loving your enemies, He was referring to individuals, not nations. If a nation is being attacked by another nation, there should be a resistance against the invaders.

This teaching is specifically about how family members should love one another. The Son of God was educating humanity how to interact with others as you go about your life at home, in school, on the job, at the supermarket, service station, etc.

This does not mean that you are to meekly allow someone to attack you with a weapon.

It may seem strange, but showing love to an evil person releases the power of the Holy Spirit to work in their life. **verses 43-48**

This divine teaching set Christianity apart from the other religions. No one can love their enemy without the power of the Holy Spirit. The Jewish people were baffled at the God-man's teaching because this was contrary to the way they had lived for thousands of years.

The teaching of Jesus was impossible to follow until the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came down in power and finally made it conceivable to adhere to the Son of God's philosophy. **John 7:37-39; Acts 2:1-4**

GIVING TO THE POOR

There were no organized social services such as we have today. Retirement and pensions were unknown in all nations. There were no hospitals since technology was primitive. Electricity was undiscovered and the modern conveniences simply did not exist.

At times there was organized fundraising for the poor, and when people donated money or commodities, it was called "giving alms."

Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, and political officials like the Herodians made a big show of giving to the poor. During such fundraising, they would appear in public and announce the amount of money they had given. They did not give to the poor because they wanted to help them out, but to score political points and be revered.

Jesus taught that when a person gives to the needy, do it secretly. Don't announce that you are giving a donation. Give to the poor because you have pity on them, and most of all, because the love of God compels you to do so. **Matthew 6:1-4**

Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!

Do you have an ear to hear with?