

## **13. The Unchanging Ethics and Morality of Jesus**

The ethical and moral system authored by Jesus, the Christ by the will of God the Father, never changes in concept and duration. No synod, convention, council, nor any other body of men can change or alter it. The ethics and morality of Jesus are not situational, to be changed to suit the times or situation. Jesus and the apostles and prophets all affirmed the unchanging nature of the Gospel law of faith and practice. In Jude 3-4, Jude summarized the unchanging nature of the faith: "I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints." About this faith once for all delivered, Paul spoke of completeness and all-sufficiency in 2 Tim 3:16-17, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." Jesus, himself, affirmed the fullness and completeness of his authority, prior to his ascension.

Jesus laid the spiritual foundation for appropriate ethical and moral behavior in the beatitudes in Matt 5:3-12. The ethical and moral standards of behavior follow in Matt 5-7. Matthew records in Matt 28:18-20:

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."

Words like *all*, *in heaven and on earth*, and *obey everything* leave no room for latter day religions to water down the morality and ethics commanded by Jesus or add new and different teachings and interpretations.

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Matt 7:24-27: 24

*"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."*

The first 12 lessons have established the moral and ethical behaviors expected by Christ under the Gospel law of Christ—the New Testament. These commands extend the law of commandments given to Moses to a new level—a spiritual one—controlling even the lusts and thoughts that generate from the spirit, mind, and body. These moral and ethical behaviors are so explicit that we must consider them unequivocal in nature. This lesson draws these behaviors from the past 12 lessons, all of which were taken from Matt 5-7. We must be like the wise man: we must hear the words of Jesus and do them.

**Do not murder or hate:** "21 You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' 22 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell." Matt 5:21-22.

**Do not commit adultery or lust after another person:** "27 You have heard that it was said, 'Do

not commit adultery.' 28 But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell." Matt 5:27-29.

**Do not divorce except for marital unfaithfulness:** "31 "It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' 32 But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery." Matt 5:31-32.

**Speak the truth and do not curse or swear:** "33 Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.' 34 But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; 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 swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. 37 Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one." Matt 5:33-37.

**Do not retaliate or seek retribution:** "38 You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' 39 But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. 41 If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. 42 Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you." Matt 5:38-42.

**Love your enemies and do good to those who persecute you:** "43 You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven." Matt 5:43-45.

**Do not be self-righteous:** "16 When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. 17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18 so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." Matt 6:16-18.

**Pray for forgiveness and forgive others:** "14 For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." Matt 6:14-15.

**Do not serve Money:** "24 No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money." Matt 6:24.

**Do not be hypocritical:** "7:1 Do not judge, or you too will be judged. 2 For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

"3 Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? 4 How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye." Matt 7:1-5.

**Watch out for false prophets and false teachers:** "15 Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. 16 By their fruit you will

recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? 17 Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them."

"21 Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!' Matt 7:15-23.

### **The Right of Jesus to Command**

Matt 7:28-29:

*28 When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, 29 because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.*

The crowd recognized Jesus as one who had authority. Authority is the right of one whose commands must be obeyed. One cannot accept Jesus and deny his commands. We must obey the moral and ethical commands of Jesus; they are permanent and unchanging; we must hear them and do them.

### **Conclusion**

The ethics and morals of Jesus are for all times. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, true Christians will obey them as the Lord gave them. Contemporaries never have the right to change or adjust the ethics and morality of Jesus to suit the times or to justify their own indiscretions.

### **Study Questions from the Scriptures**

1. Jude 3-4: For what are we to contend? How often was the faith entrusted to the saints?
  2. 2 Tim 3:16-17: Which scriptures are God breathed? How is the man of God equipped?
  3. Matt 28:18-20: How much authority did Jesus receive? What must disciples obey?
  4. Matt 7:24-27: Who is like the wise man? Who is like the foolish man?
  5. Matt 5:21-22: Who is now subject to the judgment?
  6. Matt 5:27-29: When has a man committed adultery in his heart?
  7. Matt 5:31-32: What is the only reason for divorce?
  8. Matt 5:33-37: By what may we swear? Instead of swearing, what are we to say?
  9. Matt 5:38-42: How are we to respond to an evil person?
  10. Matt 5:43-45: How are we to treat our enemies? If we do these things, whose sons are we?
  11. Matt 6:16-18: Why should our praying and fasting not be before men? Who rewards us for secret deeds?
  12. Matt 6:14-15: What will be the result if we do not forgive others?
  13. Matt 6:24: Why can we not serve two masters?
  14. Matt 7:1-5: Why should we not judge others?
  15. Matt 7:15-23: For whom should we watch out? How can we know false prophets?
  16. Matt 7:28-29: Why were the crowds amazed?
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