

I. Review

- A. The SOTM is the unveiling of the heart of the King and an invitation to walk in the fullness of the life of the Kingdom that God made available to us through the New Covenant. Jesus gives us 8 aspects (the beatitudes) of the fullness of life and love that He walks in and encourages us to position our hearts to be transformed into His likeness. (Rom 8:1-6; Heb. 9:1-14)
- B. Six Weeds - Jesus puts forward six particular aspects of the law in which the outward action of obedience was being walked out by the scribes and Pharisees, but the death within the heart still remained. Jesus places the priority on righteousness in the inward parts that produces outward righteousness. (Mat. 5:17-20)
 - 1. Spirit of Murder - (Mat. 5:21-26)
 - 2. Spirit of Covetousness – (Mat. 5:27-30)
 - 3. Spirit of Treachery – (Mat. 5:31-32)
 - 4. Spirit of Manipulation – (Mat. 5:33-37)
 - 5. Spirit of Revenge – (Mat. 5:38-42)

II. Exposing the Spirit of Animosity

- A. Jesus starts out this passage the exact same as the previous 5 fallen aspects or attitudes (spirits) by referencing the popular teaching and thought of the bible teachers of that day. You have heard it said, “You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.” In other words holding animosity in your heart against those who hate you is righteous.
 - 1. For many, there is a tension in the truths that God is love and commands us to love our neighbor and yet God cursed Cain, killed all but one man and his family in a great flood, burned the city’s of Sodom and Gomorrah, and carried out numerous harsh judgments upon Israel. In light of this tension, the bible teachers of that day concluded that God hates His enemies in the same way that they hated theirs, therefore hating your enemies was justified and right. Ez. 18:23-32, 2 Peter 3:9
 - 2. The way forward in resolving this tension is not to create a God in our image but rather understand that God is God of pure (no evil emotions) and perfect Justice.
 - 3. God’s perfect and righteous judgment must come up against those people who choose to remain unrepentant. The Pharisees took the Justice of God and used it to justify their hatred for anybody they disliked or was offensive to them.

- B. This teaching to hate your enemy immediately strikes the Christian heart as wrong, and we rightly wonder how such a teaching could have been given and accepted as a Godly teaching. However as Jesus gives us little deeper look as he reveals that most of us at the heart level agree with this teaching. Jesus uses three tests to examine if we hold animosity in our hearts towards our enemies.
- C. But I say to you... Love your enemies. Within the three examples that Jesus gives is found both the light that exposes animosity but also the truth of how to move forward in love.
1. **Bless those who curse you** – Think about someone who is cursing or has cursed you. The original word translated “curse” literally means to “wish evil upon”. What arises in your soul when you think of them? Jesus tells us that he wants us to think of a person who is wishing evil upon us and then “bless” them, this Greek word means to “cause to prosper, make happy, and bestow favor upon”. Rom. 12:14, 1 Peter 3:9, 1 Cor. 4:9-13
 2. **Do good to those who hate you** – Jesus then tells us to think of a person who hates us in order that the animosity would be exposed and then intentionally set our hearts and minds to do “good” to them. The word translated “good” means to “act uprightly, nobly, and commendably”. Luke 23:34, Ps.35:4-14
 3. **Pray for those who spitefully use and persecute you** – The third test is to think of someone who is or who has used you and/or persecuted (pursue to harass trouble or mistreat) you. The use of the word prayer in this context means to “intercede” for them, to stand in the gap on their behalf and to lift them up before the throne.

Our lives are so governed by other people, what they do to us, what they think about us. Think of the unkind and cruel thoughts that have come into your mind and heart. What produced them? Somebody else!! How much of our thinking, acting, and behavior is entirely governed by other people. It is one of the things that make life so wretched. You see a particular person and your spirit is upset. If you had not seen that person you would not have felt like that. Other people are controlling you. “Now”, says Christ in effect, “You must get out of that condition, your love must become such that you will no longer be governed and controlled by other people.”
– Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

III. Sons and Daughters of God

"For I say to you love your enemies, bless those who curse you, use you, and persecute you...that you might be sons (and daughters) of your Father in heaven. Therefore you shall be perfect (complete), just as your Father in heaven is perfect. (Mat. 5:43-48)

- A. Jesus now makes it clear that His intention and hope in giving the SOTM is that we would be transformed into the image of God. He is exhorting us in His beauty in order that we would be recreated in His likeness and carry His nature on the inside. This internal nature will automatically result in outward expression of Godliness and people would recognize that we are not like other people but rather we are sons and daughters of God and we give witness of His glory.
- B. He makes the sun to rise and the rain to fall upon the evil and good – This truth of God's love for the evil man, or in this case his enemies, flows from two main aspects of God's heart of love.
 - 1. **Pure Heart** – The giving of His love is not influenced by what people think or do, but rather, He loves detached from those influences. His love is not offered or held back based upon our response. His love is pure. Romans 5:6-10
 - 2. **Compassion** – He sees you in the truth of your fallen condition, He sees man stuck in his sin nature under the power of darkness. He looked at our sinful and arrogant world filled with foul thoughts and actions and sent His only begotten Son to save us because He saw us in our condition. Titus 3:1-5
- C. Supernatural Church – Jesus tells us that ungodly people can love those who love them, there is nothing supernatural about that sort of love. However what is unprecedented in the earth is an entire people group who actively love those who hate them back. This is the greatest and most powerful manifestation of the kingdom of God. Nature can be moved and shaken, broken bodies healed, dead bodies raised up in life again, and demonic powers flee just at the sound of His voice. The transformation of the heart of the evil man is a different matter altogether. This is why the single greatest and most powerful testimony of Jesus to the world is a church who loves in the very same way God loves. John 13:1-5, 26-30