

Matthew 5

By Bruce Bertram

The Word Comments on the Word

Mattityahu (Matthew) 5:1-12 (from the Complete Jewish Bible by David Stern)

Seeing the crowds, Yeshua walked up the hill. After he sat down, his talmidim came to him, and he began to speak. This is what he taught them:

“How blessed are the poor in spirit! For the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

How blessed are those who mourn! For they will be comforted.

How blessed are the meek! For they will inherit the Land!

How blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness!

For they will be filled.

How blessed are those who show mercy! For they will be shown mercy.

How blessed are the pure in heart! For they will see God.

How blessed are those who make peace! For they will be called sons of God.

How blessed are those who are persecuted because they pursue righteousness!

For the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

How blessed you are when people insult you and persecute you and tell all kinds of vicious lies about you because you follow me! Rejoice, be glad, because your reward in heaven is great – they persecuted the prophets before you in the same way.”

This teaching comes right on the heels of what seems to be his first public proclamation, “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near!” (4:17) Apparently, he was going around telling people to turn from their sins, to God, right off the bat. Yeshua selects his 12 talmidim (disciples) and travels all over the Galil (Galilee) proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom and healing people, then he gives the Sermon on the Mount.

A different emphasis could be placed on these verses by realizing they seem to be a commentary on the Word as presented in places such as Yesha’yahu (Isaiah) chapters 65 and 66 (and other similar texts). As a matter of fact, I agree with Brad Scott and others that the entire B’rit Chadashah is a commentary by Yeshua on the Tanakh (Old Testament). It is obvious that he didn’t come to change any word previously given, but to “forth tell” God’s Word as did many of the prophets before him.

Being Blessed

The English word “blessed,” if translated back into Hebrew, would be *asheri*, which is an exclamatory word that essentially means happiness or blessings gained or returned for doing something good. The “something good” would, of course, be some action performed consistent with YHWH’s will as revealed in His Word. In the context of the time it was understood that doing what YHWH required in his Torah was Good.

Unfortunately this is not the understanding in our present time. Those of us who believe that all of the Word applies all the time understand the blessings that flow from obedience to Him and His Torah.

Tehillim 119:1 *Happy/blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the Torah of YHWH.*

Mizmor 29:18b *...he that keeps the Torah, happy/blessed is he.*

Poor in Spirit is Humility

Look up Yesha'yahu chapter 66. Many of the concepts Yeshua teaches in the sermon are listed, and definitions given. For instance, to be poor in spirit (verse one and five) is one who trembles at God's Word:

Yesha'yahu 66:1 *The kind of person on whom I look with favor is one with a poor and humble spirit, who trembles at my word.*

Yesha'yahu 66:5 *Hear the word of Adonai, you who tremble at his word....*

God's word is defined in verses such as Yesha'yahu 2:3 *...for out of Tziyon (Zion) will go forth Torah, the word of Adonai from Yerushalayim.*

Mourning for What?

Mourning is described in verse 10 as mourning for Yerushalayim (Jerusalem), and comforting for that is described in verse 13:

Yesha'yahu 66:10 *Rejoice with Yerushalayim! Be glad with her, all you who love her! Rejoice, rejoice with her, all of you who mourned for her;*

Yesha'yahu 66:13 *Like someone comforted by his mother, I will comfort you; in Yerushalayim you will be comforted."*

Mourning is also spoken of the people who mourn for the Messiah in Z'kharyah (Zechariah) 12:9-11:

"When that day comes, I will seek to destroy all nations attacking Yerushalayim; and I will pour out on the house of David and on those living in Yerushalayim a spirit of grace and prayer; and they will look to me, whom they pierced." They will mourn for him as one mourns for an only son; they will be in bitterness for a firstborn son. When that day comes, there will be great mourning in Yerushalayim, mourning like that for Hadad-Rimmon in the Megiddo Valley."

Thus, mourning for Yerushalayim (because his name is there) and mourning for the Messiah are equated to each other, and such mourners will be comforted with the re-establishment of Yerushalayim as the seat of the Messiah and with the Messiah's coming to take his place on that seat.

Meekness

For meekness, check Tehillim 37:11 - *But the meek will inherit the land and delight themselves in abundant peace.*

Righteousness

The righteousness that was to be hungered and thirsted after is also found in His Word: Deut. 6:25 *"It will be righteousness for us if we are careful to observe all this commandment before the Lord our God, just as he commanded us."* Some say that Yeshua is our righteousness, and in this they are correct (Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 23:6, 33:16). YHWH has always been our righteousness.

Righteousness (Tehillim 69:27-28) (and frequently judgment - Yesha'yahu 59:9,11,14) is also a synonym for salvation. Yeshua says in a few more verses "Seek first the Kingdom of YHWH, and his righteousness" (Mat. 6:33) which equates to his salvation. Yeshua paves the way for obtaining our salvation by paying the penalties for disobedience to the words of YHWH. He is obviously not getting rid of the words of YHWH, else why would he teach on the correct interpretation and promote obedience?

Mercy, I think, is a given.

The Pure in Heart

Pure hearts - Tehillim 24:3-5 *Who may go up to the mountains of Adonai? Who can stand in his holy place? Those with clean hands and pure hearts, who don't make vanities the purpose of their lives or swear oaths just to deceive. They will receive a blessing from Adonai and justice from YHWH, who saves them.*

Peace and Persecution

Do not misunderstand. Yeshua is not talking in verse 10 of gaining salvation merit with YHWH for religious persecution. We cannot gain enough merit for salvation by any action we take. We cannot earn our salvation this way any more than we can earn it by following some rules, no matter how neat. Verses 11 and 12 do talk about persecution (watch the pronoun shift, an indicator the verses might be have been added out of sequence), but Yeshua still does not advocate looking for trouble so we can earn merit.

Making or gaining peace, the peace of YHWH, is a direct result of being in right standing with him by following his word. Sometimes we think of a peacemaker as one who tries to prevent fighting or war. But the Peace of YHWH is not the absence of conflict; it is the presence or position of right standing with YHWH. So a peacemaker by this definition is one who seeks to gain, or help others to gain, right standing, otherwise known as salvation, from YHWH. This means being persecuted, because a person who seeks to maintain or encourage right standing with YHWH will be persecuted by the world, which hates YHWH.

“Listen to me, you pursuers of justice, you who seek Adonai; consider the rock from which you were cut, the quarry from which you were dug...” Yesha’yahu 51:1

Yeshua points out that the person who stands for the Word will be persecuted just as the prophets before us were. This is because the prophets “forth-told” the Word, and held fast to what they knew was true, holding up the Light which revealed the wickedness around them (which did not make them popular with the wicked people). The prophets (and Yeshua is the head of those) were representatives of YHWH, and most of them ended up executed, some in terrible fashions.

Who Gets the Kingdom?

Notice that this set of verses is book-ended by “For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven” (verses 3 and 10). This could be better translated as “for it is of such as these that the Kingdom is made.” (For an extended discussion on this see the book “Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus” by David Bivin and Roy Blizzard.) See also Luke 18:16:

However, Yeshua called the children to him and said, “Let the children come to me and stop hindering them, because the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”

The children don’t possess the Kingdom, but the Kingdom is made up of those who are like children. The Kingdom is YHWH in action, and it is also a present reality (and has always been a current reality), rather than some future place to go to. It is also made up of all the people who submit to the rule of YHWH in their lives. Yeshua here tells us the type of person that makes up the Kingdom. I think of this as sort of a declaration, like “We the People, in order to form a more perfect union...” Later, there will be a “filling out” of this Kingdom when the Messiah comes to reign in Yerushalayim. It is much more accurate to say “Who is the Kingdom” rather than “Who gets the Kingdom.”

Flavor from Behavior

Verses 13-16

“You are salt for the Land. But if salt becomes tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything except being thrown out for people to trample on. You are a light for the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Likewise, when people light a lamp, that don’t cover it with a bowl, but put it on a lamp stand, so that it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before people, so that they may see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven.”

These verses have an interesting point/counterpoint to them. First, Yeshua talks about the effect that people who live righteously make on the Land they live in. The Land always refers to Israel, and they are to provide good seasoning to the Land YHWH gave

them. There is a mystical connection between the actions of the people and the land they live in, and even more so with The People and The Land. The counter point comes when Yeshua switches to the effect of their quality of life on the rest of the world. They are “light,” and “set on a hill” so that all could see the way to YHWH. Yerushalayim is a city on a hill, but this is probably a coincidence (yea, right). To the Hebrews, going to Yerushalayim was “going up” and moving away from Yerushalayim was going down.

Also, Yeshua doesn't talk here about “right thinking.” He is talking about “right actions” flavoring the Land. Right thinking is important, and the motivation of the heart is of equal concern to YHWH. A right action can be done for the wrong reasons, and Sha'ul (Paul) speaks of this in Corinthians (without love we are nothing). But it appears to me that if “right thinking” has taken proper root (Mat. 13) then it is impossible for “right actions” to be absent.

Abolishing the Law and Prophets?

Verses 17-20

“Don't think that I have come to abolish the Torah or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete. Yes indeed! I tell you that until heaven and earth pass away, not so much as a yud or a stroke will pass from the Torah – not until everything that must happen has happened. So whoever disobeys the least of these mitzvot and teaches others to do so will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But whoever obeys them and so teaches will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness is far greater than that of the Torah-teachers and P'rushim, you will certainly not enter the Kingdom of Heaven!”

Yeshua says, point blank, that he DID NOT come to get rid of the Torah, but he came to complete or establish it. It seems obvious to me that the words, even in English, mean opposite things, and the opposite of abolish would be to establish or place on a firmer foundation. In Greek, the word for fulfill is the same word as fullness in Colossians 1:19 (and 2:19), where we are told the fullness of YHWH dwells bodily in Yeshua (again, this is not termination). In Hebrew, abolish (or destroy in some versions) meant to improperly interpret Torah. To complete (or fulfill in some versions) was to properly interpret. He proves his point in the next few sections by properly interpreting a cross section of scripture twisted by popular misunderstandings. We'll get to that in a minute.

A yud was the smallest letter of the Hebrew aleph-bet, and a stroke was the small mark on another letter (like the cross on the letter “t”). Mitzvot is the Hebrew word for commandments, and means connections to YHWH. It was a part of Hebrew teaching that performing a commandment was to actually “connect” with YHWH, both in thinking and in doing. Each time we “do” a commandment we make another “connection” to our

Father. I don't know, what do you think so far? Does it sound like Yeshua eliminates the Law?

Salvation is not the issue here, but position or rewards in the Kingdom. Obviously both sets of people are *in* the Kingdom (Heaven and YHWH are interchangeable terms), but have different jobs with different amounts of responsibilities. Perhaps this is a reflection of another of Yeshua's teachings? The servant who is faithful in little is given more, but the servant who is not faithful with a bunch is given little. Remember, too, that the Kingdom is present now, and also a future reality, not just future.

For righteousness to exceed that of the Torah-teachers and P'rushim (Pharisees) is not so hard, in my opinion. Yeshua elaborates on what constitutes the behavior of a hypocrite in chapter six, and applies that label to the religious leadership. Careful study will reveal that a hypocrite is one who teaches the Word but does not actually do the Word. To exceed this sort of righteousness is fairly easy (although the process is not all that easy); what needs to happen is that our behavior and the Word of YHWH have to match. We have to actually DO his Word, not just flap our gums about it.

Virtual Salvation?

Some have speculated that what Yeshua is trying to teach here is a mystical connection to his death and resurrection. According to these teachers, our righteousness comes from the Messiah and we don't have to "do" anything, sort of like a "virtual" salvation. Or like we sit and watch a movie, and afterwards we feel good because of the ending, and this is passed off as salvation. Of course, the ground of our righteousness, and the foundation and reason for its existence, is the Messiah's righteousness. And that righteous standing with the Father is given to us for no other reason than trusting obedience to the Father (by Grace, through Faith). But can we just stand there, on the sidelines, after being given this gift, and say, "Yea, I think it's a really good idea?" Is it enough to just feel really good about it? Right thinking without right actions? I don't think that is what Yeshua is teaching here. Maybe if we just got our meaning from the text instead of trying to impose our own meaning on the Word we could figure it out.

If the Law is eliminated here, as some people teach, why does Yeshua say that the "least" command that is not obeyed or taught will cause the person so teaching and doing (not doing) to be the "least" in the Kingdom? Wouldn't this be a beautiful opportunity for Him to say, "Ah to heck with it? Since I'm throwing out the Law don't worry about it?" This seems to be rather a strong condemnation, seeing as how He is just "chucking it all," doesn't it?

And, um, I have another problem. Since Yeshua includes the Prophets here, which alludes to the writings of all the prophets, if He fulfilled the Law and eliminated it, did He also eliminate all of the prophetic writings, too? I mean, what applies to one (Torah)

has to apply to the other (Prophets), don't it? If the argument is made to eliminate the Law, then the same argument must eliminate the writings of the prophets also.

The simple fact, straight from the Word without intervention by the doctrines of men, is that Yeshua is telling his talmidim what characterizes the people in the Kingdom and how they should behave. These two have to match. There is no middle ground at all.

The Word Comments on the Commentary

Verses 21 through 26

“You have heard that our fathers were told, ‘Do not murder,’ and that anyone who commits murder will be subject to judgment. But I tell you that anyone who nurses anger against his brother will be subject to judgment; that whoever calls his brother, ‘You good-for-nothing!’ will be brought before the Sanhedrin; that whoever says, ‘Fool!’ incurs the penalty of burning in the fire of Gei-Hinnom! So if you are offering your gift at the Temple altar and you remember there that your brother has something against you, leave your gift where it is by the altar, and go, make peace with your brother. Then come back and offer your gift. If someone sues you, come to terms with him quickly, while you and he are on the way to court; or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer of the court, and you may be thrown in jail! Yes indeed! I tell you, you will certainly not get out until you have paid the last penny.”

I have heard many people teach that Yeshua “raises the bar” with these words. Somehow, the Law (or all of the Word given to this point) was NOT sufficient for the purpose it was given. Now (according to these people) Yeshua fills in the gaps and says that PERFECTION is the new standard.

I think your viewpoint here would depend on whether you think things started perfect and have been declining ever since, or, whether you have fallen for the evolutionary idea that things are getting better all the time. It seems obvious, and I don't want to belabor the point, that things started out perfect and have been steadily going down the drain. And the only thing that keeps us from going completely is that YHWH, blessed be He, injects His Word at just the right time to keep us and preserve us, and in His Grace keeps us going around one, more, time.

As time goes on we get more and more ignorant of Actual Right and Wrong (the ways of YHWH), and we need more and more direct intervention with the Word of YHWH to get us back on track. Information that used to be “KNOWN” now has to be taught because we have become dumber. Avraham, for instance, is said to have obeyed the instructions of YHWH (Torah) long before they were written down at Mt. Sinai (B'reshet (Genesis) 26:5). “What is right in our own eyes” becomes the standard, and what is right in His is ignored.

Please correct me if I'm wrong, but both internal and external PERFECTION HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE STANDARD. YHWH never ever gave us anything that wasn't perfect. The big problem here is that the interpretation (made by men) was off base, not the Word. By the way, I challenge anybody, anywhere, to show me anyplace in the Book that says the Law was ever given for salvation.

Since the beginning of creation, the Word of YHWH has been misinterpreted. No matter how clear the instruction, or how severe the penalty; man constantly seeks to find a way around what is clearly given by the Father. From the command to Adam and Chavah (Eve) not to eat of the fruit from a certain tree ("Did YHWH really say?") to the teachings of Moshe (Moses) to the teachings of Yeshua, the Word is given and man, well, man desperately looks for loopholes. The list of 613 commands in the Torah reads like a parent trying to give instructions to willful and disobedient teenagers.

I get really bugged when people suggest that YHWH is stupid, ignorant, or incomplete, or changes with the tides, or in other words make Him out to be just like us. People who suggest that YHWH gave the Word to us one way yesterday, but Today He is changing it. What they are actually doing is sanctimoniously proclaiming that their word is superior to the Word of YHWH. But they shouldn't try to bless the effort by sprinkling it with parts of The Word like so much "holy" water. Your own interpretation does not magically become YHWH's word by mixing His with yours. And that's what Yeshua is trying to correct in this section – YHWH is re-focusing on a proper interpretation of His Own Word.

So Yeshua is again trying to spell it out for the disobedient kids. He says the act of killing begins in the heart, and if you hate your brother then you have already started walking the path of murder. This is related to verse 44 where Yeshua says to "love your enemies." Yeshua here extends the definition of sin back to the original. He makes the case that sin separates from YHWH, even if the sin is limited to the heart. YHWH has always connected together attitude with behavior, and has always said that the penalty for sin in either or both is separation from YHWH.

When they made their rulings, the religious leaders usually dealt with actions only. And they would consider that they had "right standing" with YHWH if they conformed externally to the letter of the written Word as they saw it. But YHWH seeks a people who have a perfect heart in addition to supposed right actions. All through the Tanakh YHWH constantly deals with a people (such as in Shof'tim (Judges) 6:10; Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 3:13, chapter 7) who thought they had the right actions (sacrificing animals or tithing of produce), but would ignore the "weightier measures" (Yesha'yahu 1, 5:7, 59:1-8; Yirmeyahu 5:1-13; Mat. 23:23) of mercy and compassion. These people got into the habit of, say, committing adultery, going and offering the required sacrifice, then going out and committing adultery again.

This isn't all that much different than some people do now. Grace is used in place of the requisite sacrifice, but the behavior is the same. Presume on the goodness of YHWH so doing what seems right in their own eyes is blessed. Sin, erase with Grace, and sin some more. Just keep using YHWH's grace as some sort of cosmic eraser, and everything will be fine. This is the definition of "following God" for these people. Yeshua is pointedly teaching different, going past the "letter of the Law" and filling it with what was originally in there, and should be again.

Is Yeshua teaching pacifism? The word used here for murder means literally pre-meditated killing. There is a different word in both Hebrew and Greek for killing such as manslaughter or to defend oneself. The version I have quoted has this word translated correctly. He does not say, "Don't defend yourself," or "Do not fight in battles." What He is quick to nail down is a person's motivation.

By the way, not very many people who think the Law is abolished here seem to recognize the fact that Yeshua is telling his disciples to make things right before offering a gift at the altar. He doesn't say, "You don't need to offer gifts at the altar because I am eliminating the altar," but he says stop, make things right with your brother, and then *continue with the offering*. It don't make very much sense to me to tell people "the Law is gone" and then tell them it's okay to make an offering at the altar according to the Law.

Adultery or Divorce

Verses 27 – 32

"You have heard that our fathers were told, 'Do not commit adultery.' And I tell you that a man who even looks at a woman with the purpose of lusting after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye makes you sin, gouge it out and throw it away! Better that you should lose one part of you than have your whole body thrown into Gei-Hinnom. And if your right hand makes you sin, cut it off and throw it away! Better that you should lose one part of you than have your whole body thrown into Gei-Hinnom. It was said, 'Whoever divorces his wife must give her a get.' But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of fornication, makes her an adulteress; and that anyone who marries a divorcee commits adultery."

This is fun. Yeshua picks up on the adultery issue, like the other issues, and takes the interpretation right into the "heart" of the matter. Again, much of the "other" thinking stopped at the physical action, whereas it should go right on through to the soul. I've heard a lot of commentary on the removal of eyes and hands, and some of it is okay, but I think Yeshua is saying first that the eye and the hand do not cause you to sin. "If" is a very big "if." "If your eye," or "if your hand," are statements that in this context mean sin is coming from inside and not outside. But "if" it were true, then removal would be

the preferred option. I like the connective better here, because “And I tell you” makes it more clear that he is adding his commentary to what has already been made.

The section of the Law about divorce Yeshua is referring to (D’varim 24:1-5) reads:

“Suppose a man marries a woman and consummates the marriage but later finds her displeasing, because he has found her offensive in some respect. He writes her a divorce document, gives it to her and sends her away from his house. She leaves his house, goes and becomes another man’s wife; but the second husband dislikes her and writes her a get, gives it to her and sends her away from his house; or the second husband whom she married dies. In such a case her first husband, who sent her away, may not take her again as his wife, because she is now defiled. It would be detestable to Adonai, and you are not to bring about sin in the land Adonai your God is giving you as your inheritance.”

From this the elders of Israel deduced that you should always give a divorce document to the woman you were divorcing. Oh boy, what an insight. Instead of judging the issue according to other parts of the Law, and instead of telling the man he should treat his wife like YHWH treats him, they come up with the Big One, give her a *get*. To me, Yeshua is here saying “what about the issue of getting a divorce in the first place?” It is just like people to dwell on the finer points of “how to divorce” than “should we divorce.”

Swearing Oaths

Verses 33 – 37

“Again, you have heard that our fathers were told, ‘Do not break your oath,’ and, ‘keep your vows to Adonai.’ But I tell you not to swear at all – not ‘by heaven,’ because it is God’s throne; not ‘by the earth,’ because it is his footstool; and not ‘by Yerushalayim’ because it is the city of the Great King. And don’t swear by your head, because you can’t make a single hair white or black. Just let your ‘Yes’ be a simple ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No’ be a simple ‘No;’ anything more than this has its origin in evil.”

The intention here seems to be “don’t commit to something you may not (and probably will not) be able to do.” In D’varim (Deut.) 23:21-22 instructions are given where an oath did not have to be sworn, but many times oaths are sworn in arrogance. The proper attitude is just to do what you said, nothing more, nothing less. Swearing was mostly arrogant; we really don’t have as much power to accomplish things as we would like to think.

Equal Justice Defined

Verses 38 – 42

“You have heard our fathers were told, ‘Eye for eye and tooth for tooth.’ But I tell you not to stand up against someone who does you wrong. On the contrary, if someone hits you on the right cheek, let him hit you on the left cheek too! If

*someone wants to sue you for your shirt, let him have your coat as well! And if a soldier forces you to carry his pack for one mile, carry it for two!
When someone asks you for something, give it to him;
when someone wants to borrow something from you, lend it to him.”*

Yeshua is speaking here of equal justice. We were never supposed to go around poking out people's eyes or knocking out their teeth in payment for a similar sin. What this meant was for us to make sure payment for a sin was equal to the sin. What happened, as with so much of what YHWH tells us, was that people went around demanding to be paid in exact measure for the transgression. But Yeshua here points us to the merciful side of the Law, which is to behave in the same way YHWH Himself does. He provides many blessings for which He is customarily slammed. He does not require immediate equal payment, else we would all be summarily sent to the hellfire. No, what YHWH does is give us time to repent, and follow Him. He is gentle and longsuffering, and expects us to be like Him.

Pacifism?

If verse 39 (but I tell you..) were translated into Hebrew, one would immediately see that He is quoting a well-known proverb from Mizmor 24:19 and Tehillim 38:1 (& 8):

Tehillim 38:1

Don't be upset by evildoers, or envious of those who do wrong.

Mizmor 24:19

Don't get upset because of evildoers; don't be envious of the wicked.

The idea expressed in these proverbs is “Don't compete with evildoers.” We are not to engage in a game of “one ups-man ship” with an evil person. Don't take revenge, or try to get back at or get even with a quarrelsome neighbor. See also Mizmor 24:29. Each verse that follows verse 39 is an example of “not competing” with evildoers. Yeshua does not teach pacifism, or lying down in the face of an attack of war, rape, or other violence attempted upon you or another person. This concerns our relationships with neighbors in day-to-day living. Other passages are in harmony with this such as 1Thess. 5:15, 1 Kefa (Peter) 3:9, Romans 12:14, 17-19, and Mizmor 20:22. Mizmor 25:21 is also quoted by Sha'ul (Paul) in Romans 12:20:

If someone who hates you is hungry, give him food to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. For you will heap fiery coals [of shame] on his head, and Adonai will reward you.

Giving without Discernment?

Verses 41 and 42 are from a Hebrew poetic form called parallelism. The first line is expanded in meaning by the second line. Ask and borrow are equivalent terms but from

two different Hebrew words with slightly different meanings. “Ask” means to borrow something that must be returned to the owner, such as a book. “Borrow” is used to describe asking for something like flour or sugar, which must be returned in kind. In the second kind of borrowing one does not return the actual item but a like amount.

Verses 43 – 48

“You have heard that our fathers were told, ‘Love your neighbor – and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! Then you will become children of your Father in heaven. For he makes his sun shine on good and bad people alike, and he sends rain to the righteous and the unrighteous alike. What reward do you get if you love only those who love you? Why, even tax collectors do that! And if you are friendly only to your friends, are you doing anything out of the ordinary? Even the Goyim do that! Therefore, be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.”

“Love your neighbor as yourself” is in the Law (Vayikra (Lev.) 19:18), but “hate your enemy” was not. There are also other commands to treat the stranger the same as those born in Israel. Yeshua emphasizes the idea of treating the enemy the way we (as enemies) are treated by YHWH. The Father wants us to repent, He wants us to be like Him, and His kindness is meant to bring us closer. So we should be like our Father, and truly want good things for everyone. A little bit of a spin on this can be seen when you wish for your enemy to receive whatever he wants for you, although this is not purely what Yeshua means.

So again Yeshua compares our behavior to that of the Father, and suggests that rewards come to those who follow Him without regard for earthly gain. I think these verses dovetail right in to those following in chapter six where he expands on the idea of heavenly versus earthly gain.

If we accept it, the final verse of this chapter changes our standard of evaluation. Instead of judging based on how other people treat us, we should judge based on how the Father treats us. How much has He given to undeserving people? How many times has He held out His hands to a stubborn and obstinate people, which people are not limited to the Jews? What blessings we have squandered, what treasures have we cast in the mud?