



ASKING BETTER QUESTIONS -  
THE SERMON ON THE  
MOUNT 11 (MT 5:21-26)

# Murder (Mt 5:21-22)

You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.'

But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister, will be subject to judgment.

Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell."

# Murder (Mt 5:23-26)

Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar.

First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift. Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court.

Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.



# Initial Questions

- Judgment for anger. Really?
  - Fires of hell for name-calling?
  - How does v23-26 relate to v21-22?
  - Others?
- 
- Anything else?

# The six antitheses

**Pattern: You have heard it said “xxxxx” But now I tell you “yyyyy”**

1. Murder (5:21-26)
  2. Adultery (5:27-30)
  3. Divorce (5:31-32)
  4. Oaths (5:33-37)
  5. Eye for an eye (5:38-42)
  6. Love your neighbour and hate your enemies (5:43-48)
- So is Jesus fulfilling the Law or not? Was Moses wrong?
  - What do you notice about the **sixth antithesis**?
  - What do we have to do now then?

You have heard it said....

- But is that the same thing as **“It is written”**?
- Jesus answered, **“It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’**
- Different, eh?



Jesus is taking aim at the Oral Tradition that had grown up around the original scripture.

# WHAT'S GOING ON THEN?

**"...be deliberate in judgment,  
raise up many disciples, and  
make a fence around the  
Torah."** (Mishna, Avot 1:1)

# A yoke and a burden

- They found Torah both a yoke and a burden (indeed they called it such), and wanted to make the yoke easier and the burden lighter. How they did it varied according to the form each law took, and in particular whether it was a commandment (either precept or prohibition) or a permission. [Carson]
- Tendency to relax the command [eg do not murder just applies to actual murder]
- Tendency to extend the permissions. [eg easy divorce]
- They made the law's demands less demanding and the law's permissions more permissive.
- Jesus extended the commands which they were restricting and restricted the permissions which they were extending.
- For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law... (Mt 5:20)



YOU HAVE  
HEARD  
EX 20:13  
DT 5:17

תִּרְצַח	לֹא
teer'-tzach'	loh'
תִּרְצַח - v "murder, slay, maliciously kill another with premeditation qal impf 2ms	לֹא - adv partic "no, not" prohibitive usage Qal
you shall murder	not

לֹא תִרְצַח ◀) click

"You shall not murder."  
(Exod. 20:13)

כֹּלֵךְ תִּרְצַח

תִּרְצַח	לֹא
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shall not murder."  
(Exod. 20:13)

כֹּלֵךְ תִּרְצַח

φονεύσεις (LXX)

# But....

- “You blind fools!” (Matt. 23:17).
- Cleansing the temple
- Jesus did get angry sometimes.



# But.....

- Ephesians 4:26 says, “Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger.” In Mark 1:41 the original text may have had Jesus “moved with anger,” and Mark 3:5 explicitly says Jesus was angry at the hardness of heart of those who would not say it was right to heal the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath. Matthew 21:12–17 and Matthew 23 show Jesus angry, and in 23:17 Jesus calls his opponents fools, which would contradict 5:22 if that verse is read as a command.
- Is Jesus contradicting his own command?
- How do we process this?

# Twofold or Threefold?

We argue that the pattern of the Sermon is not **twofold** antitheses but **threefold transforming initiatives**. Therefore, our interpretation should emphasize not idealistic prohibitions but instead the **way of deliverance** Jesus teaches through the **transforming initiatives**. (S&G)

ie. Jesus is teaching us what to do about it.

# Transforming Initiative

<b>Traditional Righteousness</b>	<b>Sinful Pattern</b>	<b>Transforming Initiative</b>
<p>Matthew 5:21: “You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not kill’; and ‘whoever kills shall be liable to judgment.’” (In the Greek, “shall not” and “shall be” are not imperatives, but futures; as translations of the Hebrew in the Ten Commandments, they do, of course, imply a command.)</p>	<p>Matthew 5:22: “But I say to you that everyone being angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council, and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire.” (No imperatives in the Greek.)</p>	<p>Matthew 5:23–26: “So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, <i>leave your gift there . . . and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then coming, offer your gift. Make friends quickly with your accuser.</i>” (Italics mark the Greek imperatives.)</p>

# Threefold approach of Jesus

- **Traditional Righteousness = the traditional statement of the law/command/precept**
- **The Sinful pattern = the sinful violation, what it looks like.**
- **Transforming Initiative = what to do when you actually in that situation.**



# So, in practice...

- **Transforming Initiatives.**
- **Transforms the person who is angry into an active peace-maker.**
- **Transforms the relationship from one of anger into a peace-making process.**
- **Hopes to transform the enemy into a friend.**
- **Furthermore, it participates in the way of grace that God took in Jesus in resolving the enmity between God and humans.**
- **This is God's kingdom break-through.**
- **We are invited to participate in this way of grace.**

# Boiling it all down...

- Whenever we find ourselves in a relationship of anger or insult, we are to engage in the regular practice of:
- Talking it over (“let’s talk about it, what are your concerns”)
- Seeking to make peace; (not damage, revenge etc. doing conflict resolution, settle matters).
- Acting quickly, radical urgency.

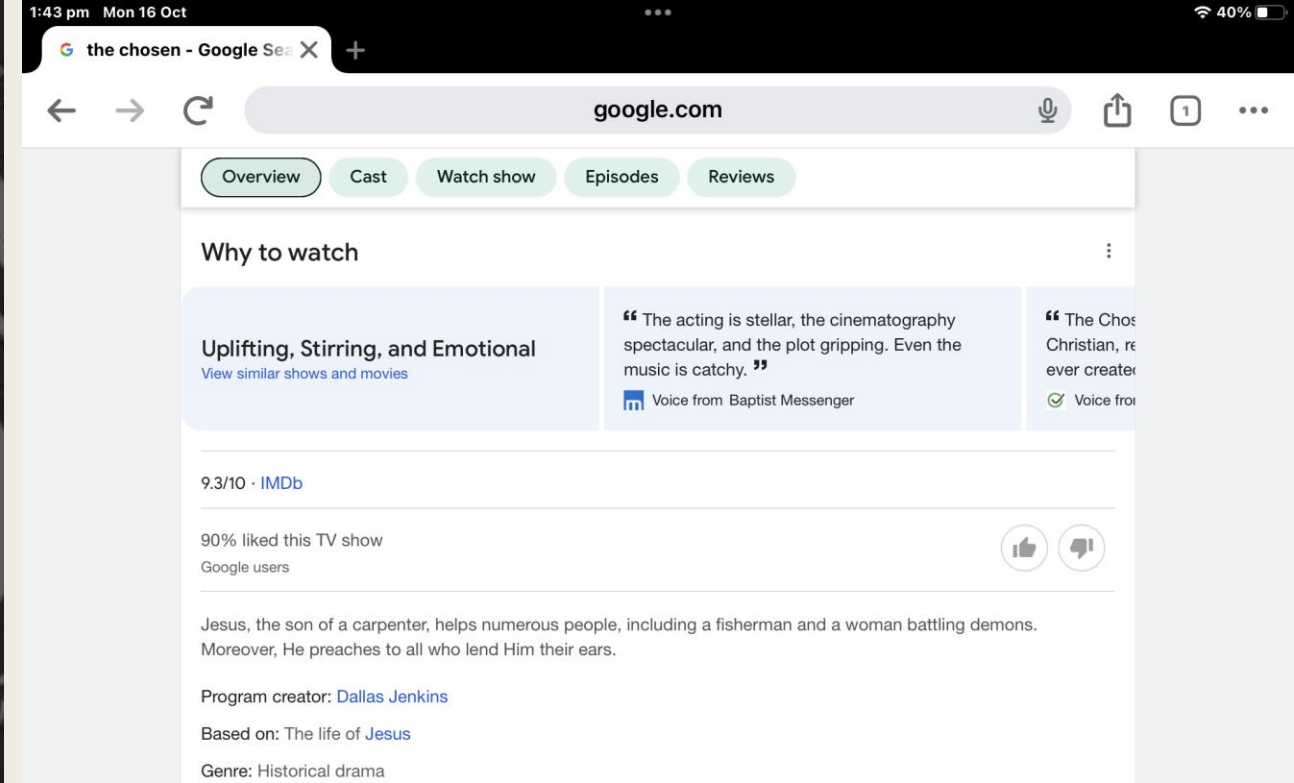






# Reflecting on this

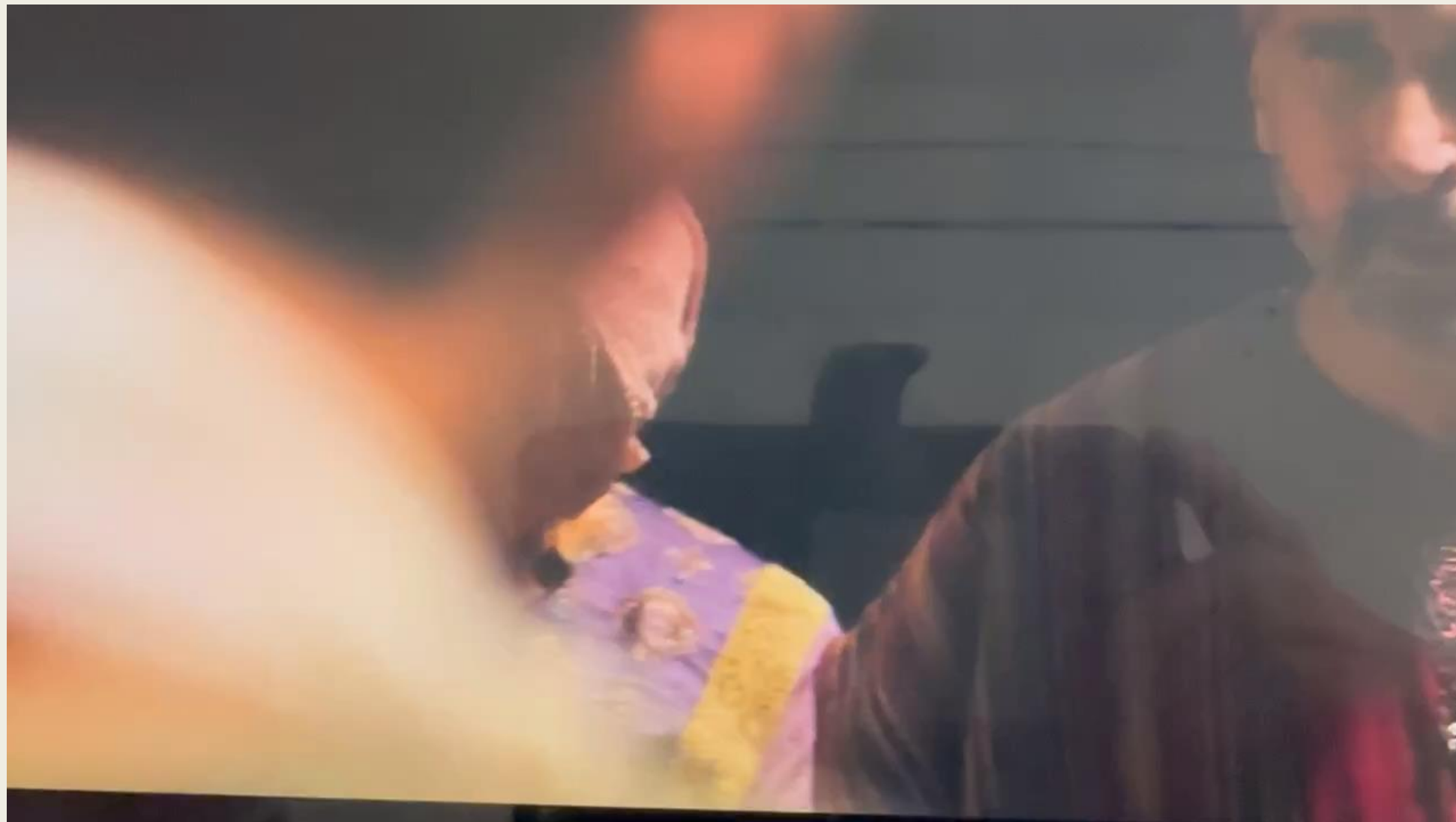
- What do you think about this idea of Transforming Initiative in applying Jesus' teaching to your life?



# The Chosen

- A couple of clips from The Chosen....
- Dramatic portrayal, not a documentary of the life of Jesus.
- Get the app!

# Conflict...Matthew



**Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar.**

**First **go and be reconciled to them**; then come and offer your gift.**

**What does that look like then?**

# Reconciliation - Andrew/Mary





■ Thoughts?

- A. B. Bruce probably preserves the major difference between the words when he writes: 'Raca expresses contempt for a man's head = you stupid!; mōre expresses contempt for his heart and character = you scoundrel!' 10

# In your own words

*You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.'*

*But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister, will be subject to judgment.*

*Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.*

How would you say it in your own words?





# Reflection

- What do I think of the concept of “transforming initiatives”?
- Are there any practical steps I need to take as a result of tonight’s lesson?