

The gospel, from the Sermon on the Mount. Poetic, wisdom literature. It's meant to be provocative, invites you to contemplate. Also requires more work from you. But if taken out of context, from other things Jesus said, it could be read wrong or confusing. Jesus says **don't call people fools, if you call someone a fool you will be in danger of Hellfire** then a few chapters later He himself will call the disciples: **fools**. We must read, hear in context; recognize what's being taught. We hear the 5th commandment, of murder; then we get an example about being taken to the judge which is really about how to live with forgiveness, about turning the other cheek. Unforgiven sins with bar entry into the Kingdom of heaven, even sins we quickly dismiss, sins we don't even feel.

Examine yourselves according to the Commandments. Not simply on the outside (not kill) but your heart (not to hate, not desire harm, that people get what's coming to them).

Therein lies the problem. With Pharisees, with us. How do we stand before God according to the Commandments? The Pharisees had legitimate external self-righteousness, stand amongst neighbors, say "I've never murdered anyone" as well "I've never had an extramarital affair. I'm not a thief. I've worked to keep the commandments." Is that enough? Enough to impress God, what all the commandments asked? Good enough to stand before God, justified?

As well, Jesus says: **you have heard it was said you shall not commit adultery but I say to you if you look with lust, you are guilty of adultery**. Provocative. It sounds on the surface as though He's correcting Moses or adding to Commandments. Of course that's not true. Moses, all the Old Testament address sin is not just committed with our hands and mouths but our hearts. It's not enough to be righteous as on the outside (Pharisees and us all clean-up very well), we must also be pure, holy in our heart.

The 5th commandment requires: to care for every physical need of our neighbor, and more. Requires us to love our neighbor, even ones difficult to deal with, even our enemies. Every unkind thought or word or anger against your neighbor, as says Jesus, is murder, deserving the wrath of God.

Repent. We're all guilty of self-righteous behavior, at least all those with driver's licenses. Right because driving, it's very easy to be self-righteous, how dare that person slow me down, how dare they make a mistake, be on the phone, checking messages, not pay attention -as though you've never done that. I'm not perfect, but not as bad as them, they deserve a cold shoulder. Self-righteous comes so easy.

Live a life of repentance, humility, gratitude. Wisdom is always humble, compassionate. That's why when you consider your sins against God in proportion to how others sin against you; look how you're abundantly, overwhelmingly forgiven, show some compassion instead of anger to others. Jesus speaks **you will never get out of prison until you pay the last penny**.

An eternal threat. You're meant to live showing mercy. Jesus doesn't say anything about whether or not what your brother has against you is just or not.

If your mother leaves the house to you and your brother. And your brother fails to recognize you're half of the estate; sure you argue for what's yours. He says well "I'm just gonna sue you for it." Mercy, the point, that you'd say you know it'd be so horrible if you sued me, it'd be so destructive to our family, it might endanger your faith; so I'd rather let you have the house, money, inheritance, and then not resent it, nor bring it up again, let you have it all, because your salvation, my salvation, our bond of love and family, matters more. But we all squirm at this, because we like want it to be fair, we like money. Thanks be to God He's not fair or your damned. It's called mercy.

I'm not saying you just roll over and you're a doormat, keep turning cheeks. Again this is wisdom literature, it's balanced by other things in Holy Scripture. But this example upholds this reality of putting first things first; recognizing you are called upon to make sacrifices for one another. You are called to love one another not just the ones that are easy to love. Think about what this means in your daily routines; how you must change not just actions, but your heart towards others.

You are not set free from God's holy law demands. You are set free from the laws punishment, condemnation. St. Paul writes, **Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? No! How can we who died to sin still live in it?** Then the Epistle. How great is this. **Do you not know that _____ baptized into Christ Jesus death? Just as Christ was raised from the death by the glory of the Father, you too might walk in newness of life. Untied to His death and resurrection.** Nothing is more sure and certain in your life than the gifts God gave you in your baptism.

To walk in newness of life -the joy each moment of every day you've been given. Also a struggle to live according to God's Word, fight temptations, your sinful reactions, fight sinful motives in your heart; so you endure, you bear burdens, you sacrifice for others; do not let the world, the demons, even your sinful flesh win the day. Walk in newness of a baptismal life, resurrected life yours now. You're the reason the earth still spins, the sun still rises. He gives your live immeasurable worth.

So what are you to do for a righteousness to enter the kingdom of heaven? You are to do: nothing. It's grace. There is but one righteousness that exceed the Pharisees, the Righteous One, whose work of keeping the commandments perfectly, whose sacrifice acceptable to the Father for all your sins, wrath you deserve is credited to you. You will stand before God with a righteousness is not your own. It is His, given you. Hell's fire will never touch you. You are what He declares you to be. His baptized child. He made you so. You are righteous, holy. You are His.