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# THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

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The Greatest Sermon Ever Told



JANUARY 24, 2021 – AUGUST 1, 2021

# OUTLINE OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

- 1.) The Citizens of the Kingdom (5:3-16)
  - A.) Their Character & Blessings (5:3-12)
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    - (2) Mournfulness -> Comfort (5:4)
    - (3) Meekness -> Inheritance of the Earth (5:5)
    - (4) Hunger & Thirst After Righteousness -> Fulness (5:6)
    - (5) Merciful -> Mercy (5:7)
    - (6) Purity of Heart -> Seeing God (5:8)
    - (7) Peacemakers -> Called the Children of God (5:9)
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Until this point in Matthew, Jesus' words have been limited (4:17,19) and reference to His teachings general (4:23). It's in the Sermon on the Mount that we have our first account of Jesus' teaching in the gospel of Matthew. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 131)

## Political Context

Most Jews expected the Messiah to be a political leader that would deliver them from oppression and establish a new, powerful kingdom. In fact, when Jesus miraculously fed the multitude at the Sea of Galilee, they tried to take him by force and make Him their king (John 6:15).

When Pilate asked Jesus if He was the King of the Jews, he responded by saying, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 133)

The thrust of the Sermon on the Mount is that the message and work of the King are first and most importantly internal and not external, and spiritual and moral rather than physical and political. Here we find no politics or social reform. His concern is for what men are because what they are determines what they do. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 133)

In the politics of this world, the greatest are those who are proud, self-concerned, ambitious, yearning for success, merciless, pragmatic in heart, and cutthroat. In Jesus' kingdom the greatest are those who are humble, compassionate, meek, yearning for righteousness, merciful, pure in heart, and peacemakers. If you live like Jesus prescribes, you may not advance in this kingdom, but you will advance in His.

## Religious Context

There were four primary religious groups in Jesus' day:

- 1.) The Pharisees – traditionalists (devout & moralistic; very steeped in dos and donts)
- 2.) The Sadducees – liberals (only believed in the Torah; discounted the supernatural, angels, or resurrection from the dead)
- 3.) The Essenes – separatists (lived like monks separated from society)
- 4.) The Zealots – activists (believed right religion centered in radical political activism)

These groups mimic what we see in religion today.

Jesus contradicted all of them. At the center of his teaching was that true religion was not a matter of ritual, philosophy, location, or politics. It was a matter of having a right heart that is manifested in right relationships with God and man...loving God with all our heart, soul, and mind and our neighbor as ourselves (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 134)

1 Samuel 16:7 - But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.

Proverbs 4:23 - Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

Luke 11:39-40 - 39 And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. 40 Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also?

Matthew 22:36-40 - 36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law? 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

The standards of the Sermon on the Mount go far beyond those of Moses in the law, demanding not only righteous actions but righteous attitudes—not just that men do right but that they be right. No part of Scripture more clearly shows man's desperate situation without God. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 135)

Illustration – using the 10 commandments to show someone their destitute condition

- Have you ever hated someone?
- Have you ever lusted?
- Have you ever made a promise you didn't really intend to keep?
- Have you ever withheld forgiveness?
- Have you ever mistreated an enemy?
- Have you ever withheld help from the poor?
- Have you ever just gone through the motions in prayer?
- Etc. ETC.

The Old Testament law demonstrates man's need of salvation, and the New Testament message offers the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord had to begin with a proper presentation of the law, so the people would recognize their sin—then could come the offer of salvation. The Sermon on the Mount clarifies the reasons for the curse and shows that man has no righteousness that can survive the scrutiny of God. The new message offers blessing, and that is the Lord's opening offer...As will be developed in the next chapter, however, the blessedness Christ offers is not dependent on self-effort or self-righteousness, but on the new nature God gives. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 132)

The Sermon on the Mount is the masterful revelation from the great King, offering blessing instead of cursing to those who come on His terms to true righteousness. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 133)

In the sermon on the mount, Jesus sets the bar for the kingdom of heaven so high that it becomes overwhelmingly obvious that we can't meet the standard through our own righteousness.

- 1.) It shows the necessity of God's forgiveness.
- 2.) It shows the necessity of God's empowerment.
- 3.) For the Christian, who is empowered by God, it shows God's pattern for happiness and true success. Here we find the way of joy, peace, and contentment. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 135)

## **Outline**

### **Bundy**

1. The Citizens of the Kingdom (5:3-16)
  - a. Their Character & Blessings (beatitudes) (5:3-12)
  - b. Their Impact on the World (salt & light) (5:13-16)
2. The Righteousness of the Kingdom (5:17-7:12)
  - a. Jesus' Righteousness (5:17-20)
  - b. Murder (5:21-26)
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  - j. How to Pray (6:5-15)
  - k. How to Fast (6:16-18)
  - l. How to Lay up Treasure (6:19-24)



- m. How to Live for the Kingdom (6:25-34)
  - n. How to Judge (7:1-6)
  - o. How to Treat Others (7:7-12)
- 3. The Invitation to the Kingdom (7:13-27)
  - a. Enter into the narrow gate (7:13-14)
  - b. Avoid false teachers (7:15-20)
  - c. Avoid false profession (7:21-23)
  - d. Hear and obey Jesus' words (7:24-27)

#### Macarthur

- 1. Introduction (5:3-12)
- 2. Citizens of the Kingdom (5:13-16)
- 3. Righteousness of the Kingdom (5:17-7:12)
- 4. Exhortation to Enter the Kingdom (7:13-27)

#### Carson

- 1. The Culture of the Kingdom (5:3-16)
  - a. Its Norms (5:3-12)
  - b. Its Witness (5:13-16)
- 2. The Demands in Relation to the Old Testament (5:17-48)
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- 4. Kingdom Perspectives (6:19-34)
- 5. Balance and Perfection (7:1-12)
- 6. Conclusion (7:13-27)

#### Sermon

##### THE CITIZENS OF THE KINGDOM

1 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

And seeing the multitudes – who had probably come to see him for many reasons. He decided to go up into a mountain to make room for all.

He went up into a mountain – this mountain was one of the hills that slopes up gently from the north shore of the Sea of Galilee. For many centuries the traditional site has been called the mount of beatitudes. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 137)



(BiblePlaces.com)

And when he was set - Jesus arrived at his chosen location and "sat down". In his day, this was the traditional position for a teacher in a synagogue or school. (Carson D., 1978, p. 15)

His disciples came unto him – those who followed him arrived as well (Luke 6:17)

2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

1.) Their Character and Blessings

Jesus is going to lay out the characteristics and blessings of those who are the citizens of the kingdom.

A.) Poverty of Spirit

3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed – the Greek word is *Makarios*. It means supremely blest, fortunate, well off. (Bible Hub)

Illustration – Tim & #Blessed

The word beatitude is often used to describe this passage of Scripture. The definition of beatitude is supreme blessedness. (Dictionary.com)

Illustration – word study taken from Misreading Scripture through Western Eyes

The Greeks had a word for the feeling one has when one is happy. It is a feeling of contentment, when one knows one's place in the world and is satisfied with that place. If your life has been fortunate, you should feel makarios.

We use idioms in English to try to approximate Makarios because we don't really have a word for it. We'll say, "My life has really come together," or "I'm in a happy place," or "Life has been good to me." We are not really discussing the details of our life; we are trying to describe a feeling we have... a feeling of being happy, content, balanced, harmonious, and fortunate. Happy sounds trite, so we avoid it. Actually, we are makarios.

This is the word Jesus uses in the Sermon on the Mount. In the English language we don't really have a word for this. "Blessed" or "happy" is as close as we can come, but that is what Jesus means when he talks of the blessedness (state of being happy, content, balanced, harmonious, and fortunate) of the citizens of the kingdom. (Richards & O'Brien, 2014, p. Ch. 3 13:30)

Throughout the course of the beatitudes, Jesus is going to describe the character of the citizens of the kingdom, and why they are Makarios/blessed.

- For instance, blessed are the poor in spirit. Why? For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- Blessed are they that mourn. Why? For they shall be comforted.

#### Blessed are the poor in spirit –

- Not in reference to poverty, lack of spiritual awareness, lack of courage, lack of the Holy Spirit
- In reference to humility before God
  - o Proverbs 16:19, Isaiah 57:15, Isaiah 66:2
- Poverty of spirit is the personal acknowledgment of spiritual bankruptcy. It is the conscious confession of unworth before God.
- To be poor in spirit is to see oneself as one really is: lost, hopeless, helpless. Apart from Jesus Christ every person is spiritually destitute, no matter what his education, wealth, social status, accomplishments, or religious knowledge. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 146)
  - o Illustration – the Pharisee & the tax collector (Luke 18:9-14)
    - Pharisee - God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.
    - Tax Collector - would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.
  - o No one can receive the kingdom until he realizes he is unworthy of the kingdom.
- At the very outset of the Sermon on the Mount, we learn that we do not have the spiritual resources to put any of the Sermon's precepts into practice. We cannot fulfill God's standards ourselves.

Yet we see that the poor in spirit are blessed.

Why are the poor in spirit Makarios? For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

#### For theirs is the kingdom of heaven –

- The great theme of these chapters is the Kingdom of Heaven aka the Kingdom of God. (c.f. Matt 19:23; Mark 10:23, etc.) (Carson D. , 1978, p. 11)
  - o In a more specific sense, the kingdom of heaven is the Davidic kingdom that will come to pass during the millennial reign. Although the kingdom is future, we can attain citizenship in the present.

- God has gladly chosen to give the kingdom to those who humbly come to Him in brokenness and trust Him (Luke 12:32)
- Two of the beatitudes promise the same reward.
  - o 5:3 - blessed are the poor in the spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven
  - o 5:10 - blessed are those which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven
  - o To begin and end with the same expression is a stylistic device called an "inclusion". This means that everything bracketed between the two can really be included under the one theme, in this case, the kingdom of heaven. That is why the beatitudes can be called collectively, "The Norms of the Kingdom". (Carson D. , 1978, p. 16)

Psalm 34:18 - The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

Psalm 51:17 - The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

Isaiah 57:15 - For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

Isaiah 61:1 - The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

Micah 6:8 - He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

James 2:5 - Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

## B.) Mournfulness

4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are they that mourn -

- Mournfulness can be understood as the emotional counterpart to poverty of spirit
- 2 Corinthians 7:10 - For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

- When we recognize how spiritually destitute we are, the natural response is godly sorrow...a godly sorrow that leads us to turn from our sin to God in faith.
- The world values pleasure. It has no place for mournfulness. The world laughs at sin. It does not grieve over it.
- This does not mean that the Christian is to be an Eeyore. Rather it means that on a personal level, the Christians grieves over personal sin.
  - Isaiah 6:5
  - Romans 7:24
- In a broader sense, it means that the Christian mourns at the state of the world (and doesn't just seek to pile on in condemnation). He mourns for the sins and blasphemies of his nation. He mourns for the erosion of the very concept of truth. He mourns over the greed, the cynicism, the lack of integrity. (Carson D. , 1978, pp. 17-18)

And we find that the mournful are blessed.

Why are the mournful Makarios/blessed?

For they shall be comforted –

- There is no comfort or joy that can compare with what God gives to those who mourn. These people exchange the sackcloth of mourning for a garment of praise, the ashes of grief for the oil of gladness.
  - Happiness does not come in the mourning itself. Rather it comes in what God does in response to it. He forgives, and his forgiveness brings comfort and happiness. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 158)
  - At the individual level, the mourner grieves over his sin, but he learns to trust Jesus as the one who has paid sin's ransom (Mark 10:45) (Matthew 1:21).
  - And as he weeps for other men, he finds to his delight that God is answering his prayers, very often even working through him to untangle sin's knots and provide others with new birth and new righteousness. But even this great comfort will be surpassed: one day in a new heaven and a new earth, the kingdom of God will be consummated, and God Himself shall wipe away all tears from the eyes of those who once mourned. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things will have passed away (Rev. 21:4). (Carson D. , 1978, p. 19)
- Those who laugh at sin, will one day mourn. Those who mourn over sin, will one day be comforted.

Isaiah 61:2-3 - To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

Luke 6:25 - Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.

Luke 16:25 - But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

2 Corinthians 7:9-10 - Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

Revelation 21:4 - And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

### C.) Meekness

5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

#### Blessed are the meek –

- The Jews expected the Messiah to be many things, but humble and meek were not two of them. Yet, that is how Jesus lived, and how He taught his followers to live. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 168)
- How does meekness differ from poverty of spirit? Poverty of spirit has to do with a person's assessment of himself, especially with respect to God, while meekness has more to do with his relationship with God and with men.
- Meekness is power completely surrendered to God's control. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 172)
- Meekness is a controlled desire to see other's interests advance ahead of one's own. (Carson D. , 1978, p. 20)
  - o Numbers 12:3; Matthew 11:28-30; 2 Corinthians 10:1; Galatians 5:22; Col. 3:12; 1 Peter 3:15; James 1:19-21
- Individually, each man tends to assume, without thinking, that he is at the center of the universe. Therefore, he relates poorly to the seven billion others who are laboring under the same delusion.

Thus, the meek are blessed.

Why are the meek Makarios/blessed?

#### For they shall inherit the earth –

- Psalm 37:11 - But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

- This is a devastating contradiction to the philosophical materialism so prevalent in our own day. It's not the greedy/wealthy that will inherit the earth, but rather, the meek. (Carson D. , 1978, p. 21)
  - o Illustration – you can have \$1 now, or you can have \$1 million in five minutes.
- One day God will completely reclaim His earthly domain, and those who have become His children through faith in His Son will rule that domain with Him. And the only ones who become His children and the subjects of His divine kingdom are those who are gentle, those who are meek, because they understand their unworthiness and sinfulness and cast themselves on the mercy of God. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 174)
- Fifty billion trillion years into eternity God's people will still be rejoicing that this beatitude is literally true as they rule and reign with him on the earth. (Carson D. , 1978, p. 21)

Psalm 22:26 - The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.

Isaiah 11:4 - But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

Isaiah 61:1 - The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

Galatians 5:23 - Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

James 1:21 - Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

1 Peter 3:4 - But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

Psalm 37:9 - For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.

Psalm 37:11 - But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

Psalm 37:22 - For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and they that be cursed of him shall be cut off.

Psalm 37:29 - The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.

Psalm 37:34 - Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.

Romans 4:13 - For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

#### D.) Hunger & Thirst for Righteousness



6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

It doesn't say those that are passively hungry and thirsty for righteousness.

It says those that actively hunger and thirst for righteousness.

#### Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness -

- Too many hunger for "material possessions" and not for righteousness
- Too many hunger for "spiritual experiences" and not for righteousness.
- The man marked by poverty of spirit, who grieves over sin personal and social, and approaches God and man with meekness, must also be characterized as hungry and thirsty for righteousness. He cannot get along without righteousness. It is as important to him as food and drink. (Carson D. , 1978, p. 21)
  - o Illustration - few of us have experienced true hunger or thirst
  - o A starving person has a single, all-consuming passion for food and water. Nothing else has the slightest attraction or appeal; nothing else can even get his attention. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 179)
    - Illustration – bible stories where parents contemplate eating their own children
    - Illustration – sleep deprivation may be a more common experience for us
- Righteousness - a pattern of life in conformity to God's will
- His delight is the Word of god, for where else is God's will to which he hungers to be conformed, so clearly set forth? (Carson D. , 1978, p. 22)
- Those who belong to the King hunger and thirst for the King's righteousness. They desire sin to be replaced with virtue and disobedience to be replaced by obedience. They are eager to serve the Word and will of God. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 179)

Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness are blessed.



Why are those that hunger and thirst for righteousness Makarios/blessed? Because they will be filled.

For they shall be filled –

- Matthew 6:33 – But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.
  - o Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will have their needs provides.
- The person who hungers and thirsts for righteousness is blessed by God and filled with righteousness.
  - o He hungers not to obey more rules, but to grow in conformity to God's will. (Carson D. , 1978, p. 23)

Psalms 42:1-2 - As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?

Amos 8:11-13 - Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it. In that day shall the fair virgins and young men faint for thirst.

Luke 6:25 - Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.

Psalms 65:4 - Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.

## **Invitation**

I trust that most of us are citizens of the kingdom. My question for you is, “Are you living like it?”

The humility and poverty of spirit that you had when you saw your need for a Savior, do you still have it? Or have you stumbled into pride and self reliance?

The mournfulness over your sin that had when you realized you were spiritually destitute, do you still have it? Or are you kind of numb to sin? Do you laugh at it?

The meekness towards others that flows from humility, that flows from understanding how unworthy I am...do you still have it? Or have you fallen prey to a me before you attitude?

The hunger and thirst for righteousness that came when you were first saved, do you still have that? Or are you content for merely a taste of it?

# MATTHEW 5:7-12

## Review

We're talking about the citizens of the kingdom of God. Jesus is referring to the kingdom of God on earth (a kingdom that Israel rejected) that he will establish when he returns at the second coming for the millennial reign. In that kingdom, God's promises to Israel will be fulfilled. That kingdom will then extend out into eternity. This kingdom is future, and yet as followers of Jesus Christ we can become citizens of that kingdom that we will one day be a part of it. (Sorenson, 2007, p. 5:3)

Jesus is talking about the character and blessings of the citizens of the kingdom.

Poverty of Spirit (spiritually destitute) -> Kingdom of Heaven

Mournfulness (mourn over sin) -> Comfort

Meek (strength under control) -> Inheritance of the Earth

Hunger & Thirst for Righteousness -> Fulness (material provision; fullness of righteousness)

## Sermon

The first four beatitudes deal primarily with inner principles, principles of the heart and mind. They are concerned with the way we see ourselves before God. The last four could be characterized as outward manifestations of those attitudes.

Poverty of spirit & recognition of need for mercy -> leads us to show mercy (vs 7)

Mournfulness over sin -> purity of heart (holiness) (vs 8)

Meek (under control) -> peacemakers (vs 9)

Hunger and thirst after righteousness -> persecuted for righteousness (vs 10)

(MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 187)

7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Poverty of Spirit (internal) -> Merciful (external) -> obtain mercy (blessing)

E.) Merciful

- Mercy was not a character trait of the proud, self righteous, and judgmental. In Jesus' day mercy, like love, was reserved for those who were merciful or loving to

you. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 187)

- Mercy and grace are frequently interchangeable, but where there is a distinction between the two, it appears that:
  - grace - a loving response when love is undeserved
  - mercy - a loving response prompted by the helplessness of the one in need
  - Grace answers the undeserving. Mercy answers the miserable. (Carson D. , 1978, pp. 23-24)
  - Illustration
    - Good Samaritan showed mercy when he bound up the wounds of the man who had been beaten and robbed
    - Good Samaritan showed grace when he took him to the nearest lodging and paid for his stay until he was well
- We are to be compassionate and gentle towards the miserable and helpless.
- Mercy is meeting people's needs. It is not simply feeling compassion but showing compassion, not only sympathizing but giving a helping hand. Mercy is giving food to the hungry, comfort to the bereaved, love to the rejected, forgiveness to the offender, companionship to the lonely. It is therefore one of the loveliest and noblest of all virtues. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 190)
- Illustration – mercy is not a cultural virtue in America due to our valuing of self sufficiency (Americans demeanor to the poor of other countries verse the poor of their own)
- Application – caring for the homeless and needy

#### Obtain Mercy

- Who is this referring to? Who do the merciful obtain mercy from?
  - Others? – it is not always true that you will obtain more mercy when you show mercy to others
  - God - If we show mercy to others, God will show even more abundant mercy to us. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 187)
- The Christian receives mercy from God at salvation -> the Christian shows mercy to others following salvation -> The Christian receives more mercy from God even

beyond what he already has (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 194)

8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Mournfulness over sin (internal) -> purity of heart (external) -> seeing God (blessing)

F.) Pure in heart

- External adherence to rules is not enough. In total contrast to the outward, superficial, and hypocritical religion of the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus said that it is in the inner man, in the core of his very being, that God requires purity. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 202)
- God's standard for holiness and purity in heart is not how you compare to others, but how you compare to Him (Matthew 5:48).
  - In Biblical imagery, the heart is the center of the entire personality.
    - Jeremiah 17:9 - The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?
    - Yet purity of heart is an indispensable prerequisite for fellowship with God (seeing God)
      - Psalm 24:3-4 - 3 Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? 4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.
      - Hebrews 12:14 - Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.
  - Purity of heart is only available through Jesus Christ.
  - We are justified and given a new nature/ a new heart. We are called to live in accordance with that new nature. One day in our glorified bodies, we will be perfectly holy.
- In holiness, we are preparing ourselves today for the coming of the kingdom in the future. (Carson D., 1978, p. 25)

See God

- Although this will not be ultimately true until the future (Revelation 22:3-4), yet it is also true even now.

- Intimate knowledge of and fellowship with God is reserved for the pure. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 207)
- Our perception of God and his ways, as well as our fellowship with him, depends on our purity of heart. What an incentive to purity! (Carson D. , 1978, pp. 25-26)
- Illustrations – vision problems (everyone in my family, but me has eye problems)
  - Inside our eyes, we have a natural lens. The lens bends (refracts) light rays that come into the eye to help us see. The lens should be clear. A cataract is when your eye's natural lens becomes cloudy. Proteins in your lens break down and cause things to look blurry, hazy, or less colorful.
  - Cataracts can make images appear dull or yellow.



- 
- Blurry or dim vision is a symptom of cataracts.



- 
- Cataracts can cause distortion or ghost images.



- 
- Sin is like cataracts. It blurs our vision. It distorts our view of God. We perceive him at times not as good and loving, but uncaring and distant.
- It is the pure in heart that see God. (Boyd, 2020)

9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Meekness (internal) -> Peacemaker (external) -> being called the children of God (blessing)

G.) The peacemakers

- God is the God of peace (Romans 15:33). Jesus is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). He makes peace between God and man by removing sin. He makes peace between man and man by bringing men into a right relationship with God.
- The peacemaker is:
  - At peace with God
  - Seeks to lead others to make peace with God
    - The Christian who shares his faith is, fundamentally, a peacemaker. (Isaiah 52:7; Romans 10:15) (Carson D. , 1978, p. 26)
  - Makes peace with others
    - Romans 12:18 - If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.
    - This is hard because peacemaking is a selfless endeavor, and our flesh wants no part in it.
    - Illustration – seeking to make peace with the Conde family
    - This doesn't mean that we compromise truth, accept sin, or change our beliefs. It means die to self, swallow our pride, and do whatever we can to pursue peace.
      - Disagreement does not have to mean division. In some cases, it should, as in the case with those who deny the faith or are living in open unrepentant sin.
      - Illustration - In our sin and hatred of God, He sent His Son to come and die in our place so that we might be reconciled to Him. If God was willing to go that far for us, we ought to be willing to bend over backwards to pursue peace with others.
    - We are to contend without being contentious, disagree without being disagreeable, confront without being abusive. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, pp. 214-216)
      - Peacemaking does not mean compromising truth, but it does mean having the right temperament.

#### Called the Children of God

- The peacemakers reward is that he will be called a child of God. Like Father, like son. The apple has not fallen far from the tree. (Carson D. , 1978, p. 27)
- Furthermore, as God's peacemakers we are not just called the children of God. We are His children. And we are promised the glorious blessing of eternal sonship in His

kingdom one day. We are not just children of God currently. We will be so for all of eternity, and we will reap the blessings of our inheritance as God's children in the kingdom to come. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 217)

10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Hunger and thirst after righteousness (internal) -> persecuted for righteousness sake (external) -> kingdom of heaven (blessing)

H.) The persecuted for righteousness sake

- Does not say persecuted because they are objectionable, crazy, or because they pursue some religio-political cause. They are persecuted because they are righteous. (Carson D. , 1978, p. 27)
- Those who faithfully live according to the first seven beatitudes are guaranteed at some point to experience the eighth. Citizens of the kingdom are persecuted people. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 219)
- 2 Timothy 3:12 - Yea and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution

The kingdom of heaven

- Being persecuted for righteousness sake is one of the greatest evidences that one is a child of God
- If the disciple of Jesus never experiences any persecution at all, it may be fairly asked where righteousness is being displayed in his life. (Carson D. , 1978, pp. 27-28)
- John 15:18-20 - 18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. 19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. 20 Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.



12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

This expansion of the eight beatitude affords four important insights

1. Jesus transitions from talking in the third person to talking directly to them in the second person (they to you). He's applying the truths to them specifically.
2. Persecution is explicitly broadened to include verbal insults and false accusations.
3. The phrase "because of righteousness" (5:10) is paralleled with "because of me" (5:11). This confirms that the righteous life that is in view is in imitation of Jesus.
4. Jesus tells us how to react when we are faced with persecution, insults, and false accusations. He commands us to rejoice and be glad when suffering under persecution of this type. (Carson D. , 1978, pp. 28-29)
  1. 1 Peter 4:12-14 - 12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: 13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. 14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.
  2. Why?
    1. Great rewards
    2. Great company

## **Invitation**

Are you living mercifully to others? Or have you forgotten how undeserving you were?

Are you pure in heart? Or has sin given you spiritual cataracts?

Are you a peacemaker? Or have you forgotten how far God was willing to go so that you could be at peace with Him?

Are you persecuted for righteousness sake? If not, how righteous are you really living?

# MATTHEW 5:13-16

## Review

We've been talking about the character and blessings of the citizens of the kingdom of God.

### Character Traits

- Poverty of spirit
- Mournfulness over sin
- Meekness (under control)
- Hunger and thirst for righteousness
- Merciful
- Purity of heart
- Peacemakers
- Persecuted

### Blessings

- Kingdom of heaven
- Comfort
- Inheritance of the earth
- Fulness
- Mercy
- Seeing God
- Called the children of God
- Kingdom of heaven

We've discussed their character. We've discussed their blessings. Now, we're going to look at their impact on the world.

## Sermon

### B.) Their Impact on the World

John 17:15-18 - 15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. 18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

- We are in the world
- But not of the world
- That we might have an impact on the world

These character traits of the kingdom, diligently practiced in a sinful world, make a major impact... In verses 13-16, Jesus develops two telling metaphors to picture how the citizens

of the kingdom impact a world that is so diametrically opposed to them. (Carson D. , 1978, p. 29)

Jesus was addressing the multitude on the hillside, but his teaching here is directed toward his disciples. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 237)

“Jesus, looking out over the multitudes of His day, saw the corruption, the disintegration of life at every point, its breakup, its spoliation; and, because of His love of the multitudes, He knew the thing that they needed most was salt in order that the corruption should be arrested. He saw them also wrapped in gloom, sitting in darkness, groping amid mists and fogs. He knew that they needed, above everything else,... light” (Morgan, 1929, p. 46)

Citizens of the kingdom that live in accordance with the character of the kingdom will impact this world in the following ways:

### 1.) As Salt

13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

Physical illustration with a spiritual application

- Physical illustration (salt)
    - o Positive solution to a negative problem
    - o Negative problem – the decay of food
      - Food decays quickly when you leave it out
      - Milk, meat (other than McDonalds)
- A photograph showing a McDonald's burger and a container of fries inside a glass cabinet. The food appears to be old and is being used as a visual metaphor for decay.
- Icelandic man kept McDonalds burger and fries in a glass cabinet for 10 years and the food showed no sign of decay.
  - Illustration – mac n cheese with curdled milk
  - o Positive solution – salt (it acts as a preservative; it holds back decay)
  - o Modern solution – refrigerator (it acts as a preservative; it holds back decay)
- Spiritual application
  - o Negative problem – the decay of the world
    - Left to itself the world gets worse and worse and worse and worse
  - o Positive solution – you (citizens of the kingdom)

- Citizens of the kingdom that live like they should hold back the sinful decay of a lost world

Ye are the salt of the earth - Christians that live like they should have the effect of delaying moral and spiritual putrefaction.

But if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted – If salt is sufficiently corrupted by say, sand, then salt can no longer be used as a preservative. The purpose of salt is to fight deterioration, and therefore, it must not itself deteriorate.

- If the salt stops preserving, you can't salt the salt.
- If the refrigerator stops working, you can't refrigerate the refrigerator

It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men - If the salt loses its saltiness, then what then? It may just as well be thrown away onto the streets (the garbage dump of the middle east) to be trodden under foot of men. (Carson D. , 1978, p. 30)

- If your salt no longer preserves, what do you do? You throw it away.
- If your refrigerator stops working, what do you do? You throw it away.

Application – are you living in such a way that you are holding back spiritual & moral decay in your neighborhood? Are you living out the character of the citizens of the kingdom? Or are you like a broken refrigerator that no longer serves its purpose and deserves to be thrown away?

## 2.) As Light

14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

## Physical illustration with a spiritual application

- Physical illustration (light)
  - Positive solution to a negative problem
  - Negative problem – darkness & its effects (losing your bearings, being unable to move, being lost in darkness, directionless)
    - Pitch black darkness is incapacitating.
    - Illustration – imagine spelunking by yourself and your light goes out

- We don't typically understand how terrifying and problematic darkness can be because there's light everywhere. In the ancient world, that was not so.
  - Positive solution – light (provides direction, helps lost people find their way)
  - Modern problem – it's hard to identify with the problem of darkness, but I think I we can all identify with the terror of being lost
    - Illustration – being in the middle of LA traffic during rush hour and my GPS froze and my phone died
      - Being in the middle of woods, and you have no signal
  - Modern solution – what is the modern solution to being lost? GPS.
    - When you are lost, there is nothing more beautiful than direction
- Spiritual application
  - Negative problem – the darkness of the world
    - The world is lost in darkness. They are directionless. They have completely lost their bearings.
  - Positive solution – you (citizens of the kingdom)
    - Citizens of the kingdom that live like they should are like the light that shines in the darkness and points lost people to God.

14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

Two physical sources of light mentioned: the light from a city set on a hill, and the light from a lamp set on a lampstand. (Carson D. , 1978, p. 30)

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid - When a city is nearby, perhaps a hundred miles away, the darkness is relieved. The light from the city is reflected off the clouds, and the night, once perfectly black, is no longer quite so desolate.

- When once we imagine a world without hundreds of watts of electric power at our instant disposal, we will understand how darkness can be a terror and a symbol of all that is evil.

Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house - Light is so important that it is ludicrous to think that anyone would want to extinguish the flickering flame from an olive oil lamp by smothering it. That burning wick may cast only a little light by modern standards; but if the alternative is pitch blackness, its light is wonderful, quite sufficient for everyone in the house. (Carson D. , 1978, p. 31)

- The darker the night, the brighter the light.

- Application – I love living in California. Why? Because it's dark.

Proverbs 4:18 - But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

John 12:36 - While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.

Ephesians 5:8-14 - For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

Exodus 25:37 - And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof: and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it.

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Application – are you living in such a way that you are shining as a light in the midst of the darkness? Are you living out the character of the citizens of the kingdom? Do lost people look at your life and see something so different that they want to know what you have found? Or is the way you live your life not even distinguishable from the way your lost neighbor lives his?

Application – what does it look like to be a preservative like salt? What does it look like to shine like a light?

- Through God's power to live in:
  - Poverty of spirit
  - Mournfulness over sin
  - Quiet and controlled strength
  - Hunger and thirst for righteousness
  - Mercy
  - Purity of heart
  - Peace
  - Persecution because of righteousness

The character, the blessings, and the impact of the citizens of the kingdom...

## **Invitation**

Are you living as salt? Are you shining as light?

# MATTHEW 5:17-20

## Sermon

### 1.) The Citizens of the Kingdom

Their character, their blessings, and their impact.

### 2.) The Righteousness of the Kingdom

It soon became obvious that Jesus fit none of the common molds of the religious leaders. He obviously had a high regard for the law, but at the same time He taught things completely contrary to the traditions. His teachings did not lower scriptural standards but upheld them in every way. He not only put God's standard at the height where it belonged but He also lived at that humanly impossible level. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 252)

In verse 20, Jesus begins to teach on the righteousness of the kingdom.

#### A.) Its Foundation: The Word of God

<sup>17</sup> Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

Think not that I am come to destroy the law - "Of primary concern to every faithful Jew seeking to evaluate Jesus was, 'What does He think of the law; what does He think of Moses and the prophets?'" (MacArthur, 1985, p. 251)

- Destroy – literally to obliterate; figuratively to render useless or nullify (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 253)
- The law –
  - What did the law refer to in Jesus' day?
  - Four different meaning of the law in Jesus' day
    - The ten commandments
    - The Pentateuch
    - The Old Testament
    - The rabbinical, scribal traditions – the thousands of detailed and external requirements that obscured the very Word of God that the traditions were supposed to interpret (most common usage)
      - Matthew 15:6 - ...Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.



- On the surface it seemed that the traditions made the law harder, but in reality they made it much easier, because observance was entirely external. Keeping the traditions demanded a great deal of effort, but it demanded no heart obedience and no faith in God. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, pp. 253-254)
  - Isaiah 29:13 - Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men
  - Illustration – Scripture says not to work on the Sabbath
    - They asked, “What does it mean to work?”
    - To work is to carry a burden
    - What is a burden?
      - Food = weight of a fig
      - Enough wine to mix in a goblet
      - Milk enough for one swallow
      - Honey enough to put on a wound
      - Oil enough to anoint a small member of the body
      - Water enough to moisten eyesalve
      - Paper enough to write a customs house notice
      - Ink enough to write two letters of the alphabet
      - Reed enough to make a pen
    - To carry anything more than those prescribed amounts on the Sabbath was to break the Law
    - To the strict orthodox Jew of Jesus’ day the Law was a plethora of extra Scriptural rules and regulations (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 254)

What is Jesus talking about when He says “the law”?

The law, or the prophets – the law and the prophets represent the Old Testament (see Matt. 7:12; 11:13; 22:40; Luke 16:16; John 1:45; Acts 13:15; 28:23). (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 252)

- When Jesus said, do not think that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets, his audience would have understood him to be referring to the Old Testament
- Application
  - We don't build our lives on tradition.
  - We don't build our lives on feelings.
  - We build our lives on the Word of God.
    - Our marriages
    - Our parenting
    - Illustration – Liz and I reading Christian audio books on marriage and parenting.
      - Meaning of Marriage
      - His Needs Her Needs
      - Parenting by the Book
      - Parenting – 14 Gospel Principles that Can Radically Change Your Family

## B.) Its Fulfillment: Jesus Christ

I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill –Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament law by keeping it perfectly and by being the fulfillment of what it promised and pointed to.

- when Jesus came the first time, He fulfilled the Jewish moral, judicial, and ceremonial law
- Fulfill –
  - Jesus fulfilled the moral law by His perfect righteousness.
  - Jesus fulfilled the judicial law when the very people that the judicial laws were meant to set apart as a holy people to Him, rejected Him and crucified Him on the cross. One day, He will redeem and restore Israel (Romans 9-11), but in the present age, God works in and through the church.
  - Jesus fulfilled the ceremonial law through His perfect sacrifice. The ceremonial laws ended because they were fulfilled. He is the fulfillment not only of the sacrificial system, but also of the feasts and holy days. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, pp. 256-257)
  - Jesus has fulfilled much of the Old Testament, and yet there are still prophecies and promises that have not yet come to fruition. What about those? Will they come to pass?

Luke 24:44 - And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

Romans 3:31 - Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

Romans 10:4 - For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Galatians 3:17-24 - And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

Matthew 3:15 - And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

Romans 8:4 - That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Hebrews 10:3-12 - But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

<sup>18</sup> 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.

For verily I say unto you – I really mean this...honest to goodness

Till heaven and earth pass – this marks the end of the world as we know it when God's final judgment will come to pass on the universe

2 Peter 3:10-13 - But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled –

- Jot – corresponds to the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet: yodh



○

(Jewish Museum

London)

- Tittle – accent mark that on a Hebrew letter that distinguishes one letter from another
  - A tittle distinguishes dalet (right) from resh (left). Resh is drawn with one stroke. Dalet is drawn with two. The tittle is the litter overhang that distinguishes them from each other.



○

(Got Questions)

- Not even the tiniest, seemingly most insignificant, part of God's Word will be removed or modified until all is accomplished. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 262)

- Till all be fulfilled – This is one of the strongest passages in the Scripture with respect to the inerrancy of the Scripture...that the Word of God is without error.
  - o Much of the Old Testament Scriptures have been fulfilled, and yet there are still prophecies and promises that have not yet come to fruition (restoration of Israel, the millennial kingdom, the second coming, etc.). It's only a matter of time until all is fulfilled.

Matthew 24:35 - Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Psalms 119:89-90 - For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven. Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth.

Isaiah 40:8 - The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

C.) Its Importance: it can't be understated.

<sup>19</sup> Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments – whoever disregards or annuls one of the least commandments of God's Word

And shall teach men so – This is even worse. Not only does he disregard a commandment, but he also teaches others to disregard it as well. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 270)

- Application – you may not teach in the church, but you teach those in your circle of influence.
  - Illustration – balance between boundaries and mentorship
- James 3:1 - My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

So, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven – in His kingdom, Jesus will hold those in lowest esteem who hold His Word in lowest esteem. They'll still be in the kingdom. They can't lose their salvation, but they can lose aspects of their reward. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, pp. 270-271)

But whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven – but for those who regard, obey, and teach others to obey even the smallest commands in the Word of God, they will be exalted in God's kingdom.

- Illustration
  - o In this world, we exalt those who are gifted and productive and unique. (Joel Olsteen, Steven Furtick, Paula White)

- In God's kingdom, He will exalt those who obey His word and teach others to do the same. (Dennis Chapman)

D.) Its Requirement: it can't be met

<sup>20</sup> For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

"It is the false teaching of salvation by self-effort that Jesus confronts head on in this verse and which all of Scripture from beginning to end contradicts." (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 275)

What Jesus says here is radical!

For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven – The purpose of God's law is to show that to be worthy of citizenship in His kingdom, more righteousness is required than anyone can possibly have or accomplish. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 276)

Illustration – except your righteousness exceed that of the pope, you can't go to heaven (what Jesus is saying to the Jews would kind of be like saying this to a Catholic)

Application – the only righteousness that is good enough to merit entrance into the kingdom is God's righteousness bestowed on those that come to Him in humility (poverty of spirit) and faith

I am not setting God's law aside. I will uphold it and strip it of all the man made traditions that have encrusted it. I will reestablish its importance. I will fulfill it, and I will remind people of its intended purpose from the beginning: that every mouth may be stopped and the whole world may be guilty before God. For it is only when we recognize that we are lost, that we can be found. It is only when we realize our spiritual bankruptcy that we can come to God in poverty of spirit and receive the forgiveness He bestows on those of faith. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, pp. 281-282)

## Invitation

The righteousness of the kingdom.

- Its foundation is the Word of God
  - You can't obey the Word if you don't know the Word.
  - You can't know the Word if you're not in the Word.
  - When's the last time you spend time alone with the Lord in His Word and in prayer? If the answer is not today, it's been too long.
- Its fulfillment is in Jesus Christ

- We praise Him for that, and we look forward in faith to His second coming when all will be fulfilled.
- Its importance can't be understated
  - In God's kingdom, Christ will exalt those who obey his word and teach others to do the same
  - What are you teaching those in your sphere of influence?
    - Your spouse, your kids, your friends
      - Are you mentoring them in the Word of God?
        - In what you say.
        - In what you do.
      - How?
        - Learn it.
        - Live it.
        - Teach it.
- Its requirement far surpasses our capacity
  - We can only be adequately righteous through faith in Jesus Christ.
  - And it is the Spirit of God within us that can empower to practically live holy lives as well.
  - Are you relying on yourself, or are you relying on the power of the Spirit each and every day?

# MATTHEW 5:21-26

## Review

### Citizens of the Kingdom

- Character
- Blessings
- Impact

### Righteousness of the Kingdom

- Foundation: the Word of God
- Fulfillment: Jesus Christ
- Importance: can't be overstated
- Requirement: exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees

In this passage, Jesus begins to develop the idea of what the righteousness that exceeds the scribes and Pharisees looks like. He is not challenging the Old Testament. He is challenging the scribes & Pharisees' interpretation of the Old Testament... (Caldwell, p. 63)

Contrary to the external, superficial, and hypocritical righteousness that typified the scribes and Pharisees, the righteousness God requires is first of all internal. If it does not exist in the heart, it does not exist at all. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 283)

Jeremiah 17:10 - I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

1 Kings 8:39 - Then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men;)

1 Chronicles 28:9 - And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.

Proverbs 16:2 - All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits. (the mind)

### Illustration –

- Western culture: Who I am is my mind. How I feel is my heart.
- Eastern culture: Who I am is my heart. How I feel is my gut (bowels).

Jesus gives six examples of how one's righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and pharisees to enter the kingdom of heaven.



“Ye have heard that it was said” ... “But I say unto you”

- Jesus is contrasting a correct understanding of the Old Testament with the rabbinical/tradition based interpretation of it.
- Vs. 21 & 22 (murder)
- Vs. 27 & 28 (adultery)
- Vs. 31 & 32 (divorce)
- Vs. 33 & 34 (oaths)
- Vs. 38 & 39 (retaliation)
- Vs. 43 & 44 (love)

You might think that you’ve hit the benchmark in these areas because of what you’ve been taught, but the real benchmark for righteous living is not here, it’s here here, and you fall short of it.

Illustration – the state of Judaism in the first century was similar to the state of the church in the 1500s

- 16th century Catholicism – most of the church had no access to the scriptures and services were all in Latin. When the priest spoke, the parishioners had no way of judging whether what he said was true or not. The Bible taught what the church said it taught. Over time, the Catholic church had developed a system of religion that departed further and further from Scripture.
  - The most significant contribution of the Protestant Reformation was giving people the Bible in their own language. People could begin to see how the traditions of the Catholic church didn’t line up with Scripture. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, pp. 285-286)
- 1st century Judaism
  - Most Jews spoke Aramaic and not Hebrew. Parts of the Old Testament were in Aramaic but most was in Hebrew. Greek translations of the Old Testament were used throughout the Roman empire, but these weren’t used or understood by most Jews in Palestine where Jesus ministered. Copies of the Scripture were bulky and expensive. When the Hebrew text was read and expounded in the synagogue services, most of the worshippers understood little of the text and had no means of judging the teaching. They respected the rabbis so they accepted what was taught. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 286)
    - Over time the rabbis had developed a system of religion that departed further and further from the Scripture.
    - Jesus is telling these first century Jews that their traditions are actually at odds with the Old Testament Scriptures.

**Sermon**

## 1.) Murder

### A.) The Rabbinical Tradition

21 Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time – the tradition passed down by the scribes and rabbis says...

Thou shalt not kill – Jesus is referencing the sixth commandment in Exodus 20:13. Thou shalt not kill was a prohibition on taking the life of another human being for personal reasons. The scribes and Pharisees had taught that to keep this commandment, one merely needed to refrain from the act of murder.

Exodus 20:13 – Thou shalt not kill

Genesis 9:5-6 - And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

Exodus 21:12-14 - He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death. And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee. But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die.

And whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment – those who commit murder physically are guilty of a civil crime and will be prosecuted in a human court. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 292)

That is the extent of what you have been taught about what murder is.

Application – if someone asked us, have you murdered anyone before, our answer would be a resounding “of course not”.

- Illustration – Lee Corse college football gameday picks “not so fast my friend”
- Jesus is saying “not so fast my friend”

### B.) The Scriptural Teaching

22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

But I say unto you, you're all murderers and deserving of judgment!

1) Murder isn't just a matter of the hands. It's a matter of the heart.

But I say unto you – He's not contradicting the Old Testament. He's contradicting the rabbinic tradition about the Old Testament.

That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause – whoever is angry with his brother (fellow man) in a sinful way.

- Righteous anger
  - Directed towards sin, spiritual, God oriented, very rare
- Sinful anger
  - Selfish, uncontrolled, vengeful, hateful, me oriented, very common
  - This kind of anger is murder committed in the heart.
    - You might be an upstanding citizen on the outside, but a serial killer on the inside.

2.) Anger (murder in the heart) makes us guilty before God

Shall be in danger of the judgment – This is the same phrase used to describe the state of one who actually murdered someone with his hands.

- Jesus declared that a person guilty of anger is guilty of murder and deserves a murderer's punishment. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 292)
  - The idea of not hating your brother in your heart is a Scriptural teaching.
  - Leviticus 19:17-18 - 17 Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. 18 Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord
  - Psalm 37:8 - Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.
  - Matthew 18:21 - Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?
  - 1 John 3:15 – whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer...
  - Application – I doubt any of us have physically murdered anyone before, but all of us have had selfish anger towards someone before. We may not have murdered them out there, but we have murdered them in here, and you know what understanding that brings: conviction.
    - The standard of the rabbinic tradition would have brought about pride in the hearts of the hearers.
    - The standard of the Scripture that Jesus taught would have brought conviction.
    - Jesus' main point is that even the best of people in their hearts are sinful and so are in the same boat with the worst of people in their guilt before God. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 293)

and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council – Raca was a four letter word. It was a word of arrogant contempt and slander.

- One could consider it the equivalent of calling someone a four letter word.
- Brainless idiot, worthless fellow, silly fool, etc.
  - Application – “I don’t talk to people that way” How about your wife, your kids, your siblings?
- David describes slanderers as those who “have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adder’s poison is under their lips” (Psalm 140:3)
- Those who said this were slanderers. They cut people down in contempt and anger.
- To slander a creature made in God’s image is to slander the One who created that person...and guess what it is indicative of? Murder in the first degree. We have killed that person in our heart (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 295)
- The one who did such an act was guilty before the Supreme Court (the council of the Sanhedrin) where the most egregious offenses were to be tried

And whosoever shall say, Thou Fool, shall be in danger of Hell fire – to call someone a fool was to accuse them of being godless and stupid

- Is this an off limits word? The Bible throughout uses the term fool.
- Jesus’ warning here is against slanderously calling a person a fool out of anger and hatred. Doing so is indicative of murder in the heart, and to be guilty of murder is to be deserving of the eternal punishment of fiery hell. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, pp. 295-296)

Proverbs 18:6 - A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes.

Jeremiah 17:11 - As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.

### 3.) Anger (murder in the heart) affects our relationship with God

23 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

You can’t be right with God if you’re not right with man.

Therefore – connects this thought back to Jesus’ previous statement on anger

if thou bring thy gift to the altar – if you come to bring a sacrifice to God in worship at the altar in the court of the temple (Barnes, 1834)

And there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee – standing in front of the altar with the priest, you remember that your brother has something against you (unresolved conflict)

Deuteronomy 16:16-17 - Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty: Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee.

1 Samuel 15:22 - And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

Isaiah 1:10-17 - Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

Leviticus 6:2-6 - If a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the LORD, and lie unto his neighbour in that which was delivered him to keep, or in fellowship, or in a thing taken away by violence, or hath deceived his neighbour; Or have found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsely; in any of all these that a man doeth, sinning therein: Then it shall be, because he hath sinned, and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the lost thing which he found, Or all that about which he hath sworn falsely; he shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his trespass offering. And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the LORD, a ram without blemish out of the flock, with thy estimation, for a trespass offering, unto the priest:

24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way – drop everything, leave the priest, the animal, and the altar (this would have been very embarrassing)

First be reconciled to thy brother – confess, repent, acknowledge the hurt you’ve caused, and ask forgiveness. If you’ve wronged him financially or in some other way, make restitution as necessary.

and then come and offer thy gift – run back to the temple, apologize to the priest, and offer your gift

- Application – if you come to church to worship God, you’re getting ready to shake my hand in front of the church, and you remember that you have offended a brother (or your wife) in some way (anger, mean words, a fight), leave me hanging, leave the service, go to the car, and drive away. Go find your brother, confess your wrongdoing, acknowledge the impact it had on him, and ask for his forgiveness. Then, get back in your car, speed back to church, give your offering, and catch the end of the service.

Why? Sin and anger affect our relationship with God.

Isaiah 59:2 - 2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

You can’t be wrong with man and right with God.

4.) Anger (murder in the heart) should be resolved quickly

25 Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

26 Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

Verses 25 & 26 are an illustration that Jesus uses to emphasize the importance of reconciling quickly when we have wronged someone. In first century culture, a person could be imprisoned for not paying off a debt if they took too long making restitution. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 298)

This illustration is a picture of sin against another person. Such sin must be resolved to avoid having to face a sentence from the divine Judge.

(MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 298)

Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him – today is the day of reconciliation! The offended party could bring the accused with him to face the judge. On the way to the trial, the guilty part could reconcile and reach some sort of an agreement with the offended one before they arrived. Once the trial had begun, it was too late though. (Barnes, 1834)

Lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge – lest the one you have offended bring you before the judge and it's too late

And the judge deliver thee to the officer – having found you guilty, the judge delivers you to the officer of the court

And thou be cast into prison – having received instruction to do so, the officer of the court casts you into prison

Proverbs 6:1-5 - My son, if thou be surety for thy friend, if thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger, Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the words of thy mouth. Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself, when thou art come into the hand of thy friend; go, humble thyself, and make sure thy friend. Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids. Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of the hunter, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler.

Proverbs 25:8 - Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame.

Job 22:21 - Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee.

Verily I say unto thee – honest to goodness

Thou shalt by no means come out thence – you will not be freed from prison

Till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing – the smallest Roman copper coin in circulation (a quadrans) (Bible Hub). Until you have paid the very last cent.

When you have sinned against someone, make restitution as soon as you possibly can. For if you don't there is another party that you will have to face, a judge, that will hand down justice and judgment and you will have to pay for what you have done.

## Invitation

Rabbinic tradition set the bar for murder here...and it made people feel good

Jesus sets the bar for murder here...and it should make us feel convicted.

How's your heart? How do you treat people on the inside? It matters. That's a terrifying thought.

Murder:

It's not just a matter of the hands, but of the heart.

I'm sure none of us have murdered someone physically, but are you a serial killer in here? Do you have a real problem? Is your life marked by compassion, meekness, and self control, or are you consumed with anger?

What do I do?

- Recognize it (catch yourself)
- Repent of it
- Replace it (Matthew 5:44)
  - o Prayer
  - o Action (love)
    - Our feelings follow our actions. That's why Jesus tells us to love our enemies. The more you do it, the more you'll actually care for them.



# MATTHEW 5:27-30

## Review

### Citizens of the Kingdom

- Character
- Blessings
- Impact

### Righteousness of the Kingdom

- Foundation: the Word of God
- Fulfillment: Jesus Christ
- Importance: can't be overstated
- Requirement: exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees

Jesus gives six examples of how one's righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and pharisees to enter the kingdom of heaven.

#### 1. Murder

- a. Murder isn't just a matter of the hands. It's a matter of the heart.
- b. Anger (murder in the heart) makes us guilty before God
- c. Anger (murder in the heart) affects our relationship with God
- d. Anger (murder in the heart) should be resolved quickly

## Sermon

### 2.) Adultery

#### A.) The Rabbinical Tradition

27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

Exodus 20:14 - Thou shalt not commit adultery.

The sixth commandment protects the sanctity of life, and the seventh commandment protects the sanctity of marriage. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 299)

Adultery – physical intimacy outside the confines of the boundary of marriage

- In strict terms, when one or both of the parties is married.
- That Jesus is speaking to purity in a broader sense (though adultery is his point here) seems clear from the fact that both *everyone* and *woman* are comprehensive terms that could also apply to the unmarried (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 302)

In the Old Testament, adultery was punished by death.

- Leviticus 20:10 - And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

You have heard and been taught that bar is here. Just don't commit the act. But I'm telling you, it's much higher than you think.

Application – Christians play this game with adultery

- I would never cross that line with a coworker or a friend's spouse
  - But I'll text her
  - I'll flirt with him
  - I'll think about her
  - I'll open up to him emotionally
  - But Pastor I would never cross that line
  - You know what Jesus is saying, "You've been taught the line's here, but it's not. It's here."

Deuteronomy 22:22-24 - If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel. If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you.

Proverbs 6:32 - But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul.

## B.) The Scriptural Teaching

1.) Adultery isn't just a matter of deed, but desire

28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Anger and lust are two of the most dangerous impulses that we can allow to influence our lives. The more we give into them, the less we control them and the

more they control us. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 300)

- Illustration: this is what the world preaches – if it feels good, do it. Let your desires control you.

But I say unto you – Jesus is placing his own authority above that of the rabbinic tradition (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 302)

That whosoever looketh on a woman – continuous process of looking; intentional lingering (not referring to a glance)

to lust after her – this is referring to the purpose of looking on the woman: to lust after her; to satisfy a sinful desire; looking at a man or a woman as an object, not a person

The mental consumption of a person is a violation of the image of God in each of us.

Illustration – this is not a prohibition on looking at someone of the opposite sex

- Application – there's all sorts of venues in which you can do this
  - The movie you watch
  - The places you go
  - The sites on your phone
  - The mental images in your mind

Hath committed adultery already with her in his heart – lusting after another in your mind does not lead you to commit adultery with them in your mind. It means that you already have. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 303)

- Illustration – David and Bathsheba
  - His sin was not seeing her. His sin was that he did not look away.
  - He did not control his desires. He was controlled by his desires.
  - Long before he had committed adultery with her physically, he had done so mentally...he had done so in his heart.
- Illustration – Job
  - Job 31:1, 7-8 - I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid? 7 If my step hath turned out of the way, and mine heart walked after mine eyes, and if any blot hath cleaved to mine hands; 8 Then let me sow, and let another eat; yea, let my offspring be rooted out.
    - Job knew that sin begins in the heart and that he was just as deserving of God's punishment for looking at a woman lustfully as for committing adultery with her. That's why he made a covenant with his eyes. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 303)

- He said, “Hey, if I’ve broken that covenant, if I’ve lost my integrity, then God may others eat the crops that I have planted and may all that I have planted be uprooted.”

## Lust

- Lust is done in isolation and is devoid of relationship.
- Lust is secretive.
- Lust is devoid of intimacy.
- Lust is victimizing.
- Lust ends in despair.
- Lust is used to escape pain and problems

The impure thought life is the life of a thief. You’re stealing images that aren’t yours.

Sinful thoughts and pornography shape and rewire us in such a way that we become unable to see women as we should.

As men fall deeper into the mental habit of fixating on these images, the exposure to them creates neural pathways. With every erotic image viewed this pathway widens and becomes an automatic pathway through which interactions with women are routed.

When engaging in lust, the brain physically reacts in the same way that it does when one is actually engaging in the act of physical intimacy.

Adultery isn’t just a matter of deed, but desire. This is taught in the Old Testament.

Exodus 20:17 - Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

2 Samuel 11:2 - And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon.

Proverbs 6:25 - Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids.

Romans 7:7-8 - What shall we say then? is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.

2.) Adultery (lust) should be dealt with swiftly and radically

29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee...and if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee – the phrase offend thee literally means to cause to fall

- It was often used of the bait stick that springs the trap when an animal touches it.
- Anything that morally or spiritually traps us, that causes to fall into sin or to stay in sin, should be eliminated quickly and totally. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 304)
  - Application
    - What we watch
    - What we read
    - Where we go
    - What we think
    - Who we are around
    - What we allow into our heart
  - Why?

for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. – it is better cut off those things from your life and enter into the kingdom, then it is to keep those things in your life and be cut off from God's kingdom in Hell.

I've been with my spouse for almost 15 years. In those years, I've never been with anyone but the mother of my son. But that's not because I am an especially good and true person. In fact, I am wholly in possession of an unimaginably filthy and mongrel mind. But I am also a dude who believes in guard-rails, as a buddy of mine once put it. I don't believe in getting "in the moment" and then exercising will-power. I believe in avoiding "the moment." (Ta-Nehisis Coates, "Violence and the Social Compact," Atlantic, December 20, 2012.) (180)

What's the solution to lust? Cut it off.

For overcoming some addictions, the addictive source can be gradually reduced. For others, the best method is cold turkey. What works best with lust? Cold turkey. By starving your eyes and your mind of all things sensual outside of marriage.

How?

Practical helps:

Cut it off with confession

- Confess it to God
- 1 John 1:9 – If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- You can't fix a problem that you're not willing to admit is there.
- Psalm 51:1-12 - Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. <sup>2</sup> Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. <sup>3</sup> For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. <sup>4</sup> Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. <sup>5</sup> Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. <sup>6</sup> Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. <sup>7</sup> Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. <sup>8</sup> Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. <sup>9</sup> Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. <sup>10</sup> Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. <sup>11</sup> Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. <sup>12</sup> Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.

Cut it off with accountability

- This is where many fall short
- James 5:16 - Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.
- Galatians 6:1-2 - Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. <sup>2</sup> Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

- The individual you choose to disclose your problem with should be mature, supportive, discrete, compassionate, and emotionally resilient.

#### Cut it off scripturally

- That's why we recommend a single "attack verse," and it better be quick. We suggest the opening line of Job 31: I have made a covenant with my eyes.
- Your shield—a protective verse that you can reflect on and draw strength from even when you aren't in the direct heat of battle—may be even more important than your sword, because it places temptation out of earshot. We suggest selecting this verse as your shield: 18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. 19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. (1 Corinthians 6: 18-20)

#### Cut it off physically

- Proverbs 4:23 - Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.
- 2 Timothy 2:22 – flee youthful lusts
- Setting up defense perimeters around your eyes.
  - Where, when, and how am I tempted? Be radical. Cut off access.
    - Illustration – until addicts are better, they should avoid places of temptation
  - Movies you watch.
    - Any video unsuitable for the kids is probably unsuitable for adults. With this rule in place, sensual movies have never been a problem in our home.
  - Music you listen to.
  - Places you go.
  - People you're around.
  - Your tv.
  - Your phone.
- Learning to bounce your eyes.
  - You can win this battle by training your eyes to "bounce" away from sights of pretty women and sensual images. If you "bounce your eyes" for six weeks, you can win this war. Let's repeat that, for emphasis: When your eyes bounce toward a woman, they must bounce away immediately.

- Illustration – walking around with a rubber band on your hand and snapping yourself every time you have a thought or linger looking at something

#### Cut it off mentally

- 2 Corinthians 10:5 - Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;
- Once you've learned to bounce your eyes, it's time to learn to bounce your mind. It's the same process, but just mental.
- Philippians 4:8 - Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.
- Colossians 3:16 - Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.
- When we stop thinking wrong thoughts and we replace it with pure thoughts, with scriptural thoughts, you know what happens? We renew our minds.



# MATTHEW 5:31-32

## Citizens of the Kingdom

- Character
- Blessings
- Impact

## Righteousness of the Kingdom

- Foundation: the Word of God
- Fulfillment: Jesus Christ
- Importance: can't be overstated
- Requirement: exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees

Jesus gives six examples of how one's righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and pharisees to enter the kingdom of heaven.

### 2. Murder

- a. Murder isn't just a matter of the hands. It's a matter of the heart.
- b. Anger (murder in the heart) makes us guilty before God
- c. Anger (murder in the heart) affects our relationship with God
- d. Anger (murder in the heart) should be resolved quickly

### 3. Adultery

- a. Adultery isn't just a matter of deed, but desire.
- b. Lust (adultery in the heart) should be dealt with swiftly and radically.

### 4. Marriage & Divorce

My intention this evening is not to brow beat people over the head for what they have done in the past. The past is the past. You can't change it.

My heart is for you to understand the Biblical teaching on this topic so that it will affect how you approach marriage in the present and in the future.

- For those who are single: I want you to grasp the seriousness of Jesus' teaching on marriage
- For those who are married: Maintain your life long commitment to your spouse
- For those who have been remarried: Maintain your life long commitment to your spouse

None of us can change the past, but all of us can control what we do in the future.

#### 4 views on divorce & remarriage

- Divorce and remarriage are permitted under no circumstances
- Divorce and remarriage are permitted under any circumstances
- Divorce is permitted under certain circumstances, but never remarriage
- Divorce and remarriage are permitted under certain circumstances (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 308)

Of course there is only one correct view, and Jesus teaches it in this passage. He corrects the view that divorce and remarriage are permitted under any circumstances, and He describes one circumstance in which divorce and remarriage is permitted (though not recommended or commanded)

#### 1.) The Rabbinical Tradition

31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

In Jesus' day the dominant rabbinic position on divorce, and by extension on remarriage, was the most liberal of the four views mentioned above: permissibility on any grounds.

- The only requirement was giving a "writing/certificate of divorcement"
- By that period of Jewish history, divorce had become so easy that a man could dismiss his wife for such trivial things as burning his meal or embarrassing him in front of his friends. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 309)

The rabbinic justification for such easy divorce was based on wrong interpretation of Deuteronomy 24:1-4, the Bible's first mention of a "certificate of divorce"

Deuteronomy 24:1-4 - When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

- The basic criteria was uncleanness, which has to do with indecency, some shameful thing. This would not have been in reference to adultery because the penalty for adultery was death in Israel.
- Verses 1-3 are a series of conditional clauses that culminate in a prohibition. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 310) Moses only gave one command in this passage, and it's in verse number 4. All of the verbs in this passage are in the same tense, except for the one in verse 4. The gist of what this passage was meant to communicate was as follows:
  - If a man marries a woman and because of uncleanness wants to divorce her, and if he does so and gives her a bill of divorcement, and if she remarries, and if that second husband divorces her or dies, her former husband is not permitted to remarry her.
  - The only commandment is that the divorced wife could not return to her first husband if she was put away by her second husband. Moses did not command divorce in this passage. (Wiersbe, 2007)
- God tolerated divorce in the Old Testament. It was never His perfect or final will. However, under the Mosaic Covenant, it was tolerated because of how rampant it was and how hard and sinful Israel's hearts were.
  - Nevertheless, first century Jews mistook God's toleration of divorce as approval of divorce. (Sorenson, 2007)
  - Deuteronomy 24 neither commands nor condones divorce. It simply recognizes it as a reality, as do other Old Testament passages, and it puts restrictions on it.
  - Far from encouraging divorce, most references to divorce in the Old Testament put restrictions on it. The Old Testament put restrictions on a rampant practice that was tolerated for a time because of Israel's extreme sinfulness. (Deuteronomy 22:13-19; 22:28-29; 24:1-4; Exodus 21:11)
    - Deut. 22:13-19 – if a husband falsely accuses his wife of fornication, and he's wrong, he's never permitted to divorce her.
    - Deut. 22:28-29 – if a young man has relations with a young woman outside of marriage, and it's discovered, he must marry her, and he's never permitted to divorce her
    - Deut. 24:1-4 – if a husband divorces his wife, and she marries another man, he's never permitted to marry her again

- Exodus 21:11 – In the instance of a wife whose husband refused to fulfil his responsibilities to her, rather than being left destitute, but still in legal bondage to her covenant breaking husband, she could be set free, presumably to find another man who would take proper care of her.
- Once again, each of these passages in the Old Testament put restrictions on a rampant practice that was tolerated for a time because of Israel's extreme sinfulness.
- Divorce like polygamy and even slavery were ever present realities in ancient near east cultures. What God did often in the Old Testament law was put restrictions on evils that existed.

If that's the case, what was and is God's ultimate design for marriage going back into the Old Testament.

Genesis 2:24 - Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

- From the beginning, God intended monogamous, life-long marriage to be the only pattern of union between men and women.
- Cleave carries the idea of firm, permanent attachment like in the gluing/welding of items together. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 311)

Exodus 20:14 - Thou shalt not commit adultery.

- The act of adultery was prohibited

Exodus 20:17 -Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

- The act of desiring one's neighbor's wife was egregious and prohibited

The seriousness with which God takes marriage is seen in the penalty for adultery. All physical intimacy outside of marriage is sinful and defiling, but any sinful physical intimacy that involved married persons was punishable by death. (Leviticus 20:10-14; Deut. 22:22) (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 312)

Malachi 2:13-16 – And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand. Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.

- In this particular situation, the men of Judah appear to be divorcing their Israelite wives to marry younger pagan women. In doing so they invoke God's wrath as their wrongful divorce was an assault on God's lordship and on the innocent.
- Divorce breaks a covenant made before God (vs. 14)
  - Malachi 2:14 - Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.
  - A willful breach of the marriage covenant is a sin not just against one's spouse, but against God, who serves as the enforcer of the covenant. Thus, a covenant breaker invites his wrath.
- Divorce harms the innocent spouse (vs. 15-16)
  - The treachery described in Malachi 2:14-16 is both treachery against God and treachery against a faithful wife. In this case, she gave her best years to her husband, cared for his needs, and bore him children. Yet, he decided to cast aside the wife of his youth for a younger woman who offers the prospect of greater sensual delights. To add insult to injury, he is marrying a pagan girl (Mal. 2:11) in defiance of God's law (Deut. 7:3). (Newheiser, 2017, pp. 184-185)

God's design for marriage is for it to be between one man and one woman for one lifetime.

Deuteronomy 24 neither commands nor condones divorce. It simply recognizes it as a reality, as do other Old Testament passages and places a restriction on it.

However, first century Jews mistook God's toleration of divorce as approval of divorce. (Sorenson, 2007) It led to the idea that divorce for just about any cause was acceptable.

## 2.) The Scriptural Teaching

32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

### **Widespread Agreement on Issues of Marriage**

1. Ordinarily the marriage covenant ends with the death of one spouse, at which time the surviving spouse is free to remarry (Rom. 7:2-3; 1 Cor. 7:39; 1 Tim. 5:14).
1. 1 Cor. 7:39 - The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.
2. Outside of death, fornication (Matthew 5:32) and abandonment by an unbelieving spouse (1 Cor. 7:12-15) are the only instances in which divorce and remarriage are even a possibility for a Christian.
3. Those who have divorced without proper biblical grounds sin if they remarry someone else (Matthew 5:32). (Newheiser, 2017, pp. 170-171)

32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

That whosoever shall put away his wife – Some question whether or not this is referring to the breaking off an engagement, rather than a divorce. However, the passage Jesus is referencing back to in Deut. 24 dealt with a married couple and divorce. In verse 32, it is abundantly clear from the terms he is using (wife, marry, adultery) that he is talking about a husband and wife divorcing.

- When used in the context of a man and wife, the common meaning was always divorce, not merely separation or the breaking of an engagement (c.f. Matthew 19:3, 7-9; Mark 10:2,4, 11-12; Luke 16:18)
- The background of the passage is Deuteronomy 24, which does not deal with broken betrothal but with broken marriage. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 315)

Saving for the cause of fornication – Jesus thus affirms one sin which so seriously violates the one flesh principle underlying marriage that it gives the innocent party grounds to divorce the adulterer: fornication

porneia is a broad term for sexual misconduct that included adultery (1 Corinthians 10:8; Revelation 2:14; 1 Cor. 5:1)

- In the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament), porneia is sometimes used interchangeably with the more specific word for divorce, moichaō (Jer. 3:8–10; Hos. 2:2–5).
- The context of this passage makes it clear that it's being used in the broader sense, that would have included adultery.
- Nevertheless, even in the case of the misconduct of adultery, Jesus is not commanding or even recommending divorce. Rather it is the only grounds that God tolerates.
- In fact, in the Old Testament, adultery or other kinds of sexual misconduct would be punished by death thus ending the marriage and freeing the innocent spouse to remarry. (Lev. 20:10)
  - Romans 7:3 - So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.
  - So in the Old Testament, in the case of spousal faithfulness, the guilty party would have been dead, thus automatically freeing the innocent party to remarry.

Causeth her to commit adultery - ...Jesus said that every time a man without proper cause turned his wife loose to remarry (as it was assumed she would), he forced her into adultery, which made him guilty also. In addition, the man who married the former wife and the woman who married the former husband were likewise guilty of adultery. The result was multiplied adultery. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 314)

and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery – a man or woman who has no right to divorce has no right to remarry. To do so initiates a whole chain of adultery. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 315)

All of this ties back into Jesus' teaching on adultery.

- You thought the bar was here: just not committing the act
- But really the bar is here: if you lust, you've committed adultery in your heart
- Not only that, you have been using divorce as a way of being with another woman without committing adultery, by just getting a divorce. The ease of divorce made it possible to avoid open adultery. Only a little paperwork was required to legalize their lust.
  - You think you're clever. You think you're good that you've avoided adultery by divorcing your wife.
  - Jesus says, "unless you've done so for the cause of fornication", you have literally committed adultery in your remarriage and caused your former wife to do the same.

Once again, when it came to divorce, they thought the bar was here, but Jesus said, “The bar is here.”

## **Application**

What’s the takeaway from tonight?

- If you are single
  - You need to understand the seriousness with which God takes marriage
  - Outside of your salvation, marriage is the most serious commitment you’ll ever make in your life. It’s for life.
  - Illustration – talking with my brother about this
  - Make sure you’re ready for that commitment
- If you are married
  - You need to understand the seriousness with which God takes marriage
  - Your marriage is more important than your career. Your marriage is more important than your hobbies. Outside of Jesus, your marriage is more important than anything else in your life.
  - Treat it that way. Guard it. Protect it. Invest in it like your life depended on it.
- If you’ve made mistakes in the past
  - Don’t get discouraged. Don’t beat yourself up about it.
  - Have the heart of, “From this day forward, I’m going to be wholly committed to God’s design.”
  - Illustration – the woman at the well
    - She didn’t walk away from her encounter with Jesus discouraged about her past, but excited and determined about the future.



# MATTHEW 5:33-37

## Review

### Citizens of the Kingdom

- Character
- Blessings
- Impact

### Righteousness of the Kingdom

- Foundation: the Word of God
- Fulfillment: Jesus Christ
- Importance: can't be overstated
- Requirement: exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees

Jesus gives six examples of how one's righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and pharisees to enter the kingdom of heaven.

5. Murder
  - a. Murder isn't just a matter of the hands. It's a matter of the heart.
6. Adultery
  - a. Adultery isn't just a matter of deed, but desire.
  - b. Lust (adultery in the heart) should be dealt with swiftly and radically.
7. Marriage & Divorce
  - a. Divorce isn't permissible for any cause, but only in the case of fornication.
8. Oaths

### A.) The Rabbinical Tradition

Because of the extreme importance of truthful testimony to justice, perjury itself is a crime that can bring severe penalties. Even gangs of criminals and conspirators, who use lying and cheating as their stock-in-trade, demand the truth among themselves, because it is necessary to their own survival. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 320)

The misplaced emphasis in the rabbinical tradition was in limiting the honest oaths to vows to the Lord, to oaths made directly to Him or in His name. The keeping of those oaths was mandatory, whereas the keeping of others they made optional. People would swear by heaven, by the earth, by the Temple, by the hairs on their heads, and by any other thing they thought would impress those they wanted to take advantage of. That kind of routine oath-making was usually lie-making; and it

was considered by those who practiced it to be perfectly acceptable as long as it was not in the name of the Lord. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 323)

Matthew 23:16-22 - Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.

- By what twisted logic, He asks, should that which is less valuable make an oath more binding?
  - Swearing by gold of the temple > swearing by the temple
  - Swearing by the offering on the altar > swearing by the altar
  - This is ridiculous
- But the greatest error in the system was not in its illogic but in its basic deceptiveness and dishonesty. As a matter of accepted policy, some oaths were used to undermine the very purpose they purportedly were meant to serve: the truth. In spite of the fact that an oath is given to reinforce and emphasize the truthfulness of a statement or the reliability of a promise, over the years an intricate system of duplicity had been devised that virtually promoted the use of oaths for deception.
- Jesus' point was that God is the Creator and Lord of everything and is the God of truth in everything. To carelessly and dishonestly call any part of His creation as witness to a false oath was to dishonor God Himself, whether or not His name was invoked. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 325)

33 Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

Forswear thyself – swear falsely, commit perjury (Bible Hub)

But shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths – if you make an oath to God, you need to keep what you have said

This teaching that whatever you swear to God must be kept is taken from passages such as Leviticus 19:12, Numbers 30:2, and Deuteronomy 23:21.

Leviticus 19:12 - And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD.

- This passage says not to swear falsely by God's names.
- This passage was interpreted to mean that although you couldn't swear falsely by God's name, you could swear falsely by other names.

Numbers 30:2 - If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.

- This passage says to keep your oaths to God.
- This passage was interpreted to mean that you had to keep your oaths to God, but you didn't have to keep your oaths to others.

Deuteronomy 23:21 - When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee.

- This passage says to keep your oaths to God
- This passage was interpreted to mean that it was a sin to break your oaths to God, but not a sin to break certain oaths to others.

You've been taught that the bar of honesty and oaths is keeping your word when it comes to oaths to God...and everything else is fair game for deception.

Exodus 20:7 - Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

Ecclesiastes 5:4-6 - When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands?

## B.) The Scriptural Teaching

34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:

35 Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.

- But I say unto you
  - You shouldn't be swearing by anything other than God (if you mean it, then put your money where your mouth is. Call on God as your witness, and invite his retribution if you're lying or break your oath)

- Don't swear by other things. it's not like any of those other things can take retribution on you if you break your oath.
- When you do swear by those other things and flippantly break your word, you think you're fine, but you're not. Because in swearing by the creation, you are in a sense swearing by God because He is the Creator and owner of everything.
- You have been told
  - You need to be truthful in what you swear to God
- But I say unto you
  - You need to be truthful in everything

Swear not at all – Some, such as The Society of Friends, interprets this as a ban on all oaths (including oaths to God). (Ellicott, 1905). I do not believe that is the case. I believe this a ban on trivial oaths to things in place of legitimate oaths to God. (Gill, 1811) Why do you think that is the case?

- The oaths Jesus specifically condemns were trivial oaths to things that first century Jews made for the purpose of deception.
- The Old Testament definitively approves of and teaches the value of making and keeping serious oaths to God.
  - Jesus in Matthew 5 said He did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it.
  - I do not believe that He is contradicting the Old Testament in this passage.
- In Hebrews 6:13-17, God's oath that He made to Abraham on His own name is mentioned in a positive light.
- Paul routinely calls on God as his witness in the New Testament.
  - Romans 1:9 - For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;
  - Romans 9:1 - I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,
  - 2 Cor. 1:23 - Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.
  - Philippians 1:8 - For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ
- This is not a prohibition on oaths to God, but a prohibition on trivial oaths to things for the purpose of deception.

James 5:12 - But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

Jesus gives us several illustrations of trivial oaths that should not be made deceptively.

Neither by heaven; for it is God's throne – when we swear with God as our witness, there is a purpose behind such an appeal. We are in a sense calling on God to bless our curse us in accordance with the truthfulness of what is said. (Ellicott, 1905)

- What purpose is there in swearing by things?
  - There really isn't any unless we believe that such an object has some sort of mystical power to bless or curse us.
- Not only that, but many believed that if they swore untruthfully by heaven, the earth, or Jerusalem, it wasn't a big deal. And Jesus was saying, "It is a big deal."
  - Why?
  - Heaven is God's throne.
    - Isaiah 66:1 - Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?
  - The Earth is God's footstool.
    - Psalms 99:5 - Exalt ye the LORD our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy.
  - Jerusalem is God's city.
    - 2 Chronicles 6:6 - But I have chosen Jerusalem, that my name might be there; and have chosen David to be over my people Israel.
  - Thus to use them lightly is therefore to profane the holy name they imply. (Ellicott, 1905)
    - Men do not guard themselves against perjury by such appeals.
    - Creation is God's domain. There is no place in that domain in which you can be untruthful and it not be a violation of His character.

36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

Appealing to heaven, earth, Jerusalem, and other such things was considered by most Jews to make their oaths less binding. Those were grand and great things, things that gave an aura of power, importance, and veracity to what was said or promised in their name. But because those things were far less than God, they made oaths given in their names far less binding than an oath made in His name. Still less binding would be an oath made merely by your head. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 324)

Nether shalt thou swear by thy head – This was a common oath. To swear by the head was the same as to swear by the life; or to say, I will forfeit my life if what I say is not true. (Barnes, 1834)

because thou canst not make one hair white or black – Just as is true of every other part of creation, God is the owner. Heaven is His throne. The earth is His footstool. Jerusalem is His city, and you are His child. To swear by God's property is to swear by God, and to swear falsely by yourself is just as wrong as swearing falsely with God as your witness.

- Not only that, you are powerless to enact retribution on such an oath. God is the one in control. You can't even change one single hair on your head. (Barnes, 1834)

Matthew 6:27 - Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

Luke 12:25 - And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?

If the oaths I make are to be serious and to the Lord, and if I am to refrain from deceptive oaths by things in every day conversation, then what should my every day conversation be like?

37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

God's absolute, unchanging standard is truth and sincerity in everything.  
(MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 325)

But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: – every single word you speak in the course of every day conversation ought to be authentically true and honest without need for qualification. In all common speech, a man's words should be as good as his oath. Yes should mean yes, and no should mean no, even though there be no oath to strengthen it. (Ellicott, 1905)

for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil – if this is not the case...if the truthfulness of your conversation is dependent on whether or not it is accompanied by an oath, the origin of that is not God, but evil.

2 Cor. 1:17-20 - When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea yea, and nay nay? But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

Colossians 4:6 - Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

Matthew 15:19 - For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

John 8:44 - Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Ephesians 4:25 - Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

Colossians 3:9 - Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds.

### **Invitation**

Are you an honest person?

Does your yes mean yes, and does your no mean no?

Do people have to ask you if you really mean what you say?

Do you swear lightly by things, or are your oaths serious and to God?

# Matthew 5:38-42

## REVIEW

Jesus has been talking about how one's righteousness must exceed that of the Pharisees and scribes to enter the kingdom of heaven. He gives six examples.

1. Murder
  - a. You think the bar is just not committing the act, but if you've hated someone in your heart, you're guilty and you fall short.
2. Adultery
  - a. You think the bar is just not committing the act, but if you've lusted after someone in your heart, you're guilty and you fall short.
3. Marriage & Divorce
  - a. You think the bar is just writing the bill of divorcement, but unless you've done so for the cause of fornication, you're practicing legalized adultery.
4. Oaths
  - a. You think the bar is truthfulness in what you swear to God, but the bar is truthfulness in everything you say.
5. Vengeance

## VENGEANCE

38 Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

Over the years, there has been widespread confusion and misinterpretation of this passage of Scripture (just like with the oaths passage we looked at the other week). Some have used this passage to claim that Christians should be pacifists and that serving in the military is immoral. In fact, the Russian writer Tolstoy based his novel *War and Peace* on this passage of Scripture. His main idea was that the elimination of police, military, government,



authority, etc. would bring about the perfect civilization. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 329)

Illustration – taking things out of context

- The Giants massacred the Angels on Friday. They out schemed them. They out muscled them. They destroyed their psyche. It was an outright massacre.
  - What am I talking about? A Baseball game. But if you ignored the context, you would arrive at a completely different conclusion.
- People do this all the time with the Bible.
  - Religious – mother of God cult
    - World Missionary Society Church of God
    - Galatians 4:26 - 26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.
      - They ignore verse 24 where it says “which things are an allegory”
    - Revelation 19:7 – they talk about the marriage of the lamb
      - They ignore the passages in the NT that talk about the church as the bride of Christ
  - Non Religious – atheist critique of Old Testament ethics
    - They’ve never studied Old Testament ethics a day in their life
    - They ignore both the Scriptural context and the cultural context

#### A.) The Rabbinical Tradition

38 Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

An Eye for and eye, and a tooth for a tooth – this instruction in the Old Testament was given as a principle/rule to the judges/authorities/congregation to regulate how sentencing would be handed down in civil matters. It meant that in legitimate judicial cases, the sentencing should not fall short of or exceed the severity of the crime committed. (Barnes, 1834) Essentially what the law said was, “In judicial sentencing, the punishments needs to match the crime!”

- The problem was that people took these rules/commands about civil sentencing and interpreted them as justification for vengeance and vigilante justice.
- Golden rule – do unto other as you would have them do unto you
- Rabbinical rule – do back to others what they did to you
  - This came from the misinterpretation of the pertinent Old Testament passages.

This phrase “eye for an eye; tooth for a tooth” is found in three Old Testament passages: Exodus 21:22-27, Leviticus 24:19-20, and Deut. 19:19 each addressing a different specific situation.

(1) A pregnant woman was struck and mischief came from it (Exodus 21:22-25)

Exodus 21:22-25 - If men strive, and hurt a woman with child (imagine two men fighting and a woman intervening and accidentally getting hurt in the process), so that her fruit depart from her (she has the baby), and yet no mischief follow (to the mother or the child): he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him; **and he shall pay as the judges determine**. And if any mischief follow (to the mother or the child) , then thou shalt give life for life, Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

- In this case of a man harming a pregnant woman, the official sentencing and retribution must fit the crime. (Sorenson, 2007) (Keil & Delitzsch, 1857-1878)
  - o This civil was meant to enact civil justice and prevent private vengeance. Yet, many Jews had taken this passage out of context and used it to justify private vengeance.

(2) Harm done to a neighbor (Leviticus 24:19-20)

Leviticus 24:19-20 - And if a man cause a blemish in his neighbour; as he hath done, so shall it be done to him; Breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth: as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him again.

- In this case of a man harming his neighbor, the official sentencing and retribution must fit the crime.

(3) A witness testifying falsely against another (Deut. 19:18-21)

Deuteronomy 19:18-21 - 18 **And the judges shall make diligent inquisition:** and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother; 19 Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you. 20 And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you. 21 And thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

- In this case of a man falsely testifying about his neighbor, the official sentencing and retribution must fit the crime.

These civil laws were actually a protection against private retaliation, vigilante justice (little Batmans popping up taking justice into their own hands), and the natural overreach that it brings.

Illustration – when someone hurts us, we don't want justice. We want vengeance. We have no impartiality, no sense of fairness. We want to hurt them worse than they

hurt us. This is why retaliation tends to escalate problems, instead of lowering the temperature.

- Me and my brothers growing up

Under no circumstances did the law give private citizens the right to take the law into their own hands and apply it as they saw fit. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 330)

However, instead of understanding this command in its proper judicial context, the Jews had extended this rule to private conduct. They took upon themselves the role of judge, jury, and executioner. So, for instance, if you have wronged me in any way, it is my right and moral obligation to enact vengeance on you. Why? Well, that's what the law says: an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

## B.) The Scriptural Teaching

But I say unto you, this law has nothing to do with private vengeance/retribution...and since this law was only given to regulate judicial sentencing, your private conduct should be governed by different commands. (Barnes, 1834)

In your private conduct, when you are offended, you should take whatever comes with a spirit of kindness, forgiveness, patience, and meekness, without taking vengeance into your own hands. (Sorenson, 2007)

39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

### That ye resist not evil –

- This is not a prohibition on resisting evil conduct in the world
  - o Jesus cleansed the temple (Matt. 21:12)
  - o We are told to resist the devil (James 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:9)
  - o We are to stand against Satan, the world, and his forces (Eph. 6:10-13)
  - o Paul opposed Peter (Gal. 2:11)
  - o Sin is to be removed from the congregation (1 Cor. 5:13)
  - o We are to be a purifying presence in the world that holds back moral decay (Matt. 5:13)
- This is not a prohibition against governmental action against evil
  - o Romans 13:4 - For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.
  - o 1 Peter 2:13-14 - 13 Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; 14 Or unto governors,

as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.

- This is a prohibition on taking personal vengeance against an evil person that has harmed us
  - o Romans 12:17-21 - Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

When Jesus says not to resist evil (don't take vengeance into your own hands), Jesus is appealing to the Old Testament teaching on personal conduct, relationships, and vengeance.

The Old Testament clearly state that individuals were not to take vengeance into their own hands.

Leviticus 19:18 - Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.

Deuteronomy 32:35 - To me belongeth vengeance and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.

Proverbs 20:22 - Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee.

Proverb 25:21 - If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink:

- Whoa! I didn't realize all of that was in the Old Testament. You'd be surprised how much of the New Testament is in the Old Testament. It's almost like you need both parts to understand the whole.

If we're not supposed to take vengeance, then how are we supposed to respond to others? Like Jesus did....in gentleness and generosity. He offers four practical illustrations of what this looks like.

(1) Illustration 1 – someone insults us

but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, – in Jewish culture, this was an attack on someone's dignity; it was incredibly demeaning (c.f. Matt. 26:67-68; Mark 14:65; John 18:22)

- Illustration – someone spitting in your face; someone cursing you out; someone demeaning you publicly
- Application – this is what they did to Jesus; Paul was slapped like this too
- Application – what do you naturally want to do? Respond in kind
  - o Illustration – quitting fantasy where you go off on your boss
  - o What has God called us to do? Bite your tongue.

turn to him the other also. – when we are insulted by someone, how are we to react?

- Turn the other cheek
  - o This is not a prohibition on self defense.
  - o This is a prohibition on responding to insults in kind.
- “Turning the other cheek symbolizes the nonavenging, nonretaliatory, humble, and gentle spirit that is to characterize kingdom citizens (cf. vv. 3, 5).” (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 333)
  - o Isaiah 50:6 - I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.
  - o That's weak!! – was Jesus weak?
  - o When someone insults us, we do not retaliate. We leave vengeance to God, knowing that one day we will rule and reign with God for eternity and that He will right all wrongs.

40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

(2) Illustration 2 – Someone rightfully sues us

And if any man will sue thee at the law – if a man sues you to collect a debt that you owe him; if someone comes to collect something that you owe them

and take away thy coat – and he takes your coat (shirt/undergarment) as collateral

Let him have thy cloak also – give him your cloak (coat/outer garment which also served as one's blanket at night) as well (c.f. Ex. 32:26-27)

- If a legal judgment is legitimately made against us, our response should not be anger and vengeance. Rather, it should be remorse and abundant generosity to show that we are not bitter against the one who has sued us. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 334)

Luke 6:29 - And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also.

1 Corinthians 6:7 - Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?

41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

(3) Illustration 3 – someone inconveniences us

Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile – Roman law permitted Roman soldiers to force a civilian to carry his gear for a Roman mile (about 1600 yards). This was both incredibly inconvenient and physically taxing on the private citizen.

- Illustration – Simon the Cyrene being compelled by the Roman soldiers to carry Jesus' cross (Matt. 27:32)
- Illustration – imagine that were you and you were voluntold to carry a soldiers gear for a mile
  - o Illustration – carrying a pack down the Grand Canyon

Go with him twain – in such an instance where we are forcibly inconvenienced, we must not react in bitterness, anger, or vengeance. Rather, we should go above and beyond in generosity and kindness. If we are legally required to go 1 mile, we should be willing to go two.

42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

(4) Illustration 4 – someone asks your for something

Give to him that asketh of thee – Such is the general rule in instances where someone has a genuine need, and they ask something from you and you have it. Give it to them. Don't get mad. Don't get bitter. Be generous.

“Sometimes to give a person what he wants but does not need is a disservice, doing him more harm than good.” There must be wisdom in different situations, but such an instance ought to be the exception, not the rule.  
(MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 335)

And from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away – this as well as giving, must be done in consistency with other duties, such as providing for your family.

But once again, if someone has a genuine need, we ought to have the heart to lend what is needed.

#### Illustration

- Joseph could have taken vengeance on his brothers, but he treated them with gentleness and generosity.
- David could have taken vengeance on Saul, but he treated him with gentleness and generosity.
- Jesus could have taken vengeance on us (the people He came to save, who killed him), but he treated us with gentleness and generosity.

Matthew 25:35-40 - For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Religion says, "When someone wrongs you, you have the right to make things even."

Jesus/Scripture says, "When someone wrongs you, you have the responsibility to be gentle and generous."

Religion says, "The bar for vengeance is here."

Jesus says, "There is no bar."

Psalms 37:21 - The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again: but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth.

Proverbs 3:27-28 - Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it. Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.

Proverbs 11:24-25 - There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.

Proverbs 19:17 - He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.

Romans 12:20 - Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

2 Corinthians 9:6-15 - But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;) Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God. For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men; And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you. Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.

1 Timothy 6:17-19 - Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

James 2:15-16 - If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

1 John 3:16-18 - Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

## Application

How are you doing in that regard?

When someone wrongs you, how do you respond?

Do you respond in kind or in kindness?

If I asked the people that knew you to describe you as either vengeful or gentle and generous, what would they say?





# Matthew 5:43-48

## REVIEW

Jesus has been talking about how one's righteousness must exceed that of the Pharisees and scribes to enter the kingdom of heaven. He gives six examples.

6. Murder
  - a. You think the bar is just not committing the act, but if you've hated someone in your heart, you're guilty and you fall short.
7. Adultery
  - a. You think the bar is just not committing the act, but if you've lusted after someone in your heart, you're guilty and you fall short.
8. Marriage & Divorce
  - a. You think the bar is just writing the bill of divorcement, but unless you've done so for the cause of fornication, you're practicing legalized adultery.
9. Oaths
  - a. You think the bar is truthfulness in what you swear to God, but the bar is truthfulness in everything you say.
10. Vengeance
  - a. You think the bar for vengeance is here, but there is no bar for vengeance because it belongs to God.
11. Love
  - a. Jesus is going to contrast the traditional standard for love with God's standard

## LOVE

### Matthew 5:43-48

43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?

48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

## 1.) THE RABBINICAL TRADITION

43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy – this is based on the rabbinical interpretation of Leviticus 19:18

Leviticus 19:18 - Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.

- What does this verse say? Love your neighbor as yourself
- Not only that, but do you remember in Luke 10 when the Jewish lawyer asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”
  - What was his answer? It was a story.
  - Luke 10:29-37 - 29 But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? 30 And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. 33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, 34 And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. 36 Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? 37 And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.
    - This story answers two questions:
      - Who is my neighbor?
      - What does it look like to treat my neighbor as myself?
  - The Rabbinical tradition taught “Love your neighbors and hate your enemies.”
    - Notice what was taken out.
      - “as thyself”
      - There is a big difference between loving your neighbor and loving your neighbor as yourself.

- Illustration – in the same way that you are aware of and tend to your own needs, you ought to treat others that way
    - Hungry
    - Thirsty
    - Tired
    - Needy
  - I love myself
    - Completely
    - All the time
    - First and foremost
- Notice what was added in.
  - “and hate your enemies”
  - The Rabbis had read between the lines to develop the teaching of hating one’s enemies. You will not find it in Leviticus 19:18. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, pp. 340-341)
  - Where might the justification for hatred of enemies come from?
    - The Driving out of the Canaanites from the Holy Land
      - In the Old Testament, God used Israel as a nation, as an instrument of judgment on exceedingly depraved people groups living in Canaan.
        - Illustration – God is going to judge America for how wicked it is
          - That’s what He did with the Canaanites, but rather than doing it through famine or economic collapse, He did it through Israel driving them out.
      - God delayed Israel’s entry into the land until the sin of the people groups in the land had reached a boiling point, a point of no return, from which those civilizations deserved destruction. (Joshua 3:10; Genesis 15:13-16; Exodus 3:10; Deut. 7:1)
      - Israel’s treatment of those people groups was as an instrument of God’s justice to those specific nations at that specific time.
      - The Jews confused God’s justice on those nations with personal hatred towards their enemies. They used God’s righteous justice of his enemies to justify their unrighteous hatred of their enemies. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, pp. 341-342)

- Imprecatory Psalms
  - Imprecation – “curse that invokes misfortune upon someone”
  - Imprecatory psalms – “those in which the author calls down calamity, destruction and God’s anger and judgment on his enemies”
  - Major Imprecatory Psalms - 5, 10, 17, 35, 58, 59, 69, 70, 79, 83, 109, 129, 137, and 140.
  - David’s prayers did not flow out a desire for vengeance on those who had personally wronged him. Rather David’s prayers flowed out of a desire for God’s justice to be wrought on those that severely persecuted His people and defied His holiness.
  - Illustration – the difference between righteous and unrighteous anger
    - Unrighteous anger – self oriented, comes when someone has personally offended me
    - Righteous anger - God oriented, comes when someone has offended God
  - The Jews confused David’s prayers for justice with personal hatred towards his enemies. They used his righteous anger towards God’s enemies to justify their unrighteous hatred of their enemies. (Got Questions) (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, pp. 342-343)

Matthew 22:36-40 - 36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law? 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

James 2:8 - If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:

Deuteronomy 23:3-6 - 3 An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord for ever: 4 Because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee. 5 Nevertheless the Lord thy God would not hearken unto Balaam; but the Lord thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the Lord thy God loved thee. 6 Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days for ever.

Psalm 41:10 - But thou, O LORD, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them.

Psalm 139:21-22 - Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.

## 2.) THE SCRIPTURAL TEACHING

Throughout the Old Testament, God's standard for His people was to treat even their personal enemies in kindness and love.

### A.) Love your enemies

44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

But I say unto you – Here's what the Scripture really says

Love your enemies – we are not just commanded to love those who are kind to us, but also those who are unkind to us

- Application: Don't think of love as a feeling, but an action.
  - o As Christians, we don't follow our feelings. We follow the Word in how we act and live.

Leviticus 19:18 - Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.

- Even your enemies are your neighbor (c.f. the Parable of the Good Samaritan)

Exodus 23:4-5 - If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him.

- Once again, in talking about loving your enemies, Jesus is not talking about civil conduct, but rather private conduct. So, for instance, when Jesus talks of the enemy in this passage, He is not talking of the enemy on the battlefield. He is talking of your personal enemy. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 338)

Bless them that curse of you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you – speak well of those who speak ill of you. Be kind in action to those that hate you. Pray for the ones who persecute you.

Psalm 35:11-14 - 11 False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not. 12 They rewarded me evil for good to the spoiling of my soul. 13 But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with

fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom. 14 I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother.

- Though my enemies treated me horribly, when they were sick, I mourned for them. I humbled myself in prayer and fasting for them. I acted as if they were my friends and family.
  - Illustrations
    - David refused to take the life of King Saul
    - When he was king, Shimei threw rocks at David and cursed him. He could have killed him, and yet David refused to respond in kind.
- One of the quickest ways to quench the flesh is to do the exact opposite of what it's telling you to do.
  - When someone curses me
    - My gut reaction is to curse them
    - What should I do? Bless them.
  - When someone mistreats me
    - My gut reaction is to mistreat them
    - What should I do? Treat them in kindness
  - When someone uses me and persecutes me
    - My gut reaction is to take vengeance
    - What should I do pray for them?
  - Cut your flesh off at the knees.

Proverbs 24:29 - Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work.

Proverbs 25:21-22 - If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee.

Psalms 7:1-4 – 1 O Lord my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me: 2 Lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver. 3 O Lord my God, If I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands; 4 If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me; (yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy:) 5 Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust. Selah.

- David knew it was wrong to be evil and unloving towards his personal adversaries

Proverbs 17:5 - Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished.

Luke 23:34 - Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

Acts 7:60 - And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Romans 12:14 - Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.

Romans 12:20-21 - Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

1 Peter 2:23 - Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

1 Peter 3:9 - Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

#### B.) Love like your Father Does

45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven – Loving like God loves does not make us children of God, but it does show that we are His children (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 348)

- We should love like that so that we might show ourselves to be His children by resembling Him (Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown, 1884)
- Application – do people see God in the way that you treat others?
  - o Your coworkers, your family, your friends – what do they see in you?
  - o Does the way you love more closely align with the way God loves or the way Satan does?

1 John 4:20 - If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

For he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust – How does God love? He loves His enemies. The blessings of the sun and rain are given to everyone regardless of who are they are or what they've done. In areas that theologians refer to as common grace, God is indiscriminate in his love. We all breathe the same air, are warmed by the same sun and cooled by the same rain. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 348)



- Illustration - ultimate expression of God loving His enemies is the cross. We were all His enemies in sin, and yet Christ died for us...and He didn't just die for the ones who would accept Him. The cross and the salvation it brings are available to everyone (just like the sun and the rain).

Psalm 145:15-16 - 15 The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season. 16 Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.

- Every truly good thing that anyone ever experiences finds its origin in God.

C.) Love beyond how the lost do

46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? – if you only love those that love you, in what world is that praiseworthy? That's pathetic. (Barnes, 1834)

Do not even publicans the same? –

- Publicans – Jewish contractors with Rome that were given a tax quota to collect from the Jews. In addition, they were permitted to collect as much on top of that quota as they could get away with. They were seen as vile, crooked, dishonest traitors. (Sorenson, 2007)
- Even publicans love their friends and family
- Illustration – even serial killers, human traffickers, and drug lords love those that love them. If that's how you love, you're no better than them.
  - o By the way, one of the 12 disciples and the author of this book of the Bible we are studying was a former publican (Matthew).

Luke 6:32-35 - For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.

Matthew 19:10-11 - And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?

Matthew 11:19 - The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.

Matthew 18:17 - And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.

Matthew 21:31-32 - Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

Luke 18:13 - And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

Luke 19:2 - And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.

Matthew 9:9-12 - 9 And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him. 10 And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. 11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? 12 But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.

47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?

And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? – if you greet and are civil only to those of your own people, what's so extraordinary about that?

Do not even publicans so? – The publicans do that. The Gentile heathens do that.

- Application – If you're only civil and kind to people who are nice to you, what's so exceptional about that? That's exactly how lost people act.
- Is your life really that indiscriminate from the lives of those that don't know God?

Matthew 10:2 - And when ye come into an house, salute it.

Matthew 5:20 - For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

D.) Love completely

48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Therefore – connects what is says in verses 44-47 to verse 48

Be ye...Perfect – this word is used 19 times in the New Testament; it is only used one other time in the gospels, and that is in Matthew 19:21

- Maturity/completion in love
- Luke 6:35-36 - 35 But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. 36 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.
- “You shall take no lower standard in love to enemies than God shows to those who ill treat him, and you shall, in fact, attain to this standard.” (Spence & Exell, 1883)
  - o Jesus seems to be referring back to Deuteronomy 18:13

As your Father, which is in heaven, is perfect – this is not being used to denote equality, but likeness (Gill, 1811)

- As God shows love to all of His creation, so we ought to show love to all of His creation. As God is perfect in love, so we ought to be perfect in love.
- Those who love only their friends and family, love incompletely. (Gill, 1811)

Genesis 17:1 - And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

Leviticus 19:2 - Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.

Deuteronomy 18:13 - Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God.

Job 1:1-3 - There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.

Psalms 37:37 - Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.

Matthew 19:21 - Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.

Luke 6:35-36 - 35 But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. 36 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

1 Corinthians 2:6 - Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not

Ephesians 4:13-15 - 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

Philippians 3:12-15 - Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

Colossians 1:28 - Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

Colossians 4:12 - Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

Hebrews 5:14 - But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

James 1:4 - But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

James 3:2 - For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.

1 Peter 1:15-16 - But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

## **Application**

Once again Jesus is trying to use the law to point people to their own sufficiency.

- How's your love?
- How do you react when people curse you?
- How do you react when people are unkind to you?
- How do you react when people intentionally persecute and use you?
  - o There's only one right answer, and that answer is love.

When it came to the traditional religious understanding of the bar for righteousness in

- Murder
- Adultery
- Marriage and Divorce
- Oaths
- Vengeance
- Love

People thought they were good, that they met the standard.

What Jesus was saying was, "The bar is not here. It's here." The response to that is not to say, "Man, I'm going to spend the rest of my life trying to hit that bar to earn God's favor." It's to come to God in contrition and humility acknowledging one's need for forgiveness and empowerment. Because it's only through God's forgiveness that we can be saved from our sin, and it's only through God's empowerment that we can love and live as He has called us to.

# Matthew 6:1-6

## Sermon

### The Righteousness of the Kingdom

- Its Requirements (exceeding the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees)
- Its Expression
  - Giving (vs. 1-4)
  - Praying (vs. 5-15)
  - Fasting (vs. 16-18)

#### 1.) How to Give to the Poor

##### A.) Give before God

1 Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

Take heed – beware or be careful

Alms – charitable giving, donating to the poor (Sorenson, 2007)

that ye do not your alms before men – in the case of alms giving, prayer and fasting, in this particular sermon, Jesus does not begin by commanding them to engage in such activities. Rather, he assumes that they already are and provides instruction on how they should do so. (Barnes, 1834)

To be seen by them - Jesus is not criticizing the act of giving to the poor. He's not even really criticizing the location of giving to the poor. He's criticizing the act of giving to the poor for the purpose of being seen/noticed/watched by men.

- Do not do the good things that you are supposed for the purpose of being seen by an audience.
- I was trying to think of a good illustration of those who act a certain way to be seen by an audience, and I couldn't think of a better one than those who literally act for a living. They act a certain way to be seen by an audience.
- Illustration – Christian Bale is an actor. In the Batman/Dark Knight films, he pretends to be a character named Bruce Wayne by day, Batman by night. Whenever the cameras were on, Christian would have on his batsuit. He would talk in a deep voice. He would do stunts. He would fight bad guys. He would protect the innocent. But guess what? Christian Bale only acted that way when they were filming the movie, when the cameras were on, when there was an audience.
  - If you went to Christian Bale's home, you would not find him walking around in a batsuit. You would not find him speaking in an abnormally deep voice.

You would not find him doing stunts and fighting bad guys. Why? Because that's not who he really is. He's really Christian Bale. He just pretended to be someone else when he was in front of a camera, an audience.

- Application: You can't act like a generous person to the poor, or you can be a generous person to the poor. Those who act like they're generous to the poor play the part when they're in front of an audience. Those who are generous to the poor are just generous. They don't need or even want an audience. Why? Because they're not acting. Actors need audiences.
- What about Matthew 5:16?
  - 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.
  - There is a big difference between doing good works for my glory for the purpose of being seen and doing good works for His glory and people noticing. In the first instance, I'm glorified. In the second instance, God is glorified. (Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown, 1884)

Otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven – if you give to the poor for the sole intent that others may see you do so and praise you, you will not be rewarded by God.

- You are either living for God or performing for people. You can't have it both ways.
- You are either lifting God up or lifting yourself up. You can't have it both ways.
- You are either serving God or serving self. You can't have it both ways.

If I give to the poor to be seen of men, then why doesn't God reward me anymore?

- It's no longer a gift. It's a purchase. You are paying for recognition. You are paying for the praise of men. You've received what you paid for.
- You have sinned.
  - Philippians 2:3 – let nothing be done through strife or vain glory (self conceit)
  - 1 Peter 5:5 – God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble
  - Why would God reward you for sinning?

Application – God is forcing you to choose between yourself and Him.

- Will you purchase something for yourself or will you give something for my sake?
- Will you sin by lifting yourself up or will you serve by lifting me up?

Matthew 16:6 - Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

Psalms 112:9 - He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour.

2 Cor. 9:9-10 - (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. Now he that ministereth seed to the sower

both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;)

Matthew 23:5 - But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,

John 12:43 - For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Hebrews 6:10 - For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

2 Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

Therefore, When thou doest thine alms – because those who do their alms to be seen of men receive no reward...because of that, when you do your alms...when you give money, food, or clothing to the poor, don't toot your own horn

- Application: once again we see Jesus assuming that we will be generous to the poor.
  - o Why does Jesus assume that? Because the Scriptures tell us to do so over and over again.

Job 31:16-20 - If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; Or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof; (For from my youth he was brought up with me, as with a father, and I have guided her from my mother's womb;) If I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering; If his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep;

Psalms 37:21 - The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again: but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth.

Proverbs 19:7 - He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.

Isaiah 58:7 - Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

Galatians 2:10 - Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.



Ephesians 4:28 - Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

1 Timothy 6:18 - That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

Hebrews 13:16 - But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

Do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets – this reference to the blowing of a trumpet seems to be hyperbole for those who made openly known their acts of generosity (an intentional exaggeration – tooting your own horn). (Sorenson, 2007) (Barnes, 1834)

Hypocrite – actor; one who puts on the appearance of religion

- They're not generous to the poor. They just act like they are.
- Jesus used many figures to describe hypocrisy
  - Leaven (Luke 12:1)
    - It's undetected until it produces its effects.
    - It puffs up. It swells. It makes me bigger.
    - It spreads. (Barnes, 1834)
  - Whitewashed tombs (Matt. 23:27)
    - Once a year tombs were to be covered with a white lime powder that they made them easily detectable so people could avoid ceremonial defilement by coming into contact with them. (Ellicott, 1905)
    - Hypocrites are like those whitened tombs. They look bright and nice on the outside, but there's death on the inside of them.
  - Concealed tombs (Luke 11:44)
    - Hypocrites are like the tombs that aren't whitened. Men come into contact with them and become defiled without even realizing it.
  - Tares amidst the wheat (Matt. 13:25)
    - Hypocrites will be rooted out and destroyed.
  - Wolves in sheep's clothing (Matt. 7:15) (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 353)
    - They look harmless, but they are destructive.

That they may have glory of men – once again this points to the purpose for which the alms were distributed

Verily I say unto you, They have their reward – and it is most certainly a poor reward. The praise of men is fickle and worthless.

John 5:44 - How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?

John 7:18 - He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth – when you give to the poor, do it without drawing attention to yourself.

- Do it so inconspicuously that your left hand, not to mention other people, doesn't even take note of it.
- That kind of charity and kindness to those less fortunate than us ought to be such a natural part of our life that it's not a big deal when we do it, and we don't make a big deal out of it.

4 That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

That thine alms may be in secret – so that your generous giving is under the radar

And thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly – that which is done before men will be rewarded by men. That which is done before God will be rewarded by God.

- Here's where it is hard.
  - o Waiting on God to reward us takes faith.
  - o "A bird in hand is better than two in the bush."
    - Yet as Christians the two in the bush is more like 200 in the bush and it's not based on the possibility of possibly getting them. It's based on the promises of God.

Psalms 44:21 - Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.

Psalms 139:1-3 - O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.

Jeremiah 17:10 - I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

1 Cor. 4:5 - Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

Matthew 10:42 - And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

## 2.) How to Pray

### A.) Pray before God

5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

And when thou prayest – once again, Jesus here is assuming that we are praying

Thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are – the hypocrisy of hypocrites overflows into every area of their life.

- Hypocrites give hypocritically.
- Hypocrites pray hypocritically.
- Hypocrites fast hypocritically.

In first century Judaism, prayer had become distorted in different ways.

- It had become ritualized.
- It had become meaninglessly repetitive.
- It had become limited to specific times and occasions.
- It had become long winded, just for the sake of being long winded.
- It had become directed towards man. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, pp. 362-363)

For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men – once again, the problem here is not the act of praying, the posture of praying or even the location of praying. It's the hypocritical purposing of their prayers. They are praying not so that God hears them, but so that men hear them. (Sorenson, 2007)

- Synagogue – this is where Jews worshipped most often, especially those who lived a great distance from the temple in Jerusalem.
  - o it was the local place of assembly, not only for worship, but also for social and civic gatherings as well. If done with right mentality, there would have been nothing wrong with praying in the synagogue. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 365)
- Corner of the street – corner of a public square or a broad street (Bible Hub)
  - o Now many Jews would stop and pray at the appointed hour, and so it wouldn't be that out of the ordinary for them to stop in public and pray right where they were at.
    - Psalm 55:17 - Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.
  - o There is nothing wrong with prayer on the corner of a very public street if that's where you happened to find yourself at the appointed time. However, there's a big difference between finding yourself on a public street at the time for prayer and planning it out so that's where you would be at the appointed

time. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 365)

Proverbs 15:8 - The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight.

Daniel 6:10 - Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.

Job 27:8-10 - For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul? Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him? Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?

Isaiah 1:15 - And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

Luke 18:10-11 - Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

Proverbs 16:5 - Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished.

6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret – when you pray, go to a private place, where you can be free from distractions and from temptations to pray for anyone else's sake but the Lord's.

- Keep in mind, as is the case with almsgiving, the issue isn't really one of location, but attitude.
- Location can be a symptom of the underlying attitude.
  - o For the religious hypocrites, the public location of their prayers was a symptom of their underlying attitude of pride.
  - o For the true followers of God, the private location of their prayers was a symptom of a desire to commune with God and get His ear.
- Is this a prohibition of public prayers? No.
  - o 1 Kings 8:22-23 – Solomon prayed in front of the entire nation of Israel
  - o Ezra 10:1 – Ezra prayed publicly at the house of the Lord
  - o Matthew 14:19 – Jesus publicly blessed the food before the feeding of the 5000

- Acts 4:24 – following the release of Peter and John by the chief priest and elders, the church lifted up their voice in one accord in prayer and thanksgiving to God (Got Questions)
- This is a prohibition on public prayers offered for the purpose of being seen.
  - The problem wasn't the location. It was the underlying heart of pride that led to the prayer being offered in that location.
  - Application: If the majority of your prayers and public, that is a strong indicator that your prayer life is out of whack.

And thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly – if you are praying publicly for the purpose of being heard by men, you're not really praying. You're just acting. You're acting like you're praying so as to be praised by men. If you're not really praying, then God is not going to answer your prayers.

- But if you are truly praying to God, then God will reward you openly for that.

Matthew 14:23 - And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.

Matthew 26:36-39 - Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

Acts 10:9 - On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour:

## **Application**

Are you generous to the poor?

- Jesus assumes we would be, and the New Testament commands us to be.

Why are you generous to the poor?

- Do you do it for the recognition? Or do you do it out of concern for your neighbor in obedience to your God?
- Are you paying for praise, or are you giving to the Lord?

Are you praying to the Lord?

- Jesus assumes we would, and the New Testament commands us to do so.

How are you praying to the Lord?

- Are the majority of your prayers public or private?
- Are you praying to be heard by men, or are you praying to be heard by God?

## Matthew 6:7-8

### Introduction

Jesus is teaching the people on the mount how to pray. He first starts off by condemning the attitude of the Pharisees in their prayers.

In first century Judaism, prayer had become distorted in different ways

It had become ritualized.

It had become meaninglessly repetitive.

It had become limited to specific times and occasions.

It had become long winded, just for the sake of being long winded.

It had become directed towards man. (MacArthur, 1985, pp. 362-363)

Matthew 6:5, "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men."

The purpose of their prayer was for others to hear them, and ultimately to exalt themselves. Really, Jesus is not condemning public prayer (we have many examples of that in Scripture), and even Jesus prayed publicly. What Jesus is condemning is their attitude in prayer. Their attitude was not from a genuine desire to pray to the Lord, but to pray to men to exalt themselves. It was an issue of pride.

Jesus then exhorts the people to pray in their closet. Again this is not so much about the location as it is the attitude in which they prayed.

Matthew 6:6, "6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

The attitude we should have in our prayer, is one of a desire to genuinely fellowship with God, and bring him your requests.

Location is more of a symptom of the underlying attitude.

For the religious hypocrites, the public location of their prayers was a symptom of their attitude of pride.

For the true followers of God, the private location of their prayers was a symptom of a desire to commune with God and get His ear.

And the Bible says that if we genuinely pray to the Lord rather than men, he will reward us openly. This simply means that he will answer our prayers. If you are praying for the sake of men, you aren't praying to the Lord. Not only that, it is an indication of a heart of pride. The Bible says that "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." If you are praying for the sake of pride, do not be surprised when your prayers are not answered.

Jesus then continues to tell them how not to pray. Specifically, he tells them not to pray by using vain repetitions.

## **Sermon**

### **1.) Pray Without Vain Repetitions**

Matthew 6:7-8 - 7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. 8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

vain repetitions - Stammer, it has the idea of babbling

heard - obey, hear, listen

Jesus is saying when you pray, do not use vain, empty repetitions like the pagans do.

Now, some commentators think that Jesus was warning them against Jewish practices, and now he is warning them about pagan practices. This doesn't seem to be the case though. "Many argue that whereas vv. 5-6 warn against the prayer practices of Jews, vv. 7-8 warn against those of Gentiles (pagans; see on 5:47), partly because the parallel in Luke 11:2 (MS D) has "the rest of men." (Carson, 166) But it does not seem that pagans are really the ones Jesus is warning them about in this verse. He seems to be using them as more of an illustration of anyone who prays with vain repetitions. "'Pagans" (cf. 1 Kings 18:26) are not so much the target as the negative example of all who pray repetitiously." (Ibid.) The Pharisees also had long, repetitious, prayers. (Ibid.)

Jesus is condemning all who pray with vain repetitions. The word for vain repetitions has the idea of Babbling. It may have even been an **onomatopoeia**, a

word that sounds like what it is describing, like buzz, or whoosh, or pow. Really, it has the idea of praying the same phrase over and over and over again. This, according to Jesus, is meaningless, and worthless. It is empty, and lacking any substance.

What Jesus is condemning here is that when they pray to God, do not pray like the pagans by using vain, repetitious prayers. But not only is he condemning vain repetition in prayer, he is also condemning the purpose of vain repetition in prayer.

#### A.) The Purpose of Vain Repetitions

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

The purpose of vain repetition prayer was to use it to get God's attention. The more repetitive you were, the more likely it was that God would answer your prayer. They were using vain repetitions to get God's attention in hopes that he would answer their prayer.

Now, Jesus is not condemning all repetition in prayer. If you remember, when Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane, he prayed the same prayer three times, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me..." (Matt. 26:39-44). Jesus is not condemning prayers that are long or repeat themselves, he is condemning people who pray using vain repetitions in order to get God's attention.

This reminds me of the story of Elijah on Mount Carmel, and how the prophets of Baal tried to get their god's attention.

1 Kings 18: 25-29, "And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under. 26 And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made. 27 And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked. 28 And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them. 29 And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded."

They literally tried to get Baal's attention from morning till noon! They even cut themselves in order to get Baal to listen! Elijah starts trash talking them by saying "He's talking to someone else, he may be on a journey, or he might be sleeping, you need to wake him up!" They were going to extreme measures to get their Baal's attention.



The God of Christianity does not need us to get his attention by vain repetitions, because he already knows what we need. We do not need to get his attention, because we already have it. So not only do I want us to look at Vain Repetitions, I want us to look at Divine Omniscience.

#### B.) The Futility of Vain Repetitions

8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

The Bible teaches that God is omniscient, which basically means God knows all things or is unlimited in his knowledge.

Psalms 139:4, "For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether."

Psalms 147:5, "Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite."

Isaiah 40:28, "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding."

God is omniscient; God already knows what we need.

The teaching that Jesus wants to get across here is that God does not need us to get his attention in prayer. He already knows our need, and wants us to ask him to meet that need! In a sense, God is waiting there for us to pray. God is not like a distracted Father, who isn't really concerned about our needs. We don't need to use repetitive prayer to get God to notice us; he is already omniscient, and is waiting there for us to pray.

"the new-born children of God, who, making their Father's interests their own, are here assured that their Father, in return, makes their interests His, and needs neither to be told nor to be reminded of their wants. Yet He will have His children pray to Him, and links all His promised supplies to their petitions for them; thus encouraging us to draw near and keep near to Him, to talk and walk with Him, to open our every case to Him, and assure ourselves that thus asking we shall receive—thus seeking we shall find—thus knocking it shall be opened to us." (JFB, pg. 25)

We don't have to chant to get our God's attention, we do not have to bring a sacrifice to him in order for him to provide for us. Our God is just there, ready to listen to our prayer whenever we come to him. We do not need to get God's attention, we already have it.

#### Application

Have you ever prayed for something, and it feels like you are hitting a wall? And it feels like the more you pray to God, the more distant he feels, the more it feels like he doesn't notice you?

1. Take comfort in this fact, that even before you brought your need to him, God knew your need. And he was waiting for you to ask him. He, in his Sovereignty, might be waiting to answer, or he might tell us no. But God always knows what we need, and he is waiting for us to bring him our requests. So if you are sitting here tonight, and you are butting your head against a wall because it feels like God doesn't hear you, rest in the fact that he does hear you, and that you do not need to get his attention.

# Matthew 6:9, 13

## Introduction

The Righteousness of the Kingdom (5:17-7:12)

- Its Requirements
- Its Expression (6:1-7:12)
  - o How to Give to the Poor (6:1-4)
  - o How to Pray (6:5-15)

It's vitally important that we do pray. Jesus didn't just instruct us to pray. He prayed Himself.

Jesus routinely rose early in the morning to pray with His Father. Often in the evenings, He would also find a quiet place to commune with Him as well. "Prayer was the spiritual air that Jesus breathed every moment of His life." (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 371)

If we are to follow in Jesus footsteps, we too must pray, not only when we find ourselves in time of need, but constantly.

Illustration – Have you ever had someone in your life that the only time they reached out to you was when they were in need?

- Every time you pick up the phone it's like "Here we go again."
- Story of the Catholic couple whose children only call when they want money
- We shouldn't treat God like that. We should be praying consistently.

We need to pray consistently. But how?

- Pray to God (not to man) (vv. 5-6)
- Pray without vain repetitions (God hears you. Be direct, clear, and sincere with Him.) (vv. 7-8)

Tonight we're going to begin studying the Lord's prayer from Matthew 6, and we're going to see some additional instructions about how we should pray.

The theme for tonight is going to be praying with praise. We're going to be looking at verses 9 and 13, but I'm going to go ahead and read the entire Lord's prayer.

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

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

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

## PRAYING WITH PRAISE

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

After this manner therefore pray ye – it does not mean, “Pray this exact prayer”, but rather, “Pray along these lines...pray like this.”

- Illustration – grammar teacher instructing the class to write their essay with an introduction, body (three paragraphs), and conclusion; how would she react if a student turned in their paper and it was a carbon copy of the example she gave?
- In the entirety of the remainder of the New Testament, we do not once find this prayer being repeated in an exact, ritualistic manner.
- That doesn't mean that there's anything wrong with reciting or meditating on this example prayer that Jesus gave, but it does mean that this prayer is primarily an outline or a guide...a roughly 70 word outline. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 374)

If we're not careful, when it comes to prayer, we can make it about us and not about God. It's all about me and my wants and my needs. Prayer, just as is the case with every area of our lives, should revolve around the glory of God. We should recognize His greatness and submit our desires to His.

One of the ways that we glorify God in prayer is through praise, and that's going to be our emphasis this evening. As we study praying with praise, the first thing that we see is God's nearness.

### 1.) His Nearness

Our Father– Prayer begins with addressing the one that we are praying to. We do not pray to idols. We do not pray to Mary. We do not pray to the saints. We do not pray to ourselves. We do not pray to Allah or Krishna. We pray to the one true God, who is our Father.

- That portrayal of God as Father extends back into the Old Testament.

Isaiah 64:8 - But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.

Malachi 2:10 - Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?

- We are all the offspring of God as Creator, and yet in a spiritual sense, only believers are God's children.

John 1:12 – But as many as received Him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.

Romans 8:15 - For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

In addressing God as Father, we are reminded of the relationship we enjoy with Him because of our spiritual birth, our salvation, our cleansing from sin.

- Those who remain in sin and unbelief have another father.

John 8:44 - Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

- Connotations of Father
  - That title is a picture and reminder of the nature of God in relation to us. When we address Him as such, it reminds us that:
  - He loves us (1 John 4:19)
    - We love him, because he first loved us.
  - He is available to us (1 John 5:14-15)
    - 14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.
  - He will never abandon us (Heb. 13:5)
    - 5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.
  - He cares for our needs (Matt. 7:11)
    - If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

He is near to us as a Father, and we can praise Him for that.

- God you are my Father.
  - God you are always there for me.
  - God you love me.

- God you care for me.
- God you provide my needs.
- I praise you for that.

## 2.) His Greatness

which art in heaven – in calling God our Father, we are reminded of the relationship and nearness we have with God. In proclaiming that God is in heaven, we are reminded of His majesty, superiority and greatness as the one enthroned in heaven. (Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown, 1884)

2 Chronicles 20:6 - And said, O LORD God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?

Isaiah 57:15 - For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

Isaiah 66:1 - Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?

He is near as our Father, but He is also great as the one enthroned in heaven.

Illustration – Lebron James and his three kids (Bronny, Bryce, Zhuri). He is their father, but he is also King James.

- God is our Father, but He is also the king of the universe. He is enthroned in heaven.

And yet despite the fact that God is enthroned heaven, due to His omnipresence, He is also near to us as well.

Psalms 139:7-12 - 7 Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? 8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell (the grave), behold, thou art there. 9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; 10 Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. 11 If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. 12 Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.

The one we pray to is both near and far. He is both Father and king.

We can praise Him for that.

God you are enthroned in heaven.

- You are the ruler of the universe.
- You are powerful.
- You are mighty and awesome.
- I praise you for that.

### 3.) His Holiness

Hallowed be thy name – holy or sanctified be thy name (Sorenson, 2007)

- Jesus begins His prayer by addressing God as Father and then by praising His holiness.
  - o Holiness is one of God's defining character traits.
  - o Isaiah 6:2-3 - 2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. 3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.
- "May your name be celebrated, venerated, and esteemed as holy everywhere, and may it receive from all people proper honor." (Barnes, 1834)
  - o God, holy is your name.

1 Chronicles 17:24 - Let it even be established, **that thy name may be magnified for ever**, saying, The LORD of hosts is the God of Israel, even a God to Israel: and let the house of David thy servant be established before thee.

Psalms 34:3 - O magnify the Lord with me, and **let us exalt his name together**.

Psalms 111:9 - He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: **holy and reverend is his name**.

When is the last time you praised God for His holiness?

God you are holy.

- o You are perfectly righteous.
- o You are without blemish.
- o You are pure and good.
- o I praise you for that.

He is worthy of our praise.

Not only can we glorify God and praise Him in what we say, but also in what we do as His image bearers, as His children.

Ezekiel 36:23 - **And I will sanctify my great name**, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, **when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes.**

- In this prophetic passage about Israel we see that as God's children, when we live holy lives we can proclaim God's holiness to those around us.
- 1 Peter 1:15 – but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation
- Are you living in a way that reflects well on the holiness of your father?

God is worthy of our praise in what we say to Him and how we portray Him to others through our actions.

Revelation 4:11 - Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

In verse 9 Jesus begins his prayer by speaking of God's nearness, greatness, and holiness.

In verse 13 Jesus ends his example prayer the same way that He begins it: with praise.

#### 4.) His Kingdom

13 ... For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen – Jesus ascribes the coming kingdom as well as power and glory to Him as an act of praise. (Sorenson, 2007)

- God: you are king
- God: you are powerful
- God: you are glorious

1 Chronicles 29:11 - Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all.

God, you are king.

- You are mighty.
- You are worthy.
- You are Lord of the universe.
- Your kingdom will be an everlasting one.



- I praise you for that.

You are worthy of my praise.

## 5.) His Power

, and the power

Revelation 5:13 - And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

Revelation 19:1 - And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:

God, you are powerful.

- You are infinite.
- Your are omnipotent.
- You are sovereign.
- You are awesome.
- I praise you for that.

You are worthy of my praise.

## 6.) His Glory

, and the glory forever. Amen.

1 Timothy 1:17 - Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

God, you are glorious.

- You are indescribable.
- You are worthy of honor.
- You are worthy of my worship.
- I praise you for that.

You are worthy of my praise.

How is your prayer life? Are you praying with praise? Do you intentionally take time every day to lift God up for how great He is?

## Psalm 145

- 1 I will extol thee, my God, O king; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever.
- 2 Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever.
- 3 Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable.
- 4 One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts.
- 5 I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works.
- 6 And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts: and I will declare thy greatness.
- 7 They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness.
- 8 The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.
- 9 The Lord is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.
- 10 All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee.
- 11 They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power;
- 12 To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom.
- 13 Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.
- 14 The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down.
- 15 The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season.
- 16 Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.
- 17 The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.
- 18 The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.
- 19 He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.
- 20 The Lord preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy.
- 21 My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord: and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.

# MATTHEW 6:10-15

## Introduction

How to give to the poor

- Secretly

How to pray

- Pray to God, not to man (for the purpose of being heard by God, not seen by man)
- Pray without vain repetitions (clearly and sincerely)
- Pray with praise
- Pray with requests

## Sermon

### PRAYING WITH REQUESTS

1.) For God's Kingdom to Come

10 Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Thy kingdom come – when we talk about the kingdom of God, this phrase can be used in different ways. It can be used to refer to God's general rule and authority over all creation or in reference to the kingdom of God on earth under the Messiah.

General Rule of God over Creation

- 1 Chr. 29:11-12 - 11 Thine, O Lord is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. 12 Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.
- Psalm 103:19 - The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.
- Psalm 29:10 - The Lord sitteth upon the flood; yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever.
- Lamentation 5:19 - 19 Thou, O Lord, remainest for ever; thy throne from generation to generation.
- There's a general sense in which God is king, and He's king over all creation.

The Kingdom of God on Earth under Messiah

- Daniel 2:44 - And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

- Daniel 7:13-14 - 13 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.
- Zechariah 14:9 - And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one.
- Revelation 20:4 - 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.
  - o This is in reference to the coming millennial kingdom (Rev. 20:4)
    - It is a kingdom on earth, but it is not a kingdom of this world (i.e. of this present world system) (John 18:36) (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985)
      - It is opposed by the kingdom of this present world, which Satan rules.

-

When Jesus prays “thy kingdom come” is it in reference to God’s general rule over creation or is it in reference to the coming kingdom of God on earth that Jesus will set up when He comes back the second time?

- God’s general dominion over all of creation has always been and always will be.
- Therefore, this must be in reference to the kingdom of God under Messiah which has not yet arrived. (Benson, 1857)

To pray “Thy kingdom come” is to pray for Christ to come back the second time, set up His kingdom, and reign as King of kings and Lord of lords on the earth. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985)

- o We are praying for God’s earthly kingdom to come, that God might rule on earth as He does in heaven.
- o Aren’t you looking forward to the day when it’s not politicians or kings or dictators that reign, but rather it’s Jesus that does?

Lord, come back and set up your kingdom.

## 2.) For God’s Will to Be Done

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven – the fact that Jesus is praying that God’s will be done on earth (as it is in heaven) indicates that God’s will is not always done on earth.

- Whoa, that almost sounds kind of heretical. What do you mean by that? Well there’s different aspects to God’s will.
  - o God’s Sovereign Will

- Which is always accomplished.
- Isaiah 46:9-10 - 9 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:
- God's ultimate plans and will for creation, redemption, the universe always come to pass.
- God's Revealed Will
  - Not always accomplished
  - Pastor, where do I find God's will for my life?
    - Boom. Right here in the Scriptures.
  - God reveals His commands (His desires for our lives) in the Scriptures, but do we always obey His revealed will?
  - Example
    - Don't lust
    - Don't hate
    - Don't lie
    - Leave vengeance to God
    - Love your enemies
    - We often fall short in these areas.
- When we pray for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven, we are praying for every person and thing on earth to be brought into conformity to God's revealed will.
  - God's will is perfectly obeyed in heaven, and as His children, we should desire and pray that it would also be perfectly obeyed here on earth. (Barnes, 1834)

Let me give you an example of this.

Psalm 103:20-21 – 20 Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. 21 Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.

- The angels in heaven do God's will immediately, joyfully, and completely.
- Oh that such would be the case here on earth as well.
- Praying for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven starts with praying that I would do God's will.
  - That I would do God's will
    - Lord help me to do your will.
    - Illustration – praying the fruit of the Spirit
      - Help me to be loving.
      - Help me to be joyful.
      - Help me to be peaceful.

- Help me to be patient.
- Help me to be gentle (kind and compassionate).
- Help me to be good (righteous).
- Help me to be meek (confident but under control)
- Help me to be faith filled (trust in you)
- Help me to temperate (disciplined)
- That others would do God's will
  - Our church
  - Our state
  - Our nation
  - Our world

### 3.) For God's Provision

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

Bread – symbolic of everything necessary to sustain life (daily sustenance)

Give us this day our daily bread – Lord, provide us today with sustenance that is needed for today

If we're not careful we can fall into the trap of not asking God to provide our daily sustenance.

- Why? Because we're Americans. We have everything we need, or so we think. I can't remember a time where I didn't know where tomorrow's food was going to come from.

It is vitally important that we ask God to provide our daily sustenance. Why?

- Reminds us that none of us are promised tomorrow
- Keeps us from anxiously worrying about the future
- Restrains us from covetousness
- Keeps us dependent upon God (Gill, 1811)

Too many Christians are like the fool that had a barn full of possessions and rather than thanking God, asking God for continued provision, and sharing what he had with others, he built a bigger barn. He didn't need God, or so he thought....until God took his life and he was separated from his possessions forever.

Proverbs 30:8 - Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me:

There is a spiritual application here as well. We don't just need physical sustenance. We need spiritual sustenance.

Matthew 4:4 - But he answered and said, It is written (quoting Deut. 8:3), Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Psalm 119:18 - Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

Illustration – family devotions and dad always reading Psalm 119:18 before we started

Lord, provide my physical sustenance for the day.

Lord, provide my spiritual sustenance for the day.

#### 4.) For God's Forgiveness

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

Luke 11:4 - And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

And forgive us our debts – From our cross reference in Luke 11:4, as well as the context in verse 14 in this chapter, it is obvious that when Jesus speaks of debts, He speaks of sins. He's using the term "debt" as an illustration of how our sins relate us to God.

- Just as only a creditor can forgive a debtor, only God can forgive our sins. The debtor is at the mercy of the creditor, and we are at the mercy of God. (Barnes, 1834)
- "Lord forgive us for that in which we have wronged You, that in which only You can forgive."
- Pastor, aren't we already forgiven if we've trusted in Christ as our Savior? Yes. Then why are we praying for forgiveness?
  - o Those who trust in the Lord have received God's pardon for sin and are saved from eternal hell. And since, this prayer is given to believers, the debts referred to here are those incurred by Christians when they sin. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985)
  - o As born again believers we are completely forgiven of sin and without condemnation or judgment before God our Judge (Romans 8:1). But because we still fall into sin, we frequently require God's gracious forgiveness, not now as Judge but as Father, and not so as to be delivered from Hell but so as to restore the closeness of our relationship with Him.
  - o 1 John 1:8-9 - 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
  - o "Father, restore the closeness of our relationship by forgiving me of that which would separate us."
    - Sin will not cause us to lose our salvation from God, but sin does cause us to lose our closeness with God.

As we forgive our debtors – we pray for your forgiveness for how we have wronged God as we forgive those who have wronged us.

- Why do we forgive those who have wronged us?
  - o It's a prerequisite for receiving God's forgiveness as His child and having the closeness of our relationship restored.

Jesus lays this principle out very clearly in verses 14 and 15.

14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

- As those who have been judicially forgiven by God of the penalty for our sin, we should be quick to forgive others of their sins against us. In doing so, we ensure that when we sin against God and come to Him for reconciliation, we will be forgiven and the closeness of our relationship will be restored.

15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

- To receive pardon from the perfectly holy God and then to refuse to pardon others when we are sinful men is the epitome of the abuse of mercy. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985)
  - o No one has wronged me more than I have wronged God. To believe anything different is pride.

Matthew 18:23-33

21 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.

24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.

25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

26 The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.



29 And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

31 So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:

33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?

#### 5.) For God's Deliverance from Sin

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil – the parallel usage of temptation with evil tells us that Jesus had in mind “enticement to sin” when he used the term. Moreover, this enticement to sin does not come from God, but from our flesh (James 1:13-14).

- Lord, help to direct my steps so that I avoid temptation to sin
- Lord, please don't take me down paths where I will be tempted to sin, but rather, rescue me from it.
  - o Rescue me from evil by keeping me from temptation
    - Matthew 26:39 - 39 And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.
    - We should fear the danger of temptation. We must recognize the inadequacy of our ability to deal with evil on our own. There should be a healthy fear there the same way that an addict might fear an encounter with the drug that he's abused.
  - o Rescue me from evil by providing a way of escape in the midst of temptation (1 Cor. 10:13)

1 Cor. 10:13 - There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

James 1:2-3 - 2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; 3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

James 1:13-14 - 13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: 14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

### **Application**

How's your prayer life doing?

Are you praying for Jesus to return and establish God's kingdom?

Are you praying for God's will to be done in your life and in the lives of those around you?

Are you praying for daily sustenance?

Are you praying for forgiveness of sin?

Are you praying for deliverance from sin?

# MATTHEW 6:16-24

## Review

How to Give

- Secretly

How to Pray

- To God, not to man
- With praise
- With requests

How to Fast

How to Lay up Treasure

During Old Testament times many faithful believers fasted—Moses, Samson, Samuel, Hannah, David, Elijah, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Daniel, and many others. And the New Testament tells us of the fasting of Anna, John the Baptist and his disciples, Jesus, Paul, and numerous others.

- Fasting is refraining from something for the purpose of directing our attention to God (almost every instance of fasting in the Bible is fasting from food).

The only fast commanded in the Scripture, however, was the fast on the Day of Atonement.

Leviticus 16:29 - And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall **afflict your souls**, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you:

- Afflict/humble your souls: Hebrew expression that included forsaking food as an act of self denial
- This was a national fast, involving every man, woman, and child in Israel, and it occurred once a year on the Day of Atonement.

Because it is not elsewhere commanded by God, fasting is different than giving and praying, which are commanded in many places in both the Old and New Testament. It is an activity that is spoken of positively in the Old and New Testament, and although it is not commanded, when it is practiced (which Jesus assumed that it would be), it is to be regulated according to the principles provided here. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 400)

## 1.) How to Fast

16 Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

When ye fast – here's how you should do it

During the time of Christ, fasting had become twisted and distorted. It had become a ritual to gain merit with God and attention before men. Like giving and praying, it had become primarily a religious show. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 400)

- Luke 18:12 – many Pharisees fasted twice a week, typically the second and fifth days, which just happened to be the major Jewish market days where they'd have the largest audiences

How are we to fast?

Be not as the hypocrites – not like the hypocrites do.

Illustration – someone explaining how to do something to another (How do I throw a football? You see how that guy's doing it. The exact opposite)

How do they fast?

Of a sad countenance – they act gloomy and sad, so as to draw attention to themselves

Illustration – people who fast and have to tell others about it

- How can you tell if someone does Crossfit? Don't worry. They'll tell you. Probably every day.

For they disfigure their faces - They would wear old clothes, sometimes purposely torn and soiled, dishevel their hair, cover themselves with dirt and ashes, and even use makeup in order to look pale and sickly. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 401)

That they may appear unto men to fast – they do it to draw attention to themselves for their religious piety so that others may praise them and think highly of them.

- Why are they fasting? Is it to focus all of their energies on the Lord in prayer? No, it's themselves. It's their pride.

They have their reward – their reward was the attention of men. They received it in full, but nothing else.

Isaiah 58:3-5 - Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate,

and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?

Zechariah 7:3-5 - And to speak unto the priests which were in the house of the LORD of hosts, and to the prophets, saying, Should I weep in the fifth month, separating myself, as I have done these so many years? Then came the word of the LORD of hosts unto me, saying, Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me?

Matthew 9:14-15 - Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.

Acts 13:2-3 - As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

Acts 14:23 - And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

17 But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;

But thou when thou fastest – Jesus words here assume that we will fast on certain occasions. It is certainly normal and beneficial in the Christian life to do so, to refrain from something for a period of time so as to focus our attention on God. However, He does not specify a particular time, place, or method. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 401)

Fasting is associated with

- Prayer
  - In just about every scriptural account genuine fasting is linked with prayer. In the Bible you see prayer without fasting, but you don't really see fasting without prayer. Why? Fasting is an affirmation of intense prayer, a corollary of deep spiritual struggle before God. If we are truly refraining from something so as to direct our attention to God, well how do you do that without praying? (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 404)
    - Illustration – clearing my schedule to focus on my wife and then not talking to her

- Times of Sorrow
  - o David pleading for his baby sons' life (2 Sam. 12:16)
  - o Following Abner's death (2 Sam. 3:35)
  - o Illustration – have you ever experienced deep, deep grief? It naturally lends itself to fasting. Why? Food isn't even a thought. You're sick to your stomach.
- Times of Need
  - o King Jehoshaphat proclaimed a national fast in Judah when they were threatened with attack from the Moabites and Ammonites (2 Chr. 20:3)
  - o Queen Esther, her servants, and all the Jews in the capital city of Susa fasted for three days before presenting herself before the king to plead for the Jews to be spared from Haman (Esther 4:16)
  - o Illustration – deep times of need and hardship naturally lend themselves to fasting. Stress and difficulty can once again make us not even want to think about food.
- Times of Repentance
  - o David after his sins with Bathsheba and Uriah
  - o When Elijah confronted Ahab with God's judgment for his great wickedness, the king "tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and fasted, and he lay in sackcloth and went about despondently" (1 Kings 21:27). Because of Ahab's sincerity, the Lord postponed the judgment (v. 29).
  - o The people of Nineveh upon hearing the preaching of Jonah (Jonah 3:5, 7) (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, pp. 403-404)
  - o Illustration – when we are deeply grieved over our sin, the situation naturally lends itself to fasting.

Anoint thy head and wash thy face – anointing the head with oil and washing one's face were commonly done as a matter of good grooming

- Illustration: modern day equivalent would be "get a shower and get yourself dressed...make yourself look presentable."
- The idea was to present yourself as you normally would. There was a purpose for that.

Ruth 3:3 - Wash thy self therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor: but make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking.

Daniel 10:2-3 - In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

That thou appear not unto men to fast – the purpose was so that your act of fasting would be done in secret. Others would have no idea what you were doing, which is a good thing. Why? You're not doing it for them.

But unto thy Father which is in secret – in so doing only God would know of your activity

And thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly – and in so doing genuinely and privately, your Father will see you and reward you for it. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, pp. 405-406)

Matthew 6:4 - That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

Matthew 6:6 - But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

## 2.) How to Lay up Treasure

### A.) In heaven

19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth – Do not hoard treasures for yourselves on the earth.

Illustration – this is what the world does. They live for this life. They hoard and stockpile as much as they can here, and then they die, and they are separated from their stuff forever.

- It pictures wealth that it not being used, just stored up for safekeeping or showiness.
  - o This issue is not having much. It's having much and not using it for God's glory and His kingdom.
- Many Bible characters were very well off.
  - o Abraham was wealthy.
  - o Job was wealthy.
  - o David was wealthy.
  - o Solomon was wealthy.
  - o Proverbs 24:3-4 - 3 Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established: 4 And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches.
  - o "It is right to provide for our families, to make reasonable plans for the future, to make wise investments, and to have money to carry on a business, give to the poor, and support the Lord's work. It is being dishonest, greedy, covetous, stingy, and miserly about possessions that is wrong. To honestly earn, save, and give is wise and good." (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 410)

Where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal - In Bible times wealth was identified in primarily three literal commodities:

- Garments - get ruined by moths
  - The best clothes were made of wool, which moths love to eat.
- Grain - gets eaten by vermin, worms and insects
- Gold - gets stolen by thieves and rusts
  - This is why people often buried their gold and silver in a field or an obscure location away from their home

When we stockpile wealth on earth, one of two things happens:

- i. It passes away
- ii. We pass away
  - 1. Either way, we reach a point where it's useless to us.
  - 2. Illustration – imagine an investment where within your lifetime you knew for certain that it would reach a point where it was worth absolutely nothing

Psalm 62:10 - Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.

Proverbs 23:5 - Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.

Ecclesiastes 5:10 - He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity.

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven – stockpile wealth in heaven. Why?

Where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal – heavenly resources are completely free from destruction, deterioration, and theft. There is absolute security. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 411)

Illustration – it's an investment with incredible dividends that will last forever and is insured not by the FDIC, but by God Himself

Application

- We lay up treasures in heaven when we invest our time, our money, and our abilities in eternity, in the advancement of God's kingdom?
  - When we give to the church
  - When we minister to the poor.
  - When we serve the Lord through the church.
  - When we share the gospel with others.



You are to remember with the passion burning within you that you are not the child of today. You are not of the earth, you are more than dust; you are the child of tomorrow, you are of the eternities, you are the offspring of Deity. The measurements of your lives cannot be circumscribed by the point where blue sky kisses green earth. All the fact of your life cannot be encompassed in the one small sphere upon which you live. You belong to the infinite. If you make your fortune on the earth—poor, sorry, silly soul—you have made a fortune, and stored it in a place where you cannot hold it. Make your fortune, but store it where it will greet you in the dawning of the new morning. (The Gospel According to Matthew [New York: Revell, 1929], pp. 64-65)

#### B.) From a Right Heart

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also – wherever your money is, that's where your heart is too

The principle is simple and sobering: the way we look at and use our money is a sure barometer of our spiritual condition. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 414)

Illustration – your budget is an indicator of what you care about.

- This is where the phrase “put your money where your mouth is” originates from.
- For some their heart is in fishing or sports or flying or music, and there's nothing wrong with those things as long as they're not first place.
  - o Illustration – people tithing to the NFL

If our hearts are heavenly minded and spiritually directed, then the allocation of our time, abilities, and money will be too.

Proverbs 3:9-10 - 9 Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: 10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

Luke 6:38 - Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

2 Cor. 9:6 - But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

Colossians 3:1-3 - If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

Where's your heart? Wherever it is, your time, your abilities, and your money won't be far behind.

Jesus gives an illustration of how the disposition of our heart affects every other area of our lives.

22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

Jesus uses the physical eye as an illustration for the spiritual heart.

The light of the body is the eye - The body functions based on what it sees through the eye

If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light - If your eye is physically functional and focused, then you can perceive the physical world as it is, and your whole physical being can function as it should.

But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness - if your eye is broken, then you cannot see the physical world as it is, and your physical body cannot function as it should. Why? Because you're physically blinded.

If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness - What the eye is to your physical being, your heart is to your spiritual being.

- If your heart is focused on heavenly things, then your heart is functioning as God intended, and your time, your money, and your abilities will be too. Your whole life will be functioning as God intended.
- If your heart is focused on earthly things, then your heart is broken, and how you spend your time, money, and abilities will be too.
  - How's your heart? Is it there or is it here? Is it functioning as God intended, or has it been distorted by your flesh?
  - Application – how do I know if my heart is on heaven? Where's your money? Where's your time? Where's your abilities?

Luke 11:34-36 - The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.

Acts 2:46 - And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

Ephesians 6:5 - Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

C.) In service to our master

24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

No man can serve two masters - this is not talking about working a 9-5. It's talking about being a slave. You can work two jobs, but you can't be a slave to two masters.

- You can no more serve two masters than you can walk in two different directions at the same time.

For either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other - The man who loves God cannot love the evil world, and, so far as it is evil, will learn to hate it. The man who loves the world will, even in the midst of lip-homage, hate the service of God in his inmost heart. (Ellicott, 1905)

- You can't serve both at the same time.

Ye cannot serve God and mammon - The word mammon in this passage is a Syriac word that means riches or money. You can either be a slave to God or a slave to money, but you cannot do both.

How are we to lay up treasure? How are we to invest our lives?

- The world lays up treasure on earth out of heart that loves the earth in service to the god of money.
- Yet Jesus instructs us to lay up treasure in heaven out of a heart that's fixated on heaven in service to the God of heaven.

Joshua 24:15 - And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

1 Kings 18:21 - And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

James 4:4 - Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

1 John 2:15-16 - Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

## **Application**

When's the last time you took time to fast and focus your attention solely on God? When you fast, is it a show? Do others need to know? Do you do it to get the attention of others or are you concerned with giving God yours?

Where's your treasure?

Your life is an investment portfolio comprised of your time, your money, and your abilities. Unlike the stock market, with your life you have two investment options: this life and the next. Where is your portfolio invested? Is it here where you can't keep it, or is it there where you can't lose it?

## MATTHEW 6:25-34

### Review

The Expression of Righteousness

- How to give to the poor
- How to pray
- How to fast
- How to lay up treasure
- How to live for the kingdom

Matthew 6:19-24	Matthew 6:25-34
Geared towards those with more	Geared towards those with less
Making life count	Making ends meet
Laying up Treasure	Laying down Worry

- Don't worry.
  - "Take no thought" - to be pulled in different direction. Worry pulls us apart. Why?
  - Your Father sees you.
  - Your Father loves you.
  - Your Father has promised to provide for you.
- What should I do instead of worrying?
- Seek God's kingdom first.
  - It's astonishing that He says that in the context of addressing people that might not have even known where their next meal was coming from.
  - You put God first in your life with your time, your talents, your priorities, your finances, and God will take care of your needs.
  - If this principle was true for poor, impoverished 1st century Jews, how much more so for those of us that live in the richest country in the world?

### Sermon

HOW TO LIVE FOR THE KINGDOM

1.) Lay Down Your Worry

25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

Therefore I say unto you – since you can't serve God and money

24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Take no thought for your life – don't be so consumed with thinking about the things of this life that it makes you anxious. What kinds of things?

Philippians 4:6 - Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

1 Peter 5:7 - Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

What ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on – food, water, and clothing: the basic necessities of your existence

Jesus is going to give us five reasons not to worry about our physical needs in this life.

A.) God is powerful

He is able to provide your needs.

Is not the life more than meat and the body than raiment? – who gave you life? Was that you? Did you do that? How about your body? Did you create that? Was that you? ....No. Well, who was it then? Who gave you life and created your body? Well, it was God.

- If God gave you life, don't you think He can give you the food you need to sustain that life? Isn't it more difficult to create life than it is to provide food? Don't worry. Trust the one who gave you life.
  - o He is able to provide your needs.
- If God gave you your body, don't you think He can give you the clothing you need to put on it? Isn't it more difficult to fashion a body than it is to clothe it? Don't worry. Trust the one who created your body. (Barnes, 1834)
  - o He is able to provide your needs.

Illustration - In the late 1800's George Mueller operated an orphanage that at one time had 1,000 orphans. One morning there was no food to eat, but he called all the children and staff together and prayed thanking God for the provision of food, even though no food was on the table. A few moments later a baker knocked on the door. He told Mr. Muller that God had led him to bake bread the night before and give it to the orphanage. Before the bread was given to the children, a milkman knocked on the door. He said that his milk truck had broken down and he wanted to give the milk to the orphanage. (Ministry 127)

- God is able to provide your needs.

Ephesians 3:20-21 - 20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, 21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Luke 1:37 – the angel said to Mary, “For with God nothing shall be impossible.”

Genesis 1:1 – in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth

- If God is able to create the universe and everything in it from nothing, He can provide for your needs.

You don't need to worry. Why? Because God is powerful?

B.) You are cared for

26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

Behold the fowls of the air – think about the birds

For they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; - do you ever see them planting seed? Do you ever see them harvesting crops? What about barns? Do they store their gathered food in barns? You ever see a lion working a drive through window? You ever see a giraffe cook for a restaurant? You ever see a sea lion manage an IT department?

No. Unlike us, they're not even physically or mentally capable of doing such things. (Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown, 1884)

Yet your heavenly Father feedeth them – and yet, despite their insufficiencies, God provides their needs.

Are ye not much better than they? – You are physically greater than them. You are mentally greater than them. You are of infinitely more spiritual value to God than them. If God cares enough about the birds in the sky to provide for their needs, and if God cares way more for you than the birds, then don't you think He's going to take care of you too?

- They are His creation. You are His child.

“Things are precious, often because of their relationship. The most precious thing a mother has is her dear babe. We all love those who are near to us by the ties of nature. Precious, therefore, in the sight of the Lord are His saints, because they are born in His household, by regeneration made to be His sons and daughters. Think not that God our Father has less affection towards His children than we have towards ours. Ah, no! No mother's heart ever yearned over her child, and no father's bosom ever rejoiced over his offspring, as the heart of God yearns over His erring children, and as His soul rejoices when they come back to Him.” – C. H. Spurgeon (Ministry 127)

- If you care enough to provide for the needs of your children, know that God cares so much more for you as His child and will provide you needs too.

Matthew 10:29-31 - Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.

Psalms 145:15-16 - The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.

Psalms 147:9 - He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.

Don't worry. Why?

- God is able
- You are cared for

C.) Worry is powerless

27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

Which of you by taking thought - which of you by being anxious

- It's not talking about thinking through a problem or an issue. It's not talking about planning. It's talking about worry...anxiety?

Can add one cubit unto his stature? - which of you by being anxious can make yourself a foot and a half taller?

Illustration - anxiety changes nothing about your problems

- Thinking through things over and over again in the middle of night

Anxiety is imagining worst case scenarios and then living as if they have already come to fruition

Illustration - An exasperated husband asked his wife, "Why are you always worrying when it doesn't do any good?" She quickly piped back, "Oh yes it does! Ninety five percent of the things I worry about never happen." (Ministry 127)

Matthew 11:28-30 - 28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Isaiah 41:10 - Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

Proverbs 3:5-6 - 5 Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Illustration - do your best, forget the rest

Don't worry. Why?

- God is powerful.
- You are cared for.
- Worry is powerless.

D.) God is reliable

28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

And why take ye thought for raiment? – why are you worried about clothing?

Consider the lilies of the field – think about the flowers in the field

How they grow – they grow up beautifully; they are breathtaking in their external covering

They toil not – have you ever seen a flower working like a farmer? Have you ever seen them planting and harvesting the materials like flax from which garments are made? No. (Gill, 1811)

Neither do they spin – Have you ever seen them take materials like flax and weave them into garments to wear? (Benson, 1857)

- Flowers don't make clothes.

29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these – even the richest, wisest most glorious king decked out in all of his grandeur: in his finest robe, with his crown on his head, seated on his throne was exceeded by the beauty and covering of a single lily (Gill, 1811)

2 Chronicles 9:20-22 - And all the drinking vessels of king Solomon were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold: none were of silver; it was not any thing accounted of in the days of Solomon. For the king's ships went to Tarshish with the servants of Hiram: every three years once came the ships of Tarshish bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks. And king Solomon passed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom.

1 Kings 10:5-7 - And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her. And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard.

30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?



Wherefore – Consequently

If God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven – if God so clothes the vegetation of the ground, including the lilies which were just specifically mentioned...which today is in the field, but tomorrow is cast into the oven to be used as tinder to heat it (Spence & Exell, 1883)

Shall he not much more clothe ye, O ye of little faith – if God is reliable in clothing the vegetation of the field, don't you think He can be relied on to clothe you?

Illustration – there are some people you just can't count on

- This becomes abundantly clear in team project settings
- You're constantly having to check back in
- God isn't like that

Deuteronomy 7:9 – The Lord is called the faithful God

Hebrews 13:5 – He will never leave us nor forsake us

Titus 1:2 – God cannot lie. He always keeps His Word.

Don't worry.

- God is powerful.
- You are cared for.
- Worry is powerless.
- God is reliable

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

Therefore – since God is powerful, you are cared for, worry is powerless, and God is reliable

Take no thought – don't worry

Saying, What shall we eat? Or, What shall we drink? Or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? – don't get overly anxious about the provision of your basic necessities

Psalm 78:18-31 - And they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust. Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people? Therefore the LORD heard this, and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel; Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation: Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven, And had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven. Man did eat angels' food: he sent them meat to the full. He caused an east

wind to blow in the heaven: and by his power he brought in the south wind. He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea: And he let it fall in the midst of their camp, round about their habitations. So they did eat, and were well filled: for he gave them their own desire; They were not estranged from their lust. But while their meat was yet in their mouths, The wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen men of Israel.

E.) God knows your situation

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek) – you can almost image a tone of condescension here...that's the kind of worthless stuff that the heathen obsess over because they don't know any better (Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown, 1884)

- Because they don't know about God's kingdom
- Because they don't know God
- Because they don't understand God's provision (Poole, 1990)

For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things – You have a heavenly Father who cares for you, is able to take care of you, is completely reliable, and knows of your needs

- Stop obsessing over these insignificant things that God has promised to take care of
- Illustration – It's not my daughter's responsibility to worry about what we're going to eat, how the bills are going to be paid, where we're going to live.
  - o I don't want her wasting her mental energies worrying about those things. I want her thinking and dreaming about bigger and better things.
    - I know what she needs. I'm able to provide her needs. I care enough about her to take care of her needs. I am reliable in taking care of her needs.
  - o Such is also true with God. God doesn't want us obsessing in our lives over things as meaningless as food, water, and clothing. He wants our sights set on bigger things, more important things. What are those bigger and better things God wants us to set our sights on?

Psalms 103:13 - Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.

Luke 11:11-13 - If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

2.) Pursue God's Kingdom and Righteousness

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness – Make pursuing God's kingdom and hungering after His righteousness the priority in your life. Stop worrying and obsessing about the things of this life. Get your eyes and your mind fixated on living for the next one.

And all these things shall be added unto you – And God will take care of the minor things of this life

Those who live for the next life will be taken care of in this one.

Those who live for this life, will be left out in the next one.

Some people spend their whole lives so worried about dying that they never live. They spend their whole lives so worried about failing that they never succeed. They spend their whole lives worrying about this one that they never do anything that matters for the next one.

Don't waste your life worrying about what might go wrong. Your life is too important for that. It is too important to do anything less than live it in pursuit of God's kingdom and what is right.

Stop worrying about what could go wrong. Start living for what could go right.

Stop playing defense and play offense.

You are a soldier in the army of God.

You are a citizen of the kingdom of God.

You are a child of the God of the universe.

Live like it.

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Take therefore no thought for the morrow – this doesn't mean not to plan for tomorrow. It means don't worry about tomorrow. Why?

For the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself – Tomorrow will take care of itself

Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof – There are enough things to take care of today without worrying about tomorrow (Sorenson, 2007)

### **Application**

Are you wasting your life worrying about what could go wrong? Folks, don't worry.

- God is powerful.
- You are cared for.
- Worry is powerless.
- God is reliable.
- God knows your situation.

Are you seeking God's kingdom first? Is it the priority of your life? Are you living for what's really important or are you caught up in less significant things?

## MATTHEW 7:1-6

### Review

The Expression of the Righteousness of the Kingdom

- How to give to the poor
- How to pray
- How to fast
- How to lay up treasure (in heaven)
- How to live for the kingdom (lay down worry)
- How to treat others

### HOW TO TREAT OTHERS

1.) Don't be critical

1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.

Did you know that there are passages in the Bible that tell us not to judge (such as here in Matthew 7:1-5), but that there are also other passages in the Bible that tell us we should judge (such as John 7:24 – judge righteous judgment)? How do you reconcile that? And what does Jesus mean here when he says, "Judge not"?

Judge not – the word judge as used in the Bible is a broad word that can mean different things depending on the context of how its used

Illustration – English word with broad meaning: fight

- What do I mean when I say, "Don't fight"? Well, you need context to answer that question.
  - o Fighting in war
  - o Fist fighting
  - o Verbal fighting
  - o Competing

- Because fight is a broad word with different meanings in different contexts, I could tell my kids to not fight physically with each other, but also to be fighters in life without contradicting myself.
  - Why? Because I mean different things when I say “fight” in different contexts.
  - Such is also true with “judging”.
    - In Matthew 7:1, we are told not to judge, but in other passages of Scripture we are told to judge. What type of judging are we supposed to do, and what type of judging are we not supposed to do?
  
- Judge (evaluate) others
  - Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment. (John 7:24)
    - Don’t just evaluate others by appearances.
  - Confront a sinning brother in an effort to restore them from their sin (Matthew 18:15-17)
  - Galatians 6:1 – spiritual members of the congregation are called to gently restore other members who have fallen into sin
  - Not correcting a sinful neighbor is a form of hatred, not love (Lev. 19:17)
  - Separate from a professing believer engaged in open egregious sin (1 Cor. 5:11)
- Judge (evaluate) teachers
  - Beware of false prophets (Matt 7:15)
    - Evaluate whether a teacher is proclaiming the truth or error.
  - Mark those who cause divisions contrary to the doctrines which you have learned and avoid them (Romans 16:17-18)
  - Judge the soundness of the doctrine of everything we hear (Gal. 1:8; 2 John 10-11)
- Judge right and wrong
  - The book of Hebrews calls for a level of spiritual maturity wherein Christians have their senses trained to discern good and evil (Heb. 5:14) (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, pp. 431-432)
- There is an aspect of judgment/evaluation of others, of teachers, and of right and wrong that the Bible calls us to.
  - The problem is that the Christian’s responsibility to discern, once granted, is readily warped into justification for harping criticism. (Carson D. , 1978)
  - That’s what Jesus is getting at here.

Judge not – Do not be judgmental or critical in your evaluation of others (Carson D. , 1978)

- It speaks of a critical condemning spirit whose goal is condemnation, not restoration... It speaks of one who is always judging and evaluating and condemning and criticizing others. (Spence & Exell, 1883)

- Jesus is here talking about self-righteous, egotistical judgment and unmerciful condemnation of others that was practiced by the scribes and Pharisees. Their primary concern was not to help others from sin to holiness, but to condemn them to eternal judgment because of actions and attitudes that did not square with their own worldly, self-made traditions. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 432)  
Romans 14:4 - Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand

- You're not the master of your brother. If God is the master and you and your brother are both his servants, who are you to act like the master of your servant?

1 Corinthians 4:3-5 - But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

- Paul wasn't concerned with how others judged him or how he judged himself, but recognized that his ultimate judge was the Lord.

James 4:11-12 - Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

- The one who speaks evil of his brother for things not condemned in the Bible, not only takes the place of God as judge, but also places his standards on par with the Word of God. (Poole, 1990)

A.) You too will be judged

That ye be not judged – if you are critical in your evaluation of others, God will be critical in His evaluation of you

- If you are judgmental towards others, well what goes around comes around, and in the way you judged them, God will judge you.

2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged – God will judge us with the same type of spirit with which we evaluate others (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985)

- When we embrace a critical spirit of others, we think of the distance between ourselves and others as massive, but from God's perspective it's miniscule. We are

all in needs of God's forgiveness and mercy. What's massive is the distance between us and our judge.

- Illustration – the kettle calling the pot black
- A critical, condescending judgmental spirit is like a boomerang that comes around and hits you in the head.
- Illustration – parable of the forgiveness of the debts
  - o We are more like that than we think, when we embrace a critical spirit.

And with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again – judgment is the verdict. Measure is the sentencing.

If you presume to take upon yourself God's office of judge in critically condemning and disparaging others, the verdict and sentencing that you cast on others will come back upon you from the one who truly is the righteous judge. (Spence & Exell, 1883)

If you are critical in your evaluation of others, God will be critical in His evaluation of you.

Romans 14:10-13 - But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

- o Let us not take upon ourselves the office of judge in condemning our brother, but rather, if we are predisposed to judging, let us examine our own lives and see if there's anything we're doing that might cause our brother to stumble in his walk with the Lord.

Obadiah 1:15 - For the day of the LORD is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head.

Mark 4:24 - And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given.

Luke 6:37-38 - 37 Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: 38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

2 Corinthians 9:6 - But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

B.) You need to look in the mirror

3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye – a mote would be a twig or possibly a splinter. Why do you perceive the splinter in your brother's eye? (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985)

But considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? – but you don't notice the beam/the log that is in your own?

You've got two problems here:

- You can't see clearly to help your brother if you've got a log in your eye
- You've got a log in your eye
  - o If I had a log in my eye, that would take the priority

Illustration – Nathan's confrontation of David

2 Samuel 12:1-9 – 1 And the Lord sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. 2 The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: 3 But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. 4 And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. 5 And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: 6 And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity. 7 And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; 8 And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. 9 Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.

Application – we can get so caught up in being critical of others and their sin that we lose sight of our own

- You may not struggle with pornography, but you may struggle with greed.
- You may not struggle with drugs, but you may struggle with fear and anxiety.
- You may not struggle with alcoholism, but you may struggle with anger.
- Beware of putting others under the microscope without ever looking in the mirror.

Luke 18:11-14 - 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess 13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but



smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

John 8:7-9 - So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

- He goes further. It's not just that you notice the splinter in your brother's eye while being oblivious to the log in your own, it's that you confront him about helping fix his problem while doing nothing about your own.
  - o It's not just that you are like a hawk in noticing the sin of others (without perceiving your own), but you are like a bull in confronting others about their sin (without ever confronting your own).
  - o You know what that makes you? A hypocrite.

5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye;

Thou hypocrite – you are a hypocrite. Why? Because you're not practicing what you preach. You preach the importance of living a holy life, but you haven't even confronted your own unholiness.

- It's easy to tell others what to do. It's much harder to actually be able to do it yourself.
- It's like we talked about last Sunday: modeling always precedes mentoring.
  - o Practice first. Preach second.
  - o Teaching your kids
    - Be thankful, but are you thankful?
    - Control your temper, but do you control your temper?
    - Be kind to others, but are you kind to your wife or husband?

Application – this is not for someone else. This is for you, and this for me. You say, "I don't struggle with that." Boom. There it is. Yes you do. You just don't see it.

- Don't you understand that that is exactly what the guy with the beam in his eye would say? "Oh I don't struggle with that. I don't have a log in my eye. What are you talking about?"

First cast out the beam out of thine own eye – take note of your own sin and turn from it. Cast it out of your life.

Application – taking time in prayer every day to examine your life (Lord, help me to see my blind spots), repent of sin, and ask for God’s help in living right for the day. Why?

### C.) Your brother needs your help

and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

- I don’t know if you were aware of this, but your brother has a twig in his eye. He could use a hand in dislodging it. It’s kind of hard for him to see it.

When Jesus says not to be judgmental, He’s not saying to refrain from confronting others about sin. This verse makes that clear. He’s saying to refrain from being critical and from confronting others hypocritically.

And then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye – you’ve removed the log from your own eye, and now you’re ready to help your brother remove the twig from his

- You’ve purged your own life of sinful practices. Now you’re ready to help your brother do the same, and Jesus is teaching here that we should. Moreover, other passages do as well.
- Matthew 18 – we are to confront  
Galatians 6:1 - Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

Psalm 51:9-13 - Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

### 2.) Be Discerning

6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

In the prior verses Jesus addressed the danger of a discerning spirit turning into judgmental harsh criticism. In this verse Jesus addresses the danger of being undiscerning, wishy washy, and refusing to make legitimate distinctions between truth and error, good and evil. (Carson D. , 1978)

- By the way, take note that Jesus designates five verses for judgmental people and only one for undiscerning people. (Carson D. , 1978)
  - o We tend to struggle more with being too judgmental than do with being too undiscerning.

Dogs – semi wild hounds that roamed the streets and hills, tongues hanging from their mouths and burrs clinging to their filthy coats as they foraged for food in savage packs (Carson D. , 1978)

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs – for a Jew to have thrown to the dogs a piece of holy meat that had been consecrated as a sacrifice in the temple would have been unthinkable!

- Offerings
  - o Some parts burnt up
  - o Some parts eaten by the priest
  - o Some parts taken home and eaten by the family that made the sacrifice
  - o The part left on the altar was that which was consecrated exclusively to the Lord and was therefore holy in a very special way
    - If no man was to eat of that part, how much less should it be thrown to a bunch of wild, filthy dogs? (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985)

Swine – wild pigs who foraged for themselves, often in garbage dumps on the edge of town. These swine were greedy, vicious and filthy even by ordinary pig standards

Neither cast ye your pearls before swine – pearls were immensely valuable and rare jewels. Yet if you cast one before pigs, whose primary concern was ravaging for food, they would not appreciate it, considering that it was hard, and tasteless, and could not be eaten. In fact, the pigs very well may...

Lest they trample them under feet, and turn again and rend you – Not only would they not appreciate you casting the pearls before them, but they may resent you for it and attack you as the one who threw the tasteless, hard pearls in front of them. If you came between pigs and their food, they could turn and tear you to pieces with its tusks and sharp hooves (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985)

Illustration – don't feed the bears when out camping. If they're not satisfied, they will turn on you and tear you to pieces.

- Former youth pastor feeding alligators marshmallows in Florida (he's now pastoring in Yermo)

Application - Have you ever tried to help someone, and they attacked you? They turned on you? That's what Jesus is getting at here. You need to be discerning. We should have a heart to help and minister to others, but you can't help people that won't help themselves...and there comes a point in time where you need to be discerning about that and move on.

Matthew 10:14-15 - And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.

Acts 18:5-6 - 5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. 6 And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean; from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

Titus 3:10 - A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject;

## **Application**

How do we treat others?

- We should not be judgmental and critical. Why?
  - o Because we too will be judged.
  - o Because we need to take a look in the mirror.
  - o Because our brother needs our help.
- We must be discerning.
  - o We're called to confront sin. We're called to help others, but there comes a point in time where we must be discerning and move on.

How are you treating others in your life?

- Are you critical towards others?
- Do you take note of the sin in your own life? Is there a log in your eye that you need to confess and repent of?
- Do you need to grow in discernment as a child of God?

# MATTHEW 7:7-12

## Review

### HOW TO TREAT OTHERS

#### 1.) Don't be critical

1 Judge not, that ye be not judged. Why?

A.) You too will be judged

2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

- Don't be critical lest God be critical with you.

B.) You need to look in the mirror

3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

- Don't be critical because you've got your own issues you need to fix.

C.) Your brother needs your help

5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

#### 2.) Be Discerning

6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

You can't help people that won't help themselves. There are times when you try to help people and they attack you. You need to be discerning in situations like that.

## Sermon

7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

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.

Verses 1-6 – teaches how to treat others

Verses 7-11 – jumps over to prayer

Verse 12 – begins with “therefore” and gives us the golden rule on how to treat others

Recall that Jesus has already taught on prayer in Matthew 6:5-15. He taught us not to pray hypocritically to men, but to pray to God, and then He gave us the Lord’s prayer. I almost taught this passage back when we we’re working through prayer, but I believe Jesus included it in this section on how to treat others for a reason. Further, the use of the word “therefore” in verse 12 confirms that.

I believe that in verses 7-11 Jesus is setting the groundwork for why we should follow the golden rule, why we should treat others so well.

I believe at the core of it is this thought: God has perfectly provided for my needs so that I can treat others the way that God has treated me.

Or because God cares for my needs in a way that I don’t deserve, I can care for the needs of others in a way that they might not deserve.

How should we treat others?

1.) Don’t be Critical

2.) Be Discerning

3.) Practice the Golden Rule

Why?

A.) God’s promises to us ensure us He will meet our needs

7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

- There are three different forms presented of coming to God for the things that we need from Him. Their tense tells us that they are to be continuous activities, and

their sequence tells us that they are progressive in intensity. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985)

- Keep on asking and it will be given to you
  - We ask for what we wish
- Keep on seeking and you will find it
  - We seek for what we miss
- Keep on knocking and the door will be opened for you
  - We knock for that from which feel ourselves shut out (Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown, 1884)
  - We knock as beggars do for relief and assistance. (Gill, 1811)

Psalm 145:18-19 - The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.

Jeremiah 29:12-13 - Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Verse 7 emphasizes the command, and verse 8 emphasizes the promise.

Is this a blanket promise? Anyone who continuously asks anything from God at any time for any reason will receive it? No. It is not.

It's interesting because sometimes people get mad at God for not keeping promises that He never made. This is not a promise that guarantees that anyone who keeps asking God for anything will receive it.

Illustration – Experience confirms that. Otherwise I would be in the NBA and the NFL and the MLB and be a preacher.

Jesus is talking in general terms here, and we have to compare Scripture with Scripture when we talk about promises. We also have to evaluate broader, more generalized statements Jesus made in light of more specific statements that He made.

Illustration – as an American, you are free...That's great! But there's qualifications on that freedom. Right? You're not free to murder your neighbor. You're not free to steal catalytic converters. You're not free from taxes.

Illustration – with this ticket, you can go anywhere in Disneyland that you'd like. But once again, there are qualifications. You can't go into the ride operating booth. You can't go behind the danger fencing. General truths must be evaluated in light of those specific qualifications.

When Jesus says, "Ask and you will be given; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you" it's 100% true, but that general statement must be evaluated in light of more specific statements that He made, more specific qualifications that He taught on prayer.

#### Qualifications implicit in this promise

- Relationship
  - o Everyone – refers to those who belong to the Heavenly Father. Those who are not God's children cannot come to Him as their Father. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985)
- Faith
  - o Matthew 21:22 - And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.
  - o The child like believing disposition of the prayer is presupposed in Matthew 7:9-11. (Meyer, 1880)
- Motives
  - o James 4:3 - Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.
  - o God's not going to answer sinful or selfish requests.
  - o Just because you pray for a Lamborghini does not mean that God is entitled to give you one.
- Submission to His Will
  - o 1 John 5:14 - And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:
  - o Matthew 7:11 - 11 If ye then, being evil, know how to **give good gifts** unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in **heaven give good things** to them that ask him?
  - o There are many things that a good parent will not give to their child no matter how much they ask. To answer yes to every request of a child is not love, but foolishness.

#### Illustration – today's wants versus tomorrow's needs

- Kids don't see past today, and so they don't understand their own needs in the same way as their parents do



- Christians don't see past today, and so they don't understand their own needs in the same way as their Father does
  - o Today – this life
  - o Tomorrow and beyond – eternity
  - o Nana asked me years ago, “Jacob, what do we really need?”

God's promises to us ensure us He will meet our needs.

B.) God's relationship to ensures us He will meet our needs

9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

Or what man is there of you – Dads, how many of you guys?

Whom if his son asked bread, – if your son asked you for a loaf of bread because he was hungry

- Asking expectantly that you would provide a need that was within your power to do will give him a stone? – something that resembles a loaf of bread, but does not meet your need and is cruelly deceptive

- Even if the son discovered the deception before breaking a tooth, his heart would be broken by his father's cruelty. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985)

10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

Or if he ask a fish – if your son asked you for some fish to eat

Will he give him a serpent – something that resembles a fish in that it is an animal, but once again is cruelly deceptive

- The idea is not that the snake would be alive and poisonous, and therefore of physical danger to the son. The suggestion is of a snake that is cooked to look like ordinary meat and would, unlike the stone, meet the son's physical need. But because they were among the unclean animals (Lev. 11:12), snakes were not to be eaten by Jews. A loving Jewish father would not deceive and defile his son into dishonoring the Word of God by tricking him into eating ceremonially unclean food. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985)

11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

If ye then, being evil – if you fathers, being depraved sinners

Know how to give good gifts unto your children – know how to provide good things to your children, to answer the expectant good requests of your children

How much more shall your Father which is in heaven – how much more will your Heavenly Father who is perfect, sinless, all powerful, and all caring

Give good things to them that ask Him – answer your requests and provide for your needs

The truth Jesus proclaims here is that, if imperfect and sinful human fathers so willingly and freely give their children the basics of life, God will infinitely outdo them in measure and in benefit. That is why the children of God are “blessed . . . with every spiritual blessing” (Eph. 1:3) offered by “the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us (vv. 7-8). (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 446)

Psalm 86:15 - But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.

Isaiah 49:15 - Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.

Romans 8:32 - He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

2 Cor. 9:8-15 - And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;) Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God. For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men; And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you. Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.

God's promises to us ensure us He will meet our needs.

God's relationship to us ensure us He will meet our needs.

C.) God's command directs us to meet others' needs

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.

Therefore

- Since your needs are taken care of by your Father
  - o You don't need to waste your mental bandwidth on your own needs. God's taken care of that. He has freed you up to care for and think about others. He has thought about you so that you can think about them.
- Since you are to imitate God's care for you to others
  - o God, in His conduct towards you, has set the example for how you should act in your conduct towards others.
    - God does not treat you how you deserve.
    - God does not treat you how you treat Him.
    - God graciously meets your needs and mercifully forgives you time and time again. Wouldn't it be great if we as Christians started treating people the way that God treats us?

All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you – however you want people to treat you

- It would be easy for Jesus to say, "Therefore, treat others the way that God treats you." And other New Testament passages do say that. Our problem is that we're so forgetful. We forget how God treats us. We forget about His mercies and grace in our life.
- So Jesus here gives us a roadmap for ethical behavior that is very easy to visualize and follow.
- However you want people to treat you

Do you even so to them – treat them that way.

- It does not say, "Treat others the way they treat you."
  - o That's the devil. That's your sin nature. That's the flesh. That's how lost people treat others. That's easy.
- It says, "Treat others in the way that you would want them to treat you."
  - o This is how you can love your enemies. You don't treat your enemies as they treat you. You treat them as you wish they would treat you, as God does treat you.

For this is the law and the prophets – if you took the entire Old Testament code of conduct for human relationships and summed it up in one sentence, this is it.

Matthew 22:39-40 - And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

What does this look like practically?

Illustration:

Corrie Ten Boom was a Dutch Christian who helped her family hide Jews during the world war. For this, she, her father, and her sister were imprisoned in horrible Nazi concentration camps where they were tortured, beaten, and starved. Both her father and sister died from the brutal treatment they received in the camps. Years after the war, Corrie was speaking in

a church about the love and forgiveness of God. After the service, a man came to thank her for her testimony. As he approached her, Corrie recognized him and recoiled. He had been one of the guards at the concentration camp she was held in. He was one of the men responsible for the death of her family. He was one of the men responsible for torturing and beating and starving her and millions of other Jews. She stood frozen as he approached. "You might not remember me. I was a guard at the Nazi concentration camp, and I am so so sorry for everything I was a part of. But since that time, I got saved and became a Christian. God changed my life in the most merciful and incredible way. I know that God has forgiven me for the cruel things I did there, but I'd like to have your forgiveness as well. Ma'am, will you forgive me?"

"I stood there with coldness clutching my heart thinking back on how he had wronged me so badly. But forgiveness is not an emotion. I knew that. Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart." – Corrie Ten Boom. She reached out her hand to shake his in forgiveness, and the love of God then filled her heart.

- You and I every day are like Corey Ten Boom in that moment. We are faced with the decision to treat others how they have treated us or to treat others how we wished they would have treated us.
- But in a greater sense, you and I are more like the guard at Auschwitz. We were the enemies of God. We were undeserving of mercy and Grace, and yet God gave us exactly that. And you know what God is saying to each of us in this room: Go and do thou likewise. Do not treat others as they have treated you. Treat them as I have treated you and treat them as you wish they treated you.
- Selfless love does not serve in order to prevent its own harm or to ensure its own welfare. It serves for the sake of the one being served, and serves in the way it likes being served—whether it ever receives such service or not. That level of love is the divine level, and can be achieved only by divine help. Only God's children can have right relations with others, because they possess the motivation and the resource to refrain from self-righteously condemning others and to love in an utterly selfless way. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 448)

## **Application**

Do you treat others that way? Do you treat others as God treats you? If God treated you the way you treat others, how much of a bind would you be in? Do you treat others as you would have them treat you?

- Do you forgive like you'd hope to be forgiven?
- Do you give grace as you'd hope to be given grace?
- Are you generous like you'd hope others would be generous with you?
- Are you empathetic like you'd hope others would be empathetic with you?



# MATTHEW 7:13-20

## Review

- 1.) The Citizens of the Kingdom (5:3-16)
  - A.) Their Character & Blessings (5:3-12)
    - (1) Poverty of Spirit -> Kingdom of Heaven (5:3)
    - (2) Mournfulness -> Comfort (5:4)
    - (3) Meekness -> Inheritance of the Earth (5:5)
    - (4) Hunger & Thirst After Righteousness -> Fulness (5:6)
    - (5) Merciful -> Mercy (5:7)
    - (6) Purity of Heart -> Seeing God (5:8)
    - (7) Peacemakers -> Called the Children of God (5:9)
    - (8) Persecuted for Righteousness Sake -> Kingdom of Heaven (5:10-12)
  - B.) Their Impact on the World (5:13-16)
    - (1) As Salt (5:13)
    - (2) As Light (5:14-16)
- 2.) The Righteousness of the Kingdom (5:17-7:12)
  - A.) Its Foundation: The Word of God (5:17)
  - B.) Its Fulfillment: Jesus Christ (5:17-18)
  - C.) Its Importance: Significant (5:19)
  - D.) Its Requirement: Unreachable (5:20)
    - (1) Murder (5:21-26)
      - i.) Murder isn't just a matter of the hands. It's a matter of the heart. (5:22)
    - (2) Adultery (5:27-30)
      - i.) Adultery isn't just a matter of deed, but desire. (5:28)
    - (3) Divorce (5:31-32)
      - (a) The Rabbinical Tradition (5:31)
      - (b) The Scriptural Teaching (5:32)
    - (4) Oaths (5:33-37)
    - (5) Vengeance (5:38-42)

Vengeance is God's department.
    - (6) Love (5:43-48)
      - i.) Love your enemies (5:44)
  - D.) Its Expression (6:1-7:12)
    - (1) How to Give to the Poor (6:1-4)
    - (2) How to Pray (6:5-15)
    - (3) How to Fast (6:16-18)
    - (4) How to Lay up Treasure (6:19-24)
    - (4) How to Live for the Kingdom (6:25-34)
    - (5) How to Treat Others (7:1-12)

Jesus has delivered the thrust of His sermon, and now He is going to transition into an invitation.

The Sermon on the Mount contains a great deal of ethical instruction – so much that some people have concluded that it lays out a series of conditions which must be met if a person is to enter the kingdom of God. In this view, an individual enters the kingdom because his obedience merits entrance. Such a deduction is of course false. (Carson D., 1978, p. 116)

If the Sermon on the Mount is to be construed merely as legal requirement to kingdom entrance, no one shall ever enter. Can anyone meditate long on Matthew 5-7 and remain unashamed? The Sermon on the Mount provides us with a crushing blow to self-righteousness. (Carson D., 1978, p. 121)

The invitation to the Sermon on the Mount as we will see over the next two weeks is a call to abandon self-righteousness and hypocrisy and follow Jesus in faith.

The Sermon on the Mount does not end with lofty thoughts of human goodness, sprinkled liberally with naïve hope about the inevitability of human progress. It offers two ways, and only two. The one ends in life (7:14), good fruit (7:17), entrance into the kingdom of heaven (7:21), stability (7:25); the other ends in destruction (7:13), bad fruit and fire (7:19), exclusion from the kingdom along with evildoers (7:23), ruination (7:27). (Carson D., 1978, p. 122)

From here through the rest of the sermon (vv. 13-27) Jesus repeatedly points out two things: the necessity of choosing whether to follow God or not, and the fact that the choices are two and only two. There are two gates, the narrow and the wide; two ways, the narrow and the broad; two destinations, life and destruction; two groups, the few and the many; two kinds of trees, the good and the bad, which produce two kinds of fruit, the good and the bad; two kinds of people who profess faith in Jesus Christ, the sincere and the false; two kinds of builders, the wise and the foolish; two foundations, the rock and the sand; and two houses, the secure and the insecure. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985, p. 452)

### 3.) THE INVITATION TO THE KINGDOM

#### A.) Choose the narrow gate to life

13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

Illustration – there are two entrances into this auditorium (front entrance which is wide and back door entrance which is narrow)

- Which entrance is used more often?

Illustration – there were numerous gates to the city of Jerusalem. Some were the broad magnificent gates through which the rich and powerful entered the Temple. Others were narrow and humble used for more mundane functions such as delivery, disposal of dung, or for animals. (Sorenson, 2007)

- Which gates do you think were used more often?

Enter ye in at the strait gate – enter through the narrow gate now

- Choose God's path now. Choose eternal life now. Become a citizen of the kingdom now.
- To those in the crowd who were lost, Jesus is saying, "You are traveling on the wrong path headed for destruction. If you want to be saved, you need to turn from the path you're traveling on and enter through the narrow gate to eternal life."
- What's the narrow gate? It's Jesus. It's a real faith based saving relationship with Jesus. How do you enter it? You put your faith in Jesus and become His follower/disciple.
  - o John 10:9 - I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.
    - Jesus is the door of salvation.
  - o John 14:6 - Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.
    - Jesus is the way to God.
  - o Matthew 7:22-23 - 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and 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.
    - What's the criterion for entrance into the kingdom? A relationship with Jesus Christ.
  - o Luke 13:23-29 - 23 Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, 24 Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. 25 When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: 26 Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. 27 But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. 28 There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. 29 And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.
    - That narrow gate to everlasting life is not open forever. That narrow gate to become a citizen of God's kingdom will one day close.
    - Illustration: once God closed the door to the ark, it was closed.
- What is Jesus saying? Enter the gate to eternal life now. Be saved. Believe in me. Follow me.



For wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat – There is one way to heaven (through Jesus), but there are many ways to Hell.

#### Illustration

- narrow gate -> narrow path -> eternal life (heaven)
- Wide gate -> wide path -> destruction (hell)
  - It is a path that is well traveled.
    - o Takeaway: God's way cannot be discovered by appeal to majority decision. (Carson D. , 1978, p. 124)
  - It's a path marked heaven that leads to hell.
    - o It's the route traveled by religion, false Christianity, and secular humanism.
  - It is a path that lead to destruction.
    - o The tragedy is that otherwise reasonable men become so enamored with the spaciousness and the popularity of their path that they take little thought as to its destination: destruction. Should they hear that it leads to destruction, they will deny it, arguing that they are no worse than most others on the same road, and that in any case God would not permit the destruction of so many. (Carson D. , 1978, p. 125)
    - o Apleia (destruction) does not refer to extinction or annihilation, but to total ruin and loss (cf. Matt. 3:12; 18:8; 25:41, 46; 2 Thess. 1:9; Jude 6-7). It is not the complete loss of being, but the complete loss of well-being. It is the destination of all religions except the way of Jesus Christ, and it is the destiny of all those who follow any way but His. It is the destination and destiny of perdition, hell, and everlasting torment. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985)

There is a wide path to destruction that many travel. Why?

14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way – The reason that many travel the wide path to destruction is because the gate to life is small and the way is tight, compressed, and narrow. The narrow way is the way of the godly and the broad way is the way of the ungodly – and those are the only two ways in which men can travel. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985)

Which leadeth unto life – which leads to eternal life in heaven with God.

And few there be that find it – why? Because man doesn't want God's way. Man wants man's way.

- It's not because the gate is too narrow to accommodate more. Jesus beckons all to come.
- It's not because heavenly space is limited. God desires all to be with Him.
- It is because man is too prideful to humble himself and come to God on His terms.
- Application: this is an indictment on religious pluralism and ecumenicism
  - o Illustration: Mormonism

Matthew 20:16 - So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

Matthew 22:14 - For many are called, but few are chosen.

Choose the narrow gate to life now.

B.) Avoid false teachers

15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

Beware of false prophets – False prophet: one who claims to speak on God's behalf but does not. It is one who claims to proclaim the truth, but does not.

Kids Illustration – claiming to speak on Caleb Isbell's behalf to Cody Fary but speaking falsely

- False prophets are dangerous and the broad way is littered with them.
- Those who preach a broad way can gather quite the audience. Why? Because people have itching ears for that which approves their sinful and prideful lifestyle.

Which come to you in sheep's clothing – they portray themselves as innocent and harmless (Barnes, 1834)

- Jesus has used the illustration of the gate, and now He's using another vivid illustration.

But inwardly they are ravening wolves – they are grasping, seizing, stealing wolves.

- In one sense, they are as dangerous to a flock of sheep as a hungry imposing wolf would be.
- In another sense, they are thieves, preying upon the naïve and extorting them for all they are worth. (Poole, 1990)
- Kids Illustration: fairy tale of little red riding hood and the big bad wolf
  - o That's what people who falsely speak on God's behalf are like.

How can you tell if someone is a false teacher?

How can you tell if someone is a wolf and not a sheep? By the way they act.

- Because no matter how much that wolf tries to look like a sheep, he's still a wolf on the inside, and over time he's going to act like a wolf.

16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

Jesus is going to answer the question: "How do you know if someone is a false teacher?"

- In Deuteronomy 18:20-22 God set forth warning regarding false prophets. In the Old Testament, the basic criteria for determining a false prophet was if his prophecy did not come to pass. And by the way, do you know what the penalty was for falsely prophesying? Death penalty.
- In Deuteronomy 13:1-5, we are also told to evaluate what a prophet says by the Word of God. If it contradicts what God has said, then we know this person is a false prophet.
- Here in Matthew 7, Jesus gives us another criteria for evaluating teachers and he uses another illustration.

Ye shall know them by their fruits – Teachers are like trees. You can tell what kind of a tree it is by the fruit that it produces. In the same way, a teacher can be evaluated not just by appearance or words, but by the fruit of his life. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985)

Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? – In Jesus' day everyone knew that the buckthorn had little black berries which could be mistaken for grapes, and there was a thistle whose flower, from a distance, might be mistaken for a fig. But no one would confuse the buckthorn with a grape once he put it in his mouth. No one would be taken in by thistle flowers when it came to eating figs for supper. (Carson D. , 1978, p. 128)

- Grapes don't grow on thorn bushes and figs don't grow on thistle plants. (Sorenson, 2007)
  - o Illustration – apples don't grow on orange trees and oranges don't grow on apple trees.
  - o If you want to know if a tree is an apple tree, what do you do? You look for apples. If you want to know if a tree is an orange tree, what do you do? You look for oranges.

Matthew 12:33 - Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit.

James 3:12 - Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit – The thought of a corrupt tree here likely refers to a wild tree. The word translated as corrupt (*sapros*), in this context, refers to being of poor quality or unfit for use. Wild trees as a rule produce sour, bitter fruit. In contrast, good trees produce the sweet, good fruit which is desirable. (Sorenson, 2007)

A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit – He reiterates what He just said about trees and fruit, and the implication Jesus is making is that you can evaluate the fruit of a false teacher in their lifestyle (Galatians 5:19-24)

Luke 6:43-45 - For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

- Application: if someone claims to speak for God but they're selfish, fleshly, conceited, and worldly, that tells you that probably need to avoid them and their teaching.

Galatians 5:22-24 - 19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

Ephesians 5:9 - (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

Philippians 1:11 - Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

Colossians 1:10 - That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

1 John 3:9-10 - Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire – Trees that don't bring forth fruit are cut down and worthless. All they are good for is burning.

Such is true of false teachers as well, whose sin filled lives testify against them and condemn them to the fires of hell. (Spence & Exell, 1883)

Matthew 3:10 - And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

- John the Baptist used this illustration, and he made it even more vivid by saying that the axe of judgment is already here.

Luke 13:6-9 - He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

John 15:2-6 - Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

Hebrews 6:8 - But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.

20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them – what's true of trees is true of teachers. You will know them by their fruits. False prophets can look like real prophets, and even their fruit may appear to be genuine. But the nature of the false prophet cannot be hidden forever. Sooner or later he will be seen for what he is. The falseness of his teaching erupts in the disobedience of his life. (Carson D. , 1978, p. 128)

- What does good fruit look like? It is a life in growing conformity to the culture of the kingdom of God: righteousness, transparent humility, purity, trusting and persistent prayerfulness, obedience to Jesus' words, truthfulness, love, generosity, rejection of all that is hypocritical. (Carson D. , 1978, p. 129)

Jesus' Invitation Part 1

- Enter the narrow gate to life now
- Avoid false teachers

### **Application**

Have you entered the narrow gate? Have you accepted Jesus as your Savior?

Don't get discouraged by the narrow way. It's tight. It's compressed. But the destination is well worth it.

How's your fruit? If you were on trial for being a Christian, would the fruit of your life be enough to convict you?

## **MATTHEW 7:21-29**

### **Review**

Jesus is giving His invitation to the Sermon on the Mount and it is primarily a call to abandon self-righteousness and hypocrisy and follow Jesus in faith.

There are primarily four aspects to the invitation that Jesus gives.

A.) Choose the narrow gate to life

- Two gates (broad and narrow)
  - Narrow – Jesus
  - Broad – everything else
- Two paths (broad and narrow)
  - Narrow – path of godliness
  - Broad – path of ungodliness
- Two destinations
  - Life – eternal life in heaven
  - Destruction – judgment of hell

Choose the narrow gate to life now. Choose me and the path that I teach.

B.) Avoid false teachers

- Of which the broad path is littered
- What are they like? They're like wolves in sheep's clothing
  - They pretend like they're harmless, but they are Dangerous with a capital D.
- How can you tell if someone is a wolf in sheep's clothing
  - You can tell by the way they act. A wolf can only act like a sheep for so long. Eventually that wolf nature will come out.
  - Just like you know trees by their fruits, you know false teachers by their lives.

### **Sermon**

C.) Avoid false profession

Claiming to know Jesus and doing incredible works in His name are not sufficient to gain entrance into God's kingdom.

21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven – mere profession of a relationship with Jesus does not result in entrance to the kingdom

But he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven – here Jesus contrasts those who merely profess a relationship with Him with their mouths with those who profess a relationship with Jesus through their actions.

- Your walk talks and your talk talks, but your walk talks louder than your talk talks.
- It's not that we enter into a relationship with Jesus through works. We don't. We enter into a relationship with Jesus through faith, and yet if we genuinely believe in Jesus that faith should be manifested in the way that we live our lives.
  - Illustration – I can tell my wife “I love you” all the time, but if I don't spend time with her, talk with her, and treat her kindly, those words mean nothing.
    - If I really love my wife, that will be manifested in the way that I interact with her. How can I claim to love her and it not change the way I treat her?
    - I can talk about how I love God all the time, but if I don't act like it, how empty are those words?
      - If I really love my God, that should be manifested in the way that I interact with Him. How can I claim to love Him and it not change the way I treat Him?
  - You know what Jesus is saying here? “Talk is cheap.”
  - The blasphemy of the sanctuary is far more awful than the blasphemy of the slum. – G. Campbell Morgan

Luke 6:46 - And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

Titus 1:16 - They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

James 2:20-26 - But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Further, the will of God in the matter of salvation is turning to and trusting Jesus Christ as one's personal savior. (Sorenson, 2007)

- John 6:28-29, 40 - 28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? 29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. 40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Luke 13:25 - When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are:

1 John 3:21-24 - Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works – not only is mere profession insufficient for entrance into the kingdom, but also religious experiences and activities are insufficient for entrance into the kingdom.

Have we not prophesied in thy name? – This could be in reference to foretelling or forthtelling.

- Jesus, have we not publicly taught others in your name? Have not we foretold of things to come?

And in thy name have cast out devils? – Jesus, have we not cast out demons in your name?

And in thy name done many wonderful works? – Jesus, have we not done miracles in your name?

Jesus says it's not sufficient.

- How do you explain the claims of these false believers? Did these false believers, these professing Christians actually cast out demons and do miraculous works even though they weren't saved?
  - o Take note that although they claimed to have done these things, the text never explicitly states that they actually did these works. These exorcisms and miracles very well may have been contrived, fake, or disillusioned.



- Nevertheless, it may also be that these “false believers” were empowered by Satan to do such things.
  - Acts 8:9-11 describes the work of a Satanic sorcerer named Simon.
  - In Acts 19:13-15, we’re told about the seven sons of Sceva who were traveling Jewish exorcists.
    - Acts 19:13-15 - Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?
  - Talking about the tribulation time period, Matthew 24:24 says, “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”
- They may have even been empowered by God to do such things.
  - In the Old Testament we find Baalam and Saul prophesying, who were both wicked men. Judas was sent out (under the New Testament) both to preach and to work miracles. (Poole, 1990)

Hebrews 6:4-6 - For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

Regardless, Jesus is saying that in addition to mere profession, religious activities are insufficient grounds for entrance into God’s kingdom. What is sufficient grounds?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you – it doesn’t matter what you profess. It doesn’t matter how great your religious experiences are. It matters whether or not you have a real relationship with Jesus that is entered into through faith and manifested through obedience to Him.

- These were religious, but they had no relationship with Jesus Christ.
- They sought a relationship with Jesus on their terms instead of on His terms.

- They professed to know Jesus, but Jesus professed that He never knew them.

Illustration – claiming to know Trevor Lawrence in order to gain entrance into his home

- Knowing of him is not enough
- Doing things for the sake of the Jags is not enough
- What matters is if he knows me. Do we have a real relationship?
  - o Relationships are two sided.

Matthew 25:12 - But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

John 10:14 - I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

John 10:27-30 - My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.

2 Timothy 2:19 - Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

I never knew you – He doesn't say here, "I used to know you."

- It's not that they had possessed salvation at one point in time and then lost it. They never truly possessed a relationship with Jesus.

1 John 2:19 – They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

Depart from me ye that work iniquity – these will be sent away into everlasting punishment where they will be separated from the presence of the Lord forever.

- Further, they are sent away into everlasting punishment, not because they worked iniquity, but because they work iniquity...not because they were sinners, but because they are sinners and will remain sinners forever and ever. (Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown, 1884)

Matthew 25:41 – Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 – 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

Revelation 22:15 – For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

Don't fall into the trap of thinking that just because you know the lingo and you're plugged into the church, that you're good. What matters is whether or not you know Jesus as your Savior.

D.) Hear and Obey Jesus' Words

24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

Man – represents us

House – represents our lives

Rock – represents the Word of God

Building our house on the rock – represents obeying the Word of God

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them – the person who hears, understands, believes and obeys the things I have just taught you (Benson, 1857)

I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock – rock here does not refer to a stone or even a boulder, but a great large expanse of bedrock. It is solid, stable and unmovable. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985)

Palestine was to a considerable extent a land of hills and mountains. It was subject to sudden and violent rains. The Jordan, the principal stream, was annually swollen to a great extent, and became rapid and furious in its course. The streams which ran among the hills, whose channels might have been dry during some months of the year, became suddenly swollen with the rain, and would pour down vehemently into the plains below. Everything in the way of these torrents would be swept off. Even houses, erected within the reach of these sudden inundations, and especially if founded on sand or on any unsolid basis, would not stand before them. The rising, bursting stream would shake it to its foundation; the rapid torrent would gradually wash away its base; it would totter and fall. Rocks in that country were common, and it was easy to secure for their houses a solid foundation. No comparison could, to a Jew, have been more striking. (Barnes, 1834)

What Jesus is saying is, "believing and obeying what I have taught you is like building your life on a bedrock foundation."

James 1:22 - 22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves

Luke 11:28 - But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

John 13:17 - If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

John 14:15 - If ye love me, keep my commandments.

John 14:22-24 - Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

John 15:14 - Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

James 2:17-26 - Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

1 John 2:3 - And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

1 John 3:22-24 - And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

And the rain descended – from above

And the floods came – from below

And the winds blew – from across

And beat upon that house – from every direction

And it fell not – and it didn't fall. Why?

- Not because of the make up of the house
- Not because of its own strength
- Not because of the builder (Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown, 1884)

For it was founded upon a rock – it stood because of its foundation

- What is the foundation? The Word of God.
- In our lives and our homes and our families, we need to build upon the foundation of Jesus' Word. How do you do that? You read it. You understand it. You obey it.

26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not – every person who hears and understands Jesus' words, but doesn't obey them, doesn't build their life upon them

- Notice that both the wise and foolish equally hear the words of Jesus

Shall be likened unto a foolish man – is like a fool

Which built his house upon the sand – whereas bedrock is solid, stable and unmovable, sand is loose, unstable and extremely movable.

- This is a man who has built his life on an unstable foundation
- This is a man who has built his life on everchanging religion, the opinions of culture, or the external traditions of men and not on the Word of God (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985)

27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

And the rain descended – from above

And the floods came – from below

And the winds blew – from the sides

And beat upon that house; and it fell; and great was the fall of it – the house was destroyed and its destruction was great and swift

- Those who build their lives on Jesus and His Word will be stable and saved from destruction.
- Those who build their lives on anything else will be unstable and destroyed.

Choose the narrow gate to life.

Avoid false teachers.

Avoid false profession.

Hear and obey my words.

## E.) The People's Response

28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:

The people were astonished at his doctrine – after Jesus had finished his sermon, the people were amazed at His teaching

Matthew 13:54 - And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?

Mark 1:22 - And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.

Luke 4:22 - And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

Luke 4:32 - And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.

John 7:46 - The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.

29 For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes – The scribes quoted others to lend authority to their teachings, but Jesus quoted only God's Word and spoke as the final authority on truth. (MacArthur, Matthew 1-7 MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1985)

It hath been said...But I say unto you...

Matthew 21:23-27 - And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

Matthew 28:18 - And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

## Application

The people were amazed at Jesus' teaching, but Jesus didn't want them to be amazed. He wanted them to believe and obey.

Friend, have you entered the narrow gate to life?

Are you avoiding false teachers?

Are you avoiding false profession?

Are you building your life on the foundation of God's Word?

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