

THE
HEART
OF THE MATTER

A SERMON ON THE MOUNT SERIES



Sermon on the Mount

Part 1: Matthew 5

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Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 5:1-11

Lesson 1: Beatitudes Part 1

Living Under the Word

Sermon Notes

Personal Bible Study

The Sermon on the Mount found in Matthew 5-7 is Jesus's longest recorded sermon. Many familiar words, phrases and concepts are found in these three familiar chapters of scripture. The message of this sermon is very clear. Jesus describes the lifestyle of those who belong to his kingdom. He challenges value systems, ethics, religious devotion, attitudes about relationships and money. Would it surprise you that the response of his disciples might be this: "There is no way I can live like this. Is it even possible?!"

Like Jesus's disciples on that mountain in the first century, his disciples today need to wrestle with his words. What kind of life is Jesus calling us to? What does he want us to understand about who he is and the authority he has? If we are going to follow Jesus as his disciples, we must be willing to trust him and believe what he says. Let us look with new eyes and a fresh perspective on this famous sermon, becoming men and women who wholeheartedly follow Jesus.

1. Read Matthew 5:1-7:29 found on page 86 of this study guide. Highlight the repeated words and phrases. Look for themes, patterns, comparisons, and contrasts. Use this chart to record what you find.

Sermon on the Mount Observations: Matthew 5:1-7:29

Sermon on the Mount Observations (continued)

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2. Read Matthew 4:12-17 and compare it to Isaiah 9:1-2. Where was Jesus? Who was his audience? What did he say? Why were these words meaningful?

3. The chapters and verses in our modern bible are meant to help us easily locate scripture references. When Matthew wrote this gospel, however, he recorded it as one continuous story. To place the Sermon on the Mount in context, read Matthew 4:17-5:1 as one story. Who was with Jesus as Matthew 4 drew to a close and Matthew 5 began?

4. Theologians call Jesus the new and better Moses. There are many parallels between Moses and Jesus. Viewing Jesus as the new and better Moses will add meaning to the seemingly ordinary events that occur in Matthew 4-5. Read the following verses and compare Jesus and Moses.

Moses	Jesus
<i>Exodus 1:15-22:</i> Pharaoh killed babies	<i>Matthew 2:16-17</i>
<i>Exodus 3</i> God told Moses to lead his people out of Egypt	<i>Matthew 2:13-15</i>
<i>Exodus 14:21-22</i> Pass through the Red Sea	<i>Matthew 3:13-17</i>
<i>Joshua 5:6</i> 40 years in the wilderness	<i>Matthew 4:1-2</i>
<i>Exodus 19-20</i> Went up onto Mount Sinai to receive the law from God	<i>Matthew 5:1</i>

When Jesus is transfigured (Matthew 17) before the three disciples, he completed the story of Moses. He became the new mediator who goes up on the new mountain and reflects God's presence. This fulfills the hope of the people living under the rule of Yahweh and becoming like him. Jesus moves the story forward, because unlike Moses, Jesus's face now always shines and he doesn't have to cover his face. Jesus reveals the will of God in his shining face.

"Matthew's Gospel as You've Never Read It Before" (TGC article by Patrick Schreiner; September 6, 2019.)

5. How does knowing that Jesus is the new mediator change the way you hear his word?

6. Jesus preaches this sermon with authority, setting clear and right expectations for his followers, those who are citizens of the kingdom of heaven. Read the following verses and identify what these expectations are.

Matthew 4:12-17

Matthew 4:19

Matthew 5:2-12

Matthew 7:24-29

Matthew 28:18-20

7. Reflect on all the verses you read in this lesson. What has made the most impact on your life? What does Jesus want YOU to know? What was most convicting to you?

Living Out Our Faith Together

Group Discussion Questions

1. Reflect on the sermon. What resonated with you? What questions or insights do you have?
2. Read Matthew 5-7 as a group.
3. Where does the Sermon on the Mount occur in God's story, the metanarrative? Why does this context matter?

Note: The biblical metanarrative is the overarching story of scripture that is divided into four parts: Creation, Fall (or Rebellion), Redemption, and Restoration. When you read scripture, it is helpful to think about where each passage fits in the story.

4. What intrigued you about the Sermon on the Mount? Share something new that you learned or share a question you have about what you read.
5. In what ways did the comparison between Moses and Jesus add to your understanding?

6. Jesus perfectly displayed and lived out the life he described in the Sermon on the Mount. How did the world respond to Jesus? How will the world respond to His disciples, or followers?

7. What kind of life is Jesus describing for his disciples? If you are a follower of Jesus, what is your response to his description? If you are not a follower of Jesus, what is your response?

Prayer

The Beatitudes is such a succinct list of ways to live a life that reflects the promise of Heaven. Take time to pray through this passage (Matthew 5:3-12). We recommend having one reader who reads the passage aloud, but pauses after each verse and allows time for others to pray out loud as a group in between the verses.

Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 5:1-11

Lesson 2: Beatitudes Part 2

Living Under the Word

Sermon Notes

Personal Bible Study

This account of the Sermon on the Mount was written by Matthew to a predominantly Jewish audience who knew of the faithfulness of God and were waiting for the promised Messiah.

The message of a Messiah King was proclaimed by the Old Testament prophets. The prophet Jeremiah said,

"Behold, the days are coming" declares the Lord, "when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.'"
Jeremiah 23:5-6

When Jesus began calling his disciples, Philip—one of the disciples—recognized who Jesus was and said to Nathanael,

"We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." John 1:45

In the first two chapters of Matthew's gospel, he reinforces the evidence of God's faithfulness by repeating this theme five times

"All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet" Matthew 1:22, 2:5, 2:15, 2:17, 2:23

Jesus's identity was a big deal. His presence among his people was about to change everything. And the reality of his with-us presence means that his kingdom is not somewhere far off or distant, rather the kingdom is here. And that reality matters. It impacts every aspect of our lives, calling us to live as citizens of the kingdom.

1. Read Matthew 5:1-7:29
2. Read Matthew 1:1-17. What did Matthew want his readers to know about Jesus? Why did Matthew emphasize that Jesus Christ was the son of David?

3. List the significant events that Matthew records in Matthew 1:18-4 on the chart below. Comment on your observations. (Who does Matthew name? Where were they? What did they do or say? In what ways does this narrative set the stage for the Sermon on the Mount?)

Matthew 1:18- 2	Matthew 3	Matthew 4

One theme that you may have seen in these chapters is that of *king* and *kingdom*. Jesus, the son of King David, is the promised Messiah or *king*. John the Baptist preaches, "Repent, for the *kingdom of heaven* is at hand".

The kingdom theme bookends the Sermon on the Mount, see Matthew 5:3 and Matthew 7:21. (Matthew 4:17 also refers to the kingdom.) In his sermon, Jesus describes kingdom life and paints a picture of what it looks like to live as people who belong to the kingdom.

From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Matthew 4:17

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

Matthew 5:3

And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

Matthew 7:28-29.

4. According to Jesus, when and where is the kingdom of heaven?
5. What did the disciples know about the Messiah? What type of king did they seek and was Jesus the type of king they were looking for? Why or why not?
6. Jesus begins describing life in the kingdom with a list of beatitudes. What is a beatitude?
(To look up the Greek word for beatitude (*makarios*), type "Strong's Greek #3107" in your browser.)

The beatitudes follow a pattern: a promise, followed by an exhortation that describes what it looks like to live as citizens of his kingdom. Jesus is calling together a people who will live under his reign in a counter-cultural way. He wants his disciples to lay down their kingdoms and follow him.

7. Read Matthew 5:3-4. List what or who comes to your mind when you think of poverty and mourning?

8. What do the following verses teach about being poor? Why would the promise of the kingdom of heaven be a blessing to those who are poor in spirit?
 - a. Psalm 34:6

 - b. Psalm 40:16-17

 - c. Psalm 69:32-33

 - d. Psalms 72:12-13

9. Make a list of areas in your life that you are poor in spirit. (Someone who is poor in spirit is someone who has insufficient resources to help him or herself)

10. Jesus says his disciples are blessed when they mourn because of their sin. Why would sin cause us to mourn?

e. Read Isaiah 6:1-6 and describe Isaiah's response to his encounter with God.

f. How does Nehemiah respond when he learns about Israel's generational sin in Nehemiah 1:1-6?

g. What does James say about mourning in James 4:6-9?

11. How does God comfort those who mourn over sin? Read 2 Corinthians 7:6-10 and James 4:8-10.

12. Ask the Spirit to reveal an area of sin in your life. Ask Him to give you a heart that is filled with Godly grief, leading you to repentance and forgiveness.

13. Write Matthew 5:5 here. Who is blessed?

14. How does the world define meekness?

Look up the Greek definition of meek. (Strong's #4239).

How are these two definitions different?

15. Based on the biblical definition of meek, how meek are you?

16. Rewrite the first three beatitudes in your own words.

Living Out Our Faith Together

Group Discussion Questions

1. Reflect on the sermon. What resonated with you? What questions or insights do you have?
2. Read Matthew 4:17-5:11.
3. How does seeing Jesus as *king* shape the way you read and understand the Sermon on the Mount?
4. How does viewing yourself as a *citizen of the kingdom of heaven* shape your understanding of Jesus's sermon?
5. How does Jesus describe the life of a disciple in Matthew 5:1-11?
6. Think about how Jesus has described people who are blessed. What lies is the world telling you that are counter to what Jesus said?

7. Why would the promise of the kingdom of heaven be a blessing to those who are poor in spirit?

8. The mourning that Jesus describes in Matthew 5:4 could be called godly grief. The Heidelberg Catechism (Answer 89) defines godly grief this way: is to be genuinely sorry for sin, to hate it more and more, and to run away from it.

Are you willing to name your sin? Do you experience deep grief over your sin and desire to run away from it?

In what ways are you tempted to hide your sin, to bury or ignore it?

How does this understanding of godly grief impact the way you view the sin in your life? What does godly grief produce in us? see 2 Corinthians 7:10-13.

9. How can our group help each other as we strive to live the life Jesus has called us to live?

Prayer

One useful tool to help shape our prayers is the ACTS model, stated below. Take time individually to identify at least one prayer you have for each category and then pray those ACTs prayers together.

A - Adoration
C - Confession
T - Thanksgiving
S - Supplication

A-

C-

T-

S-

Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 5:1-11

Lesson 3: Beatitudes Part 3

Living Under the Word

Sermon Notes

Personal Bible Study

Viewing the sermon from 50,000 feet provides the context needed to understand the lifestyle Jesus is describing. The temptation is to take each familiar chunk of Jesus's teaching and view it as a standalone message, which might lead us to think of these teachings as a moralistic code or something we can accomplish by being disciplined enough.

In Matthew 4:17, Jesus tells his followers to repent, for the kingdom of heaven is here. He then describes the lifestyle of those who belong to the kingdom. Only in Christ are we able to attain the level of righteousness that Christ describes. He wants his disciples to know that he is here. That is why he came. To live as he lived and die as he died. When we trust our lives to Christ he regenerates us from the inside out. He gives us a new heart. The prophet Jeremiah alludes to this in Jeremiah 31. He says,

"Behold, the days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband," declares the Lord. "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the Lord: "I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the Lord. "For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Keep this context in mind as you dive into the sermon.

1. Read Matthew 5:1-7:29 and focus on Matthew 5:3-11.
2. Define righteousness. (Strong's #1343).
3. Who is our righteousness? Read I Corinthians 1:26-31.
4. What does Jesus promise to those who hunger and thirst after righteousness?

10. What is the context of the persecution that Jesus describes in verse 10? Share some examples of what this type of persecution looks like.

11. Rewrite the beatitudes in your own words.

12. What is the overarching theme of the beatitudes?

Living Out Our Faith Together

Group Discussion Questions

1. Reflect on the sermon. What resonated with you? What questions or insights do you have?
2. How does the world's view of blessed, or blessing, differ from what Jesus taught? What do you count as blessings?
3. What challenges you as you consider Jesus's description of life as a citizen of the kingdom of God?
4. Were there any warnings that captured your attention?
5. How can you be a peacemaker with the people in your life? What are some practical ways you can do this?

6. What is the context of the persecution that Jesus describes in verse 10? Share some examples of what this type of persecution looks like.

Perhaps reading the beatitudes has left you with a growing awareness of your own inadequacy and inability. Do not lose hope. Jesus is purposely exposing the deep core issues about the state of our hearts and calling us to a deeper obedience. Jesus moves toward his people as their righteous king and shows us how to live.

Prayer

Matthew 5:10 says, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Share with one another about a place in your lives where you felt persecuted, reviled, or underappreciated, and pray for each other. We recommend going around the room in a circle sharing, then praying for the person on your right.

Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 5:13-16

Lesson 4: Gospel Salt and Gospel Light

Living Under the Word

Sermon Notes

6. Why are believers called the "salt of the earth"? What do you think Jesus is saying here? Compare the uses and characteristics of salt to followers of Christ.

7. How can salt lose its taste? How can followers of Jesus lose their saltiness?

8. What does verse 13 say should be done with salt that has lost its taste?
 - a. Read Mark 9:42-50 to further understand what it means for a believer to lose their saltiness.

 - b. Why is this very serious?

9. In Colossians 4:6, what area of our life is specifically called to be seasoned with salt? Why is this important?

10. Read these passages where light is mentioned. Note what the light represents and what is commanded:

a. John 8:12

b. 1 John 1:5-10

c. Colossians 1:13-14

d. Isaiah 9:1-2

e. Ephesians 5:8-14

11. Where do we get our light? How do we become a "light of this world"?

12. Having this light, what are we called to do (v.16)? What does this mean?

13. Having this light, what are we not supposed to do (v.14-15)? What does this mean?

Living Out Our Faith Together

Group Discussion Questions

1. Reflect on the sermon. What resonated with you? What questions or insights do you have?
2. How are believers to be “salt of the earth”? What are some practical ways to do this?
3. What areas of society are “dark”? How can you be a light, specifically in these areas?
4. Do you ever find yourself hiding your light? What is causing or tempting you to hide your belief in the Lord?
5. Darkness affects your ability to see clearly. How does your sin and darkness affect your relationship with God? How does the brokenness of the world affect you having a kingdom mindset?

Prayer

Read verse Matthew 5:16 again. In order to shine a light for each other, share as a group where you have seen God's faithfulness recently. Take time together to praise him for these things and how we can rely on his faithfulness and steadfast love.

Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 5:17-20

Lesson 5: Christ the Fulfilled Law

Living Under the Word

Sermon Notes

Personal Bible Study

1. Read Matthew 5:1-7:29.
2. Read Matthew 5:17-20.

When Jesus talks about the "Law and the Prophets" he is referring to the whole of the Hebrew Bible including the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) and the Prophets (the prophetic and poetry books). This is the whole story of God's grace and the Mosaic Covenant that God made with Israel. The Law and the Prophets included much more than what commandments or rules God's people must obey; it also encompasses Jesus's relationship to the covenant that God made with Israel.

3. What do the following verses teach about the law and prophets?
 - a. Mark 7:1-13
 - b. Luke 24:13-23
 - c. Acts 10:34-43
 - d. Romans 13: 8-10

4. The word *abolish* (Strong's Greek #2647, *katalyo*) means to destroy, throw down, demolish, overthrow, dissolve, or loosen. Jesus says that he has not come to *katalyo* (abolish) the Hebrew scriptures, rather he will fulfill them.

What does Jesus say in verse 17? Why does Jesus make this statement? Think of some reasons why his listeners might think that he had come to abolish the law and prophets?

5. Look up *fulfill* in the Greek. (Strong's Greek #4137). Write the definition here.

In his gospel Matthew refers to the *fulfillment of scripture* 15 times. He clearly wants his readers to know that Jesus is the promised Messiah, the one about whom the prophets had spoken.

Take some time to read through some of these verses in Matthew's gospel and note what they say about fulfillment.

Matthew 1:22-23

Matthew 2:15

Matthew 2:17-18

Matthew 2:23

Matthew 4:14-16

Matthew 5:17

Matthew 8:17

Matthew 12:17-21

Matthew 13:14-15

Matthew 13:35

Matthew 21:4-5

Matthew 27:9-10

What does this definition and these verses add to your understanding of who Jesus is and what he came to do?

6. List some of the ways that Jesus has fulfilled scriptures. Include scripture references.

Promise	Fulfillment

11. What do these verses teach us about following God's commands and teaching others to do the same?

a. John 14:15

b. John 15:10

c. I John 2:3

d. I John 3:24

e. I John 5:3

12. Look up the word righteousness. (Strong's Greek 1343) What is righteousness?

13. What type of righteousness must one possess to enter the kingdom of God?

Note: Who were the Scribes and Pharisees?

Scribes were experts in the interpretation and application of the law. They were greatly respected by fellow Jews and treated with honor. They were paid professionals.

Pharisees were members of a religious sect committed to meticulously observing the law. They were concerned with keeping the Sabbath, tithing, and rituals.

14. Read the following verses to gain a deeper understanding of the righteousness that God requires and how we attain this surpassing righteousness.

Isaiah 64:6

Ezekiel 36:24-28

Romans 3:21-22

2 Corinthians 5:21

Galatians 2:20

15. In what ways do you try to obtain this righteousness on your own?

Living Out Our Faith Together

Group Discussion Questions

1. Reflect on the sermon. What resonated with you? What questions or insights do you have?
2. Read Matthew 5:17-20
3. Share what you learned about the Law and the Prophets.
4. How does Jesus view the Old Testament scriptures?
5. How does knowing that Jesus is the fulfillment of Old Testament scriptures impact the way you view them?
6. Why is righteousness necessary for us to enter the kingdom of God?
7. What type of righteousness are you pursuing, an external, legalistic righteousness or an internal, spiritual righteousness? Share some examples of each.

8. As a group, reflect on the following verses:

Isaiah 64:6

Ezekiel 36:24-28

Romans 3:21-22

2 Corinthians 5:21

Galatians 2:20

Prayer

"A unique and special Korean prayer style is called *Tongsung Kido*. *Tongsung* means, 'cry out together loudly,' and *Kido* means, 'pray.' So, *Tongsung Kido* means, 'praying together out loud.' This unique form of Korean prayer is an important part of prayer life among the spirit-filled prayer life of Korean Christians." (Pastor Yohang Chun)

As a group, try *Tongsung Kido*, with each of you simultaneously presenting your reflections from today's Scripture and lesson with God.

Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 5:21-26

Lesson 6: Heart of Anger

Living Under the Word

Sermon Notes

Personal Bible Study

As Jesus began his ministry, he was revealing God's kingdom to living, breathing people who existed at a real time and real place. He affirmed the Old Testament Scriptures. He established his authority over the law. And he challenged the interpretation of the law that had been given to them. His listeners hear that God sees and cares about our hearts, not just our external good deeds, calling us to a greater and deeper obedience.

In Matthew 5:21-48, Jesus shares six examples, or antitheses, of what it means for his disciples to live according to Old Testament laws. Each of these examples begins with "*You have heard it said . . . , but I say to you.*" His point is not to contradict the law, rather to illuminate the true meaning of the law which goes beyond external actions to motivations and attitudes of the heart.

Our next five lessons will focus on these six antitheses. As you read and study, ask God to give you insight into what it looks like to live in greater obedience to Him as one of his disciples.

Read Matthew 5:1-7:29.

Read Matthew 5:21-26.

1. Read these passages in the Old Testament and note what they say about murder.
 - a. Exodus 20:13
 - b. Leviticus 24:17
 - c. Genesis 9:6
 - d. Exodus 21:12

10. What is the difference between righteous and unrighteous anger? Give some examples of both *in your life*.

11. Does God refuse to reconcile with us? How does he reconcile with us?

Living Out Our Faith Together

Group Discussion Questions

1. Reflect on the sermon. What resonated with you? What questions or insights do you have?
2. What often prevents you from seeking reconciliation with others? Or forgiving someone?
3. God reacts to us sinning against Him by sending his Son to die for us and reconcile us back to Him. How can we extend this grace to those who have hurt us?
4. What are some sources of anger in your life?
5. How can you respond in a Christ-like manner, instead of unrighteous anger?
6. Read Genesis 1:26-27. Since we are all made in the image of God, are we to treat people as if they have different value? Treat others with contempt? Seeing people as worthless? What are some people or people groups you are biased against? Identify these groups and ask God to help you love these people.

7. As you read these passages, you might be convicted to reconcile with others. Share with one another, pray for one another, and hold one another accountable.

8. Re-read Matthew 5:21-26. Is what Jesus calls us to easily obtainable? What hope do we have in Jesus, knowing we cannot live completely without sin?

Prayer

Verse 23 and 24 say, "So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." Split up into partners or groups of three. Share your prayer requests and if there is any way in which you need to reconcile with others. Also, share how you've been encouraged recently and pray for each other.

Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 5:27-32

Lesson 7: Sex and Marriage

Living Under the Word

Sermon Notes

Personal Bible Study

1. Read Matthew 5:1-7:29
2. Re-read Matthew 5:27-32.
3. In verse 27, Jesus is quoting the 7th commandment found in Exodus 20:14 and Deuteronomy 5:18. When he says, "*you have heard it said,*" is he implying that they had been taught wrongly?
4. How serious was adultery in God's eyes? see Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:22. How did the people of Jesus's day view adultery? See John 7:53-8:11.
5. Jesus affirms the seriousness of adultery, and he calls his listeners to a deeper obedience. How does verse 28 get to the heart of the matter?
6. What is lust (Strong's Greek #1937) and where does it originate?
7. Where does Jesus say adultery begins?

8. The connection Jesus makes between lust, the heart and the eyes is powerful. Read Job 31:1-12 to learn what righteous Job did to help guard his heart.

9. In Matthew 5:29-30 is Jesus telling his listeners to literally gouge out their eyes and cut off their hands? If not, what is he saying?

10. What kind of life is Jesus calling his followers to live?

Mark 8:34

Romans 8:12-14

Galatians 5:24-25

Colossians 3:1-5

Deuteronomy 24:1-4 gives context for Jesus's words in Matthew 5:31-32. Moses found it necessary to regulate divorce because hard-hearted men were divorcing their wives with no legitimate grounds. These regulations protected divorced women and made it more difficult for men to divorce their wives. Jesus wants his listeners to know that while these laws served a purpose, the intent for marriage is that a man and woman would live faithfully together for life, except in the case of adultery.

11. Was divorce part of God's design? Why did Moses allow divorce? See Matthew 19:3-9.

12. Contrast Jesus's teachings on marriage and divorce in Matthew 5:30-32 and Matthew 19:3-9 with how people view marriage and divorce today.

13. In what ways has divorce impacted your life or the lives of the ones you love? In what ways are Jesus's words hard to hear? In what ways are they a comfort to you?

14. Jesus challenges his listeners to look deep within themselves and identify the heart issues that lead us to lust or to commit adultery. How do the following verses help us understand our hearts, and what hope do these verses give?

Jeremiah 17:9

Ezekiel 11:19

Matthew 15:9

Ephesians 4:18

Psalms 51:10

Jeremiah 24:7

Ezekiel 36:26

15. What are some signs or red flags that alert you when you are lusting or committing adultery in your heart?

16. Perhaps the gospel has set you free from a pattern of adultery and lust. Praise God! How might you come alongside others who are struggling with these sins?

Living Out Our Faith Together

Group Discussion Questions

1. Reflect on the sermon. What resonated with you? What questions or insights do you have?
2. Why do we gaze lustfully? Why do we commit adultery? Are men the only ones who commit these acts?
3. Share some of the ways *committing adultery in the heart* can cause damage to yourself and others.
4. How do we protect our eyes from seeing things that would cause us to gaze lustfully?
5. What are some practical ways that we as a community of believers can help each other fight the sin of lust?

Prayer

Sing or read the hymn "Sanctuary" by John W. Thompson together. Afterwards, pray out loud when you feel led.

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary

Pure and holy, tried and true;

With thanksgiving I'll be a living

Sanctuary for You.

It is you, Lord

Who came to save

The heart and soul

of every man.

It is you Lord

Who knows my weakness,

Who gives me strength,

With thine own hand.

Lead Me on Lord

From temptation,

Purify me

From within.

Fill my heart with

Your Holy Spirit,

Take away

All my sin.

Lord, teach your children

To stop the fighting

And start uniting

All as one

Let's get together

Loving forever

A sanctuary

For You

Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 5:33-37

Lesson 8: Integrity Lost

Living Under the Word

Sermon Notes

Personal Bible Study

Read Matthew 5:1-7:29

1. Read Matthew 5:33-37. What Old Testament teaching was Jesus quoting?

2. What did taking an oath entail?
 - a. Read these passages to find out what God's people had been taught about taking oaths in the Old Testament:
 - Exodus 20:7

 - Leviticus 19:11-12

 - Numbers 30:1-2

 - Deuteronomy 23:21-23

 - 1 Samuel 12:3-5

 - b. Look up Strong #3660 to define *to take an oath*.

 - c. Look up Strong #1964 to define *swear falsely*.

7. In verse 37, what does Jesus say “comes from evil”? What is at the heart of this statement?

8. Rewrite verse 37 in your own words.

9. Why is it important for disciples of Christ to keep their word?

10. While Jesus commands us not to make oaths of this sort, God takes oaths. Read about some of these:
 - a. Genesis 22:16-18

 - b. Genesis 9:8-17

 - c. Psalm 132:11

 - d. Acts 2:27-31

 - e. Hebrews 6:17-18

11. What does God taking oaths reveal about Him? What does God taking oaths reveal about you?

12. List some of the characteristics of God that remind us that he is trustworthy.

Example: God can not lie	Numbers 23:19	God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?"

Living Out Our Faith Together

Group Discussion Questions

1. Reflect on the sermon. What resonated with you? What questions or insights do you have?

2. Think of a time when someone broke a promise they made to you. How did this make you feel? What was most disappointing about the promise being broken?

3. Does your "yes" mean "yes" and your "no" mean "no"?
 - a. Are you honest and trustworthy?

 - b. How do you stray away from honesty and trustworthiness?

 - c. What causes you to not tell the truth?

 - d. As a child of God, why is honesty so important?

4. Jesus is addressing those who redefine the law so that it is easier to obey. Do you find yourself doing this? What sin are you trying to justify as not a sin? How are you doing this?

5. How are God's oaths and promises different from the ones talked about in Matthew 5:33-37? How are God's oaths different from the promises we make?

6. Where do you see hypocrisy in your own life? How can you be less hypocritical?

7. Share some of the characteristics of God that remind us he can be trusted; that his "Yes" is "Yes". How does knowing that God keeps his promises and never breaks his word give you confidence to trust him?

8. What truths does God our father want us to know about him, about ourselves, and about our relationship with him?

9. In what ways does knowing that you have an honest and faithful King help you, as a citizen of His kingdom, to tell the truth?

Prayer

To conclude your time together, share prayer requests one at a time, but pray in-between each request. Pray for honesty and trustworthiness. Rejoice in prayer in knowing that Jesus came to save us, even though we are not honest and trustworthy.

Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 5:38-42

Lesson 9: Giving Up What Is Yours

Living Under the Word

Sermon Notes

Personal Bible Study

1. Read Matthew 5:1-7:29
2. Read Matthew 5:38-42 and Leviticus 24:19-20, Deuteronomy 19:16-21, Exodus 21:23-25.
3. What Old Testament teaching was Jesus quoting?
4. "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" is a principle, or law, called the law of retaliation. What was the intended purpose of this law? Who was responsible for administering justice?

The *lex talionis*, "eye for an eye", is holy, righteous, and good (Romans 7:12). Yet, as Jesus, Paul, and the Prophets knew, we tend to distort the law. We twist it to our advantage or evade it, so we can do as we please. In public, the *lex talionis* is necessary justice. But in private, it can cover a vindictive spirit. Society needs justice, but we do not need to exact justice with our own hand. As individuals, we can entrust justice to God and the state, and act in mercy.

In the law of Moses, public leaders enforced "an eye for an eye" in the land of Israel. But the church has no territory or public magistrates. Jesus addresses that borderless nation, the church, in its private life. He forbids us the cold pleasures of a vengeful spirit. IN isolation "an eye for an eye" might seem to tolerate the thought, "I'll give him back everything he gave, just as the law says." But Jesus forbids it. Indeed he requires the opposite attitude. (Dan Doriani, *The Sermon On The Mount*, pg. 87.)

5. Jesus addressed the misuse or misinterpretation of this law in Matthew 5:39-42. People were taking the law into their own hands by seeking personal revenge and retaliation. What does Paul say in Romans 12:17-21 about how we are to relate to the evil doers in our lives?

6. When Jesus says "do not resist the evil doer," is he saying not to use self-defense against someone who is harming you? If not, what is he saying?

7. Jesus himself models for us what it means to not resist evil doers. How did Jesus respond to those who meant to harm him?

Matthew 26:63,67

Matthew 27:30

Mark 14:65

John 19:9-11

What did Isaiah prophesy about this?

Isaiah 50:6-8

How did Peter describe Jesus's response to those who hated him?

1 Peter 2:23-25

Living Out Our Faith Together

Group Discussion Questions

1. Reflect on the sermon. What resonated with you? What questions or insights do you have?
2. Read Matthew 5:38-42.
3. How were the teachers of the law wrongly applying “the eye for an eye” principle?
4. Is Jesus saying you should never defend yourself or seek justice? How do 2 Samuel 5:6-25, Joshua 1:5, Judges 2:11-15, Romans 13:1-4, and James 1:27 inform your answer?
5. Is there a difference between retaliating against an evil doer and defending or protecting people you love? How can you discern the difference?
6. How are you tempted to respond when someone hurts, insults or embarrasses you? What would it look like to return a slap?

7. Can you think of an example of going the extra mile for someone?

8. Is there someone in your life that you simply do not want to turn the other cheek toward, or give your tunic and your cloak? What would Jesus want you to know? How is Jesus instructing you to respond?

Prayer

Today's Scripture encourages us to give to others. Take index cards and on one side write something you are thankful for. On the other side, write something that you are struggling with and need prayer for. Collect the notecards, shuffle them, then pass them back out. Pray for that person every day this week.

Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 5:43-48

Lesson 10: Love in Hard Places

Living Under the Word

Sermon Notes

Personal Bible Study

1. Read Matthew 5:1-7:29.
2. Re-read Matthew 5:43-48.
3. The Old Testament passage Jesus cites in verse 43 is Leviticus 19:18:
"Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord."

Contrast these words with what the scribes had taught. What did they add? What did they leave out?

4. Notice how this command was twisted to address *who* God's people were to love, rather than *how* they were to love. When are you tempted to twist scripture to make it more palatable?
5. How does Jesus correct this faulty teaching? In verse 44, what does he say to them?
6. Imagine what Jesus's listeners might have been thinking when they heard his words. In what ways do you think they may have struggled when Jesus told them to love and pray for their enemies? (Who might have been enemies of the disciples?)

7. Have you ever prayed for an enemy? Describe what happened in your heart when you did.

8. Read Matthew 5:45. When the children of God love their enemies, what does it affirm and identify about them and their relationship with God?

9. Giving sunlight and rain to all humanity is a visible way that God reveals his love and grace. This is called natural revelation and common grace. Why did Jesus include this in verse 45? How does Jesus challenge God's children to imitate Him?

10. Read Romans 5:6-11. How did Jesus show love to his enemies?

11. Who does Jesus mention in verses 46 and 47? Why do you think he mentions these people when he was teaching about loving your enemies?

12. Summarize the point Jesus makes in Matthew 5:46-47.

13. Make a list of some practical ways you can love your enemies. Be specific.

(If you are struggling to love your enemies, confess this to God. Ask him to give you humility and grace to see others with his eyes. Ask him to fill your heart with His love that enables you to love others beyond what you ever imagined possible. You might want to confess this struggle to someone in your Renew Group. Ask them to pray for you and hold you accountable as you seek to love those you do not consider friends.)

14. Write out the words to Matthew 5:48. How do these words make you feel?

15. In what ways are the words of verse 48 both a command and a promise?

16. As children imitating their father God and as citizens of the kingdom of God, how does Jesus want us to live?

Living Out Our Faith Together

Group Discussion Questions

1. Reflect on the sermon. What resonated with you? What questions or insights do you have?
2. Read Matthew 5:43-48 as a group.
3. We learned that the scribes had twisted the Old Testament law found in Leviticus 19:18 to make it suit their own purposes. Loving their enemies as themselves was not on their Top Ten list. In what ways are you tempted to add to or take away from scripture to make it "easier" to obey?
4. Jesus tells his disciples to pray for their enemies. Do you have any enemies? What are some things you might pray for them?
5. Take an honest look into your heart. Is there someone who you are more inclined to love based on gender, race, religious belief, upbringing? What truth does Jesus want you to know about this?
6. Share some ideas with one another about how to practically love your enemies.

7. How can this group support each other as we seek to love and pray for our enemies?

8. Read and reflect on Romans 5:6-11. Thank God for his love for you, once his enemy and now his friend.

9. What does Jesus mean when he says, "You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly father is perfect."?

But, Jesus says to his disciples, because you are living from God as citizens of the kingdom, have the kind of fullness, of full functionality, that he has. Be perfect in the way your Father, the one in the heavens, is perfect. (Dallas Willard. *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God*, HarperCollins, 1998, pg. 203.)

Prayer

This passage can be very challenging and requires a lot of introspection. Take time to pray through Matthew 5:43-48. We recommend having one reader read the passage aloud but then pause after each verse and allow time for others to pray silently

APPENDIX

Matthew 5 English Standard Version

Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

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

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

4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

5 "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

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

9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

13 "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19 Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

21 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' 22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire. 23 So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. 25 Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. 26 Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

27 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

31 "It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' 32 But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

33 "Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.' 34 But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil.

38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' 39 But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. 41 And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. 42 Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Matthew 6

6 "Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

2 "Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 3 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

5 "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 6 But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

7 "And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

9 Pray then like this:

“Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name.

10 Your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread,

12 and forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

16 “And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 17 But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18 that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

22 "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, 23 but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

24 "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

25 "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? 28 And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

34 "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Matthew 7

“Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. 3 Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

6 “Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.

7 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? 11 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

12 “So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the

13 “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. 14 For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? 17 So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. 18 A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' 23 And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

24 "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. 26 And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

28 And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, 29 for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

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