

I SAY UNTO YOU....

Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. ¹⁸For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Mathew 5: 17-18

One of my friends called me the other day and asked me abruptly what is my view of ethics. She is one of those well learned persons who seeks knowledge through books. Her area of expertise is Thamizh literature.

But I without thinking answered her that my view of ethics is firmly grounded in chapters 5-7 of Mathew. She had not read that before, so she said she'll read it and will discuss later.

It also set me thinking and I started reading these three chapters all over again. How seemingly simple, yet how densely complex!

After the beatitudes, Jesus states the rest of His teachings as His commandments :

- Do not curse your brother in your mind or you'll be in danger of hell fire
- Ask forgiveness and be reconciled with your brother before you come to the house of the Lord to worship
- If you look lustfully at a man or woman you have already committed adultery
- Do away with what makes you sin
- Do not divorce
- Love your enemies
- Bless those who curse you
- Do good to those who hate you
- Pray for those who spite you and persecute you

All these above sentences are individual heart cleansers. Jesus points the danger of swearing and lusting in our thoughts, because He knew when we start fantasizing, it would soon translate into action. Calling your brother fool, leads to hatred, which, after many days may lead to murder. Lusting in the thoughts may obsess the heart, till the fantasy becomes a reality.

The next important thing is to have a forgiving heart. A heart which is closed to forgive or to receive forgiveness from others cannot be forgiven by God also. Only a heart which is forgiven by God, can love enemies. If there is no forgiveness then there is no question of love.

Forgiveness first, then love comes naturally. Then comes doing good to them, blessing them and praying for them.

All these short sentences aim a death blow to our puffed up egotistic selves. That is precisely why this is so hard to follow.

It is a pity many of us Christians do not read the Bible for ourselves. We do not read the commandments of our Lord, yet we think we know the Word.

An honest reading of these chapters and personalising them, will surely change a person upside down.

Are we willing to lay open the evil, lustful, unforgiving thoughts of our life?

Can we extend a hand of friendship, love and prayer to those who hate us?

By our own strength it is very difficult, but we need the grace of the One who gave this to us.