

## Sermon on the Mount 2

### Your Kingdom Come: Perfect as your Father is perfect (Mt. 5:17-20)

This section of the Sermon on the Mount continues from where we ended last. The good works done by us, as the salt and light in His Kingdom, is because of the work of God within us and therefore as Jesus said, 'They may see your good works and praise your Father in heaven'. What comes from God must return to Him. Jesus had earlier given the imagery of salt and light. They are created entities, just as we are now, the new creation of God.

In today's study, Jesus sought to show how far human ideology has undermined the work of God.

<sup>17</sup> "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. <sup>18</sup> For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. <sup>19</sup> Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>20</sup> For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus talked about the law and its fulfillment in Himself. He then goes on to talk about righteousness here. He said that unless our righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. Again, this is not a condition to enter the kingdom of heaven, but what we should be when the Father has brought us into the kingdom.

Jesus fulfilled the law. He is the spotless lamb of God. His sacrifice on the cross superseded the ceremonial law of the temple worship. With regards to the moral law, Jesus as the Son of God fulfilled the moral as the moral law is a written image of God. Thus, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ accomplished all that God had purposed. So, what about the law for us now? It remains with us on this side of eternity because that is how we can see God, in His law.

The scribes and Pharisees were not the 'baddies' as we have been given to think. They were godly people. The Pharisees was a religious and political party in Palestine in New Testament times. The Pharisees were known for insisting that the law of God be observed. The Pharisees were people set apart for that purpose. They were doing their best to understand the law and to follow the law, like many people do today. So how can our righteousness exceed, surpass or go beyond that of the Pharisees and scribes? The scribes and Pharisees were devoted people like many Christians today. They wanted to please God. They wanted to do their best to fulfil the law. They did it in the way they know how.

The way the Pharisees expound the law is like this. They studied the law meticulously to understand it. Then they spelt out how that was to be fulfilled. Take for example the command to keep the Sabbath day holy. The Pharisees would spell out in detail the amount of work that could be done including how many steps one can walk on that day. It is a form of self-justification. That was the way they expressed their righteousness.

Jesus said that unless our righteousness exceeds theirs, we will not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Now that is hard to exceed that. The Pharisees and scribes dedicated their whole life to the study of the Torah. They renounced all earthly pleasures in order to do that. Some of us might have spent many hours and years in the study of the word but it would still be hard to match that of the Pharisees. They had set apart their whole life to do just that.

Jesus is not talking here about spelling the practicality to an even higher or a more detailed manner. If we were simply talking about the human endeavour and human actions, then there is no way in which anyone can exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. They have spelt out in detail every single action that fit into the demands of the law. Everything has been spelt out. There is nothing left to the imagination or to the person to work out. Every single situation is just about covered, very

much like our legal codes today. And when a new situation occurs, then a new legislation is put out to cover that.

It is quite obvious that this is not the way Jesus is talking about righteousness. Jesus is talking of something that goes beyond the external appearance or actions that others can see. Jesus is talking about the intent of the heart. We need to stop for a while to look at the way the heart governs actions and very briefly the matter of culture.

We do not want to go into the details of sociological argument, but very simply actions are the expression of what is internal. An action by itself does not mean very much. What we see is the external appearance, the actions, the smile or the handshake and even the free dinner invitation. What do they all mean? It may mean true affection for the other. It may be that the host wants to sell you something or want to get something or some favour from you.

So behind or beyond the action is a motive. This is governed by the value system of the person and the perspective the person has in life. So, a spin in the advertising like a half-truth to get you to buy something may not be seen as anything wrong by one person.

The motive or value system is further governed by the core assumption that one holds. This is the sum of everything that we have been brought up with. It is something that lies deep within us. We may simply say that this is internal from the heart. This is where the other does not have any control over. But if we are clever then it does. Where there is greed we can play to the greed of the person and have control over the person. Where there is jealousy, we can play to that and use it to control the action of the other. This is how the devil has control over us. He plays to the core assumption we hold.

Yet this is also where the Spirit works. The Spirit works by changing that core assumption and purifying it. He changes the heart. That is why the Scriptures talks about taking out the heart of stone and putting in a new heart of flesh. It is also called a new birth, a regeneration. God does not want to build on the core assumption that we have been brought up with. He wants that out, torn down so that he can build up a new core on which the devil has no hold. Where there is no greed, financial incentives do not work. Where there is no jealousy, the devil is unable to divide a relationship.

That is why we do not legislate on actions or preach about things that one should do or do not do. Of course, that does not mean that we do anything we like. We entrust that to the Spirit to work within the person. And where the heart has not been changed by the Spirit, then what is the use of trying to get people to do the right thing. What is the right thing then? They will simply argue from their perspective and value system.

The thrust of what follows is a matter of the heart. The Chinese have a way of expressing this. When one presents a gift to another, the recipient would say that there is no need to give something that is so nice. The giver then says, 'It is just a little from the heart'. Now whether it is from the heart or not, we will not know. At least it is better than simply looking at the material gift and nothing beyond. Of course, Jesus enters into the depth of our being, into the heart of the matter He created and changed that.

**Your Will be Done on earth as it is in heaven:**  
**1. You have heard that it was said (Mt 5:21-48)**

We are dealing with what some might call practical issues from the Sermon on the Mount. We may see the text as practical issues, but we need to go behind the scene to see what Jesus is really saying here. One principle in biblical interpretation is to use scripture to interpret scripture. We cannot come to any text and interpret it out of its context or from our own assumptions. It is not only with scripture but with any text. One must interpret the text in its context. The context we have here is what precedes.

The beatitudes set the scene. They are not conditional blessings but the blessings of God already poured out on His people. The blessings are given not because of what we do, but because of what we are. And what we are is the work of God. That is the logic that governs our whole understanding of the bible. I have put up this relational model to help us to get away from the conditional mode of thinking.

This is the context with which we come to this passage. It deals with love and fidelity. Jesus took two of the commandments which He gave to Moses – the sixth and seventh.

<sup>13</sup> You shall not murder.

<sup>14</sup> You shall not commit adultery. (Ex. 20:13-14)

The commandments do not merely deal with actions. Jesus took them to show what the root cause of those actions is. It lies in the heart. Sin took place first of all in the heart, the place where others could not see, but the Lord can.

<sup>7</sup> But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.” (1 Sam. 16:7)

So, we come to the two specific commandments that Jesus highlighted here. They have to do with relational righteousness. We must not read the commandments as ethical precedents to be followed, but we need to know the basis on which they are given.

### **Anger and murder**

<sup>21</sup> “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ <sup>22</sup> But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire. <sup>23</sup> So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, <sup>24</sup> leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. <sup>25</sup> Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. <sup>26</sup> Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

The first has to do with the commandment, ‘You shall not murder’. We can understand that. It is the law in any civilized society. Human life is sacrosanct and it is not right to take another life because life is given by God. This is not specific to the Judeo-Christian tradition, but the sanctity of life is held in high regard right across all cultures. However, Jesus is going a step further here. He is going to the root cause of sin. It takes place in the heart. Anger and jealousy are issues that the heart harbours. When we do not acknowledge God, the God of love, that is when anger with another creeps within. That is the conflict that comes when we do not acknowledge God and do not have the love of God within us. Cain was angry with his brother Abel. There was an underlying jealousy which came because Cain did not want to obey God. So, the process goes this way – disobedience of God leads to jealousy of the other who obeyed God. This then leads on to anger and then murder. The action has an underlying basis and that is the core assumption of the heart. Telling a murderer that it is wrong to murder will not do him any good. He knows that, but he could not control the anger within himself. He needs a new heart. There are always re-offenders in our reform system because the penal system is not able to change the heart.

The new heart is a reconciled heart, a heart that is reconciled to God and hence reconciled to another. That is why one cannot worship God without having been reconciled with our brother or sister. If we are reconciled to God then we must be reconciled to our brother and sister because the love of God in us must flow on to the love of humanity.

When Jesus said, 'Come to terms quickly with your accuser' (v. 25), is not about expediency that we simply agree with our accuser. It is acknowledging our faults and be reconciled. From here we need to go to the last section of today's reading to see the heart of the matter.

### **Love your neighbour**

<sup>43</sup>“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ <sup>44</sup> But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, <sup>45</sup> so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. <sup>46</sup> For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? <sup>47</sup> And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? <sup>48</sup> You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

What are the things that reside within our hearts? Those are our core assumptions. That has to be answered first. That is what we have been saying – it is all a matter of the heart. We may have all the right answers to justify our actions, but what is in the heart?

Coming to Jesus is not simply a matter of believing in Him or believing in God. It is not merely subscribing to a set of doctrine. It is being given a new heart. We do not repent in order to receive forgiveness. Our God is a forgiving God. He has forgiven us and we acknowledge His gift to us. So, we repent in acknowledgment of what God has done for us. In the process He re-creates us by the Holy Spirit. That is what a new heart means. It is the gift of God to us and not because of what we have done. If that were so, then it would be contractual. It would no longer be love. So where is the fairness in all that? We were given what we do not deserve. The bible calls that grace.

Jesus did that for us on the cross. He suffered on our behalf. Where is the fairness in that? The psalmist asked this question. ‘Must I repay that which I did not steal?’ (Ps. 69:4). That is what covenantal righteousness is all about. Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. Jesus suffered, the just for the unjust. A new born child is in a covenant relationship. We give all that we have to the child. However, when they grow up we ask for some of that back from them. We have turned a God-given covenantal relationship into a contractual one.

Further, Jesus said that the Father ‘makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous’ (v. 45). Our Creator God does not deal with His creation in a contractual manner. The punishment and the judgment are meant for the restoration of His creation. They are not simply penal but restorative. God may scatter His people just as the false shepherds do, but the intention is for the gathering.

So, we need to see beyond the actions to the intention. Of course, we have a problem there because we cannot look into the heart of a person. Only God can. That is why He taught us not to be judgmental. It is only in relationship that we can come to know the heart of the person. That knowledge comes out of the relational. That is why I have said that righteousness is not legal but relational. It is covenantal righteousness.

So, Jesus teaches that we ought to love our enemies. I know that is a difficult thing to do. We can't do it in our own strength. To love our enemies takes a super-human effort and that is true. Jesus is not asking to do that in our own strength. That effort comes from the Spirit of God in us. It is beyond us. What rewards have we when we only love those who love us? That is the ‘an eye for an eye’ principle. Even the low-down tax collectors do the same.

Loving another is not about fairness. We think we are loving people when we respond to those who love us and shower heaps of gifts on us. Fairness is not the language of love. When we can say, ‘What I did not steal, I must now repay’ (Ps. 69:4), then love is within us. It is only then that we begin to understand what love is.

What Jesus asks of us is not what we can do. He knows that. It is not so much as what we do, but what we are. And what we are is the result of what God has done in us – in creation and in re-creation.

### **Unfaithfulness**

<sup>27</sup>“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ <sup>28</sup>But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. <sup>29</sup>If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. <sup>30</sup>And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

The next commandment deals with adultery. Adultery does not start with an act. We all know that. It starts with a thought. It is in the lust of the eyes. Jesus said that adultery takes place not merely in the act. It takes place in the heart. That is what we have been saying all along. It is the desire in the heart that leads to the action. Sin takes place in the heart. When we relegate that to the actions, we can continue sinning in the heart pretending we are all OK. That is the way our society and our culture has been deceiving us. So just because we have not been to jail or caught out in any action, it does not mean that we are all righteous. Even when we have been caught, we sometimes rationalize that as an error of judgment or get off a conviction on a technicality of the law. That is how devious our mind is. We will not acknowledge the filth in our hearts. That is what Jesus came to do. He came to clean out that filth, an act that we cannot do.

David in his prayer of repentance said, ‘Create in me a pure heart’ (Psalm 51:10). Ezekiel wrote, ‘the soul that sinneth, it shall die’ (Ezk. 18:4, KJV). The word soul *neh fesh* refers to life, person, mind, heart.

The psalmist wrote, ‘If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened’ (Ps. 66:18). Sin starts in the heart.

On the other hand, the psalmist also realized that ‘I treasure your word in my heart, so that I may not sin against you’ (Ps. 119:11). So, it is the word in our heart that protects us from sinning. It did not say the word in your mind. Many of us labour hard to deal with those ethical issues in our lives. Some things may require an effort on our part. I do not say that we do not need to make some effort, like a smoker not buying cigarettes or an alcoholic not buying bottles of wine and beer. That is the start.

That is what Jesus means when He says,

<sup>29</sup>If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. <sup>30</sup>And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell. (Matt. 5:29-30)

Stop going to the pub if you have a problem with alcohol. Stop buying cigarettes if you want to give up smoking. Stop going to places or stop looking at images if that cause you to lust. Recognising the problem is a good start. However, it is not simply a matter of knowing that it is right or wrong. That does not give us the power not to act in that way. It is the word of God, i.e. the power of God within us that enables us to act rightly. That is why we preach the word of God. We continue to encourage us to dwell on the word and this is not simply the written word of the bible or the preached word on Sunday. The written word and the preached word direct us to the living word, Jesus Christ. And as He dwells within us, He gives to us the power to overcome these things.

All of us have to deal with these things in our lives, particularly with anger and jealousy. When we have been hurt, rightly or wrongly, we harbour anger. We feel righteous when we have been hurt wrongly. We justify that by calling it a righteous anger. When we are in the wrong, we will justify ourselves by whatever rationale we can think of. Whether one is in the right or wrong is not the issue

here. We are to love our brother or sister. When one is in the wrong, don't try to justify. Be honest in the Lord and acknowledge the error to your brother so that you can get on with your life. When you are in the right, did Jesus not say that when we are persecuted for righteous sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

That is why Jesus said that 'if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment' (v. 22) and when one 'looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart' (v. 28). The heart is the seat of sin. So, God's work in us is not so much as reforming our actions but in purifying the heart. That is not to say that one cannot acknowledge what is pretty or charming, but it is quite another to desire that for oneself.

Our church culture is to maintain some form of respectability in relation to others, presenting what is often called the Sunday best appearance. But we need to examine ourselves within. Our friends may think us respectable because we have not been transparent. God looks into the heart and if we are honest before God, we need to ask Him to search our hearts and expose those issues to us, issues that we may not have realized, but the Holy Spirit of God will bring that to the fore of our minds and cause us to be aware of those things. Spend time in quietness and in prayer. Spend time with someone whom you can relate with and trust and pray together. Be willing to be open before the Lord and it will surprise you what the Spirit will do in your lives.

<sup>31</sup> "It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' <sup>32</sup> But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

This has been the stumbling block for a lot of people. These words must be put in the wider context of covenantal relationships and in the context of the Sermon on the Mount. That is why I have repeatedly come back to the contents of the passage. It is only in the context of the Sermon on the Mount that we can see what Jesus is driving at. And the way we can come to know covenantal relationship is that of God's covenantal love. We live with broken relationships of one sort or another. It may marriage or it may be friendships.

Many people have come to this with their legal righteousness and that is not the point of what Jesus taught here. Further, I have also said right at the beginning of this series that Jesus is not about contractualism as if by doing the right thing then we will reap the blessing from God. That is not the way. He is not simply giving us a command and leaves us to our own effort to fulfill it. He said that He is the fulfillment of the law and of all of the requirements of God. We experience the fulfillment when we are in Christ.

We should not talk with anyone about divorce (or any broken relationship) without having first talk to them about marriage, i.e. the covenant relationship and reconciliation.<sup>1</sup> The difficulty presents when people start to talk about separation in a legalistic way and criticize what Jesus is saying without having first known the covenant love of God and the price that was paid for the reconciliation at the cross. You cannot patch a broken relationship by sorting out the issues at hand. Both parties need to bow before the cross and when that is not happening, then there is no solution. You may sew a patch over it for a while before it gives way again.

Marriage is a covenant relationship, just as the relationship between parent and child. Friendship between brothers and sisters can also be covenantal, for example, the friendship between David and Jonathan in the Old Testament. In fact, all relationships to be meaningful need to be covenantal because that is the first order of relationship in creation.

So, when Jesus speaks about divorce, he is also speaking of any breaks in covenantal relationships. We have experienced that when others have left us or when we have left a previous relationship with others because of whatever reasons. We all feel the pain of that. It may be due to reasons beyond our

---

<sup>1</sup> John Stott, *Christian Counter-culture*, (Great Britain: IVP, 1978), 98-99.

understanding. It may be due to unresolved anger in the other for which we cannot do much. Whatever those reasons may be, the cross of Jesus is our answer. There is not much to be gained by trying to sort out the reasons or arguing about the situation. People will only justify their own situation and we will not be able to go anywhere by that approach. The only resolution is when the heart is changed by the Spirit of God. As a result, there will be the acknowledgment of the other and this creates the room for the other in the heart.

We see all relationships climaxed in the relationship of the bride and the lamb, i.e. Jesus and His redeemed people. It is from covenant relationship in creation to covenant relationship in the *telos*, the end time. All marriages reflect the marriage of the bride and the lamb as given to us in Revelation. That is the image of the covenant relationship. God creates us and relates with us in an unbreakable covenant. That is the reason for the cross. As I have said, the cross is not because there is a problem to solve. It flows from God's covenant love of God and this is the basis for all relationships.

When Israel went after other gods, she was described as a harlot, i.e. an adulterer, because she has broken the covenant. But God did not leave Israel alone. God did not leave His wayward people alone. In His covenant love, He redeemed His people. The cross is the place of reconciliation. So, what God does is not a response to what people do in a contractual manner. Love cuts across contractualism and puts it back on the original basis of covenant.

The problem presents when we think that we are on our own and have to solve all the problems we face. Not so. There is help at the cross. Jesus is the reconciler. He restores. He makes new. David acknowledged that. Despite being an adulterer and murderer, He found new life in God. That is true repentance. God gives us the true new beginning, not just a new leaf to turn over with our own efforts.

Wherever we may have come from, the message this morning is not one of condemnation for Paul says, 'there is now no condemnation in Christ' (Rom. 8:1) when we put our faith in Him. What we need to do is not to hold on to the pain of the separation in the past or whatever pain or hurt that we may have been harbouring. We need to embrace the cross where we find reconciliation and a new beginning in Christ.

So many people have come to these passages looking for legal answers for their problems or reasons for self-justification. This is not what Jesus is about here. He is about the covenant of love and the way it operates in the Kingdom of God. He is not about the right way to do things like the Pharisees and scribes. He is about the right relationship and that right relationship can only come through incorporation into His body because of the cross. He is about the comprehensiveness of our body and soul and mind in coming to Him. That is why our 'yes' and 'no' must be from the heart. He is about the permanence of our relationship with Him and with each other in the covenant He has established in His blood.

However, He also knows the pain of our waywardness and the pain from separation. Through the cross He has not condemned us, but has opened the way not just simply to patch up the defect, but to make new the heart and the life that we now live. He has taken away the pain of the past separation and gives to us the comfort of a new relationship with Him and all that it entails. That is our hope and future.

So, let us not come to Him with our own righteousness for we have none. Sin is inherent in or being and we are not able to deal with that. We can by showing remorse and turning over a new leaf. That is hardly repentance. Our new righteousness is in Christ and that is not dependent on the things of the past.

### **Speaking forthrightly**

<sup>33</sup> "Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.' <sup>34</sup> But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God,

<sup>35</sup> or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. <sup>36</sup> And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. <sup>37</sup> Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil.

Our 'yes' and 'no' are bounded by covenantal relationship. So often our 'yes' and 'no' are responses to expediency or to manipulate an outcome. That is the way we deal with things and not with persons in relationships.

What does Jesus mean when He says, 'Let your 'yes' be 'yes', and your 'no' be 'no'? We understand it this way. When we say 'yes' we go ahead and do what we promised to do. We often used the expression, 'he is a man of his words', which means he will do what he says he will do. His 'yes' is 'yes'. This is only half of what Jesus meant. Jesus goes further than that. He goes into the heart.

When we say 'yes' and do what we have promised, that may not be sufficient because I can do what my employer wants me to do, but I resent that. Since that is my job, I simply say 'yes' and do that. I may not even believe in what I am doing. It is just a job. Jesus wants that 'yes' to come from deep within so that when we say 'yes', there is a perfect union within the heart, mind and body. That is the integrity of the person.

There is yet another caveat to this. The human mind is particularly deceitful. This is the drawing power of the outcome. In other words, we can say and do something that is truly from the heart, but we have the outcome firmly in our gaze. Take for example the 'I do' said so many times at the altar. I do not have doubt that it was said from the heart, but that is only when you have a pretty bride and a charming groom looking at each other. When that aesthetics are gone, it is a different story. Again, take the confirmation in churches when a pastor is installed. There is no doubt that the confirmation was from the heart at that time, but when things do not work out so well, it would be a different story. Let the 'yes' be 'yes' need to originate from within the heart and the mind carries out the deed. It also needs to be freed from the outcome, because the outcome is in God's hands. We will come back to these things later on and especially when we look at the Lord's prayer and those words, 'Thy will be done'.

### **Contractualism**

<sup>38</sup> "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' <sup>39</sup> But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. <sup>40</sup> And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. <sup>41</sup> And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. <sup>42</sup> Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

So much harm is done to the gospel when we put it in the context of contractualism. Our new life in Christ can no longer be lived on the basis of 'an eye for an eye' principle. Christ has shown to us what it means for the just to suffer for the unjust. And we continue to seek fairness and self-justification. If others say that we are wrong, so let it be until they find out that they have made a mistake themselves. Even then sometimes they may not want to acknowledge that. That is the extra mile that we need to walk.

We must declare contractualism to be dead and buried for good. That happened at the cross. The new life is covenantal. The pains of the past have been healed. The Sermon on the Mount is not about right actions. The action is only right when it flows from the heart because of what God has done in that life. Otherwise it will only be all of self no matter how lofty the motive or how advantageous the outcome may be.