

CRUCIAL ASPECTS OF MATTHEW 5 THROUGH 7

(Friday—Evening Session)

Message Six

Being Perfect as Our Heavenly Father Is Perfect

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

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.
 - 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.
- 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:
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.

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:

- 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).
 - 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.
 2. God as love is the divine essence that has been poured out into our hearts—Rom. 5:5:
 - 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.
 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.
 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.
- 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. Love is the inward essence of God and the heart of God—1 John 4:16.
 2. God is love; we love because He first loved us—vv. 8, 19.
 3. God's predestination of us unto the divine sonship was motivated by the divine love—Eph. 1:4-5.
 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.
 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.
 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.
 8. We are God's species because we have been born of Him to have His life and nature—John 3:5-7:

- a. We have been regenerated to be God's species, God's kind, and God is love—vv. 3, 5; 1 John 4:16.
 - 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.
 - c. As God's species, we are love because God is love—1 John 4:8.
- D. First John 4 tells the secret of how to stand boldly before the judgment seat of Christ—v. 17:
- 1. To abide in love is to live a life in which we love Christ—abide in love—vv. 17-18; 2 Cor. 5:10, 14.
 - 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.
 - 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.