

Refrigerator Notes 12 February 2017
"The Antithesis of Jesus' (Sayings) Word"
Matthew 5: 21-37

1. The question I asked DPC in beginning of the Sermon was "Did Jesus literally mean what was said in the text this morning?"
2. Like many of the Lord's parables, the disciples did not understand their meanings
3. Our text provides a challenge for the most astute bible readers
4. Jesus words or sayings are presented to us in the form of an antithesis
5. An antithesis is a person, thing or saying that is the direct opposite of something else
6. I said that the opening lines of Charles Dickens' novel "A Tale of Two Cities" provides an unforgettable antithesis example: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity ..."
7. In the opening passage of our text, vs. 17-20, Jesus lays a foundation of respect for the OT that will not allow it to be dismissed because of Jesus sayings in our NT scripture lessons
8. Rather, Jesus relies on the moral commandments and His re-interpretation of the OT, to be the true understanding.
9. It is out of that understanding that the "six antitheses" in our scriptures find their application to us living in relationship before God, with God's people, and with a broken and contrary world
10. Jesus does not contradict the Law (OT), but deepens it and broadens the OT sayings
11. The statement that alerts the hearer to what Jesus is saying, "You have heard it said ... and Jesus answers OT sayings with the words, "But I say to you"
12. These words are heard throughout the text in verses 21, 27, 31, 38, and 43 and the antithesis starts in the verses that follow; 22, 28, 32, 39 and 44.
13. I announced it was easier to live by lists of rules and laws than it was to live in authentic, dynamic, and redemptive parallel relationship with people, while serving our Lord in a vertical relationship
14. As an example of the Lord's reinterpretation of the OT: For instance "you shall not murder" It is not enough to prohibit the killing of another person, but Jesus makes the law much more stringent before the escalation of murder should ever take place
15. What is required is that we not only fail to do a person harm, but that we are to engage in proactively seeking their good, affirming their worth, even to the risk of our own good by not doing any harm to our brother or sister
16. Jesus is telling us that if we see the hostility coming, that we are to go high while they go low
17. It's not enough just to refrain from murder. We should also treat each other with respect and that means not speaking hateful words
18. It is not enough to avoid physically committing adultery. We should also not objectify other persons by seeing them as a means to satisfy our physical desires by lusting after them
19. It is not enough to follow the letter of the law regarding divorce. We should not treat people as disposable trash and should make sure that the most vulnerable things in our culture are women and children – and that we as men provide protection for them
20. All the hyperbole of cutting off body parts and burning in hell only serves to magnify just how important our relationships to one another be before God

21. But what Jesus really cares more about than our relationship with Him, is our relationship with each other