

Matthew - The King And His Kingdom
The Great Adventure
Notes for Session6 - Chapter 5: The Bar is Raised by the King

Matthew Chapter 5 – Beginning of the Sermon on the Mount

Jesus is going to give us the New Law of the new covenant for this Kingdom He is establishing.

We sometimes say thank God we are not living in back in the OT, but that we are living in the NT. Might think differently after the Sermon on the Mount. How difficult it is for us to live this life.

OT emphasis is on the externals, while the NT emphasis is on the Internal aspects of the Law. The bar is raised higher than in the OT.

St. Augustine says the deepest need in your life “To find true Happiness.” There is not anyone here that deep down in their heart does not desire true happiness.

Beatitudes led us to true happiness, how to attain true happiness.

It has been said that happiness as four levels:

1. Instant Gratification: Something immediate that makes us happy. Like buying a new car, etc. However, it does not last long because we have been created for more.
2. Personal Achievement: Awards, recognition, etc
3. Philanthropy: Giving to Others. Random Acts of Kindness to others makes us feel better and happier.
4. Union with God: St. Augustine: “Our hearts are restless until they rest in Him.”
 - Deep Communion and Intimacy with God. That is what we are created for.

Sermon on the Mount is the New Law of the Kingdom.

If you want to understand the relationship between Jesus and Moses and the prophets. His relationship with the stories of the OT, it would be the new Exodus. As Moses led the Exodus from bondage in Egypt, Jesus is going to lead the Exodus from the true bondage of sin.

- Israel will be brought out of Nations (captivity), and the Nations will come out also to Mount Zion where they will receive a new law.
- Jesus is going to walk up the Mount as Moses walked up the Mount in the OT. And Jesus is going to receive the new Law and give it to those who follow Him.
- There is going to be a new Passover, a new Exodus, a new Law, a new covenant, a new Israel, a new Temple, new Priests, Jesus is ushering all of this in the Book of Matthew.

Parallels between the NT and OT: Jesus and Moses

- Deliverer is born
- Edict to destroy male children
- God delivers them
- Raised for a time in Egypt
- Comes out of Egypt

- Goes into the Wilderness
- Fast for 40 days and nights
- Quotes from Moses
- Passes through water like Moses
- Ascends a Mountain like Moses
- Life of Jesus is a parallel of all we studied in the OT.
- Moses chooses 12 Chieftains to rule the 12 Tribes, Jesus chooses 12 to sit on the 12 Thrones and judge the 12 Tribes of Israel.
- Moses appointed 70 Elders (Book of Numbers Ch 11) to rule and govern. Jesus (Luke 10) appoints 70 gives them His Spirit and Mission along with the 12.

Sermon on the Mount is to Jesus what the Ten Commandments were to Moses. The Law. The Law not relaxed, but raises the bar to new heights.

Views of Sermon on the Mount: Who can do this?

1. Perfectionist Perspective: Catholic view. What we read is exactly what Jesus meant.
 - Rule of personal conduct – how we are to live our lives.
2. Martin Luther: Impossible Idea. Moved to despair because I can never to that and then leads to God's grace.
3. Interim Morality: This is reserved for a few, right before the Second Coming of the Lord. A few who would live this way.

Jesus meant for us to follow what he said, but it is impossible for us to live this way without God's Grace. We fail from time to time.

One of the Keys to understanding the Sermon on the Mount is the Fatherhood of God. The Father is revealed in the Son (5:9 & 5:16). The Law of the new Covenant surpasses the old because it discloses the reality of God's Fatherhood. Jesus is completely disclosing to us the Fatherhood of God. We are transformed by the Spirit as Sons.

To understand the Beatitudes it is important to know:

1. Beatitudes describe perfectly and reflect perfectly the Image of Christ. If you want to describe Jesus to someone, you can do it by describing the Beatitudes.
 - Jesus is telling us what it is like to be Him. We want to become like Him.
2. Beatitudes are not a string of clever sayings. They flow into each other. They build on each other. Flow one into the other.

Blessed – Hebrew means happiness. Want to be happy we need to become more like Christ.

- CCC 2546. Blessed are the poor in spirit." The Beatitudes reveal an order of happiness and grace, of beauty and peace. Jesus celebrates the joy of the poor, to whom the Kingdom already belongs:

The Word speaks of voluntary humility as "poverty in spirit"; the Apostle gives an example of God's poverty when he says: "For your sakes he became poor."

1. First Beatitude: Humility: Cannot have other virtues unless you have humility.
 - Opposite of Humility is Pride – EGO.
 - We all have been created to see God face to face. We cannot do all this on our own. We need God's help – Humility recognizes this within.
 - Humility is a true self-assessment.
 - Empty our self to make room for the life of Christ.
 - a. Gal 2:20, For through the law I died to the law, that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me; insofar as I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who has loved me and given himself up for me.
 - b. Phil 2:6, Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.
 - c. CCC 2559. "Prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God." But when we pray, do we speak from the height of our pride and will, or "out of the depths" of a humble and contrite heart? He who humbles himself will be exalted; humility is the foundation of prayer, Only when we humbly acknowledge that "we do not know how to pray as we ought," are we ready to receive freely the gift of prayer. "Man is a beggar before God."
 - Humility is the prerequisite for entering the Kingdom.
2. Mourn: Once you walk in Humility – then we can mourn our weakness and God comforts us.
3. Meek: To be Teachable. God makes us strong and we submit our strength to Him. When we are meek, He can trust us with the entire earth.
4. Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness: Right Standing with God
 - Psalm 63:1-3: O God, you are my God-- for you I long! For you my body yearns; for you my soul thirsts, Like a land parched, lifeless, and without water. So I look to you in the sanctuary to see your power and glory.
 - St. Augustine: "God thirsts that you might thirst for Him."
5. Merciful: Our response for being right with God. We become a merciful people. We are eager to show mercy.
6. Pure of Heart: Capacity for Truth. CCC 2518
 - Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." "Pure in heart" refers to those who have attuned their intellects and wills to the demands of God's holiness, chiefly in three areas: charity; chastity or sexual rectitude; love of truth and orthodoxy of faith. There is a connection between purity of heart, of body, and of faith:
 - The faithful must believe the articles of the Creed "so that by believing they may obey God, by obeying may live well, by living well may purify their hearts, and with pure hearts may understand what they believe."

7. Peacemakers: We become perfect sons & daughters of God and His peace is expanded through us. We extend God's Peace to others.
8. Persecuted for Righteousness Sake: Opposite of reward for obedience in the OT.
 - Col 1:24: Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of his body, which is the church...
 - Pope John Paul II: "Nothing is lacking in the sufferings of Christ, but because He loves you, He makes room in His suffering for you to come and participate with Him in knowing the love of the Trinity, and what it is to pour out your life and use suffering as part of the redemption of the world."

Reward is the Kingdom of God.

- CCC 1729 The beatitude of heaven sets the standards for discernment in the use of earthly goods in keeping with the law of God.

In the OT, God gave what we wanted (worldly goods). What He wants was for us to trust Him. Then we would take Him at His word, we He would tell us what we really needed.

God gives us we want to prepare us to trust Him. Gods gives us what we need, wrapped in what we want.

He is trying to get to want the Giver rather than the gift. Example: I may say to my children if you obey me, you get two cookies. What I really want them to want is me.

We you grow up you will participate in my suffering, if you are going to participate in My glory. You will walk in my walk, you will become a lover and a self-giver of yourself rather than a selfish I want, I want. God wants us to want Him – not the cookies

Verses 13 – 16 The Similes of Salt and Light.

- OT Salt was one of the ways you would make a covenant.

Six Antitheses: You heard what was said, but I say to you. He is going to raise the bar.

- The Law was set forth negatively in the OT: You shall not do this, You shall not do that.
- Jesus realizes what He just taught them in the Beatitudes does not sound the same as the OT.
- Vs 17-18: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place."
- Transition from the focus on the outward emphasis to the Interior Focus of the Heart. He is raising the Bar.
- Jer 31:31: I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah... I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

In the old Law OT, you could be Obedient externally. It was easy to be obedient externally. Do not do this, Do that. Simply out of fear, you could obey the law.

Now we do it for Love for our Father.

Jesus says in Exodus 20:13: You shall not kill. (easy decision you shall kill or not kill)

Exodus 20:14: You shall not commit Adultery. You entertain lustful thoughts and are bothered by them. That is **Concupiscence**:

- "Yet certain temporal consequences of sin remain in the baptized, such as suffering, illness, death, and such frailties inherent in life as weaknesses of character, and so on, as well as an inclination to sin that Tradition calls **concupiscence**, or metaphorically, "the tinder for sin"; since concupiscence "is left for us to wrestle with, it cannot harm those who do not consent but manfully resist it by the grace of Jesus Christ." CCC 1264
- The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) teaches that Adam and Eve were constituted in an original "state of holiness and justice" (CCC 375, 376 398), free from concupiscence (CCC 377)... Besides this, the Catholic Church teaches that our first parents were also endowed with sanctifying grace by which they were elevated to the supernatural order. By sinning, however, Adam lost this original "state," not only for himself but for all human beings (CCC 416).
- As a result of original sin human nature has not been totally corrupted; rather, human nature has only been weakened and wounded, subject to ignorance, suffering, the domination of death, and the inclination to sin and evil (CCC 405, 418). This inclination toward sin and evil is called "concupiscence" (CCC 405, 418). Baptism erases original sin and turns a man back towards God. The inclination toward sin and evil persists, however, and he must continue to struggle against concupiscence (CCC 2520).
- All of us experience Concupiscence. The Sin of Lust is when you are entertained by those thoughts. We go back and exercise our will to be entertained by lustful thoughts.

Teaching about Anger:

MT 5:21: "You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, 'You shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment.' 5:22 * But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment... He is internalizing it - Jesus is raising the bar – it is tougher.

Jesus is now showing us the real intent of the Law, internalizing it. That to truly walk like Him and be holy is not just an external exercise, but an Internal Transformation, and we can only be transformed by the Grace of God. That is why we need the Eucharist, the Sacraments in our lives.

Teaching about Divorce:

MT 5:31: "It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife must give her a bill of divorce.' 5:32 But I say to you, whoever divorces his wife (unless the marriage is unlawful) causes her to commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

- Relates to Deuteronomy 24:1 when Moses permitted divorce. MT19:7: They said to him, "Then why did Moses command that the man give the woman a bill of divorce and dismiss (her)?" 19:8 He said to them, "Because of the hardness

of your hearts Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.

- Moses permitted a certificate of divorce because the only way they could get rid of their wife was if their wife was dead. Guess what happened, wives started showing up missing. So Moses said because of the hardness of your hearts I will allow a certificate of divorce. Jesus said it was not this way from the beginning.

Teaching about Oaths:

MT 5:33: "Again you have heard that it was said to your ancestors, 'Do not take a false oath, but make good to the Lord all that you vow.' 5:34 But I say to you, do not swear at all; not by heaven, for it is God's throne; 5:35 nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.

- People swore Oaths because they were not trusted.
- In the NT, we are told we should not be swearing Oaths unless we are forced to by civil authorities.
- He is not doing away with Oaths, but clarifying their use.

Love of Enemies:

In the OT what did you do to your enemies – you killed your enemies – you dealt with your enemies.

Now in the NT what do we do with our enemies – we love our enemies. Because people are potential Children of God, we are to love them.

Conclusion:

In Chapter 5 of Matthew, Jesus is Internalizing the Law. Showing us really what it means to be Him, to walk like Him. Giving us the Beatitudes and telling us true piety, true walking with Him is not a matter of external obedience for reward, but internal obedience and conformity to Him and His will.

Why – for Him that is our reward. The mark of maturity is not what we get out of religion, but the mark of maturity is the relationship that we have and the joy of communing with Him. Our is the Kingdom of Heaven.

This was the goal in the OT, this is our goal here on earth, this is our goal after we die. The beatific vision. The goal after you die is not gold, it is not silver, it is not cabins or fine cars – IT IS HIM! And this is how we obtain Him.