**THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT (5)**

**Matthew 5: 33-48**

**INTRODUCTION**

**The kingdom of heaven is the sphere where God reigns, where His will is being done.**

**The norms of the kingdom supersede those of this world and unregenerate conscience.**

**This world: Don’t kill anyone. The kingdom: Don’t be angry.**

**This world: Be seen as being honest. The kingdom: Tell the truth**

**This world. An eye for an eye The kingdom: Don’t take revenge**

**This world: Be good to those who are good to you The kingdom: Love your enemies**

**But does God really expect us to live up to the norms of the kingdom?**

**How is this possible?**

**THE KINGDOM NORM: JUST TELL THE TRUTH (vv.33-37)**

**Scripture shows us many people taking oaths: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Paul…**

**What Jesus condemns is the flippant, uncalled for, and often hypocritical oath used in order to impress or circumvent what was promised.**

**People agreed that an oath taken where God’s name was invoked was to be kept. (v.33)**

**Therefore they took oaths invoking: heaven, earth, Jerusalem, their head… with the thought that these oaths could be broken as God’s name was not invoked. (vv.34-36)**

**Jesus: all of these- heaven, earth, Jerusalem,…-are in some way related to God. (vv. 34-36)**

**Therefore:”Let your ‘yes’ be ‘yes’ and your ‘no’ , ‘no’. (v.37)**

**In other words : JUST TELL THE TRUTH**

**THE KINGDOM NORM: DON’T TAKE REVENGE (vv.38-42)**

**“Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth” was known as the ‘lex talionis’. (v.38)**

**It was meant not to encourage revenge, but to prevent it and especially prevent it from getting out of hand.**

**It was meant to be used by the civil authorities (eg. judges and civil courts) .**

**The idea was: Let the punishment fit the crime.**

**It was not to be administered by individuals. In fact it was meant to discourage private revenge. (eg. family or clan feuds)**

**Jesus: “But I tell you…” (don’t stop at not taking revenge, but accept injustice done to you and go beyond that even to the point of giving up your rights (paraphrase))**

**Four examples:**

 **1. someone insults you(v.39)**

 **2. someone takes your tunic (v.40)**

1. **someone presses you into service (v.41)**
2. **someone borrows from you (v.42)**

**The person living according to kingdom norms is willing to “suffer injustice” and think about ways of advancing the kingdom of heaven and its influence on this earth.**

**THE KINGDOM NORM: LOVE YOUR ENEMIES (vv.43-47)**

**Leviticus 19:18 states: “…love your neighbor as yourself” It does not say to hate your enemy. That’s what people were saying was the thing to do. (v.43)**

**Jesus: “Love your enemies” (v.44)**

**In doing so you are a ‘son of God’, that is, your acting like Him (v.45)**

**God showers His blessing on all- even those who oppose Him. (v.45)**

**Tax collectors and pagans were looked down upon, yet Jesus says they treat people well who treat them well. If you only love those who love you then you’re just acting like**

**them. (vv.46,47)**

**The kingdom norm is ‘to love your enemies.’**

**JESUS CALLS KINGDOM PEOPLE TO LIVE ACCORDING TO KINGDOM NORMS (v.48)**

**Jesus: “Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”**

**This is not sinless perfection.**

**This is a ‘call’ to live and love according to God’s standards, not the world’s.**

**LIFFE LESSONS**

1. **Once again we are reminded that kingdom people (that is ourselves) are called to lives**

 **consistent with kingdom norms. The standards of society,as well as those of our**

 **unregenerate hearts, are not the arbiters of our conduct. Kingdom people should live according to kingdom norms.**

1. **Oath taking is sometimes necessary, nothing in scripture forbids it.**

 **In this world of dishonesty and deception the oath is at times necessary to add solemnity and the guarantee of reliability to an important affirmation or promise. What is condemned here is oath taking to fudge the truth. Over against this Jesus commands truthfulness. Simply put, Christians should be honest.**

1. **The kingdom person is concerned with the ‘welfare of others’ and the advancement of**

**the kingdom. He/she is willing to forego their rights.**

**( example: Romans 14:19-21)**

1. **Kingdom people are called to ‘love’ their enemies, not necessarily to ‘like’ them.**

**The word for love in this passage is ‘agape’, love which emanates not from emotion**

**but from one’s will. It involves desiring good for that person. One action step is prayer**

**for that person. (v.44)**

1. **Kingdom people do not take revenge**

**The apostle Paul’s pastoral advice (Romans 12: 17-21)**

1. **It’s been said: “To return evil for good is devilish; to return good for good is human; to**

**return good for evil is divine.”**

**POINT: Kingdom people (ourselves) are called to live according to God’s standards.**

**This will only be possible with God’s help. And He has given us the Holy Spirit!**