

BIBLE STUDY
February 13, 2023

THE SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Leviticus 19: 1-2, 17-18

Matthew 5: 38-48

1 Corinthians 3: 16-23

1. Leviticus 19: 1-2, 17-18

- The Israelites are told to be holy as God is holy. They will be holy if they obey the Lord's commandments. Holy does not necessarily mean perfect. Rather it means "set apart." The Israelites are to be set apart from other nations. They are to keep to themselves so that they are not corrupted by the practices and belief of the other nations who worship other Gods.
- Vv 17-18: These two verses describe behavior toward their fellow countrymen. They are not to hate a fellow Israelite. They are to correct a neighbor publicly so that they do not harbor evil thoughts against them or engage in secretive behavior. They are not to seek revenge or hold a grudge. They are to love their neighbor as themselves. This last commandment becomes one of the greatest commandments that sums up the Law along with loving God with our whole heart, mind, and strength. Jesus quotes this as one of the greatest commandments.

2. Matthew 5: 38-48

- Vv. 38-39: An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth is found in Leviticus 24:20. It was meant to introduce proportionality into seeking justice. The punishment must be in line with the crime. Jesus challenges his disciples to take it further and do not seek any retaliation. They are to respond with without any resistance. It is the non-violent strategy of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King.
- Vv. 40-42: Instead of retaliation, these verses speak about being generous and lavish in charity. If someone ask for a little, give them more. Behind this teaching is a belief that only love can disarm hate. Love is the strongest weapon.
- V. 43-47: Love your neighbor but hate your enemy is not found explicitly. Leviticus 19: 18 commands love of neighbor. There was a natural presumption that hatred of enemies was permissible. Jesus' teaching is revolutionary. He commands his disciples to love their enemies. He says that it is nothing special to love those who love you. Everyone, even sinners, do that. Disciples are to go further and love their enemies and persecutors. When they do this, they are like God who loves both saints and sinners. God sends sun and rain on both.
- V. 48: Perfect means complete, whole. If we answer this challenge we have integrity, wholeness just as God does. Perfection comes through how we treat others.

3. 1 Corinthians 3: 16-23

- Paul is teaching the Corinthians that they should not think themselves better because they had a better teacher like Apollos or Cephas. The Lord is the foundation, and each preacher builds upon that foundation. Their work will be tested by trials (fire) and it will be revealed who built correctly and to last.
- V. 16: Paul switches from the judgement of the quality of the preacher's work in building up the temple of God to the fact that the community is a temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells in the community.
- V. 17: Destroying the temple of God can refer to those who divide the community with claims of superiority.
- V. 18-20: Those in the community who think that they are superior to others should know that the wisdom of the world is foolishness to God. If they think themselves wise, they are seeing as the world sees and not as God sees. They must learn the wisdom of the Cross in which Jesus appeared to be defeated in the eyes of the world but was to be raised up in victory in the eyes of God.
- V. 21: No one has a reason to boast because everything we have is a gift of God. All God's gifts belong to everyone. Paul ranks everyone from Church members to Church leaders to Christ to God.