



Carl Bloch, *Sermon on the Mount* (detail), 1877, public domain

What New Life in Christ Really Means

User's Guide To Sunday

Sunday, Feb. 15, is the Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time. *Mass readings: Sirach 15:15-20; Psalm 119:1-2, 4-5, 17-18, 33-34; 1 Corinthians 2:6-10; Matthew 5:17-37.*

In the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord is drawing a picture for us of the transformed human per-



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son and what sanctity really is.

The Christian moral vision is received, not achieved. Holiness is a work of God. The human being acting out the power of his flesh alone cannot keep, and surely cannot fulfill, the Law.

We must understand the moral

vision given by Jesus.

Because of his divine life and power at work in us, we do not merely keep the Law but *fulfill* it.

The Gospel contains four descriptions of fulfilling the Law - and what happens to a person in whom Jesus Christ is really living.

The Lord teaches us that the commandment not to kill has a deeper meaning. When Jesus lives his life in us, we are increasingly free of vengeful anger. There is such a thing as righteous anger at the perception of injustice and sin. Yet the type of anger condemned here is that which is born of hate, wishing harm to another or denying his human dignity; this is what leads to murder.

Adultery also has a deeper meaning. It is not merely about transgressing marital boundaries. To fill this Law in full means to be chaste in all matters, in mind and in

heart. It is wrong to look at pornography or fantasize sexually about others. It is wrong to engage in any illicit sexual union, heterosexual or homosexual. What the Lord is offering us here is a clean mind and pure heart. He is offering us authority over our sexuality and our thoughts.

"Again you have heard, 'Do not take a false oath.' But I say to you, 'Do not swear at all. ... Let your Yes mean Yes and your No mean No. Anything more is from the evil one.'"

When Jesus begins to live his life in us, we speak the truth in love. When we make commitments, we are faithful to them; we do not lie; we don't "play games" with the truth. God is truth.

As he lives in us, we become the truth, speak the truth, and live the truth. This is the gift that Jesus offers us here.

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