

## Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany February 16, 2020

Lectionary Year A – the Gospel of Matthew

# Living the Lutheran Lectionary

*A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday since May 4, 2014.*

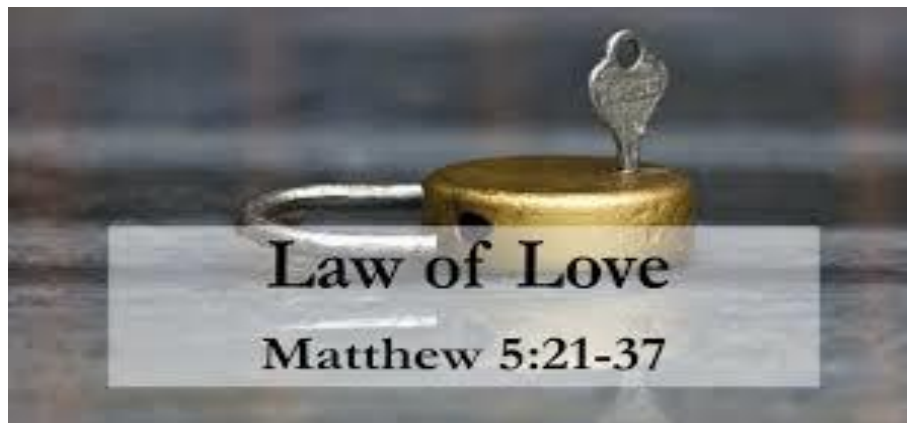
*An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the rhythms of the readings part of the rhythms of your life.*

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- ✦ [www.bethlehmlutheranchurchparma.com/biblestudies](http://www.bethlehmlutheranchurchparma.com/biblestudies)
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### Gather and be blessed:

- ✦ **Thursdays at 10 AM:** At Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH 44134 and on line through <https://zoom.us/j/815200301>
- ✦ **Fridays at 7 PM in a house church setting:** For details, contact Harold Weseloh at [puritaspastor@hotmail.com](mailto:puritaspastor@hotmail.com)
- ✦ **First Sunday of the month at 11 AM:** St. Philip Lutheran Church, 11315 Regalia Ave., Cleveland, OH 44104
- ✦ **Tuesdays at 12:00 PM (8pm Kenya time)** via Zoom to the Lutheran School of Theology - Nyamira , Kenya
- ✦ **On Facebook through Messenger** in a discussion group shared by people throughout the United States, Kenya and Uganda. Contact Harold Weseloh on Facebook Messenger.



<https://pastormandi.com/sermons/gospel/law-of-love-matthew-521-37/>

### Hymn of the Day

**Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 394 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 134**

**“Songs of Thankfulness and praise”**

“The author of this hymn was Christopher Wordsworth (1807–1885), an Anglican clergyman and later a bishop in England in the mid-nineteenth century...

The great number of biblical references and images used in this hymn is one thing that makes it a great and lasting contribution to the Church’s worship. Wordsworth’s sensitivity to the needs of regular worship in ordinary churches is another thing that makes it a great hymn. It comes from a real pastoral concern that the worshipers in his congregation should hear and learn the lessons from the Word read and taught every Sunday. To this day this hymn is in regular use by English-speaking Christians throughout the world...

“Songs of Thankfulness and Praise” is a very good hymn to sing toward the end of the Epiphany Season. It reminds us of many of the ways God is manifest — plain, obvious, evident — in Jesus through the things He did and said in His earthly ministry. It brings the season together and sums it up.”

<https://www.lcms.org/worship/hymn-of-the-day-studies>

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbck7W4Mm90> Piano accompaniment  
[Andrew Remillard](#)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4GhAlQp7Kis> Organ with improvised introduction - [Jeff Windoloski](#)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oP8bG55x1qo> Alternate melody, the most common one in use. Tune: Salzburg by: Jakob Hintze 1622-1702 Harmonized by: J S Bach 1685-1750 Source: Catholic Hymn Book 1998 #47 [Andrew Remillard](#) “Check out the complete list of all 4200+ hymns and 125+ solo classical piano music I have recorded... “

Commentaries have been chosen because the author has written in a way that compliments the reading. Not all of the commentaries are from Lutheran sources. They have been edited for length and in some cases for additional content that is not in keeping with a Lutheran understanding of Scripture. Links are provided for those who wish to read the entire commentary.

The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001  
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**O.T.**— “I have set before you today life and good, death and evil ”

**Psalms** – “law...testimonies... precepts... statutes... commandments... statutes ”

**Epistle** – “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. ”

**Gospel** – “**You have heard that it was said** ”

**Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), the same reading or Sirach 15:15-20**  
(Next week: Transfiguration Sunday, Exodus 24:8-18; RCL, the same reading)

*“The majestic speech of Deuteronomy nears its conclusion in this stirring exhortation.*

*In the wilderness beyond the Jordan, the Israelites listen as their prophetic leader, Moses, describes the kind of people they have become: a people formed in the crucible of covenant, a people who are made and unmade by the grace and ferocity of their God. Under the banner of YHWH, Moses had brought them out of slavery in Egypt and guided them through the perils of the*

wilderness. They had been brought to the towering possibility of Sinai, and they had assented. Theirs would be a life lived in obedience, a faith practiced and witnessed through their devout adherence to the Law.

We listen with them now as Moses lays out in stark terms the choice that lies before his audience: obedience or death. Love God and live; serve other gods and perish! The entire Torah has been driving inexorably toward this choice, made most visible in the call of outsider Abraham and his subsequent near-sacrifice of the long-awaited Isaac (Genesis 22:1-19; see Hebrews 11:8-19). Blessings and extravagant abundance will belong to those who heed the voice of God; unspeakable calamity, terror, and affliction will be the lot of those who abandon the covenant.

In this liminal moment on the brink of the Promised Land and at this crucial point at the end of Deuteronomy, Moses exhorts believers to a renewed and fervent commitment to the God who alone is capable of saving us. Here, Deuteronomy employs powerfully hyperbolic language to dramatize the moment of decision that the book is placing before believers. Moses thunders, "See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity." The people must understand what is at stake, and -- as will be reiterated by Joshua when Moses dies -- they must choose life, which is serving God..."

➤ [http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=668](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=668)

[Carolyn J. Sharp](#) Professor of Hebrew Scriptures, Yale Divinity School, New Haven, Conn.

### **Repentance and Forgiveness    Verses 1-10**

### **The Choice of Life and Death    Verses 11- 20**

### **Repentance and Forgiveness    (15-20)**

<sup>15</sup> "See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. <sup>16</sup> If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God<sup>[a]</sup> that I command you today, by loving the LORD your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules,<sup>[b]</sup> then you shall live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. <sup>17</sup> But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, <sup>18</sup> I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish. You shall not live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. <sup>19</sup> I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, <sup>20</sup> loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them."

- a. [Deuteronomy 30:16](#) Septuagint; Hebrew lacks *If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God*

b. [Deuteronomy 30:16](#) Or *his just decrees*

“After what is surely one of the longest sermons in history -- all of Deuteronomy! -- Moses makes his final appeal to Israel in this passage.

Two long poetic passages follow in chapters 31–34, “The Song of Moses” and “The Blessing of Moses,” along with narratives recounting Moses’ death and the transfer of leadership to Joshua.

Just prior to our text, Moses announces wonderful blessings for an obedient Israel and blood-curdling curses for an apostate Israel (chapter 28). These benedictions and maledictions are followed by a prediction of eventual exile (29:18–29) and return (30:1–10), predictions sufficiently prescient that most scholars deem the words of post-exilic origin.

In the four verses immediately preceding 30:15–20, Moses assures the people that the commandments of the LORD are neither too hard nor too remote: “No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe” (verses 11–14. See Rom 10:5–8). God’s commandments do not exceed the human capacity to understand and perform them.

### **Moses’ Final Appeal**

Having assured the people that what God commands they can do, Moses launches into his final call for a decision. He reiterates the essence of God’s covenant, focusing especially on the promise of blessing for obedience and the threat of a cursed existence in exile for failure to obey. With these words, Moses concludes and descends from his pulpit. The terms of the covenant are clear; the community must now decide...

### **Today You Must Decide!**

Moses’ repeated use of the word “today” (29:10–15, for example, but also throughout chapters 4–12 and 26–30) emphasizes the hope of a new beginning. In every age, there are moments when it is again “today,” a *kairos* moment in which God’s people, individually and collectively, are offered “life and prosperity, death and adversity. To first-century Christians, the letter to the Hebrews says, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts” (3:7, 15; 4:7). Whenever God’s word is read, it is again that “today” in which each of us must decide how we will respond.

The choice is laid out bluntly. It is yes or no. The options presented do not include ‘maybe’ or ‘I’ll have to think about it’ or ‘I’ll give it a try.’ As Yoda famously tells Luke Skywalker who has half-heartedly promised to “try” to do as Yoda asks, “No. Try not. Do. Or do not. There is no try.” ... Jesus made stark demands upon his followers. A decision is required; we must choose and we must act.

### **Count the Cost**

Christian preachers may be tempted to soften the demand of Moses’ final call for decision as they draw out the implications for their flocks. After all, Christians live under the New Covenant, a covenant of grace embraced by faith. But Jesus states his call and demands in terms as uncompromising as Moses,’ and those who would follow him must consider carefully the cost of discipleship... Grace is free, but it is not cheap.”

- [http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=1758](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1758)

[Brian C. Jones](#) Professor Emeritus of Religion, Wartburg College, Waverly, Iowa

**Psalm 119:1-8; RCL, the same reading (Psalm 2:6-12; RCL, the same reading)**

*“Luther professed that he prized this Psalm so highly, that he would not take the whole world in exchange for one leaf of it.”*

- [Exposition of Psalm CXIX: as Illustrative of the Character ...](#)books.google.com › books  
Charles Bridges - 1861 -

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*Whenever I read Psalm 119, alarm bells go off in my head. For one thing, it feels like a literary monstrosity, 176 verses of boring, repetitious monotony ...*

*In addition to those literary alarm bells, I also hear theological bells warning me away from preaching on this Psalm. Its profuse praise for the beauty and value of God’s law seems at least on the surface to collide with the warnings about God’s law in the New Testament, particularly in Paul’s letters ...*

*Given those literary and theological issues, why would any Spirit filled, Christ honoring preacher take on the challenge of preaching on this stiff and boring piece of Hebrew poetry? **Well, first of all, we should consider it, because it is God’s Word. As Paul put it in II Timothy 3, “all Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable....” I take that as an article of faith.***

*And second, all of us have had the experience of tackling something difficult, like playing a complicated sonata on the piano or reading a 600 page Russian novel or learning a new golf swing, and finding great satisfaction when we mastered the challenge. Hard biblical passages can be more rewarding than the familiar old chestnuts. So I invite you to join me in an exploration of this alarming Psalm...”*

- [https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/epiphany-6a/?type=lectionary\\_epistle](https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/epiphany-6a/?type=lectionary_epistle) Stan Mast

## **Your Word Is a Lamp to My Feet**

### **Aleph**

- 119 <sup>[a]</sup> Blessed are those whose way is blameless,  
who walk in the **law** of the LORD!
- <sup>2</sup> Blessed are those who keep his **testimonies**,  
who seek him with their whole heart,
- <sup>3</sup> who also do no wrong,  
but walk in his ways!
- <sup>4</sup> You have commanded your **precepts**  
to be kept diligently.
- <sup>5</sup> Oh that my ways may be steadfast  
in keeping your **statutes!**
- <sup>6</sup> Then I shall not be put to shame,  
having my eyes fixed on all your **commandments.**
- <sup>7</sup> I will praise you with an upright heart,  
when I learn your righteous **rules.** <sup>[b]</sup>
- <sup>8</sup> I will keep your **statutes**;  
do not utterly forsake me!

### **Beth through Taw Verses 9-176**

1. [Psalm 119:1](#) This psalm is an acrostic poem of twenty-two stanzas, following the letters of the Hebrew alphabet; within a stanza, each verse begins with the same Hebrew letter
2. [Psalm 119:7](#) Or *your just and righteous decrees*; also verses [62](#), [106](#), [160](#), [164](#)

“The first eight verses commence with Aleph, and may be alphabetically rendered thus:—

1. **A**ll they that are undefiled in the way, walking in the laws of the Lord, are blessed.
2. **A**ll they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart, are blessed.
3. **A**lso they do no iniquity; they walk in his ways.
4. **A**ll thy precepts diligently to keep thou has commanded us.
5. **A**h, Lord! that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!
6. **A**shamed I shall never be, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.
7. **A**lways will I praise thee, with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments.
8. **A**ll thy statutes will I keep; O forsake me not utterly.

—*Pastor Theodore Kübler, of Islington*, 1880. “

➤ [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/spurgeon\\_charles/tod/ps119\\_001-008.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/spurgeon_charles/tod/ps119_001-008.cfm)

“These first eight verses are taken up with a contemplation of the blessedness which comes through keeping the statutes of the Lord. The subject is treated in a devout manner rather than in a didactic style. Heart-fellowship with God is enjoyed through a love of that word which is God's way of communing with the soul by his Holy Spirit. Prayer and praise and all sorts of devotional acts and feelings gleam through the verses like beams of sunlight through an olive grove. You are not only instructed, but influenced to holy emotion, and helped to express the same.

Lovers of God's holy words are blessed, because they are preserved from defilement (verse [1](#)), because they are made practically holy (verses [2 and 3](#)), and are led to follow after God sincerely and intensely (verse [2](#)). It is seen that this holy walking must be desirable because God commands it (verse [4](#)); therefore the pious soul prays for it (verse [5](#)), and feels that its comfort and courage must depend upon obtaining it (verse [6](#)). In the prospect of answered prayer, yea, while the prayer is being answered, the heart is full of thankfulness (verse [7](#)), and is fixed in solemn resolve not to miss the blessing if the Lord will give enabling grace (verse [8](#))...”

➤ [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/spurgeon\\_charles/tod/ps119\\_001-008.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/spurgeon_charles/tod/ps119_001-008.cfm) Charles Spurgeon

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“In this Psalm there are 8 basic words used to describe the Scriptures, God’s written revelation to us:

**Law** (torah, used 25 times in [Psalm 119](#)): “Its parent verb means ‘teach’ or ‘direct’; therefore coming from God it means both ‘law’ and ‘revelation.’ It can be used of a single command or of a whole body of law.” (Kidner)

**Word** (dabar, used 24 times): The idea is of the spoken word, God’s revealed word to man. “Proceeding from his mouth and revealed by him to us.” (Poole)

**Judgments** (mispatim, used 23 times): “From shaphat, to judge, determine, regulate, order, and discern, because they judge concerning our words and works; show the rules by which they should be regulated; and cause us to discern what is right and wrong, and decide accordingly.” (Clarke)

**Testimonies** (edut/edot, used 23 times): This word is related to the word for witness. To obey His **testimonies** “signifies loyalty to the terms of the covenant made between the Lord and Israel.” (VanGemeren)

**Commandments** (miswah/miswot, used 22 times): “This word emphasizes the straight authority of what is said... the right to give orders.” (Kidner)

**Statutes** (huqqim, used 21 times): The noun is derived from the root verb “engrave” or “inscribe”; the idea is of the written word of God and the authority of His written word. “Declaring his authority and power of giving us laws.” (Poole)

**Precepts** (piqqudim, used 21 times): “This is a word drawn from the sphere of an officer or overseer, and man who is responsible to look closely into a situation and take action... So the word points to the particular instructions of the Lord, as of one who cares about detail.” (Kidner)

**Word** (imrah, used 19 times): Similar in meaning to dabar, yet a different term. “The ‘word’ may denote anything God has spoken, commanded, or promised.” (VanGemeren)”

<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/psalm-119/> ©2018 David Guzik

### **1 Corinthians 3:1-9; RCL, the same reading (2 Peter 1:16-21; RCL, the same reading)**

*Throughout the season of Epiphany, we’ve heard and affirmed that the Word-made-flesh is God’s own wisdom and power graciously revealed for us.*

*Yet often we fail to grasp how profoundly this truth has changed the world, and we still try to make the old, non-Epiphany ways work.*

*The Corinthians seem to have been stuck in those ways too. In 1:10-17, Paul had begun talking about how the Corinthians were arguing over allegiance to various apostles. Then, before that issue was settled, Paul seemed to forget all about it and to wander off into a discussion about the cross of Christ as the wisdom and power of God.*

*However, Paul hasn’t lost his rhetorical way. Ever since 1:18, Paul has been criticizing the world “out there” for not recognizing God’s wisdom. Paul probably has the Corinthians nodding in agreement at this point. He has made a sharp distinction between God’s wisdom and the false wisdom of this old, doomed age.*

*In 2:13 he had mentioned how “we” share spiritual things with spiritual people, and the Corinthians probably thought that they were included in that claim, either on the giving or the receiving end (or both). But Paul begins chapter 3 with an emphatic “I,” contrasted with “you.” Paul makes clear that they aren’t spiritual at all, since their behavior is being determined by competition for status and the expected pursuits of society, rather than by the gospel. “Flesh” in this text should not be understood as something internal, private, or hidden. Rather, in this text “flesh” means the basic, standard, normal, and agreed-upon ways that human society functions, the accepted ways of defining and pursuing the good life...”*

➤ [http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=1950](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1950)

[Brian Peterson](#) Professor of New Testament, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Columbia, SC

## **Divisions in the Church**

3 But I, brothers,<sup>[a]</sup> could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. <sup>2</sup>I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet

ready, <sup>3</sup> for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? <sup>4</sup> For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not being merely human?

<sup>5</sup> What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. <sup>6</sup> I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. <sup>7</sup> So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. <sup>8</sup> He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. <sup>9</sup> For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.

a. [1 Corinthians 3:1](#) Or *brothers and sisters*

"We have the mind of Christ." That was Paul's amazing, lyric, profound final word in what we now call 1 Corinthians 2. It is this mindset alone, Paul claims, that allows us to see in the cross of Christ something other than a complete and senseless dead end. The cross is wisdom, not folly, but you will ever and only recognize that if you are filled with Christ himself. And the Corinthian Christians were so filled, Paul says.

And then . . . we get to what Paul has to say next and it seems to contradict it all. Because as chapter 3 opens, Paul loops back to something mentioned earlier in the opening of this letter. The Christians in Corinth had allowed themselves to become rather balkanized as various groups latched onto not Christ first and foremost but leaders like Apollos, Peter, Paul. Earlier Paul had already chided them for taking their eyes off Jesus first and foremost. Human leaders are unimportant and are here only to serve Christ.

But here as chapter 3 opens, his criticism of this has a sharper bite. Paul says he has to talk to them as though they were children, not mature adults. Indeed, he has to coddle them as though they were INFANTS yet and not even quite children. Their maturity is so lacking that they will choke on anything other than teachings that are the equivalent of milk and not solid food. They are not even up to Cheerios yet! ...

We cannot know, of course, how this rhetoric went over when this letter was read by the Corinthians (perhaps in the context of a worship gathering). You'd have to guess, though, that the people felt a combination of a bit of pique and a bit of shame. "How dare Paul label us as little babies?!" on the one hand and "Alas, he's got a point!!" on the other hand. In any event, Paul could not have been much clearer or more direct. One of these days these people were flat out going to have to grow up. The sooner the better, but maybe God will be patient too.

One thing that may leap out at us as we look at this text, however. If you did preach on this particular issue from 1 Corinthians 1 from earlier in this Lectionary cycle, you may wonder what is left to say in a new sermon on these verses as Paul re-treads the same wheel. So perhaps one thing that could be highlighted here is the fact that Paul does not merely lambast the Corinthians as "infants." That would be arresting and perhaps hurtful enough. But in continuity with the end of the previous chapter Paul does take care to say that although they may be infants, they are "infants *in Christ*." Ahhh, now that little prepositional phrase makes all the difference!



All in all, it is a breathtaking concept, and Paul signals all that joy and glory and wonder every time he uses his favorite two-word expression “in Christ.”

But here in 1 Corinthians 3 it is spiritual infants who are said to be “in Christ” and if it sounded harsh for Paul to call the Corinthians infants, I’d wager that his throwing in the line “in Christ” properly modifies this...

The good news? Even spiritual infants, toddlers, children, adolescents, and the occasional true spiritual adult are all nevertheless and by grace alone “in Christ.” It seems like a small thing Paul slipped into these otherwise chiding words at the head of chapter 3.

But it is by no means a small thing. Thanks be to God! Thanks be to God that the largeness of his grace means more than the smallness of our attitudes at times. And who knows, maybe one fine day we will—as Paul predicts in another place—actually grow up into full maturity after the manner of our elder brother, even Jesus Christ himself.

Infants, after all, have nowhere to grow but up!”

- [https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/epiphany-6a/?type=lectionary\\_epistle](https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/epiphany-6a/?type=lectionary_epistle) Scott Hoezee

**Matthew 5:21-37; RCL, the same reading (Matthew 17:1-9; RCL, the same reading)**

### **Lectionary Context**

*This week's lesson from Matthew 5 continues many of these same themes. The season of Epiphany proclaims the good news of God's presence with us. Our response to that proclamation, our recognition of God's life and work here and now, is more than going through the motions of church. Jesus calls us to a whole new life in God.*

### **Sermon on the Mount**

*This week's reading follows the Beatitudes to form the Sermon on the Mount (5:1 - 7:29). It contains no parables or miracle narratives, only straightforward teaching: do this. We find here, as throughout Matthew, strong ties to the Mosaic law. The opening verses of chapter 5 tell us that Jesus has left the crowds and is teaching his disciples. Jesus is the teacher, bridging familiar lessons from Jewish teachings to his own ministry as he instructs his disciples in the demands of a Jesus-following life.*

### **A Radicalized Ethic**

*We often read Jesus' statements in this discourse--"You have heard that it was said..." followed by "But I say to you..." -- as contrasting, or even replacing, prior Jewish teachings with his own. We must take care in such contrasts, for Jesus neither erases nor discounts the teachings of the law ("Do not think that I have come to abolish the law," verse 17). He uses the traditional teachings on murder, adultery, and prayer as essential grounds for building his case for righteousness..."*

- [http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=795](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=795)  
[Amy G. Oden](#) Visiting Professor of Early Church History and Spirituality, Saint Paul School of Theology, Oklahoma City, Okla

## **“The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 5th Chapter”**

**The Sermon on the Mount Verse 1**

**The Beatitudes Verses 2-12**

**Salt and Light Verses 13-16**

**Christ Came to Fulfill the Law Verses 17-20**

## Anger

***21 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’  
22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother<sup>[a]</sup> will be liable to judgment; whoever insults<sup>[b]</sup> his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell<sup>[c]</sup> of fire. 23 So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. 25 Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. 26 Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.<sup>[d]</sup>***

## Lust

***27 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ 28 But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.***

## Divorce

***31 “It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ 32 But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.***

## Oaths

***33 “Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.’ 34 But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil.[e]***

#### **Retaliation Verses 38-42**

#### **Love Your Enemies Verses 43 - 48**

- a. Matthew 5:22 Some manuscripts insert *without cause*
- b. Matthew 5:22 Greek says *Raca* to (a term of abuse)
- c. Matthew 5:22 Greek *Gehenna*; also verses 29, 30
- d. Matthew 5:26 Greek *kodrantēs*, Roman copper coin (Latin *quadrans*) worth about 1/64 of a *denarius* (which was a day's wage for a laborer)
- e. Matthew 5:37 Or *the evil one*

**“This is the Gospel of the Lord”    “Praise to You, O Christ”**

“Matthew has just presented Jesus as one who upholds the Law and the Prophets. That includes fulfilling what they predicted but also making sure what they intend is taken seriously. This would have met the criticism of fellow Jews who might have been suggesting that Jesus (and his followers) set the Law aside. It would have also countered those Christians (and their teachers) who seemed to do just that. According to Matthew, Jesus did not come to present a new set of commandments to replace the old, but to teach what the eternal commandments always meant. God requires righteousness (right living) and it has to be better than what he alleges many Jewish leaders of his time achieved (5:20).

Our passage takes in the first four of six contrasts which Matthew presents in order to show what doing God's Law really means and where its priorities lie. People can hear the commandments and not understand what they are really about. That is why Matthew introduces these six contrasts by saying:: "you have heard that it was said to the people of old". It is like saying: you know what they said the commandments meant? Well, let me tell you what they really mean! He has selected only six on which to comment. Matthew is fond of multiples of three. Each one has an introduction, the first and the fourth being the longest. The selection is important because it tells us where the emphasis lies...

There is much in this passage, but it comes up for preaching very seldom ... It addresses issues that are always with us and deserve to be canvassed regularly.”

➤ <http://wwwstaff.murdoch.edu.au/~loader/MtEpiphany6.htm> William Loader

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**At different times these topics can cause great friction to the hearer.** Jesus isn't sugar coating anything. He's not preaching soft words to you today. When words grate against the ears, the temptation is to stop listening and to disrespect the one preaching. We Lutherans know that this is a temptation and that there are people who fall prey to such temptations, yet all the more we as Lutherans then believe, teach and confess that the preacher is worthy not only of a wage (even when he speaks hard words like these words from Jesus today), but is also worthy of honour[1] as Saint Paul says to Pastor Timothy in his first letter to Timothy, and more than that, that we believe, teach and confess that the preacher would be listened too. So even here in this Gospel Reading today, this portion of the Sermon on the Mount, from Matthew chapter 5 when the words are hard words, words that are hard to hear, you are asked to listen to the preacher Jesus as He preaches to you...

- <https://lutheran-church-regina.com/blogs/post/sermon-pr-ted-giese-sunday-february-12th-2017-matthew-521-37-jesus-preaches-about-sin-and-hell-and-sex-and-marriage-and-divorce-and-murder-and-adultery-and-trustworthiness> Pastor Ted Giese, Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, Regina, Canada

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### “Are You Contradicting Me?”

When a parent asks their child: "Are you contradicting me?" there is really no right answer. If the child says "no," they are contradicting them. If the child says "yes," they are contradicting them. Is Jesus contradicting the law? Jesus' antitheses' answer to that question is "Yes and No." In Matthew 5:21-48, Jesus offers a series of six "antitheses" or contrasts.

In these teachings, which Jesus prefaces with the words "You have heard it said, but I say to you..." (5:21-48), Jesus is presented as the God-authorized interpreter of the law. The verses that precede the antitheses clarify the relationship between Jesus and the law and between his followers and the law...

Faithfulness to his interpretation leads to a righteousness that exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, not in quantity, but in quality... Jesus' followers' obedience must be to the spirit of Torah as revealed to them by Jesus, not merely to the letter as strictly construed by their opponents (7:15-20). That obedience will manifest itself in ethical behavior, even when that behavior is at odds with ritual convention (7:12)...

Intense and internal—this is both what Jesus affirms about the heart of the Law and what he critiques as lacking in its current interpretation..."

- <https://www.patheos.com/progressive-christian/contradicting-me-alyce-mckenzie-02-11-2014.html>



- Agnus Day appears with the permission of <https://www.agnusday.org/>

*The Matthew Challenge* Do you remember writing this week's Gospel last month?