

NT 09: Sermon on the Mount

Monte F. Shelley, 6 Mar 2011

Quotes

- Blessed are the flexible for they shall not get bent out of shape.
- Blessed are they who can laugh at themselves, for they shall never cease to be amused.
- Blessed are the forgetful for they forgive easily and shall die with a clear conscience.
- Blessed are the young, for they shall inherit the national debt.
- Blessed are those who hunger and thirst, for they are sticking to their diet.

1. Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5)

¹ Seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: ² And he ... taught them,

Disciples → the twelve and baptized

Jesus, who had given the Mosaic law to his prophet on the mountain (Exod. 19:20; 24:1-2, 12-18), now gives the gospel law to his disciples on a mountain. The term "disciple" means one who is accepted by contract to be a student, much as one would become an apprentice in a trade. (Brown)

The sermon ... was for the benefit of the newly ordained Twelve, being a type of missionary preparation, as well as for that larger group of disciples also present. (Thomas)

Obeying Jehovah, ²³ Moses sought diligently to sanctify his people that they might behold the face of God; ²⁴ But they hardened their hearts and could not endure his presence; therefore, the Lord ... swore that they should not enter into his rest while in the wilderness, which rest is the fulness of his glory. ²⁵ Therefore, he took Moses out of their midst, and the Holy Priesthood also; ²⁶ And the lesser priesthood continued." (D&C 84:23-26)

The Sermon on the Mount is a restoration of the higher law that which was taken from Israel in the time of Moses. (Skinner)

The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ (Gal 3:24)

In 3 Nephi, Christ gave essentially the same sermon at the temple to temple going Nephites. After reading a book by a BYU professor, I felt the sermon at the temple was related to the temple endowment.

Outline of 3 Nephi 11-18

* Based on John W. Welch, *The Sermon at the Temple ...*, 34-84.

1. Heard voice three times. Third time they did open their ears and cast their eyes to heaven. ^{11:3-6}
2. God introduced his messenger/angel. Hear him. ^{11:7}
3. Messenger/angel in a white robe descends with message from heaven. ^{11:8}
4. Silence because "they durst not open their mouths" ^{11:8}
5. Introduction: "I am Jesus Christ" ^{11:10}
6. People "fell to the earth" ^{11:12} (prostration)
7. All saw and felt the wounds in his side, hands, and feet ^{11:14-15}
8. Hosanna shout and falling again ^{11:17}
9. Ordained twelve to the priesthood (baptize, give Holy Ghost)
 - a. Explained baptism (like washings in OT) immersion pools
 - b. Assure the absence of evil (no contention, cast out devil)
 - c. Witnesses: God, Jesus, Holy Ghost ^{11:35-36}
 - d. Teaching his gospel/doctrine: faith, repentance, baptism
10. Give heed to the words of these twelve ^{12:1}
11. Blessings promised (beatitudes) to the true and faithful
12. People invited to become the salt of the earth ^{12:13} (enter covenant ^{D&C 101:39}) with a warning ^{12:13} to covenant breakers.

13. Be a light in the darkness and create good works ^{12:14-16}
14. Explain new laws that fulfill the law and the prophets ^{12:17-18}
15. Obedience and sacrifice ^{12:19-20} (animal sacrifice → broken heart and contrite spirit ^{9:19}) Sacrament (make holy): broken bread (*willing* to take name, remember, keep commandments), crushed wine (do remember; thy will be done) ALTAR
16. Not kill → no anger or ridicule of brothers ^{12:21-24}
17. Reconcile before proceeding ^{12:23-26}
18. Chastity (no adultery → not lust) ^{12:27-30}
19. Covenant marriages not dissolved except for fornication ^{12:32-33}
20. Oaths sworn by saying yes or no. ^{12:33-37}
21. Love enemies. ^{12:37-47} Good not evil speaking or doing, ^{D&C 42:27}
22. Transition to higher order (be perfect) ^{12:48}
23. Giving to the poor, ^{13:1-4} law of gospel ^{D&C 104:18}
24. Order of prayer. ^{13:5-15} Lord's prayer was a group prayer.
25. Fasting, washing, anointing ^{13:16-18}
26. Consecration: serve God not Mammon (Money) ^{13:19-24}
27. Food, drink, and clothing promised to twelve disciples. ^{13:25-34}
Clothing (GR *endowing*) disciples ^{13:25, 29-31} "tarry ... until ye be endued ^{GR clothed or invested} with power from on high" Lk 24:49
28. Preparing for judgment. ^{14:1-5} Judged as we judge or measure, mote-beam, repent. No fault finding ^{88:124}
29. Secrecy required ^{14:6, JST Mt 7:10-11}
30. Ask, Seek, Knock, and it shall be opened ^{14:7-8}
31. Seeking a gift from the Father ^{14:9-11}
32. Other people (golden rule) ^{14:12}
33. Enter through narrow opening ^{14:14}
34. Bearing the fruit of the tree of life ^{14:15-20}
35. Entering into the presence of the Lord → make, understand, and keep covenants ^{14:21-27}
36. Lecture on prophecies to be fulfilled. ^{15:1-16:20}
37. Ponder what you have heard and ask to understand ^{17:3}
38. Healing of the sick, washing feet. ^{17:5-9} (prayer roll)
39. Parents and children. ^{14:11-25} (Behold *your* little ones.)
40. Sacrament to remember covenant and new name ^{Mos 5:8-12}
41. Continued worthiness required. Watch, pray, meet ^{18:15-33}
42. Conferring the power to give the Holy Ghost ^{18:36-37}
43. Cloud overshadowed them and Jesus ascended ^{18:38-39}

2. Blessed are ... = Happy or fortunate are (SOED/HEB/GR)

Entrance requirements: “the conditions that must be fulfilled to gain entrance to the holy of holies” (Strecker in Welch, 45)

Blessed (makarios in Greek) means ‘privileged to receive divine favor.’ It could be retranslated as ‘Oh, the happiness of.’ (Thomas)

| Blessed are (the / they) | For (theirs is / they shall) |
|---|--|
| <i>*give heed to apostles</i> | <i>power to baptize: water, spirit</i> |
| <i>believe ... baptized</i> | <i>Holy Ghost, remission of sins</i> |
| poor in spirit <i>who come unto me</i> | is the kingdom of heaven |
| that mourn | be comforted how? |
| meek gentle, courteous, kind | inherit the earth |
| hunger&thirst after righteousness | be filled with the Holy Ghost |
| merciful law: debts, trespasses | obtain mercy |
| pure in heart | see God |
| peacemakers | be called the children of God |
| persecuted for my name's sake | is the kingdom of heaven |
| when men shall revile you ... | great reward in heaven |

* Italics show differences in 3 Nephi and JST.

First 6 → come unto me; last 5 → follow or be like me.

¹⁸ The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel [good tidings] to the poor [meek]; he hath sent me to heal [bind up] the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance [proclaim liberty] to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised <or oppressed>, ¹⁹ To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. (Lk 4:18-19; []=Isa 61:1-2; < >=NIV; { }= JST or 3 Ne)

Jesus announces good news for those who come unto him as the Messiah who fulfills Isa 61:1-7. First and last beatitudes are in present tense, the others are future tense. (*Sense*)

Story of bishop counseling woman wanting divorce (last page)

Study words as contained in the scriptures. Not TV English

- a. **Poor in spirit** = humble, dependent on God
Opposite = filled with spirit, or proud, rich
- b. **Mourn** due to sins, afflictions and injustices, mourn with others
Opp. = curse God and die, ignore needs of others
- c. **Meek** = gentle, courteous, kind, forgiving, not easily provoked, grateful, submissive to God’s will without murmuring
Opp. = proud, unkind, murmur, hard hearted, easily provoked

GR *praüs* = gentle, humble, considerate, meek in the older favorable sense. (Bauer). *Gentle, mild, forgiving, kind, benevolent* (LDS footnotes)

In Spanish, *manso*=meek, tame, peaceful, gentle, and *amansar* (*hacer manso*) = to meeken or make meek, to tame (an animal). Some animals (e.g., lamb) are meek by nature, while others (e.g., horse) are tamed or made meek. **A tame or meek horse is gentle, not easily provoked, submissive to rider. It is still powerful, and will do brave things as guided by a rider.**

- d. **Hunger and thirst** = seek diligently to know and do God’s will
Opp. = do own will without looking to God (Liahona)
- e. **Merciful** = forgive debts, trespasses, sins of others
Opp. = demand justice, hold grudges as did Merchant of Venus
- f. **Pure in heart** = willing to keep commandments, no desire to do evil, temple worthy and temple going
Opp. = break commandments, desire evil, not temple worthy

Nibley: Jewish priests were washed, anointed, and put on priesthood clothes before officiating in the temple. Jewish and Egyptian temple priests had to immerse (baptize) themselves and put on clean clothes before entering the temple. Outer

cleanliness symbolized inner cleanliness/purity. (*Message*)
“The commonly expressed goal and object of visiting the temple is ‘to see the god’” (*Message* 441)

Clean hands and a pure heart entitled one to “ascend into the hill of the LORD,” i.e., the temple (Ps 24:3-4). The pure in heart may see God in the temple. (D&C 67:10-13; 93:1; 97:15-17; 109:5)

- g. **Peacemakers** → Heal (atone) or reconcile relationships between: (a) self and others, (b) people, or (c) man and God; invite and entice one to come or return to Christ.
- h. **Persecuted for righteousness’ or my name’s sake**
“One reason that [persecution] is described as *blessed* is that it provides the greatest opportunity to triumph over hate and fear and to love one’s enemies; love of one’s enemies is also the last point the Lord made before the injunction to be perfect. Perhaps it is the final spiritual frontier.” (Thomas)

3. Ye are the salt and light of the world (Mt 5; 3 Ne 12)

¹³ Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, ... it is ... good for nothing, but to be cast out. ... ¹⁴ Ye are the light of the world. ... ¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father ... in heaven.

Carlos Asay: Salt does not lose its savor with age, but through mixture and contamination. (*Ensign*, May 1980)

“Both salt and fire were used in the offering of sacrifices in the temple. Salt, a preservative, represented the covenant between God and Israel. (Lev. 2:13; Num. 18:19.) ... Salt, like fire, is also a purifier.” (Thomas)

⁹ For they were set to be a light unto the world, and to be the saviors of men; ¹⁰ And inasmuch as they are not the saviors of men, they are as salt that has lost its savor, and is ... good for nothing but to be cast out. (D&C 103:9-10)

When men ... covenant with an everlasting covenant, they are ... as the salt of the earth and the savor of men; (D&C 101:39)

See Lev. 2:13 and Num. 18:19, where salt is a token of the covenants with God and was part of the sacrificial ritual.

The Greek means "become foolish." Commenting on a similar word found in Mark 9:50, Arndt and Gingrich (*Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*) state: "Salt produced by natural evaporation on the shores of the Dead Sea is never pure; when dampness decomposes it, the residue is useless." (Brown, ftns)

4. Jesus came to fulfill the Law (Matt 5; 3 Ne 12)

¹⁷ ¶ Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

Fulfill → to complete, make up a deficiency, fill up, carry out a prophecy or promise. The Law without Christ is incomplete.

I do not bring it to destroy that which they have received, but to build it up. (D&C 10:52)

Joseph: We don’t ask any people to throw away any good they have got; we only ask them to come and get more. (TPJS, 275)

¹⁸ For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Verily (GR *amen*) strong, solemn affirmation of what is said.

Yod (jot) is the 10th Hebrew letter = י יוד
Tittles make the difference between יוד and יוד.

5. Thou shalt not kill → anger, unkind feelings (Mt 5)

²¹ Ye have heard ... Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: ²² But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother { without a cause ^{JST & 3Ne} } shall be in danger of the judgment ^{GR subject to condemnation}: ... ²³ Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath <something> against thee; ²⁴ ... first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

In 3 Nephi, “come unto me” replaces the underlined words.

Where physical death was the penalty for murder ..., now spiritual death with its accompanying suffering is the penalty for anger and failure to forgive. (Thomas)

Unkind feelings, ridicule [later curse=evil speaking]

²⁵ <Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court>, while thou art in the way with him; lest ... the adversary deliver thee to the judge, ... and thou be cast into prison.

Adversary here refers to an opponent in a lawsuit. (Ogden 193)
Reconcile → be a peacemaker (make peace with man then God).

Joseph F. Smith: Be reconciled with each other. Do not go to the courts of the church nor to the courts of the land for litigation. Settle your own troubles, and difficulties; ... there is only one way in which a difficulty existing between man and man can be truly settled, and that is when they get together and settle it between them. The courts cannot settle troubles between me and my brother. (CR, Oct 1916, 7–8; Ogden 193–4)

Richard G. Scott: The inspiring influence of the Holy Spirit can be overcome or masked by strong emotions, such as anger, hate, passion, fear, or pride. When such influences are present, it is like trying to savor the delicate flavor of a grape while eating a jalapeño pepper. Both flavors are present, but one completely overpowers the other. In like manner, strong emotions overcome the delicate promptings of the Holy Spirit. ("To Acquire Spiritual Guidance," Ensign, Nov. 2009, 8)

6. Thou shalt not commit adultery → lust (Mt 5; 3 Ne 12)

²⁸ Whosoever looketh on a woman, to lust after her, hath committed adultery already in his heart.

<looks at a woman lustfully>

WI: Excommunicate for feeling attracted to non-spouse.

Fantasy/vivid imagination/day dream

Can't keep bird from flying overhead, but can prevent nest

Dr. Maxwell Maltz: "Experimental and clinical psychologists have proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that the human nervous system cannot tell the difference between an 'actual' experience and an experience imagined vividly and in detail." (quoted by Larry E. Dahl, Ensign, Feb 1991, p7)

bridle all your passions, that ye may be filled with love (Al 38:12)

7. Keep oaths → not swear, but use yes or no (Mt 5)

³³ Ye have heard ..., <Do not break your oath> ... ³⁴ But I say ... Swear not at all; ... ³⁷ <Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.>

8. Eye for an eye → not resist evil (Mt 5; 3 Ne 12)

³⁸ Ye have heard ... An eye for an eye. ... ³⁹ But I say ... resist not <an evil person. If someone strikes you> on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also; And if any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also; And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him <two miles>.

Eye for an eye → a legal standard for just punishment. Ransom

"The specific reference to the *right* cheek implies that one is slapped with the back of the hand, an action that was particularly degrading to a Jew. One's recourse... in case of insult more than injury ... would [be] to take legal action to gain recompense and vindication. According to the Mishnah the penalty for such damage was twice as severe. Therefore, in Matthew the one on the receiving end foregoes his right to legal action. (Robert Guelich, *A Foundation for Understanding the Sermon on the Mount*, 1982, 221-2)

The backhanded slap was insulting because it included the implication that the person slapped was inferior. The open-handed slap was among equals. Thus the person turns the cheek to indicate equality even as they eschew retaliation.

Go second mile!

You'll never be paid more than you are worth until you are worth more than you are paid.

9. Love neighbor, hate enemies → love enemies (5:43–45)

"The first-century use of *neighbor* had narrowed in its reference from that of Leviticus 19:18. Whereas *neighbor* meant fellow member of the covenant community, an "*Israelite*," in the Old Testament context in contrast to the non-Israelite, the rabbinic discussions contain many examples of the struggles with the casuistic implications of *neighbor*. Qumran had clearly limited the designation to members of their community ..." (Robert Guelich, *A Foundation for Understanding the Sermon on the Mount*, 1982, p. 225).

⁴⁴ Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you; ⁴⁵ That ye may be ^{GR become} the children of your Father ... in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good.

Enemy [L. in+amicus= not a friend; Span. *enemigo*= not amigo] One who has toward me OR toward whom I have unkind feelings (anger, hate), thoughts (despise= look down on), words (curse, revile), actions (mistreats, persecute, despitefully use)

Bless = say good/kind words in Greek (eu+logeō → eulogy) and Spanish (bien+decir).

Curse = say bad/unkind words in Greek (kata+logeō) and Spanish (mal + decir)

Do good, pray for

Essenes (Qumran): "Love all that He [God] has chosen and hate all that He has rejected." (Skinner, 346)

"To the Jews their neighbors were the members of the congregation of Israel; the Gentiles and all who opposed the Jewish people not only failed to qualify as neighbors, but were, in fact, enemies." (McConkie, *The Mortal Messiah* 3:178.)

Joseph F. Smith: Do you love these slanderers, these liars, these defamers, these persecutors of the innocent and of the unoffending—do you love them? [several voices, No, no.] I can scarcely blame you. But that is not according to the law of God. I want to tell you how I feel towards them. I love them so much that if I had it in my power to annihilate them from the earth I would not harm a hair of their heads—not one hair of their heads. ... If I could possibly make them better men, convert them from the error of their ways I would do it, God being my helper. ... I would not throw a straw in their way to prosperity and happiness, but so far as possible I would hedge up their headlong and downward course to destruction, and yet I detest and abominate their infamous actions and their wicked course. That is how I feel towards them, and that is how much I love

them, and if this is not the love that Jesus desired us to have for our enemies, tell me what kind of love we should have for them? I do not love them so that I would take them into my bosom, or invite them to associate with my family, or that I would give my daughters to their embraces, nor my sons to their counsels. I do not love them so well that I would invite them to the councils of the Priesthood, and the ordinances of the House of God, to scoff and jeer at sacred things which they do not understand, nor would I share with them the inheritance that God, my Father, has given me in Zion; I do not love them well enough for this, and I do not believe that God ever designed that I should; but I love them so much that I would not hurt them, I would do them good, I would tell the truth about them, I would benefit them if it was in my power, and I would keep them to the utmost of my ability from doing harm to themselves and to their neighbors. I love them that much; but I do not love them with that affection with which I love my wife, my brother, my sister or my friend. There is a difference between the love we should bear towards our enemies and that we should bear towards our friends. (JD 23:284–5)

10. Be perfect (Mt 5:48; 3 Ne 12:48)

Be ye therefore *perfect* even as {I, or} your Father {who} is in heaven is perfect.

Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. (Lk 6:36) BOTH → imitate God or become like him

GR τελιος complete, finished, fully developed

GR *Perfect* → (temple word) receive ordinances needed to come before God for gift or endowment.

“We often think perfection is defined as ‘flawless’ or ‘sinless.’” Only Christ qualifies. “Yet the scriptures say that ‘Noah was a just man and perfect’ (Gen 6:9); Job was ‘perfect and upright’ (Job 1:1); and Seth was ‘a perfect man’ (D&C 107:43). Apparently the scriptural definition of perfection is different from our usual one.

“In the Bible three Hebrew words and two Greek words are translated into King James English as ‘perfect.’ ... None of these five words means ‘flawless’ or ‘sinless.’ They are otherwise rendered as ‘whole,’ ‘upright,’ ‘undefiled,’ ‘just,’ or ‘complete.’ A person who is whole, complete, upright, and so forth, is one who, upon sinning, as all mortals do, immediately repents and is again reconciled to God and becomes whole, complete, and upright once more.” (Ogden 203)

The phrase “made whole” describes several healings of the body (Mt 9:22; 12:13; 14:36). The atonement heals the soul so it becomes perfect (whole, complete, undefiled). “Atone means to cover or recover, repair a hole, cure a sickness, mend a rift, make good a torn or broken covering. ... Atonement does not mean covering a sin so as to hide it from the sight of God; it means making good an outer layer which has rotted or been pierced.” (TT 69; quoting Mary Douglas)

Russell M. Nelson: My heart goes out to conscientious Saints who, because of their shortcomings, allow feelings of depression to rob them of happiness in life. We all need to remember; men are that they might have joy—not guilt trips. (Odds, xiv)

Bruce R. McConkie: All faithful Latter-day Saints—those who chart their course toward eternal life, receive the ordinances of salvation, and strive with all their hearts to be true to their covenants—will gain eternal life. Even though they are certainly not perfect when they die, if they have sought to stay

on course, in covenant, in harmony with the mind and will of God, they will be saved in the highest heaven. ... We ought to have hope, [and] we [need] to be positive and optimistic about attaining that glory.” (Odds, 20)

Gordon B. Hinckley: “We are the creatures of our thinking. We can talk ourselves into defeat or we can talk ourselves into victory ... Don’t partake of the spirit of our times. Look for the good and build on it. Don’t be a ‘pickle sucker.’” (Odds 83)

To focus on the Greek and Hebrew words behind the English *perfect* helps clarify understanding of what the Lord is asking. These words may also be translated as *whole, complete, the end product of a process*. An individual’s opportunity as an imperfect, unfinished being is to become *whole* through the power of Jesus Christ. During the Savior’s mortal ministry, he likened the healing of physical infirmities to the forgiveness of sins. (See Luke 5:23-24.) Infirmities of the spirit reflected a state of unwholeness, as did infirmities of the body. The Savior has the power to make people completely whole (*teleos* in Greek, the word translated in Matthew 5:48 as *perfect*) in body and spirit and offers that wholeness to all who want it.

To understand what kind of perfection the Lord is inviting us to, it is helpful to see mankind’s mistakes as divided into two kinds: errors of judgment and errors of intent. Individuals are held accountable for *intent* to do wrong, of course, though they may repent and be completely forgiven. People make many errors in *judgment*, but, where intent is pure, they need not pronounce harsh judgments on themselves, for, in fact, they may have done their best and should continue in faith. (Thomas)

11. Fast, pray, give to poor ... in secret (Mt 6; 3 Ne 13)

¹Take heed that ye do not your <‘acts of righteousness’> before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. ²Therefore when <you give to the needy>, [⁵⁻⁶pray, or ¹⁶⁻¹⁸fast] ... ³[do it] in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

alms → covenant obligations (Sense)

^b GR righteousness, acts of religious devotion.

Different Greek word used in verse 3 <give to the needy.>

If any man shall take of the abundance which I have made, and impart not his portion, according to the law of my gospel, unto the poor and the needy, he shall, with the wicked, lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment. (D&C 104:18)

My mission president asked us to ask 25 GQs a week and report # of GQs weekly. One Elder asked 50 a week until he worried that he was doing it to be seen of men, then he stopped. I suggested that he report the 1st mile (25) but not the 2nd mile.

12. Pray without vain repetitions (Mt 6; 3 Ne 13)

⁷When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do, for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

GR βαταλογεω babble, speak without thinking (Bauer)

<do not keep on **babbling** like pagans>

do not heap up **empty phrases** as the Gentiles do (RSV)

Repetition: Sacrament prayer, baptism prayer

Jesus “prayed the third time, saying the same words.” (Mt 26:44)

They repeated the many names of their Gods to get results. (NIV Study)

If ye turn away the needy, and the naked, and visit not the sick and afflicted, and impart of your substance, if ye have, to those who stand in need ... behold, your **prayer is vain** (Al 34:28)

[13:1-6 give alms secretly without reward]

Many Zoramites repeated the same prayer in same meeting.

Repetitions within the same prayer.

Elijah and Priests of Baal “called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us.” (1 Kg 18:26)

“all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.” (Acts 19:34)

Old Middle Eastern prayer book: “O God, O God, O God, O God! O Lord, O Lord, O Lord, O Lord! O Living, O Immortal! O Living, O Immortal! O Living, O Immortal! O Creator of the heavens and the earth! O thou who are endowed with majesty and authority! O wonderful,” etc.

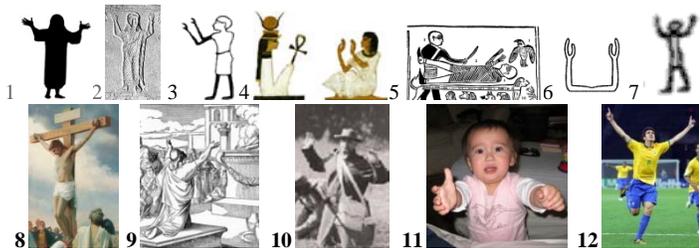
(Burder, *Oriental Customs*, #931 in James M. Freeman, *Manners and Customs of the Bible*, #645 p. 340)

13. Lord’s Prayer = model for group prayer (Mt 6; 3 Ne 13)

After this manner therefore pray ye:

Group prayer. Circle. Arms raised.

“From the earliest Christian times, the Lord’s prayer was ‘basically a prayer used by a group,’ and several early Christian texts document the use of sacred group prayers with the participants standing in a circle around Jesus at the center. The Lord’s prayer was undoubtedly intended as a pattern or model for group prayers.” (Welch, 63)



1-2: Orant/s; 3-5: *dua* or *tua*; 5: ☩=*ankh*; 6: *ka*; 7: *qa*; 9: Solomon

1-2: Orans=supplication/pleading, common in ancient religions

3-5: *dua* or *tua*=pray, praise, worship, adoration, entreat;

5: ☩=*ankh*=life; 6: *ka*= submission, supplication

7: *qa*= to be high, rejoice

“The cross is a symbol ... of the tree of life (1 Pet. 2:24). ... Ritually, the early Christians prayed in the ‘cruciform’ position, with their hands raised, ‘stretched out towards the Lord.’ This ‘extension,’ they said, ‘is the upright cross.’” (Welch, 76)

Nibley: “That magnificent gesture” of raising both hands high above the head with which those in the prayer circle began their prayer was ... a natural gesture both of **supplication** and **submission**. It was specifically a conscious **imitation of the**

crucifixion.... The Lord on the cross called upon the Father. ... It recalls the cry of distress of David in Psalms 54:2: ‘**Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth.**’ (“Early Christian Prayer Circle,” <http://mi.byu.edu>)

“When the Jews pray in a synagogue, they form a prayer circle (Minyan). It usually consists of at least ten participants. There is a tradition that if there are only nine persons, the prayer circle can be completed with an agreement that the presence of the Lord or the Spirit of the Lord is with them.” (Rona NT #09)

Our Father {who} art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Abba (father) is the first word a child was/is taught in the Middle East (MEE 97)

The composition of the 18–19 Amidah prayers began in the 4th century BC with final editing about AD 100. “It is generally assumed that most of these prayers were in use at the time of Jesus.” (MEE 106) The Amidah is in Jewish prayer books today.

Amidah (standing): Jewish daily prayer (morn, aft, eve) starts with: “Blessed are you, O Lord our God and God of our fathers, the God of Abraham, ... Isaac and ... Jacob, the great, mighty and revered God, the Most High God ... the creator of all things. ... O king, helper, savior and shield. Blessed are you, O Lord, the shield of Abraham.” (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amidah)

Father (Abba was likely) not Lord/Adonai as Jews did (Sense).

Hallow: to make holy, sanctify, consecrate—hold in reverence
GR Let thy name be sanctified

Divine passive (helped avoid repeated use of God’s name like reading Adonai instead of Jehovah). God sanctifies or makes his name holy through his divine acts (Ezek 36:21–23)

Amidah: “We will sanctify your name in this world just as it is sanctified in the highest heavens, as it is written by your prophet: “And they call out to one another and say: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.’” [Isa. 6:3] ... Blessed are you, O Lord, the holy God. You are holy, and your name is holy, and holy beings praise you daily. (Selah.) Blessed are you, O Lord, the holy God.”

¹⁰ Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done {on} earth as it is in heaven.

Due to agency, this means people must choose to do God’s will

3 Ne 13 omits “Thy kingdom come.” Perhaps because Jesus established his church and, therefore, the kingdom had come.

¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread.

Amidah: “Bless this year for us, O Lord our God, together with all the varieties of its produce, for our welfare. Bestow (dew and rain for) a blessing upon the face of the earth. O satisfy us with your goodness, and bless our year like the best of years. Blessed are you, O Lord, who blesses the years.”

Manna was “daily bread.”

Bread is the staple food in ME and symbolizes all we eat. We ask for (a) bread not cake, and (b) our bread not my bread. Old Syriac: “Give us today the bread that doesn’t run out.” This focuses on amount, time, and the fear that we will not have enough. (MEE 123)

¹² And forgive us our *debts*, as we forgive our *debtors*.

GR debts, offenses, faults, or sins

Sabbatical year → forgive debts.

Hebrew/Aramaic *khoba* → debts + sins; Matthew uses Greek word for debt (what is owed), Luke used that word and the word for sin.

Amidah (forgive us not as we forgive): “Forgive us, O our Father, for we have sinned; pardon us, O our King, for we have transgressed; for you pardon and forgive. Blessed are you, O Lord, who is merciful and always ready to forgive.”

¹³ And lead us not into temptation [or trials], but deliver us from *evil* <or the evil one>.

JST: And *suffer* us not to be led into temptation

Syriac: do not let us enter into temptation

“do not permit us to enter into temptation” OR “do not lead us into temptation, but lead us some other way” (Both?)

Whosoever breaketh this commandment suffereth himself to be led into temptation. (3 Ne 18:25)

GR but protect us from the evil one [OR evil OR BOTH]

Syriac and Arabic : “from the evil one” (MEE 128)

Temptation: Greek and Semitic words → trial/test & temptation

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen. *Amen* is also a name for Christ. (Rev 3:14)

Each of these six petitions involves an act of God, and specifies or implies action by the one praying. (adapted from MEE 105)

1. God is our Father, and I must become a child of Christ.

2. God makes his own name holy, and I am to live a holy life.

3. God brings in the kingdom, and I am to help build it up.

4. God fulfills his will, and I must seek to know and do his will.

5. God gives us daily bread, and I must work to receive it.

6. God forgives, and I must forgive.

7. God guides me away from evil, and I must obey promptings.

¹⁴ For, if ye forgive men their *trespasses* your heavenly Father will also forgive you; ¹⁵ But if ye forgive not men their trespasses neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

14. Treasures in heaven (Mt 6; 2 Ne 13)

¹⁹ Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. ²⁰ But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. ... ²¹ For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. ... ²⁴ No man can serve two masters: for ... he will hate the one, and love the other. ... Ye cannot serve God and <Money>.

... Ye cannot serve God and <Money>.

Neal A. Maxwell: We can be conscientious but still be confused about our priorities. How we spend our time is at least as good a measure of us as how we spend our money. An inventory of how we spend our disposable time will tell us where our treasure is. (*Notwithstanding My Weakness*, 116–117)

15. Seek the kingdom of God (Mt 6; 2 Ne 13:31–34)

Jesus was speaking to the twelve. (3 Ne. 13:25–34; JST) **In 3 Ne 14:1, he turned and began to speak to the multitude again.**

³¹ <Do not worry>, saying, What shall we eat? or ... drink? ... ³² for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. ³³ But seek ye first {to build up} the kingdom of God and {to establish} his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

Take no thought → GR worry or be overly anxious about

JST Matt. 6:38 *Wherefore, seek not the things of this world but seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness ...*

Build up kingdom → increase members (mission/genealogy)

Establish righteousness → perfect the saints

Ezra Taft Benson: When we put God first, all other things fall into their proper place or drop out of our lives. Our love of the Lord will govern the claims for our affection, the demands on our time, the interests we pursue, and the order of our priorities. We should put God ahead of *everyone else* in our lives.

(*Ensign*, May 1988, 4)

³⁴ <Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.>

Worry is like a rocking chair. It gives you something to do but gets you nowhere.

“Do not be unduly anxious about the morrow, for the morrow will take thought for the things of itself; sufficient to the day are the *problems* (or *troubles*) thereof.” (Thomas)

In these verses [25–34] the Lord used the phrase “take no thought for,” a bland translation of the Greek word *merimnesete*, which means to be very anxious about something. He used the word six times in this passage. In effect he invited us to *sacrifice our anxiety over the many elements of our lives that are beyond our control* (such as adding a cubit to our stature—v. 27), but that we think affect our well-being. However, he implied that this *sacrifice of fear is possible only if we first give up anger, lust, vengeance, and glory seeking, which in themselves produce fear*. He pointed out that if we make the single aim of our lives the will of God and the promotion of the cause of Zion, those uncontrollable elements of life will, one day at a time, take care of themselves, and we can live knowing that the forces of the universe are working to our benefit. (Thomas)

16. Hints for final judgment (Mt 7; 3 Ne 14:1–5)

¹ Judge not {unrighteously}, that ye be not judged: {but judge righteous judgment.} ² For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what *measure* ye <use>, it shall be measured to you again. ... ⁴ Or how wilt thou say to thy brother: Let me pull the <speck of sawdust> out of thine eye ... Thou hypocrite, first cast the <plank> out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast the <speck> out of thy brother’s eye.

³⁶ Be ... merciful, as your Father ... is merciful. ³⁷ Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn GR pronounce guilty not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven. (Lk 6)

Principles of our final judgment before bar of God. (Welch, 70)

Does this refer to judging things, self, or other people?

What types of judgments are referred to?

guilt (law), worthy (church), good/evil, like/dislike, should (not) do, (not) want, right/wrong for X to do

Judgment = GR *krima* (crime):condemnation, fault finding, a judge’s decision about guilt and punishment.

Measures: (business dealings) <Differing> weights, and ...

measures ... are alike abomination to the LORD. (Dt 25:14)

Thou shalt not have ... <differing> measures. ... *But* thou shalt have ... a perfect and just measure. (Prov 20:10)

Mote ... beam → do not ‘should’ on others; fix self not others; “Cease to find fault one with another” (D&C 88:124)

What righteous judgments can we each make?

We are to judge (1) who to follow by their fruits (beware of false prophets), (2) who not to give pearls to (dogs, swine), (3) what to believe and do (invites and entices to do good—Moro 7), (4) who to report to bishop or ‘law of the land’ (D&C 42:79–93), (5) how the golden rule applies each day.

How did the Pharisees judge others?

“Moses received the Torah on Sinai, and handed it down to Joshua; Joshua to the elders; the elders to the prophets; and the prophets handed it down to the men of the Great Synagogue [Assembly]. They said three things: Be deliberate in judgment; raise up many disciples; and make a fence round the Torah.” (Pirke Aboth, 1:1)

Pharisees built an electric ‘fence around the Law’ and judged/condemned others by their interpretation of the Law. They judged others as clean/unclean, righteous/sinner, innocent/criminal, right/wrong. They believed they were judging righteously because they could quote the Law (scriptures) and their religious leaders. Therefore, they could find fault with Christ. Christ was a sinner based on their traditions about who to eat with, what, how, when; when not to heal, what not to say (forgive, Isa 61, I am). As the *CTR police*, they were ready to cast the first stone.

Church basketball: (fouls are broken rules) 2 men after argument went to each other’s house to reconcile before going home. After arguing with and pushing a ref, a bishop was given the choice of being released or no longer playing church basketball.

How does Satan tempt me to judge others like a Pharisee?

Modern day Pharisees judge others who stray from the path they believe to be right.

The natural man judges others by their actions, but wants others to judge him by his intentions.

The natural man wants justice for others, but mercy for himself. The Saint wants justice for himself, and mercy for others.

What is required to make righteous judgments of others?

Stewardship (judge in land or Israel), know law, know both sides, revelation (know heart, God’s will), no conflict of interest, no bribes, no respecter of persons

[Jesus] as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. (Jn 5:30)

[Jesus to Pharisees after healing] Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment. (Jn 7:24)

N. Eldon Tanner: Samuel attempted to choose a new king based on “outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.” “The reason ... that we cannot judge [others] is obvious.

We cannot see what is in the heart. We do not know motives, although we impute motives to every action we see. They may be pure while we think they are improper. It is not possible to judge another fairly unless you know his desires, his faith, and his goals. ... How can we, with all our weaknesses and frailties, dare to arrogate to ourselves the position of a judge? At best, man can judge only what he sees; he cannot judge the heart or the intention, or begin to judge the potential of his neighbor. When we try to judge people, which we should not do, we have a great tendency to look for and take pride in finding weaknesses and faults, such as vanity, dishonesty, immorality,

and intrigue. As a result, we see only the worst side of those being judged.” (*Ensign*, July 1972, 35.)

The **unrighteous judgment** we make of another leads to condemnation of that person, resulting in a sense of self-superiority, in anger, or in some retributive action. If we had in the beginning given the person the benefit of the doubt, realizing that we could never know the motives or the conditioning of another, we would have avoided falling into a sin at least as great as the one that provoked our judgment, that is, condemnation. Had we not first judged and condemned another for what that person did, there would be no reason for us to forgive. If we do judge—no matter how great the injury or how deliberate—we are at fault. How helpful it is to turn our focus inward instead and concentrate on clarifying our own souls. **Righteous judgment** may often not belong to us at all, but to a priesthood leader, such as a bishop. But where we must judge, we should try to see through the lens of love rather than the dark glass of demeaning or retaliation. (Thomas)

As a judge, my father determined guilt and consequences. As a Bishop, judge violations and determine consequences. I saw more unrighteous judgment masquerading as righteous judgment than the reverse.

¹⁶ I show unto you the way to judge; for every thing which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ; wherefore ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God. ¹⁷ But whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do evil, and believe not in Christ, and deny him, and serve not God, then ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of the devil. ... ¹⁸ And now, ... see that ye do not judge wrongfully; for with that same judgment which ye judge ye shall also be judged. (Moro 7:14–18)

17. Keep mysteries sacred (Mt 7; 3 Ne 14)

{Go ye into the world, saying unto all, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come nigh unto you. And the *mysteries of the kingdom* ye shall keep within yourselves; for it is not meet to} give that which is holy unto the dogs; neither cast ye your pearls unto swine, lest they trample them under their feet. {For the world cannot receive that which ye, yourselves, are not able to bear; wherefore ye shall not give your pearls unto them, lest they} turn again and rend you. (JST)

OED Mystery: [GR secret (ceremony, teaching); from mys- → close mouth] 2a. A religious truth known or understood only by divine revelation; ... 5. [plural] In ancient religious systems, certain secret rites to which only the initiated were admitted.

OED Mystes: [GR initiate] a person initiated into mysteries, esp. religions mysteries.

Dog → GR unclean animal, reprobate;

Pig → GR immaturity and impurity (Skinner 351)

Dog and pig “were derogatory terms for the Gentiles. ... We suggest that ‘dogs’ refers to the Samaritans, who are similarly compared to dogs in an early rabbinic source.” Swine “probably refers to the Romans.” (Lachs 139)

"And now Alma began to expound these things unto him, saying: It is given unto many to know the mysteries of God; nevertheless they are laid under a strict command that they shall not impart only according to the portion of his word which he doth grant unto the children of men, according to the heed and diligence which they give unto him. And therefore, he that will harden his heart, the same receiveth the lesser portion of the

word; and he that will not harden his heart, to him is given the greater portion of the word, until it is given unto him to know the mysteries of God until he know them in full." (Alma 12:9-10)

¹⁹ This greater priesthood administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God. ²⁰ Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest. ... ²² For without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live. (D&C 84:19-22)

¹⁸ The power and authority of the higher, or Melchizedek Priesthood, is to hold the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church—¹⁹ To have the privilege of receiving the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, to have the heavens opened unto them, to commune with the general assembly and church of the Firstborn, and to enjoy the communion and presence of God the Father, and Jesus the mediator of the new covenant. (D&C 107:18-19)

18. Golden Rule="the law and the prophets" (Mt 7; 3 Ne 14)

¹² Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is **the law and the prophets**.

<do to others what you would have them do to you>

'What you do not wish done to yourself, do not do to others.'

"Therefore" refers asking for and giving good gifts to kids.

Law and prophets means ____.

^{2nd} great commandment

Marvin J. Ashton: "How can you tell if someone is converted to Jesus Christ?" After a long class discussion the teacher said: "'The best and most clear indicator that we are progressing spiritually and coming unto Christ is the way we treat other people.' The way we treat the members of our families, our friends, those with whom we work each day is as important as are some of the more noticeable gospel principles we sometimes emphasize." (Ensign, May 1992, p20)

19. Strait gate, narrow way (Mt 7; 3 Ne 14)

¹⁴ Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and **few there be that find it**. [in this life]

^a GR narrow

"The words *strait* and *narrow* mean about the same thing: constricted, tight. The juxtaposition of the synonyms is a familiar ancient Hebrew literary technique." (Ogden 221)

Gates= baptism, temple marriage

If you were to die now, to which kingdom would you go?
70% telestial.

When people did not open the door, a missionary said through the mail slot "We're the Mormons!" to make them accountable. His companion said, "If that is all it takes ... the Church could just run one international commercial for about a week and send everyone to hell." (Odds 74)

"The great plan of happiness ... would not be called the eternal plan of salvation/happiness/redemption/mercy... if its primary effect was the damnation of the vast majority of God's offspring. ... And the assumption that our mother in heaven would idly sit back and allow such a guaranteed flop to eternally strip her of any interaction with her spirit offspring is equally unfathomable. ... Those of us who shouted for joy ... felt that the odds were in our favor. ... If the Father had informed us that 'there's good news and bad news' ... 'The good news is there is a Plan, but the bad news is most of you

are not going to make it back...' surely we would not have felt reason to rejoice." (Odds, 17-18)

Bruce R. McConkie "Far more of our Father's children will be exalted than we think!" "Who can count the number of saved beings in eternity? Our God, who is victorious in all battles against the forces of evil, will surely be victorious in the numbers of his children who will be saved." (Odds, 21)

Bruce R. McConkie: "Millions of *children* ... have died before ... the age of accountability, and ... they shall have eternal life. ... Billions of spirits will come to earth during the *Millennium*, when Satan is bound. ... They will grow up without sin unto salvation." (Odds 28) (D&C 45:58)

Joseph Fielding Smith: Mentally handicapped

Wilford Woodruff and Lorenzo Snow: "There will be very few, if any, [in the spirit world] who will not accept the gospel." (Odds 37)

20. False prophets (Mt 7; 3 Ne 14)

¹³ Beware of false prophets, who come to you in *sheep's clothing*, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know ^{GR recognize, detect} them by their fruits.

Pharisees judged Jesus not by his works, but by their traditions or interpretations of the Law and judged him to be a sinner/criminal and were ready to cast the first stone!

J. Reuben Clark, Jr.: "The ravening wolves are amongst us, from our own membership, and they, more than any others, are clothed in sheep's clothing, because they wear the habiliments of the priesthood; they are they [who are] distorting the truth. We should be careful of them." (CR, Apr. 1949, 163; Ezra Taft Benson, CR Apr 1969)

21. Entering into the presence of the Lord (Mt 7; 3 Ne 14)

²¹ Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall *enter into the kingdom of heaven* ^{his presence}; but he that *doeth* the will of my Father. ... ²² Many will say to me in that day: Lord, Lord, have we not ... in thy name done many wonderful works? ²³ And then will I profess unto them: I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity. ^{GR lawlessness} ²⁴ Therefore, whoso *heareth these sayings* of mine and *doeth* them, I will liken him unto a wise man, who built his house upon a [GR the] rock.

Remember...it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, ... that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, ... when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall. (Hel 5:12)

HEB know → have covenant with (Amos 3:2)

New law replaces old; testament=covenant; make & keep

^{2 Ne 9:41-42} The way for man is narrow, ... and the keeper of the gate is the Holy One of Israel; and he employeth no servant there; and there is none other way save it be by the gate; for he cannot be deceived, for the **Lord God** ^{YHWH Elohim=he creates Gods} is his name. And whoso *knocketh*, to him will he *open*; ... and they... who are puffed up because of their learning... wisdom, and ... riches—yea, they are they whom he despiseth; and save they shall cast these things away, and consider themselves fools before God, and come down in the depths of humility, he will not open unto them.

22. "I am he that gave the law" (3 Ne 15:5–6, 9)

I am he that gave the law, and ... *covenanted* with my people Israel; therefore, *the law in me is fulfilled*, ... therefore it hath an end. Behold, I do not destroy *the prophets*, for as many as have not been fulfilled in me ... shall all be fulfilled. ... Behold, I am the law, and the light. Look unto me, and endure to the end ... for unto him that endureth to the end will I give eternal life.

Conclusion

Sermon on the Mount is to guide each of us to become like Christ, not for us to use as a club to beat on family and neighbors who fail to interpret and follow it according to our interpretation.

Mirror: Papaderos, a Greek philosopher and teacher, ended a lecture asking, "Are there any questions?" ... I asked. "Dr. Papaderos, what is the meaning of life?" The usual laughter followed. ... Papaderos held up his hand and stilled the room and looked at me for a long time. ...

"I will answer your question." Taking his wallet out of his hip pocket, he fished ... out a very small round mirror, about the size of a quarter ... [and said]: "When I was a small child, during the war, ... I found the broken pieces of a mirror [from a wrecked] German motorcycle. ... I kept only the largest piece. This one. And by scratching it on a stone I made it round. I began to play with it as a toy and became fascinated ... that I could reflect light into dark places where the sun would never shine—in deep holes and crevices and dark closets. It became a game for me to get light into the most inaccessible places I could find. ... I kept the little mirror. ... As I became a man, I grew to understand that this was ... a metaphor for what I might do with my life. ... I am not the light or the source of light. But light—truth, understanding, knowledge—is there, and it will only shine in many dark places if I reflect it. I am a fragment of a mirror whose whole design and shape I do not know. Nevertheless, with what I have I can reflect light into the dark places of this world—into the black places in the hearts of men—and change some things in some people. Perhaps others may see and do likewise. ... This is the meaning of my life."

And then he took his small mirror and ... caught the bright rays of daylight streaming through the window and reflected them onto my face and onto my hands folded on the desk. (Robert Fulghum, *It Was On Fire When I Lay Down On It*)

Hold up your light that it may shine unto the world. Behold I am the light which ye shall hold up—that which ye have seen me do. (3 Ne 18:24)

May we come unto Christ, follow him, and reflect His light in the hearts of those around us.

Quotes

Joseph Smith: When you climb up a ladder, you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step by step, until you arrive at the top; and so it is with the principles of the gospel—you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation. But it will be a great while after you have passed through the veil before you will have learned them. It is not all to be comprehended in this world; it will be a great work to learn our salvation and exaltation even beyond the grave. (HC, 6:306-307)

David O. McKay: The context of that scripture [judge not] plainly indicates that the sin the Savior is condemning is the disposition to look unfavorably on the character and actions of others, which leads almost invariably to the pronouncing of rash, unjust, judgments upon them. Very often these judgments are formed on insufficient evidence and after superficial observations, and people who form them and express them in the presence of children put poison into those children's minds. Parents who speak at the table against the bishopric, against a teacher, stake president, or any other [Church] officer... are, unwittingly, perhaps, but most assuredly, lessening in their children's minds the respect and confidence in Church authorities. (*Gospel Ideals*, 415)

Neal A. Maxwell: One of the ironies which is fostered, at times innocently, in the Church, is the feeling we have that the spirit of the law is superior to the letter of the law because for some reason it seems more permissive or less apt to offend others. The reverse is true. The spirit of the law is superior because it demands more of us than the letter of the law. The spirit of the law insists that we do more than merely comply superficially. It means, too, that we must give attention to the things that matter most *and still not leave the others undone*. (*For the Power Is in Them*, 46–47)

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- KJV King James Version of the Bible.
- NJPS = New Jewish Publication Society translation of the Bible
- NIV = New International Version of the Bible
- TPJS = *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*
- SOED = Shorter Oxford English Dictionary
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- BDB = Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon
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- Rona = Daniel Rona, www.israelrevealed.com/comp-sup-r.htm.
- DBlog = Donna Nielsen Blog, donna-connections.blogspot.com/
- DBI = *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*
- MM = Meridian Magazine, Gospel Doctrine Lesson #, www.ldsmag.com
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Richard and Jennifer (Based on a true experience. NT-I, 61–62)

It was late one night when ... I walked into Richard and Jennifer's home, the atmosphere was charged with tension. Richard spoke first. He was nearly in tears. Jennifer wanted to leave him and the children. He spoke vaguely of some problems she had had earlier during the day, obviously wanting to protect her. Jennifer then interrupted, "Why don't you quit beating around the bush, Richard. Say it. Tell him that I struck one of the children. Tell him what I've said to you and the children! Or are you afraid what the bishop might think of our 'model' home!" Richard only looked at me.

"Suppose, Jennifer, you tell me what's wrong," I said.

"I've had it ..., Bishop. I'm fed up with my husband—my kids—and this house. I'm tired of the pretense of being an ideal Latter-day Saint family when we're anything else but. I want out of this situation, the sooner the better."

And so I listened—from 1:00 A.M. until 3:00 A.M. in the morning. ... The Spirit which had once attended this sister was now gone. All feelings of refinement, sensitivity, kindness, congeniality, and charity had disappeared. In their place were accusation, coarseness, abusiveness, and hatred. I prayed inwardly for the wisdom beyond my natural ability to help.

When she had finished her [2 hour] tirade, she said defiantly: "Now I suppose, Bishop, that you're going to try to dissuade me from leaving Richard."

"No, Jennifer, it appears to me that you have already made up your mind about what you're going to do. Neither I nor anyone else could dissuade you. So perhaps the thing for you to do is to leave. ... But ... there is a way out of your misery if you're willing to try. ... Do you remember what the Savior taught those who sought to be his disciples? ...

"'Blessed are the poor in spirit who come unto me.' This is the way you can solve this problem—by coming to the Lord for help. But how can you come unto him?

"'Blessed are they that mourn.' We come unto the Savior by manifesting a broken heart and a contrite spirit. In other words, we mourn about the condition which prevents us from becoming his friend and having his Spirit with us always. I'm not talking about self-pity. ... I'm talking about the kind of sorrow that purges ugly feelings and desires from the heart. The Savior then tells us how we may overcome this depression and despair that is such a burden for you right now.

"'Blessed are the meek.' To be meek is to humble ourselves before the Lord and ask and plead for his help to overcome our weakness. ... You have discovered a weakness ... that is preventing you from having the Spirit of the Lord. ... Don't you desire that joy and happiness that has been absent from your life during these past months?

"'Blessed are they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost.' That's the blessing you need so desperately. ...

"Do you want to be more kind? 'Blessed are the merciful.'

"Do you really desire to overcome hypocrisy? 'Blessed are the pure in heart.'

"Do you want peace in your own home? 'Blessed are the peacemakers.'

"And then there is the teaching about being able to bear persecution. But what about bearing up against stress and persecutions of the adversary in your own home? ...

"If you really want these attributes, they are available to you as you 'hunger and thirst' after them. This is the righteousness the Savior is referring to—these are the blessings that come as one is

filled with the Holy Ghost. By recognizing your need to depend daily, even hourly, upon the Lord, by fasting and prayer you can overcome this problem that is now leading you to such misery. Here is the Savior's promise to you:

"... remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ ... that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, ... when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery ... because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation.' [Hel 5:12]

I then bore testimony to her of the truthfulness of these principles. Her tears, the first indication of the spirit of repentance, told me she also knew them to be true. There was a way out. There was a hope. Perhaps for the first time in her life, she began to sense how the gospel becomes a power to solve our problems, to refine our natures, and to help us become more Christlike in our disposition.

Before leaving that night we knelt in prayer together. As we arose from our knees, I knew that Jennifer would not be leaving her husband or her home.

It has been seven years since the incident of that evening. Jennifer and Richard have added three more children to their family. Overcoming her problems has not been easy; in fact, it has been an intense struggle. Gradually, however, by applying the principles of the Savior on a daily basis, she has found a strength she did not previously know.

My adaptation of this story using terms on page 2

The bishop saw no physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse of one's spouse or children.

Poor in spirit means you are no longer filled with the Spirit. To get it back you must return or come again unto Christ.

Mourn: our separation from Christ that has led to our despair, depression, anger, and hatred

Meek: humble self before God, pray for and yield to the enticing of His Spirit, renew Sacrament covenant to seek to do his will

Hunger and thirst: seek to do his will so His Spirit will always be with you, and you will be filled with faith, charity, hope, and joy.

Follow Christ by following the promptings of His Spirit

Merciful: forgive as you want to be forgiven, "cease to find fault" with yourself and others (D&C 88:124).

Pure in heart: pray for a change of heart that you might desire "to do good continually" (Mos 5:2). Follow promptings to reconcile yourself with family and others before returning to the temple altar and symbolically entering his presence.

Persecution. Love your enemies (not friends) who have unkind feelings toward you or vice versa. Bless or say kind words to those who curse or say unkind words to you. Pray for those who "make you angry" by doing or saying things you don't like.

As you follow Christ, the first beatitudes take on new meaning:

Invite the **poor in Spirit** to come unto Christ or to return to Him.

Mourn with those who mourn, and comfort them (Mos 18:9)

Meek: be gentle, courteous, and kind; help others understand, make, and keep covenants.

Invite and entice others by your example and words to **hunger and thirst after righteousness**.