

Matthew 5:1-12 Part 7

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[0 : 00] We're still in Matthew 5, we're going to finish the chapter today, he said boldly, from verse 38 to 48. Just a reminder, what we've seen so far from the chapter, and you'll be getting the notes anyway, so I won't go through them meticulously, but we've seen that in every respect, Jesus approaches the law, and what he says in the law is, it doesn't go far enough.

And what he, if you recall, one of the things he said was, if you're to be truly righteous, you need to be much more righteous than the Pharisees were. And we discussed the fact that to those people listening, that would have been an amazing statement, because they looked upon the Pharisees as the holiest you could get, and they were ritually holy.

They did all the right things, prayed all the right prayers, did all sorts of wrong things in secret, and were very corrupt behind the scenes. But the view of the people was, that they were the people you had to try to emulate, you had to try and reach their level of holiness, and Jesus had already said, that's not even holy.

That doesn't even count, that won't get you into heaven. And he then goes on, and he deals with sin at the level of our hearts. And if you remember, it's in bold type on the screen, the heart of the problem is the problem of the heart.

In other words, that whilst they were not actually committing murder, they were thinking murderous thoughts from time to time. Whilst they weren't actively committing adultery, they were lusting after passing women who weren't married to them.

[1 : 58] He's generally attacked the heart and saying, what you need is not to obey the laws as if you were ticking off items on a tick sheet, but what you need to do is have a heart change.

And if you remember, Jeremiah 31 verse 31, in that scripture, God promised that he would put in place a new covenant with his people that would take the law of God off this printed page, and print it on the human heart, so that what flows out of the heart is righteousness, not a never-ending stream of corrections, which is what we currently have, isn't it?

We go so far and then, whoops, bit of road rage, that's blown it. Whatever it is, we are still sinners. And what God has promised is that he will transform people eternally so that they become actually sinless.

At the moment, we're treated as sinless, despite the fact that we're sinners. But what he will do is he will transform the hearts of people so that they just don't sin and don't want to.

If you recall also, we dealt with the fact that we were supposed to be imitators of Jesus, and we looked at Ephesians 5 verse 1. We're called upon to be imitators of God.

[3 : 21] And we looked at, last week, we looked at the swearing of oaths, and how if we're going to swear an oath, Jesus actually in that scripture says, don't bother, just be honest, just tell the truth.

It's actually very simple. You don't need to swear an oath to give your truth credibility if you're just an honest person. But there are circumstances in which we are required to, like in the courtroom or when you take your marriage vows or whatever.

There are these occasions when you swear an oath. And when you swear the oath, before you swear it, you need to make sure you are able and you have full control over the outcomes.

So when I take my marriage vows, I actually have full control over whether I keep my side of that. My wife is responsible for her side of that.

But it's one of the reasons that divorce, which used to be made very difficult, has now become so easy because there is no longer any weight placed upon the swearing of an oath.

[4 : 22] And unfortunately, the courts have gone the same route, so you can now affirm rather than swear an oath. And when you affirm if you're a liar, you have a liar promising to tell the truth based on his own truthfulness.

I affirm that I will tell the truth. It's not reliable. The swearing of oath dates back to a date when people had a fear of God. And when they swore an oath, it was because they would expect God to strike them dead if they didn't honour their oath.

So it carried credibility and it carried impetus. It no longer does. So now we're going to move on to another subject which gets a bit knotty, which is the whole idea of retribution and retaliation.

And you can read it on the screen there. You have heard that it was said, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. It would help if I turned to the right place, wouldn't it?

Verse 38. You have heard that it was said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say to you, do not resist an evil person, but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.

[5 : 39] If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him too. Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.

You have heard that it was said, you shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.

For he causes the Son, his Son, it's interesting, they call it his Son, belongs to him. He causes his Son to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others?

Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. This passage is not without its conflict, I will use the word, advisedly.

[6 : 57] There is an apparent conflict, which I hope we will resolve as we go along. The references in the scripture, so the first part of that, where it says, you have heard that the ancients were told, you shall not make false...

Oh, I'm reading the wrong bit. Verse 38, you have heard that it was said, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. That is a quotation, well, the principle is quoted in three different places, at least in the Old Testament.

The first is Exodus 21, which is where it says this.

Do feel free to tone there if you want to, but you don't have to. Exodus 21 and verse 24.

Now, if you just take the verse, which is in fact what the Jewish leaders had done, it says, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot.

[8 : 01] In other words, what the leaders of Israel were teaching was, give back like for like. If someone does you an injustice, make sure you do them one equally as good.

Be equally unjust to people who are unjust to you. But when you read from verse 21, or verse 22, what you realise is, if men struggle with each other, strike a woman with a child, it goes on.

And then, verse 23, if there's any further injury, you shall appoint as a penalty, life for life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, hand for a hand, foot for a foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.

This is an instruction to the civil administration of the day, not to individuals. What it's saying is that the governmental administration should administer, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot, an eye for an eye, a life for a life.

Now, most Western nations, in fact, I think all Western nations now, have got rid of the death penalty. We no longer observe this justice of, if you take someone's life, you should forfeit yours.

[9 : 31] But nowhere is it ever suggested that it's your job, as the one, as the relatives of the one who was killed, to go and kill that person. It's the job of the administration.

It's the job of justice. So it's a governmental instruction. And what the Pharisees and the Sadducees have said to the people is, if anybody pokes your eye out, you go and poke theirs out.

And what they've done is they've kind of abrogated their own responsibilities and given it back to the individual for whom it was never an instruction.

The instruction to the individual was, be as kind as you possibly can and don't return evil for evil. So, the same principle, I won't bother to turn there, it says the same thing, Leviticus 24 verse 20, Deuteronomy 19, 21.

They all say, they all reiterate this, this kind of mantra of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life, a bruise for a bruise, a wound for a wound.

[10 : 47] But in every case, it's addressed to the administration. It's not addressed to individuals. Individuals are always told, don't return evil for evil. Now that does bring about another issue, which we'll talk about in a bit, which is that one of self-defence.

Am I entitled, biblically, to defend myself and my property and my family or should I just go, no, use me as a doormat? We'll return to that question. But the administrators of the law, like our law courts, were instructed to administer strict justice.

And in fact, I'll see if, turn to Leviticus 24, or if you're not going to turn there, just listen to me. I think this is the scripture that says, makes it clear, that this is not about vengeance, and that the administration, who should be administering this justice, is supposed to do so without any bias whatsoever.

So if someone has taken a life, it's not up for debate whether they have the death penalty, it's automatic. Unless the taking of that life was accidental, or unless it was conducted in self-defence, but first-degree murder, as we would call it, attracted the death penalty, and it wasn't up for debate.

Leviticus 24, and verse 20. I hope it's the right verse. So if we start at verse 17, if a man takes the life of any human being, he shall surely be put to death.

[12 : 36] The one who takes the life of an animal shall make good life for life. You kill his cow, you give him another cow. You kill his sheep, you give him another sheep. If a man injures his neighbour, just as he has done, so shall it be done to him.

This is an administrative responsibility, not the individual's responsibility to go looking for him with a pickaxe. You know? Fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, just as he has injured a man, so shall it be inflicted on him.

Thus the one who kills an animal shall make good, but the one who kills a man shall be put to death. And it goes on in like vain. And it didn't make the point I was trying to make, and we'll probably come across it as we go through, that the instruction was, no bias, just do it.

One of the reasons we have problems in our legal system is that if you went back years, enough years, you'd find that there was no labyrinth of laws to find your way through.

You had simple penalties for simple offences. And do tell me if I go wrong here, Kate. But the idea, very simply, if you steal something, you have a punishment, and if you're able to, you should make recompense.

[14 : 02] And that was brought into our modern court system to some extent, because every case that I ever prosecuted, I was asked, is there any criminal damages? The judge would ask me, am I applying for any criminal damages?

And we have both criminal and civil damages, but that's paying the person back for their loss. And it's separate from any fine or punishment. But the other thing we've done is we've kind of made the laws much more difficult to enforce.

In fact, while I was a health and safety inspector, one of the efforts was that every time they wrote new laws, instead of it being cut and dried, you do this, that's the punishment, instead of it being like that, it was goal-setting laws.

And goal-setting laws, simply, they set you the goal of doing it right. And it becomes far more difficult to work out whether they deserve a punishment or not.

Hence, for a long, long time, the punishments for killing people at work were minimal. That's now changed. But it took them a while to catch on and get back to a biblical way of doing things.

[15 : 12] But we've made laws very, very difficult to interpret and hard to enforce. God's plan was they would be very simple.

Take a life, you give a life. Take an item, you give the item back or recompense them for the item. Kill the animal, give them another animal. It was all straightforward and entirely just.

So, what I'm coming to is this. This system was designed to get rid of retribution. It was designed to limit justice to exactly what was just.

You were not supposed to, if you got beaten up, let's say, get a gang of boys with you and go round and beat the whole gang that beat you up to death and make sure they suffered worse than you did.

It was entirely tit for tat, life for life. A couple of examples. We've got, in Genesis chapter 4, turn there, in Genesis chapter 4, we've got this chap called Lameh.

[16 : 23] I'm not sure whether it's Lameh or Lameh. It's Lameh. I've heard it pronounced both ways. Yeah, well, I thought they did, but I'm not knowledgeable enough to argue the case.

So, in verses 23 and 24, this chap Lameh said to his wives, and the back story to this you can read in your own time, but Lameh said to his wives, this is after he had killed someone, so he said to his two wives, Adah and Zillah, listen to my voice, you wives of Lameh, give heed to my speech, for I have killed a man for wounding me.

Is that just? It's not just. It goes beyond justice. I've killed a man for wounding me and a boy for striking me.

So he's killed two people, a man and a boy, unjustly. If Cain is avenged sevenfold, Lameh, 70-fold.

In other words, he's bragging about the fact that anybody who commits injustice against him will have to pay back far more than they took.

[17 : 43] He's bragging about his ability to enforce injustice. There is another example and for some reason I didn't write the scripture reference down, which is the story of Dinah, the rape of Dinah.

Dinah was in the field and a bloke came upon her and he raped her. And he later fell in love with her and asked her father for her hand in marriage.

And the upshot of that was that Dinah had all these brothers and what they did was they deceitfully agreed to the marriage and they said, we'd agree to the marriage but if we're going to marry, you lot have got to become like us Jews and you've all got to be circumcised.

So all the men in Shechem got circumcised in aseptic conditions and while they were all trying to recover from the pain and the infections that then set in and they were all good for nothing, the brothers set upon the whole of the Shechemites and killed the lot of them.

Now, I will be the first to say any man who rapes a woman should be justly dealt with but this went far beyond justice. What it did was it took justice far beyond its own parameters and it became murder.

[19 : 13] Every man in Shechem was murdered because of a rape committed by one man. There was no justice in that. Left to their own devices and given what human nature is, this is what we will do if somebody doesn't tell us what to do.

Right? You've got me, you wait and see how I'll get you. It's kind of in us, isn't it? There have been times, particularly on the road, when I have not wished them well after they've carved me up.

And if it was just left to my human nature, I would be very unjust, particularly in the heat of the moment. And the idea that Jesus is putting forward is you should not only administer justice as just, but actually wherever you can you should go beyond justice in a good way and so when you have suffered some sort of injury or loss, say, forget it.

It doesn't matter. And deal with the matter with love. Which again gives you a thought, well what do you do then about self-defence? We'll come to that. So God is correcting their understanding of the scriptures.

The quotation in Matthew, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, has been misrepresented to them as their individual responsibility.

[20 : 48] And it was considered that you had a responsibility to get someone back if they got you. It was something that you had a duty to do.

And in fact what the Jews were doing was they were abrogating their own responsibilities because as an administration they should have been dealing with justice and they were saying to the people, deal with your own justice.

Which puts us right back to injustice, doesn't it? Because human nature will always try to repay more. And he was steering them away from vengeance.

And there is a distinction between justice stroke self-defence and vengeance. Justice is very simply repaying the loss that you have caused.

Self-defence is doing enough and no more to defend yourself, your property or your family. So someone, I mean I'll be absolutely straightforward.

[22 : 04] If I came down in the night to find somebody walking around my house with a baseball bat I would deal with him. And I wouldn't stop to think, hang on, what did that scripture say?

I would deal with him. But I wouldn't kill him unless I had no choice. But if I had no choice I'd kill him. And in our crazy situation, people who have done that, I can't remember the man's name, there was a farmer who shot people with a shotgun.

I met that man, I was in a hotel somewhere up north and he finished up sat next to me at the bar. Now they gave him hell because he shot these intruders and he should have had a pat on the back, in my view.

A lone man in a farm, in an out of the way place, very vulnerable and people start trying to break into his house. I didn't know that one, but it wouldn't surprise me.

But he defended himself in a right way. What he did wasn't over the top. His name will come back to me in a minute and if it does I go, ah, I've remembered.

[23 : 24] So, Jesus is not speaking against these things. He's not speaking against self-defence. What he's saying is, where someone offends you, deal with it where you can with love.

And we'll explore more of that in a moment. But let's just look at some, I'm not going to make a study of it because we'll be here all day, but a few indications of what the Bible teaches about self-defence and how it's okay to defend yourself, but it's also okay to defend your country in a just war, and it's also okay to fight for the common good.

So it needs to be separated. people get into knots about this and they say, well, I'm a pacifist, I'm a doormat basically, I let people walk all over me. That's not what it's saying. It's perfectly okay to contest matters, but not to go beyond justice.

So, in Luke 22, verses 36 to 38, Jesus says, and this is when he's sending people out to ministry, so this is, he's sending people out to preach the gospel, get people saved.

So if ever there was a situation where you want it to look right, this is it. And he says, whoever has a money belt should take it along, likewise a bag, and whoever has no sword is to sell his coat and buy one.

[24 : 57] So he's advising these disciples going out into the world to preach the gospel to be ready to defend themselves. Down in verse 38, they said to him, Lord, look, here are two swords.

And he said to them, it is enough. So it was enough for them to have two swords with them to ward off whoever might come against them. Psalm 144, verse 1. Praise the Lord who is my rock.

He trains my hands for war and gives my fingers skill for battle. It's not that God is against a godly battle.

He's against an ungodly battle. Psalm 18 says a similar thing. He trains my hands for battle. He strengthens my arm to draw a bronze bow.

So these are situations where you are in-battled or embattled and potentially fighting for your life.

[26 : 05] And on the plus side, he says in Psalm 82, verse 4, rescue weak and needy people, help them escape the power of wicked people. Now that's sometimes going to involve stepping in, you know.

I don't know what they call it these days. It used to be that you could make a citizen to rest. I don't know how much attention would be given to that these days. But there are times when you need to step in and say enough.

I remember there was a young chap with Down Syndrome walking up my road and he was being plagued by a group of children who were poking fun at him, insulting him, ridiculing him because he was Down Syndrome.

And it happened they were going past my house and they stepped in and I stopped them. And I said this is sick. What you're doing is absolutely sick. And he went on his way and these children were sort of admonished whether it came back to their attention next time they did it, I don't know.

But we are supposed to step in sometimes, not just stand by and watch injustice be done. Proverbs 24 verse 11 rescue captives condemned to death and spare those staggering towards their slaughter.

- [27 : 27] This is not justifiable death penalty, this is people who have been captured and are going to be killed and if you can rescue them you should, you should step in. 1 Timothy 5 verse 8 actually says, particularly to fathers actually, if anyone provide not for his own and especially for those of his own house, he has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel.

Sometimes you have to stand up for your own family and you have to stand up against whatever it is and if it's an attack of violence you might have to respond with violence. So fighting for righteous cause or to defend one's property or family is okay but not to excess so that you're not taking vengeance.

There's a difference between defending yourself as much as you need and taking vengeance which goes beyond what you need. I hope I haven't overstated or belaboured that but you see it occurred to me on the way here this morning.

If Jesus had not had this attitude that we're going to talk about now we would not be saved. When Jesus was arrested he takes a sword, Peter takes a sword and cuts off someone's ear and you can read that in Luke 22 verses 49 to 51.

He chops off the ear of a servant called Malchus and Jesus rebukes him for that. You can read that in the same chapter verses 49 to 51.

- [28 : 59] Jesus rebukes him. And he says, don't you know that I can walk away from this? I can call legions of angels to deliver me from this.

And he put the man's ear back on and he healed him. Now he according to human nature he had every reason to say that's exactly what you deserve to have your ear chopped off and while you're at it Peter go and chop a few more.

That was what human nature would have done here. Killed a lot of them. As it was when they came to arrest him. And you read this in John's Gospel. They came up to him to arrest him and the power of God hit the whole lot of them and they all fell flat on their backs.

Now I don't know if you read that passage and then consider it from the point of view of an arrest. Right, there he is, we'll get it, splat, and they're all on their backs. And Jesus then standing over them says, sorry, was it me you were looking for?

And he does say this, he says, I've been in the temple all this time preaching and teaching, you could have come and got me at any time, you don't need clubs. Here, come on, put the cuffs on.

- [30 : 12] And they have to get up off the floor to put the cuffs on. That's how victorious Jesus was over the circumstances. And what he was doing was disempowering the people who came to arrest him, even though he let them arrest him.

He let them do something they actually had no power to do. And he said, okay, go on then. Because he knew why he was there. And Peter had acted unwisely.

Jesus had told him again and again, I have to go to the cross, I have to be killed because I have to rise again, otherwise there's no salvation. so when it comes to violent response, violent reaction, self-defense, etc., we need God's wisdom to know when to administer it.

In this instance, Peter got chastised for doing it because he was countering God's plan. Peter acted unwisely in that situation.

And we all would if we weren't listening to God and knowledgeable about his word and having filled our hearts with his word, have a right response to that attack.

- [31 : 34] I'm reminded of I think it was Polycarp who was one of the disciples of the apostle John in the first century and he second century, he was being chased.

They were going to arrest him and he was to be burnt at the stake. And some people said they're coming to get you and they whisked him away to some remote place. And God showed him that they were in pursuit.

And instead of running away, he stayed put and he waited for them. And when they arrived, he cooked them a meal. And once he cooked them a meal, he said, okay, let's go.

And I can't remember the exact words, but he said something like, you know, my Lord has served me all my life. Am I going to abandon him now? Now, there was a situation where you could have said he was perfectly justified in dealing with the soldiers with violence if he had that capability or running away.

But actually, he knew the plan of the Lord. And he said, this is part of God's plan. And the witness of the death of Polycarp saved thousands of people because they burnt him at the stake. And from what I understand, when they set the fire, initially, it wouldn't burn him.

[32 : 59] And somebody had to step into the flame and stick a sword in him to make him die. So it was a fantastic witness to the kingdom of God.

And of course, eternally, we will all meet Polycarp one day. For him, it's not over. For those that put him to death, they've got eternal torment to look forward to.

So we're going to have wisdom and discernment. right, so let's deal with the other part of this. Let's go back to Matthew 5. How am I doing for time? Right.

If a man slaps you across the right cheek, give him the other one also. Now, this, normally, most people are right handed, and if he got slapped across the right cheek, it wasn't a slap that way, it was a backhander.

And the backhander was never going to kill you. It might hurt, it might smart a bit, but really, the importance of the backhander was an insult. It was designed to put you in your place, designed to diminish you in front of everyone.

[34 : 13] And in fact, a similar thing used to be the case in the UK, where if you were wanting to challenge somebody to a duel, you'd get your gloves and slap them across the face with a glove.

Which would mean I completely disregard you as a human being, and your response was supposed to be, right, pistols at dawn. So it's an insult.

And so if a man insults you, give him the other cheek. It's not going to kill you. And it diminishes the power of the first insult.

Right? I'll take your insult and I'll raise you one more insult. I recently had an exchange with someone online where they berated me because of something I'd said that was biblical, and they berated me, and I wrote back and said, it doesn't matter what you think of me.

That's irrelevant. The point is, you need to think well of Jesus. And that's what this is about. It's when you are unrighteously dealt with, you deal with the matter in love so far as you can.

[35 : 35] Verse 40, if you're being sued for your shirt, give him your coat as well. There was, you can find it in the Levitical law, I've only got 11 minutes, I won't take you there. You can find it in the Levitical law that you were entitled to take someone's shirt, but you weren't entitled to take their coat in a lawsuit because they needed to stay warm.

So by giving somebody your, if someone sues you for your shirt and you give them your coat as well, you've completely disempowered the lawsuit. Now, you didn't need to take me through the courts, you could have had my shirt anyway, and by the way, here's my coat.

And you've taken all the power out of it by righteous loving response. Whoever requires you to go one mile, go with him two. Any Roman soldier could stop you and say, you need to carry my bags for a mile.

They could insist on a mile, but they couldn't insist on any further. So when you get to the end of the mile, instead of dropping them in disgust and spitting on his feet and walking away, you say, it's okay mate, I'll carry him another mile for you.

It completely disempowers the first action of making you carry the bag in the first place. I'm going to make you carry my bag. That's okay. I'd love to carry your bag.

[36 : 54] Where's all my power and authority gone now? And then you get to the end of the mile and say, do you need another mile? And all the impetus goes out of the aggression that's in that action of making you go the first mile.

It's where we get the saying, I went the second mile. I went far beyond what I needed to do. Do not turn away from your neighbour who wants to borrow from you. In other words, be kind and help where you can.

Deal with the matter in love. Our own rule, Sharon's and my rule, is we only lend where we can afford to lose what we lend. so that we're not going to get all bent out of shape if they can never pay it back.

So if it's an amount we can lose, we say, no, you're not borrowing it, but you can have it. If it's an amount we can't afford to lose, really, would hurt us, we will still lend it, but we've already agreed that we're not going to get out of shape if we don't get the money back.

Because sometimes people sincerely intend to pay it back, but they just can't in the end. You have heard it said, love your neighbour and hate your enemy.

[38 : 07] This is a quote from Leviticus 19, and we will turn there. This is the verse I was looking for earlier, I think. Leviticus 19. And it becomes evident when you read from verse 17 and 18 that this was mistaught.

So what the Pharisees were teaching was, love your neighbour but hate your enemy. That's not what the Bible says. In verses 17 and 18 it says this, you shall not hate your fellow countrymen in your heart.

You may surely reprove your neighbour but shall not incur sin because of him. And to hate him would be sinful, wouldn't it? You shall not hate them. Very explicit, you shall not hate them.

You shall not take vengeance nor bear any grudge against the sons of the people but you shall love your neighbour as yourself. I am the Lord.

So it didn't say love your neighbour and hate your enemy. It says on no account hate your enemy and love your neighbour. Of course what Jesus then does is he corrects their understanding of this and says I'm not only saying you should love your neighbour but you should actually love your enemies.

[39 : 31] Now when Jesus went to the cross we were his enemies. He went to the cross predominantly for his enemies. Very very few people who could claim no I wasn't God's enemy.

So if he had not obeyed this himself we would not be saved. He would have said go to the cross for you. No chance. But as it says in Romans 10 Romans 10 7 Romans 10 9 I think.

While we were yet sinners he died for us. You could re-translate that and say why were we yet enemies of God he died for us. Pray for those who persecute you.

It's not always the first thing on my mind when I'm being persecuted. It's to pray for the person that's persecuting me. But God prayed for those who persecuted them. They hung him on the cross. He said father forgive them they don't know what they're doing.

The bit that is hard for us to take in and understand and embrace in our hearts is that that's more effective. It's more effective to pray for your persecutors than it is to try to persecute them back.

[40 : 51] It has a profound effect. Why do we do this? Verse 45 says so we can seem to be sons of our father who pours out blessing on all.

In 1 John 3 and verse 1 we read that God has lavished his love upon us so that we would be his children or his sons. And it doesn't matter whether you're a male or a female son.

It's a general expression. He has lavished his love upon us so that we would be his sons. In 1 John 4 verses 19 to 21 it tells us we love because he first loves us.

And it goes on to say we can't claim to love God if we don't love the people who were created in his image. The two are inseparable. If I claim to love God I have to love you too.

And I have to love the person that keys my car and the person who breaks into my house. I have to love humanity and pray for them. And I can't get around that because even the guy who puts his key along my car is made in the image of God.

[42 : 06] He doesn't realise it yet and he's not acting like it yet but he is and God loves him. The thing about a son is a son should carry out in the house the wishes of his father.

So we can't be sons of God and not carry out the wishes of our father. And that is a huge challenge and if we were to succeed in it we would become completely counter-cultural.

As it stands right now I am sad to say that over most of this land and most of the earth actually the church has become indistinguishable from the world.

The church does the divorce rates about the same, child abuse is about the same particularly with, I shouldn't, perhaps, I should be careful before I say it but there was a massive amount of child abuse went on in the Roman Catholic church going back a while and they were hiding it.

So in a sense the church was worse than the world. We should be completely opposite. when people walk into a church they should find what they cannot find anywhere else which is the love of God expressed even if you come in as a persecutor.

[43 : 29] We're supposed to stand out as we read earlier in the gospel like a light on a hill. Lights are not supposed to be hidden and we're supposed to be like a light on a hill.

And there's no point in having a light on a hill when the wick's turned right down and it doesn't shine very bright. So we're supposed to be uncompromising about sin but rather than using it as a stick to beat people with we provide the fruits of the spirit because of our changed heart and so we approach people who sin against us and each other when we know like if I know you're in sin I am duty bound to tell you that I know you're in sin and to encourage you to do something about it.

I'm duty bound to do those things but not to beat you over the head with your sin like a baseball bat because actually there but for the grace of God goes me.

I could just as easily be caught in the same sin or just a different sin. We all need that empowering because we turn to others who are also filled with God's Holy Spirit and are giving the fruit of the Spirit out.

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness and self-control. I nearly forgot one then. Right? The fruit of the Spirit comes from a heart that is Spirit-filled.

[45 : 00] And so when I deal with you and your sin my approach should be you do realise that you're putting yourself out of sorts with God by doing what you're doing.

and I really don't want to see you go that route. I'm not trying to bludgeon you with your sin. I'm trying to draw you back. That should be that should be the force that I give out.

The last verse says you will be perfect as your Father is perfect. That's a big ask to be perfect. perfect. However, sometimes translators translate things because they have a bit of an agenda.

This is not talking about sinlessness. It's not talking about suddenly becoming perfect. The word, the Greek word uses the word teleos which means to be complete or fulfilled.

fulfilled. So what it's saying is to behave like this in the face of whatever's thrown at you will complete you. It will fulfil you.

[46 : 13] It will fulfil you far more than retribution or retaliation will. So the application for us is to engage brain before starting tongue a lot of the time is to hold back from retaliation and retribution religion until we're sure that that's what we need.

But I do reiterate it's nothing to do with self-defence or justice administered by the state. Father, thank you for this scripture. I do hope I did it justice.

It was a difficult one to get through. But Lord, it makes me aware that all of our hearts are prone to unrighteous responses when people do us wrong.

And I pray, Lord, that you would continue to change us so that we are good witnesses for you when we're faced with these difficult circumstances when people try to wrong us.

And I ask you in Jesus' name to go with us as we try to work this out in Jesus' name. Amen. Any questions?

[47 : 22] Any questions? Please? Thank you.