

## For the Love of an Imperative Verb

### Matthew 5:21-37

*The Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany, Year A, RCL*

<sup>21</sup>"You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not murder'; and 'whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.' <sup>22</sup>But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council, and if you say, 'You fool,' you will be liable to the hell of fire. <sup>23</sup>So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, <sup>24</sup>**leave** [ἀφες, **áphes**] your gift there before the altar and **go** [ὑπάγε, **hýpage**]; first **be reconciled** [διαλλάγηθι, **diallágēthi**] to your brother or sister, and then come and **offer** [πρόσφερε, **prósphere**] your gift. <sup>25</sup>**Come** [ἴσθι, **ísthe**] to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison.

<sup>26</sup>Truly, I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

<sup>27</sup>"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' <sup>28</sup>But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. <sup>29</sup>If your right eye causes you to sin, **tear it out** [ἔξελε, **éxele**] and **throw it away** [βάλε, **bále**]; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. <sup>30</sup>And if your right hand causes you to sin, **cut it off** [ἔκκοψον, **ékkopson**] and **throw it away** [βάλε, **bále**]; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell.

<sup>31</sup>"It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, **let him give** [δότη, **dótō**] her a certificate of divorce.' <sup>32</sup>But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

<sup>33</sup>"Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord.' <sup>34</sup>But I say to you, do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, <sup>35</sup>or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. <sup>36</sup>And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. <sup>37</sup>**Let your word be** [ἔστω **éstō**] 'Yes, Yes,' or 'No, No'; anything more than this comes from the evil one. [NRSV89]

**5:24**

ἄφες, **áphes**; *vb*: 2<sup>nd</sup> aor act **imperative** 2<sup>nd</sup> pers sg from ἀφήμι:

translations: **leave** [NRSV89, ESV, NAB, NGEINT, NIV11, NJB, NKJV, NRSVue; Albright & Mann, Filson], also **deja** [IAdNT]

ὑπάγε, **hýpage**; *vb*: pres act **imperative** 2<sup>nd</sup> pers sg from ὑπάγω:

translations: **go** [NRSV89, ESV, NAB, NGEINT, NIV11, NJB, NKJV, NRSVue; Albright & Mann, Filson], also **vete** [IAdNT]

διαλλάγηθι, **diallágēthi**; *vb*: 2<sup>nd</sup> aor pass **imperative** 2<sup>nd</sup> pers sg from διλλάσσομαι:

translations: **be reconciled** [NRSV89, ESV, NAB, NGEINT, NIV11, NJB, NKJV, NRSVue; Albright & Mann], **effect a reconciliation** [Filson], also **reconcílate** [IAdNT]

Levine & Brettler: “Jews were required to seek peace with their neighbors before reconciliation with God was possible.” [p. 21.]

προσφερε, **prósphere**; *vb*: pres act **imperative** 2<sup>nd</sup> pers sg from προσφέρω:

translations: **offer** [NRSV89, ESV, NAB, NGEINT, NIV11, NKJV, NRSVue; Albright & Mann], also **present** [NJB], **presenta** [IAdNT]

**5:25**

ἴσθι, **ísthe**; *vb*: pres act **imperative** 2<sup>nd</sup> pers sg from εἰμί:

translations: **come** [NRSV89, ESV, NAB, NRSVue; Albright & Mann], also **agree** [NKJV], **be** [NGEINT], **make** [Filson], **settle** [NAB, NIV11], **está** [IAdNT]

**5:29**

ἔξελε, **éxele**; *vb*: 2<sup>nd</sup> aor act **imperative** 2<sup>nd</sup> pers sg from ἐξαιρέω:

translations: **tear . . . out** [NRSV89, ESV, NAB, NJB, NRSVue; Filson], **tear out** [NRSVue], also **gouge . . . out** [NIV11], **pluck . . . out** [NKJV], **take . . . out** [Albright & Mann], **saca** [IAdNT]

Levine & Brettler: “. . . the language is hyperbolic.” [p. 21.]

βάλε, **bále**; *vb*: 2<sup>nd</sup> aor act **imperative** 2<sup>nd</sup> pers sg from βάλλω:

translations: **throw** [NRSV89, ESV, NAB, NGEINT, NIV11, NJB, NRSVue; Albright & Mann, Filson], also **cast** [NKJV], **arrojalo** [IAdNT]

**5:30**

ἔκκοψον, **ékkopson**; *vb*: aor act **imperative** 2<sup>nd</sup> pers sg from ἐκκόπτω:

translations: **cut . . . off** [NRSV89, ESV, NAB, NIV11, NJB, NKJV, NRSVue; Albright & Mann, Filson], **cut off** [NGEINT], also **corta** [IAdNT]

## Matthew 5:21-37, continued

Albright & Mann: “Deut 25:11-12 explicitly allows for the punishment of cutting off the hand . . . . Rabbinic literature retains expressions denoting that certain acts by the hand deserve the punishment of mutilation . . . .” [pp. 63f.]

βάλε, **bále**; *vb*: 2<sup>nd</sup> aor act **imperative** 2<sup>nd</sup> pers sg from βάλλω:

translations: **throw** [NRSV89, ESV, NAB, NGEINT, NIV11, NJB, NRSVue; Albright & Mann, Filson], also **cast** [NKJV], **echa** [IAdNT]

5:31

δότη, **dótō**; *vb*: 2<sup>nd</sup> aor act **imperative** 3<sup>rd</sup> pers sg from δίδωμι:

translations: **let . . . give** [NRSV89, ESV, NGEINT, NKJV, NRSVue, Filson], **must give** [NAB, NIV11, NJB; Albright & Mann], also **dará** [IAdNT]

5:37

ἔστω **éstō**; *vb*: pres act **imperative** 3<sup>rd</sup> pers sg from εἶμι:

translations: **let . . . be** [NRSV89, ESV, NKJV, NRSVue; Albright & Mann, Filson], **let** [NAB, NGEINT], also **say** [NJB], **sea** [IAdNT], not translated in NIV11

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