

The Sermon on the Mount, Part 3. *Beyond human nature. Matt 5:33-48*

If God has any need, and some say he hasn't any, it is to be united to those of us who willingly submit to his sovereignty. If God has a goal in creation, it is the capture of our will. The will is that which most distinctly defines us as his human creation. Without will we are not free to choose, and without freedom we can never submit to God in a manner which will satisfy his desire or need for us.

Living beyond human nature.

The truth about truth, 5:33-37.

- Don't make false vows, but keep the ones you make.
 - "Official" vows, _____
 - Promises are vows, _____
 - Crossing fingers = false vows, _____
- In fact, don't make any vows at all.
 - Your word itself should become a standard, _____
 - "Yes, yes or No, no; anything beyond these is from evil."
Or "From evil intent," or "the evil one." _____
 - This does not include officially required vows. _____

Defeating the most resistant part of our nature, 5:38-42.

- The old rule: "an eye for an eye, etc."
 - Utterly misunderstood as a demand for "justice." _____
 - But it is an upper limit for those who insist on redress. _____
- The new rule: "turn the other cheek."
 - Are there limits to this? _____
 - Does this extend beyond "cheeks," and beyond your own person? _____
- Another new rule: "be generous to your enemies."
 - What about protecting ourselves? _____
 - Is Jesus asking more than we can do? _____

Love as God loves, 5:43-48.

- The world's plan:
 - *Love your neighbor, hate your enemy*". _____
- But God's plan circumvents the need to identify enemies.
 - Love them all, _____
 - But, Jesus further defined "neighbor in Luke 10:25-37 _____
 - Pray for all, particularly those who persecute you, _____
 - Don't discriminate with regard to charity or generosity, _____
- **But**, don't love as the world loves.
 - **Agapao, or agape, love:** the only term used to express the manner in which God cares for us. _____
 - **The best definition so far:** the willingness to extend or sacrifice oneself for the spiritual welfare of another.
 - This love reflects authentic concern for the welfare of the one loved. _____
- **Some rules for love.**
 - True love requires thought. _____
 - Authentic love will require discipline. _____
 - Love isn't always "nice." _____
 - Love doesn't demand a response, it desires one. _____
 - Authentic love is always risky. _____

A final command, taking on the nature of God, *Therefore, you are to be perfect, as your heavenly father is perfect.* 5:48

- What does it actually mean to "be perfect."
- The Greek word "Telios" means to be "complete, a finished work." _____

So, to complete the logical connection here, our experiences begin to reveal that our wills are essentially selfish, and will ultimately leave us dissatisfied and alone. But our wills are resistant to coercion and domination. God, though, in his infinite patience with us, draws us toward the precipice where we must choose to either submit our will to his or return to our selfish aloneness. Our choice at this point is the hugest of risks, yet the promised benefit is love: authentic, genuine, sacrificial love.