

Chapter 14. Quintilis 14 785.

The Sermon on the Mount.

The time that had passed since my visit in Nazareth had been a time of intense teaching and meeting with larger and larger groups of people. From our now quite permanent camp in Capernaum, we had made long journeys around Galilee. We had also been down once to Jerusalem for Passover.

More and more miracles of healing happened, as more people started to believe the possibility of healing, although none were able to take the step to belief in self-healing, despite my constant reminders 'Your faith has healed you'. But my beloved brother Hakob's reminder helped me to remember to let this be, and to put my own faith in my Father's hands.

This day, the summer heat had abated some. Many had asked my disciples to meet with me, and Petros had decided for a larger meeting than usual, where I would spend a whole day teaching. The disciples had told people to meet us at Mount Eremos, a couple of hours' walk northeast from Capernaum.

When we came there in the morning, many hundred had already gathered, and many in our group had to spend the first hour to arrange how people should sit in order for all to hear.

With assistance from local woodworkers, a platform had been erected, with a plank wall behind to make

my voice heard downwards into the valley below. I sat on a stool on the platform and the Twelve were seated on a low bench behind me, where they could lean against the planking behind.

The weather was perfect for an occasion like this, a little cloudy and with no wind at all. As I sat, looking over the crowds, I could hear some talking with low voices with each other, but most of the people present were just looking at us, and it was almost completely quiet.

As this was a larger gathering than usual, we had not planned to have any special breaks for questions and discussions, as we in most cases else had in our smaller gatherings. For this day I had planned a longer teaching, with time for questions afterwards in smaller groups. As soon as I started to speak, the crowd of people, that now had grown to almost a thousand, became completely silent.

- "First, beloved brothers and sisters, I will tell you the ten ways by which you can be blessed. These, and more, are the teachings I have given my twelve disciples here on the stage behind me, and to all the ones that have followed us.

Blessed are those not imprisoning with thoughts,
for theirs is the kingdom in heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn,
they will be comforted.

Blessed are the humble,
they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger for Truth,
they will find it.

Blessed are those who forgive,
they will be forgiven.

Blessed are those who see with love,
they will see Allah.

Blessed are the miracle-workers,
they will be called children of Allah.

Blessed are those persecuted for talking of Truth,
theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

And these ways are not the only ones. There are many paths that lead to our Father, and you can choose any of them.

Blessed are you even when you are insulted, persecuted or becoming victim of false accusations because of listening to me and doing my work. Rejoice and be glad, because your reward will be great.

You who spread my word are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

You who spread my word are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead

they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify our Father in heaven.”

An old man, bald and with a large white beard, stood up and asked

- “But, master, if someone has sinned he has to atone and make sacrifices to be worthy of blessing again. What do you say about sin?”

I answered him

- “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘You shall not murder. Anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’

But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will in reality be judging himself. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, ‘Raca’ is imprisoning himself by guilt. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of creating hell for oneself.

Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to

the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny. And the prison is of your own making.”

The old man had remained standing, and he said

- “How can you compare being angry with murder?”

I said

- “There is no sin, there is only wrong-mindedness. The wrong-minded see the world as hostile and they think they have to do what they do to protect themselves. Sometimes this leads to great mistakes. Both the one who says ‘Raca’ to his brother, and the one wanting to kill need to forgive. Sometimes they first need to be forgiven before they can forgive themselves, to be able to become right-minded.”

- “So you forgive the murderer and let the crime pass?” the old man exclaimed angrily.

- “You shall forgive and you shall act. But the purpose of your action shall be to help him become right-minded, and the most loving thing you can do then to protect him from killing again is locking him up, and then patiently try to wake him up to right-mindedness.”

- “But surely, every sensible person knows that the murderer deserves to be executed!”

- “You cannot help anybody become right-minded by being wrong-minded yourself” I said. “To execute is to murder.”

The old man sat down, looking both bewildered and angry, shaking his head. A young man behind him now stood up and asked

- “So you say that we shall protect people from acting on their mistaken thoughts. I can understand that the murderer may have become blinded by anger, but how can you say that about adultery? Those surely deserve to be stoned!”

I answered

- “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’

But I tell you that anyone who looks at another person as something to possess has already become trapped in illusion, believing that true happiness comes only from meeting the needs of your body. Love each other, give pleasure to each other, but use your relationship as a path to Allah, by regarding each other as divine souls that cannot be owned. If a part of your mind causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better to lose one part of your mind than for your whole soul to go into hell.

The mistake done is not the adultery itself, it is the dishonesty. Forgive yourself that you devotion to your

wife or your husband may not last a lifetime, and be honest. This honesty may lead to divorce.

It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.'

All relationships can be made holy, if they are used for giving out Allah's love to another. But even holy relationships may not be meant to last forever, so I tell you, give not only a certificate of divorce; settle all things justly and with honesty, so that you can walk away on your different paths as friends."

The young man cried indignantly

- "But surely, the adulterer has broken his or her oath! That is an oath to Allah!"

I smiled at him and said

- "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have sworn.'

But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either to Allah, or to earthly powers, or to your honor, because you cannot change your thoughts. All you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything beyond this comes from a part of your mind that is not honest."

Now many started to talk among themselves, and a man clad in a long mantle stood up and said

- “A man whose wife has been with another man is entitled to revenge. A man whose son has been murdered is entitled to revenge. Why should he forgive?”

I had heard these arguments so many times that I felt weary. But, I closed my eyes and let my impatience pass, looked at him and said

- “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’

But I tell you, do not resist a person who seeks to be evil. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you. Forgive and you will be forgiven.

You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’

But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not

even pagans do that? Be generous and forgiving, therefore, as your heavenly Father forgives all and offers us everything.”

At this many stood up and came nearer the platform. They gathered around, agitated, many raised their voices, trying to be heard. The old man with the white beard made his way through the crowd, came up and slammed his walking staff into the platform, and the sound of this silenced the others. He said

- “This is not what a righteous man can do! To defend one’s honor is Allah’s will! We give to the poor and we remember our prayers and we follow the commandments. That should be enough!”

Everyone looked at me, some were smiling triumphantly at this irrefutable statement. I smiled gently at them, held my arms out and said

- “Do you want to be righteous or do you want to happy? To be righteous, giving in order to be honored by others, is not the same as doing the right thing. The right thing is to give from your heart, without any sacrifice, because to give truly is to receive. Give and you will be given. Give all and you will be given all.

When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees

what is done in secret, will give you what you need. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like the pious scripture-followers, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. You need not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

This, then, is how you can pray:

Our Father who art in heaven.
Hallowed be thy Name.
Thy Kingdom is here.
Thy will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us what we truly need and forgive us our
mistaken thoughts,
for us to forgive others for theirs.
Help us see temptation, so that we avoid doing evil.
Ours is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, you will realize that your heavenly Father has already forgiven. But if you do not forgive others their sins, you will not be able to forgive yourself and you will never know your Father's forgiveness."

At this all who stood near the platform returned to where they had been sitting before. Many shook their heads but they did not say anything more.

A man in fine clothes stood up. He was sitting among women and children, which seemed to be his family. He said

- "Your disciples have left everything when they followed you. When you say that we shall not pray for more than we need, how shall I be able to provide for my large family?"

I heard this man being torn between his need for feeling secure and his longing for being worthy in Allah's eyes, and I felt compassion for him. I said

- "Do not store up for yourself treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourself treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both Allah and Mammon.

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' The greedy run after all these things, imprisoning themselves in these thoughts. Seek first your Father's kingdom and his Truth, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

- "So the ones that serve Mammon and gather riches for themselves, are they judged unworthy by Allah?" a young man asked.

To this I answered

- "Allah does not judge, He loves each one of you regardless of what you do. But He weeps for those of you who make yourselves deaf and blind against His love. Heal your deafness and your blindness by forgiving your brothers and your sisters. Do not judge, or you will judge yourself. For in the same way

you judge others, you will be judged by yourself, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

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? 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? 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.

So what can be said about what you need to do, for finding Allah?

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you have mistaken thoughts, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

So this is my Golden Rule: In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.

This sums up the real truth of the Law and the Prophets.

Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But tight is the gate and narrow is the road that leads to Life and only a few find it.”

- “Master”, the young man continued, “you talk like a prophet yourself, and you are not even a rabbi. How can we know that what you say is true? How can we know that those claiming to speak your message are saying the same thing as you do?”

I nodded at him and said

- “Yes, there are false prophets, and you need to be watchful. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. But, by their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Forgive them for the bad fruit, but do not eat it. Love them and their thoughts will heal.

And yes, there can come false disciples. Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will because of this enter the kingdom of heaven, this will be the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 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 in your name perform many miracles?’

Then I will tell them plainly, ‘You have not learnt who you really are. You are still imprisoning yourself in hell.’ And I will feel pity for them, but they will have merely wasted their time, nothing more. The only thing needed to become my true disciple is honesty and a little willingness.

So, dear brothers and sisters, this is what I finally want to tell you today:

Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 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.

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. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

With this I had ended my teaching. I and the Twelve stood up and went down to the crowd. Separately, we walked around the rest of the day, stopping at each person wanting to talk or that had a question. Many had brought food and water and invited us to share their meal, and both I and the ones among the Twelve now and then sat down with the ones offering their food.

Many were still angry, and questioned me much, especially about what I had said about revenge and enemies, which they felt went against all common sense. Many asked me more about adultery and divorce, and were angry because they believed I had spoken against the Law.

But many were curious and wanted to hear more. Many were awed, asking how I could speak with such authority about things like sin and forgiveness, despite not being a priest. Many asked how they could become followers, and these I sent to the Twelve to make arrangements.

When we were on our way back to Capernaum, we were met by friends to the centurion of the area. He had sent them to me because his most valued servant

had become ill and was dying, and he had heard of my powers to heal. The friends had a message from the centurion, which said

- "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am also a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go', and he goes; and that one, 'Come', and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this', and he does it."

I said to his friends

- "I am amazed, I have not found such great faith even in Israel. But go tell your friend that with his authority he can make his servant heal himself. He needs only see his servant as a divine child of Allah, having a soul free of sickness and invulnerable to death, and the body will obey and will heal."

Late in the evening the same day, a messenger came to Jason's house to report that the centurion's servant miraculously had recovered, and that the centurion had asked if there was anything in our camp his servants or his soldiers could help us with.

And for the rest of the time we were in Capernaum, and also when we came back from our tours in the country, the centurion always offered his help.