

March 7, 2021

The Sunday View

"Sir, we wish to see Jesus." — John 12:21

Welcome Visitors!

You are our honored guests and we are pleased that you have chosen to visit us today. Our goal is to do everything according to God's word, including respecting its silence. This is a church of Christ; we are not a denomination, not part of anything larger than this local church and we have no earthly "headquarters." The six elders oversee this work and, ultimately, we answer only to Christ. The comments you hear today are primarily aimed at our own members, as we examine Scripture and seek to be built up in our faith in Christ. If you don't understand something, please do not hesitate to ask one of the elders. We welcome and appreciate your comments and questions on any issue and especially if you see or hear anything that you feel does not correspond to God's word. We are here to serve; please help us do that.

Please fill out a visitor's card and put it in the collection plate at the entrance. Thank You

Schedule

The Lord's Day Assemblies

Three assembly opportunities,
in the building:

9:30 AM / 10:30 AM / 11:30 AM

Livestream at 10:30 at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLEmwy21Yxrl7ZUgTiZTVqA>

Speaking today: Scott Gardner

Young People's Classes Today

High School & Up: 5 PM (Inside)
Contact David Posey for information at
(530) 558-5057

Middle School: 5 PM (Inside)
Contact Dan Stegall for information
(818) 209-9810

Weekly Online Classes

Tuesday 10 AM ("Conformed to Christ")
Check with David Posey at dpaulposey@mac.com
or text @ 530-558-5057

Wednesday 7 PM (Faith: Hebrews 11)
Check with Jack Horak: jshorak98@gmail.com

Saturday AM Men's Breakfast
7 AM, second Saturday of the month
Contact Tyler Wade @ tyler@ppldev.com

Additional Online Classes

There are some other small online classes.
If you are interested in participating in one of them,
please contact David Posey

Information

Website & Online Presence

Visit our website at www.folsomchurch.com for updates and material on current and past classes, and recorded sermons and classes. You will also find a directory of churches on page one. If you are a member of the church here at Folsom, see one of the deacons or elders to inquire about access to the password-protected members section. Find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/folsomchurch>

Classes & Home Studies *(Will resume soon)*

We have classes for children from 18 months and up. Please see the map in the hallway or ask any of the members which room is appropriate for you and/or your child. There are several Bible studies in progress on Sunday afternoon and evening. Check with David Posey if you have questions.

Restrooms

There are two sets of restrooms: one off the first hallway to the right of the lobby and another at the end of the first hallway to the left. Ask anyone and they'll be happy to point you in the right direction.

For Small Children

There is a special room for nursing mothers and a separate "cry room" at the rear of the auditorium. You enter them from the first hallway to the right, across from the restrooms.

View & Junior View *(Let us know if you don't get a copy)*

Be sure to pick up a copy of the View and Junior View; both are sent out weekly to our member list and hard copies are printed on Sundays and available in the foyer.

Prayer Requests & News Items

Send to David Posey at dpaulposey@mac.com
or text at 530-558-5057

“The truth is in the tension...” II

[Last week I wrote about the challenge of applying Jesus' words in Matthew 5:38-42 and opened it up to comment by anyone who would like to pick up the ball. Scot Ruska chose to respond; I highly recommend that you read his excellent take on this passage. *dp*]

Thoughts on Matthew 5:38-42

BY SCOT RUSKA

“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ 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. And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you. *Matthew 5:38-42*”

In David's article last week about these verses, he pointed out two extremes to avoid in studying Jesus' sermon on the mount (Matthew 5-7). One is to “explain” the challenging parts to the point of explaining them away. The other is to look at a verse or two in isolation and end up setting impossible standards. The second extreme leads some to conclude that Jesus is presenting an idealized view, never meant to be taken seriously. I'm convinced he meant his teaching to be taken very seriously, and that it can be realistically pursued (in our stumbling and sinning way) if we keep in mind the totality of Scripture and seek out the meaning of the words to the original audience.

To start with, keep in mind the overall purpose of the lesson. Jesus speaks in these chapters to Jews, who knew the Law of Moses and took it seriously, about how the Law was being misused— not to seek godly behavior, but to justify ungodly behavior. He uses words that must have shocked his hearers—who can be “more righteous than the Pharisees?” (Matthew 5:20)— and gives striking examples. Each portion of his lesson supports his overall goal. Our understanding of these verses needs to be consistent with the whole lesson.

Second, to see how the principles Jesus is teaching are meant to be applied, we can look to the examples found in the rest of the New Testament. For example, some advocate total pacifism and non-violence based on Matthew 5:3. But in Luke 3:14, John the Baptist tells soldiers not to stop being soldiers, but to start being honest soldiers. And in Matthew 8, Acts 10 and Acts 16, we see two centurions and a Roman jailer commended or converted without a word to indicate they should lay down their swords. Our understanding needs to be consistent with the rest of Scripture.

Third, we need to look carefully at exactly what was said, and strive to understand how the original hearers would have understood those words. In Matthew 5:38-42, Jesus gives two examples. One is to “go the extra mile.” Roman soldiers could compel subject people to carry a burden to the next mile post, as they did to Simon the Cyrene (Luke 23:26). This was a right they legitimately had under Roman law. I'm sure they often used this right oppressively. It was humiliating to the one compelled, leading to resentment and a desire for revenge. The other example is “turning the other cheek.” In those times, and for most of history, it was accepted that people of social rank would slap, kick, or beat their social “inferiors” for any offense, real or imagined. This was their accepted right under the social system, and again was used oppressively, caused humiliation, and provoked resentment and a desire for revenge. These examples would be part of daily life for Jesus' hearers, and they would understand the context.

How do these examples relate to the part of the Law Jesus is addressing? He says, “You have heard it said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’” (Deuteronomy 19:21, Exodus 21:23-4). The “eye for an eye” rule was meant to limit injustice. The strong may not take an eye for a tooth or render back a tooth for an eye. Now it's being used to justify cherishing grudges and plotting for revenge. What God wants is not vindictiveness but forgiveness and grace. We should pray for our enemies (Matthew 5:44), and God sends his rain (a blessing, not a curse, to desert-dwellers) on the unrighteous as well as the righteous.

Therefore, I paraphrase the verses as follows. “You have heard it's your right to seek payback for any offense. But I say to you, when your master strikes you unfairly, not only don't resolve to cheat or harm him later, but graciously submit to whatever comes next. When a Roman makes you carry his pack for a mile, don't fling down the pack at the milestone, hoping to break something, and stalk away grumbling. Offer another mile as grace.”

What are 21st Century analogues of these First Century examples? Whenever oppressive and obnoxious people are in a position to treat us unfairly, we can apply these verses. Who might these people be? The exploitative boss, the abusive driver in the parking lot, the leeching relative, the condescending brother, the inflexible bureaucrat behind a governmental window. We are bidden not only to submit to what they can extract, but to go beyond, and not to “keep an account of a wrong suffered” (I Corinthians 13:5 NASB). Difficult? Indeed, but achievable. And when we can achieve it, we offer good evidence that we are indeed Christ's disciples.

“...God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.”

Most of us would agree that we are rich in comparison with the vast majority of people in the world. If you feel you're not, then do not read any further. To the rest, listen to Paul's admonition:

“As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.” *I Timothy 6:17*

Do you ever stop to think how many ways God shows his love for us? Ultimately, of course, he demonstrates his love in the gift of His Son and nothing can match that for proof of his love for us. But, Paul says he also *richly provides us with everything to ENJOY.*

Think of it: a great marriage, beautiful children and, later, grandchildren, beautiful places in the world that we can go and breathe in the glory of God — whether it's snow in Connecticut or balmy weather in the tropics, God's love for us is on display everywhere..

Amazing! And if God loves us that much, why do you doubt that he'll see that you get to heaven if you'll just love Him in return?

B.B. Warfield, a well-known theologian in the past, when asked what was the single, greatest truth he had ever learned said, “Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.” The one thing that sets a Christian apart from the worldling is that when he or she experiences something wonderful, they immediately attribute it all to God.

My father's mother, grandma Rene, loved Hawaii, yet she never got to go. I so wish I had had the means when I was younger to bring her here. But she was a faithful Christian so I don't regret it because she's in a place that makes Hawaii ho-hum — what an understatement! God made Hawaii and it's a wonderful place to visit but God made heaven and inhabits heaven and that's where we want to be.

Let's talk about heaven, the Paradise of God. God knows how to reward his servants. Do you believe that? Read Hebrews 11:6: “*For without faith it is impossible to please him for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek him.*”

The Christian calling is a rewarding one in itself. There are many blessings we enjoy, not the least of which is the many friends we have in Christ, all over the world. But I wonder if we think about the ultimate reward enough. Is it possible that life can get so good here that we dare begin to think that heaven is right here, right now? The devil wants us to believe that, you know. If he can get us to think that there is a way to make our home here, he's got us. In I Timothy 6:17, Paul mentions two things you can put your trust in: (1) riches (2) God. Jesus said you can't serve both (Matthew 6:24).

We are being conditioned by advertising to believe that this globe is our home. Your children are getting that message through advertising and social media. They are being told over and over that “this life consists of the things you possess” (cf. Luke 12:15). Since the average child gets 2-3 toys per week that message is likely to find a place in that “average child.” But this world is not our home. Heaven is our home.

Climb into the observatory of God's word for a bit and take a peek at heaven. Read Revelation 21:1-7 to get a glimpse of the “holy city” and what is in store for those who “conquer.”

[3] There's coming a time when the dwelling place of God will become our dwelling place. God himself will be with us, all the time and forever. But that is only meaningful if you love God. For those who do, it means *everything*.

[4a] God will wipe away every tear. Tears are part of life. Say what you will about how great this life is, but tears will always come to rip a piece of your heart out of you. Live long enough and it happens to everyone. There are a lot of tears that have been shed around here in the almost 27 years we've been here. But, we “do not grieve as others do who have no hope” (I Thessalonians 4:13).

A dad was making his young son repeat after him, “*There is no crying in Hawaii.*” The little boy said, “*Theeb is no cwyng in Hawaii.*” But there **is** crying in Hawaii...and in Folsom and in Citrus Heights and in Roseville and in Rescue. Grief is not selective. There is only one place where tears are gone, forever and ever and ever, and you've got to get to heaven to find it.

[4b] No death, no pain? Hard to imagine! The former things — the things that mar this life — have passed away. The Bible tells us that there **is** gain without the pain, life without death.

[5] “Behold, I am making all things new...” I don't know about you, but I love new stuff. Can you imagine a place where everything is new, all the time? Here “new” means something like “fresh.” Everything is fresh, clean, but you never have to “clean up” or do any housekeeping.

[6] When in Hawaii, you walk a lot and you get thirsty. You can buy something to quench your thirst but it'll cost you about \$3 bucks a sip. Figuratively, in heaven, water will be plentiful and it won't cost you a dime (cf. Isaiah 55:1).

This is just a small taste of what is in store. If God “richly provides us with everything to enjoy” here — and most of you reading this know what that means — can you imagine how great heaven will be? What's especially attractive to me is not the gifts that we'll get, but the fact that we will “get” the Giver Himself!