

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

SONS

OF THE

MOST HIGH

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Living Stream Ministry
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A CLEAR VIEW OF THE HIGHEST STANDARD OF MORALITY

The Lord's teaching in Luke 6:17-49 gives us a clear view of the highest standard of morality. As one who has studied the writings of Confucius, I can say that the teachings of Confucius do not present such a standard of morality. The topmost teaching on morality is that of the Man-Savior. He Himself as the God-man lived a life that is the highest standard of morality. His life, work, and saving power are all in the highest standard of morality. The Lord conveyed His saving grace in His human virtues with His divine attributes. This is the highest standard of morality, and we all need to pay careful attention to it.

OUR NEED FOR THE DIVINE LIFE

In order to practice the principles described in 6:17-49, we need the divine life. Life is the basic factor for any kind of being, doing, or working. If we do not have a certain kind of life, we

cannot have that kind of being; neither can we have a certain behavior or accomplish a certain work. For example, an apple tree has an apple tree life. In order for a tree to be an apple tree, it must have the life of an apple tree. Likewise, a monkey has a monkey life. In order for an animal to be a monkey, it must have the life of a monkey. Only by having the life of a monkey is it possible for an animal to behave like a monkey. The crucial point here is that if we would have a certain being and behave in a certain way, we must have a certain kind of life. Life is the basic factor of our being, behavior, and work.

The Man-Savior has the kind of life described in [chapter six](#) of the Gospel of Luke. Before His death and resurrection, He Himself lived such a life. But through His resurrection He has become the life-giving Spirit, and now He lives in us. His desire is to live in us the same kind of life He lived on earth.

In [Philippians 1:21](#) Paul speaks of living Christ. When Christ, the God-man, was on earth, He lived a life that was according to the highest standard of morality. Now Christ lives in us so that we may live Him. Actually, Christ Himself is the highest standard of morality, for He is the man created by God in [Genesis 1](#) plus

the tree of life mentioned in [Genesis 2](#). This highest standard of morality is now a Person living in us and making it possible for us to live Christ. This is the reason Paul says in [Philippians 4:8](#), “Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is righteous, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is well-spoken of, if there is any virtue and if any praise, take account of these things.” This is to live according to the highest standard of morality, a morality which is actually a Person, Christ the God-man.

In [Luke 6:17-49](#) the Lord teaches us the highest standard of morality. I hope that many of us will delve into this teaching. If we pray over these verses and digest them, this will affect our daily walk.

THE LORD'S TEACHING NOT ISSUING FROM HIMSELF

The teaching in [6:17-49](#) was given by the God-man after He had prayed throughout the night and after He had appointed twelve to be His apostles. The fact that He prayed all night indicates that He did not initiate this teaching and that He was not its source.

Before teaching His disciples in the presence of a multitude of unbelievers, the Lord Jesus

prayed. To pray is to be brought out of ourselves into God. No doubt, after spending the entire night in prayer, the Lord Jesus was absolutely out of Himself and in God the Father. Therefore, it was in the Father, not in Himself, that He appointed the twelve and taught the disciples the highest standard of morality. His teaching, therefore, did not issue from Himself but from God the Father.

We need to have a clear understanding of this background of the Lord's teaching in [chapter six](#). Otherwise, we shall not be able to get below the surface of this portion of Luke.

THE DIVINE LIFE AS THE SOURCE

The Lord's teaching in [6:17-49](#) has two basic elements. These elements are the divine word and the divine life. How do we know that the Lord's teaching here is based on the elements of the divine life and the word? Consider what the Lord says in [verses 35 and 36](#): “Love your enemies, and do good and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Be full of pity, even as your Father is full of pity.” These verses describe the living of sons of the Most High. The

expression “sons of the Most High” surely implies the divine life. If we did not have the divine life, how could we be sons of the Most High? It would, of course, be impossible. The living that is according to the highest standard of morality issues from the divine life with which we have been born of the Most High. Therefore, these verses definitely refer to the divine life.

As those who have been born of God, we are able to love our enemies. God loved us even when we were His enemies ([Rom. 5:8](#)). We need to be impressed with the fact that God loved us while we were yet His enemies. Now His love has been imparted to us. The love with which we love others, therefore, is the love of God our Father.

The Bible tells us that God is love ([1 John 4:8](#)). As Spirit is the nature of God’s Person, and light is the nature of God’s expression, so love is the nature of God’s being. Hence, if we have been born of God, we surely have been born of the nature of God’s being, which is the divine love. As those born of God, we have His life and nature. Spontaneously we are now able to love our enemies even as God our Father loves them. This is the reason the Lord tells us to love our enemies so that we may be the sons of the Most

High, the One who is kind to those who are unthankful and evil.

In 6:36 the Lord says, “Be full of pity, even as your Father is full of pity.” Pity surpasses love and mercy. It is possible to show mercy to someone without being full of pity. It is actually easier to love others than it is to be full of pity toward others. The reason for this is that often we love those who are good. Pity, however, goes much farther than love. We need to exercise our mercy in order to reach those who are in a pitiful condition.

According to our natural understanding, we may think that to be full of pity toward someone is to have mercy on a person who is sick or in poverty. But this is not the meaning of pity according to the context in this chapter. The context indicates that a person who hates us and who reviles us is in a pitiful condition. Therefore, toward such a person we should not only have love, but should also be full of pity. We need to pity the one who is evil and who is altogether not lovable. As those who have been born of God, we should be full of pity even as our Father is full of pity.

Another indication of the divine life is found in [verses 43 and 44](#): “For there is no good tree producing rotten fruit, nor again a rotten tree

producing good fruit. For each tree is known by its own fruit; for they do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a thorn-bush.” We may say that bearing fruit is the living of a tree. Every kind of fruit tree has its own life, and its life is the source of the fruit produced by the tree. The living comes out of the life. The life is the source, and the living is the issue. Here the Lord is saying that we, His disciples, are the good trees with the divine life. Out from this life will issue a living that is the expression of the Triune God.

It is not possible for us in ourselves to love our enemies. But we do have an enemy-loving life, the divine life, within us. This life is the source of the highest standard of morality. The highest standard of morality, therefore, is the issue and expression of the divine life. Both the sons of the Most High in [verse 35](#) and the good trees in [verse 43](#) indicate that the source of the highest standard of morality is the divine life. It is of vital importance for us to see this.

Confucius was not able to present the kind of teaching we have in [6:17-49](#), because he did not have the divine life or know the divine life. But Jesus, the God-man, knew the divine life and possessed it. In a very real sense, He Himself was the

divine life, and He imparted Himself to the disciples as the divine life. Hence, His teaching actually expresses what He Himself is. Because He lived according to the highest standard of morality, He teaches this morality to His disciples.

THE WORD AS THE EXPRESSION

In 6:47 and 48 we have clear mention of the Lord's word: "Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and does them, I will show you whom he is like. He is like a man building a house, who dug and went deep and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood came, the river broke against that house and was not strong enough to shake it, because it was well built." Here we see that if we live and work according to the Lord's word, we shall have a proper foundation. The Lord's word is the foundation of our being, behavior, and work.

The divine word is the expression of the divine life. Life is inward, and the word is the speaking forth outwardly of the life. In the Bible the word is called the word of life (1 John 1:1; Acts 5:20). In the Bible the divine word and the divine life are regarded as one. How do we have the divine life? We have this life through the word. When we receive the word of life, we obtain life. We

all need to see that the Man-Savior's teaching concerning the highest standard of morality is altogether based on the divine life with its expression—the divine word.

LIFE, THE WORD, AND THE SPIRIT

In John 6:63 the Lord Jesus says, "The words which I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life." Both life and the word depend upon the Spirit. If there were no Spirit, there would be no life and no genuine, real word. The word that is the word of reality is actually the Spirit. Hence, in order to have the divine life and the divine word, we must have the Spirit.

Today the Spirit is the resurrected Christ. In resurrection Christ has become the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45). Now that we have this Spirit, we also have life and the word. I wish to emphasize the fact that the Spirit is actually the Christ who has passed through death and has entered into resurrection. Christ in resurrection is the Spirit, and this Spirit is life and the word.

LIVING THE HIGHEST STANDARD OF MORALITY BY THE DIVINE LIFE AND THROUGH THE DIVINE WORD

In order to understand Luke 6:17-49, the

teaching of the God-man concerning the highest standard of morality, we need to have a view of the New Testament as a whole. If we do not have a proper view of the entire New Testament when we read 6:17-49, we shall be misled and understand this portion of Luke in a natural way. As we have pointed out, the Man-Savior's teaching concerning the highest standard of morality is dependent on the elements of the divine life, which is the source, and the divine word, which is the expression. How can we have the highest standard of morality? We can have it by the divine life and through the divine word.

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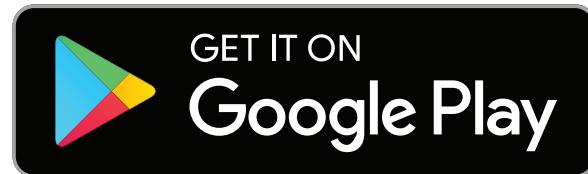
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