

International Training for Elders and Responsible Ones

September 2025

GENERAL SUBJECT: CRUCIAL ASPECTS OF MATTHEW 5 THROUGH 7 (Friday—Evening Session)

Message Six Being Perfect as Our Heavenly Father Is Perfect

MC Hymns: 943

Scripture Reading: Matt. 5:20, 44-45, 48; John 3:16a;
Eph. 5:29; 1 John 4:8, 16; Rev. 19:7

Matt 5:20	For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall by no means enter into the kingdom of the heavens.
Matt 5:44	But I say to you, Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you,
Matt 5:45	So that you may become sons of your Father who is in the heavens, because He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the just and the unjust.
Matt 5:48	You therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.
John 3:16a	For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, ...
Eph 5:29	For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ also the church,
1 John 4:8	He who does not love has not known God, because God is love.
1 John 4:16	And we know and have believed the love which God has in us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him.
Rev 19:7	Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.

I. “You therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect”—Matt. 5:48:

- A. We are the Father’s children, having the Father’s divine life and divine nature; hence, we can be perfect as our Father is perfect:
1. The divine life can make us perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect.
 2. We have this perfecting life within us.
 3. We need to turn to our Father and realize that we have His life and nature.
 4. In this way we will be perfect as our heavenly Father.
 5. This is the kingdom life, the kingdom living.
 6. The way to be perfect is to remain in the divine fellowship to receive and enjoy continually the dispensing of the processed Triune God—v. 48.
Matt 5:48 You therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.
 7. Since we are sons of the heavenly Father possessing His life and nature, it is logical that we, His sons, should be perfect even as He is perfect.
 8. In order for us to be perfect in this way, we need to enjoy the dispensing of the divine life and nature into us by enjoying the Father Himself—2 Cor. 3:6a.
2 Cor 3:6a Who has also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, ministers not of the letter but of the Spirit; ...
- B. Ephesians 4 is a chapter that speaks of the perfecting of the new man through the growth in life; the new man created by Christ must be perfected in order to function:
Eph 4 be omitted.

1. The organically perfect new man needs to be perfected through the growth in life in order to function in a proper way:
 - a. The new man can become perfect in relation to his function only through receiving the proper nourishment; this is one of the deepest concepts in the book of Ephesians.
 - b. We should all fulfill our responsibility to perfect the new man through nourishing and cherishing—5:29.
 Eph 5:29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ also the church,
2. In order to be perfected, we need to be constituted with Christ (Col. 3:10-11); this means that as the all-inclusive Christ is wrought into us to be our everything, the organically perfect new man becomes perfect functionally.
 Col 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,
 Col 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.
3. When the new man is perfected, that will be the time for the Lord's coming, and the perfected new man will be the bride—Rev. 19:7.
 Rev 19:7 Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.

II. For the kingdom people to be perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect means that they are perfect in His love—Matt. 5:20, 44-45:

- Matt 5:20 For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall by no means enter into the kingdom of the heavens.
- Matt 5:44 But I say to you, Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you,
- Matt 5:45 So that you may become sons of your Father who is in the heavens, because He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the just and the unjust.
- A. The divine love is the nature of God's essence; thus, it is an essential attribute of God:
1. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son"—John 3:16a:
 - a. Although we are fallen, God still loves us with His divine love, which is Himself (1 John 4:8, 16), because we are vessels created by God according to His own image to contain Himself (Gen. 1:26; Rom. 9:21a, 23).
 1 John 4:8 He who does not love has not known God, because God is love.
 1 John 4:16 And we know and have believed the love which God has in us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him.
 Gen 1:26 And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.
 Rom 9:21a Or does not the potter have authority over the clay to make out of the same lump one vessel unto honor ...
 Rom 9:23 In order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared unto glory,
 - b. God so loves us that He gave His only begotten Son, His expression, that we might obtain His eternal life.
 2. "Herein is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son as a propitiation for our sins"—1 John 4:10:
 - a. In this fact is the higher and nobler love of God.
 - b. The divine love as God's essential attribute is mainly expressed in sending His Son to redeem us and impart God's life into us so that we may become His children.
 3. "God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us"—Eph. 2:4:

- a. God loves us because we are the object of His selection.
 - b. Because of His great love, God is rich in mercy to save us from our wretched position into a condition that is suitable for His love.
 - c. The nobler love of God as His essential attribute needs His attribute of mercy to reach us in the deep pit of our fallen life.
- B. “The love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us”—Rom. 5:5b:
- 1. The love of God is God Himself—1 John 4:8, 16.
 1 John 4:8 He who does not love has not known God, because God is love.
 1 John 4:16 And we know and have believed the love which God has in us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him.
 - 2. God as love is the divine essence that has been poured out into our hearts—Rom. 5:5:
 Rom 5:5 And hope does not put us to shame, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.
 - a. The pouring out of the love of God into our hearts is a matter of the essence of God.
 - b. Because we have been regenerated, we have love as the nature of God’s essence within us.
 - c. As believers, deep in our hearts we have something of the divine essence, and this is God the Father in His love—Matt. 18:35.
 Matt 18:35 So also will My heavenly Father do to you if each of you does not forgive his brother from your hearts.
 - 3. Because the love of God has been poured into our hearts, the heart of a believer in Christ is a heart of love—Eph. 3:17.
 Eph 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
 - 4. In our experience and enjoyment of God as the Father in His love, we experience and enjoy the dispensing of love as the nature of God’s essence into our hearts—Rom. 5:5, 8; 8:35, 39; 15:30; 2 Cor. 13:14.
 Rom 5:5 And hope does not put us to shame, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.
 Rom 5:8 But God commends His own love to us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
 Rom 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or anguish or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword?
 Rom 8:39 Nor height nor depth nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
 Rom 15:30 Now I exhort you, brothers, through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf,
 2 Cor 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
- C. First Corinthians 12:31—13:8 reveals that love is the most excellent way for us to be anything and to do anything for the building up of the Body of Christ:
- 1 Cor 12:31 But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And moreover I show to you a most excellent way.
 - 1 Cor 13:1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels but do not have love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.
 - 1 Cor 13:2 And if I have the gift of prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.
 - 1 Cor 13:3 And if I dole out all my possessions to feed others, and if I deliver up my body that I may boast, but do not have love, I profit nothing.
 - 1 Cor 13:4 Love suffers long. Love is kind; it is not jealous. Love does not brag and is not puffed up;
 - 1 Cor 13:5 It does not behave unbecomingly and does not seek its own things; it is not provoked and does not take account of evil;

- 1 Cor 13:6 It does not rejoice because of unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;
 1 Cor 13:7 It covers all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
 1 Cor 13:8 Love never falls away. But whether prophecies, they will be rendered useless; or tongues, they will cease; or knowledge, it will be rendered useless.
1. Love is the inward essence of God and the heart of God—1 John 4:16.
 1 John 4:16 And we know and have believed the love which God has in us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him.
 2. God is love; we love because He first loved us—vv. 8, 19.
 1 John 4:8 He who does not love has not known God, because God is love.
 1 John 4:19 We love because He first loved us.
 3. God's predestination of us unto the divine sonship was motivated by the divine love—Eph. 1:4-5.
 Eph 1:4 Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love,
 Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
 4. God first loved us in that He infused us with His love and generated within us the love with which we love Him and the saints—1 John 4:19-21.
 1 John 4:19 We love because He first loved us.
 1 John 4:20 If anyone says, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.
 1 John 4:21 And this commandment we have from Him, that he who loves God love his brother also.
 5. The life that we have received from God is a life of love.
 6. Christ lived in this world a life of God as love, and He is now our life so that we may live the same life of love in this world and be the same as He is—3:14; 4:17; 5:1.
 1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brothers. He who does not love abides in death.
 1 John 4:17 In this has love been perfected with us, that we have boldness in the day of the judgment because even as He is, so also are we in this world.
 1 John 5:1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten of God, and everyone who loves Him who has begotten loves him also who has been begotten of Him.
 7. We must be persons who are flooded with and carried away by the love of Christ; the divine love should be like a rushing tide of great waters toward us, impelling us to live to Him beyond our own control—2 Cor. 5:14.
 2 Cor 5:14 For the love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died;
 8. We are God's species because we have been born of Him to have His life and nature—John 3:5-7:
 John 3:5 Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.
 John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
 John 3:7 Do not marvel that I said to you, You must be born anew.
 - a. We have been regenerated to be God's species, God's kind, and God is love—vv. 3, 5; 1 John 4:16.
 John 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.
 John 3:5 Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.
 1 John 4:16 And we know and have believed the love which God has in us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him.
 - b. Since through regeneration we have become God in His life and nature, we also are love; this means that we do not merely love others but that we are love

itself—John 1:13; 13:34.

John 1:13 Who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

John 13:34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

c. As God's species, we are love because God is love—1 John 4:8.

1 John 4:8 He who does not love has not known God, because God is love.

D. First John 4 tells the secret of how to stand boldly before the judgment seat of Christ—abide in love—v. 17:

1 John 4 be omitted.

1 John 4:17 In this has love been perfected with us, that we have boldness in the day of the judgment because even as He is, so also are we in this world.

1. To abide in love is to live a life in which we love Christ—vv. 17-18; 2 Cor. 5:10, 14.

1 John 4:17 In this has love been perfected with us, that we have boldness in the day of the judgment because even as He is, so also are we in this world.

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear because fear has punishment, and he who fears has not been perfected in love.

2 Cor 5:10 For we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done through the body according to what he has practiced, whether good or bad.

2 Cor 5:14 For the love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died;

2. To abide in love is to live a life in which we love others habitually with the love that is God Himself so that He may be expressed in us—1 John 4:16.

1 John 4:16 And we know and have believed the love which God has in us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him.

3. Perfect love is the love that has been perfected in us by our loving others with the love of God; such love casts out fear and has no fear of being punished by the Lord at His coming back—vv. 17-18; cf. Luke 12:46-47.

1 John 4:17 In this has love been perfected with us, that we have boldness in the day of the judgment because even as He is, so also are we in this world.

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear because fear has punishment, and he who fears has not been perfected in love.

Luke 12:46 The master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know, and will cut him asunder, and will appoint his portion with the unbelievers.

Luke 12:47 And that slave who knew his master's will and did not prepare or do according to his will, will receive many lashes;

Excerpts from the Ministry:

THE NEW LAW—LOVE YOUR ENEMIES AND PRAY FOR YOUR PERSECUTORS

To Be Perfect as the Heavenly Father

Matthew 5:48 says, "You therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." For the kingdom people to be perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect means that they are perfect in His love. They are the Father's children, having the Father's divine life and divine nature. Hence, they can be perfect as their Father is. The demand of the new law of the kingdom is much higher than the requirement of the law of the old dispensation. This higher demand can be met only by the Father's divine life, not by their natural life. The kingdom of the heavens is the highest demand, and the divine life of the Father is the highest supply to meet that demand. First, the gospel presents in the Gospel of Matthew the kingdom of the heavens as the highest demand, and last it affords us in the Gospel of John the divine life of the heavenly Father as the highest supply, by which we can have the highest living of the kingdom of the heavens. The demand of the new law of the kingdom in Matthew 5 through 7 is actually the expression of the new life, the divine life, which is within the regenerated kingdom people.

This demand opens up the inner being of the regenerated people, showing them that they are able to attain to such a high level and to have such a high living.

All the requirements of these changed laws reveal how much the divine life within us can do for us. These laws are not merely a requirement; they are a revelation, showing us that the divine life can even make us perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect. We have this perfecting life within us. We have a life with such a divine nature that it can make us as perfect as our heavenly Father.

We have seen that according to 5:45 the Father causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good and that He sends rain on the just and the unjust. First, the Father causes His sun to rise on the evil, then on the good. If you were the Father, would you cause your sun to rise first on the evil or on the good? Certainly, you would first cause it to rise on the good. This verse also says that the Father sends His rain on the just and on the unjust. Notice that the order in this part of the verse is changed. This indicates that in the eyes of the heavenly Father there is no difference in sending the sunshine first on the evil and then on the good and sending the rain first on the just and then on the unjust.

Let us apply this to the matter of dealing with our children. Even in dealing with your own children, you have your choice. This indicates how natural you are. Suppose you have three children. One of your three children may be lovable, one may be naughty, and one may be neutral. Day after day these three children expose you, revealing how much you dislike the naughty one and blame him. Although you do not like him, the heavenly Father loves him more than the lovable one. He has sent him to expose your natural taste.

We also have our natural taste in the church life. We like the brothers who are gentle and the sisters who are nice. We want all the brothers and sisters to be like this. But this is just a dream, for there will always be some who bother us. Consider the problem of the shortage among the elders. Many brothers are nice and gentle, but they are not capable of being elders. However, the capable ones may be rather sharp. God uses this to expose your natural choice.

Now we understand the implication and significance of the Lord's word in verses 31 through 48. It is not simply a matter of outwardly loving our enemy. No, it is a matter of having our natural being exposed. After we have been exposed, we will say, "Lord, have mercy on me. How I need Your deliverance! I want to stay near to You and trust in You. Then I will be perfect as my Father."

Do not take the Lord's word as a teaching concerning how you should behave. This way will not work. The Lord's word was intended to touch our being, our natural choice, and to expose what we are and where we are. When we have been exposed and subdued, we will give the full opportunity to the divine life to live in us. This will make us perfect even as our heavenly Father is perfect. We cannot imitate the Father. When I was young, I was taught by those in Christianity that our heavenly Father loves those who are bad and that we should love our enemies just as our Father does. Although this sounds good, it actually is like trying to teach a monkey to behave like a person. You may teach a monkey to behave like a kind gentleman. The monkeys, however, will fail to do this because they are not the sons of that man. We are the sons of our heavenly Father. Thus, the Father's life and nature are within us. All the outward enemies, compellers, and opponents expose what we are. Because they expose our natural being, we learn not to trust ourselves any longer but to look to our Father and to realize that we have His life and nature within us. Through this exposure we come to see that we must stay close to Him and live by His life and nature. In this way we will be perfect as our heavenly Father. This is the kingdom life, the kingdom living.

Misunderstanding these verses, many Christians have taken them as instructions concerning their outward behavior. This is the reason so many have been disappointed and have said, "This is too much for us. We are far away from it, and we are unable to fulfill it." This is not a common word given by the Lord Jesus; it is the constitution of the heavenly kingdom. Because we are His kingdom people, we can certainly fulfill these requirements. We have the kingdom life within us, and we can fulfill these laws not in ourselves but by the Father's life and nature. Therefore, we must thank Him for sending so many contrary things into our environment in order to touch our being and to expose what we are so

that we may be fully subdued, turn to Him, stay near to Him, trust in Him, and live by Him. Then we will be the genuine kingdom people with the kingdom life for a proper kingdom living. This is God's kingdom on earth today, and this is the proper church life. (*Life-study of Matthew*, pp. 231-234)