**The Book of Matthew**

**Sermon V Righteousness in the Kingdom of God**

Last Matthew Sermon: Citizens of the Kingdom of God are distinct. We stick out. This is why we are persecuted, because we are the salt of the earth, the aroma of Christ and we are the light of the world. But to some we are the aroma of death and darkness does not appreciate the light.

But, there are those in our community who are looking for that salt and that light.

Therefore, we must put forth that aroma of Christ and be a city on a hill whose light shines before people in Bakersfield.

Matthew 5:17-20. The key to the sermon and, to some extent, the key to Matthew.

Jesus is the completion/fulfillment of the Old Testament in the four ways mentioned above.

a. In that he, unlike any other human before him, literally fulfilled all the requirements of the Law of Moses.

b. In that through his actions he satisfied the penalty for all of us who did not fully obey the Law of Moses.

c. Everything the OT anticipated finds its fulfillment in Jesus (prophecies, foreshadows and prefigures, etc.)

d. Jesus completes/explains more fully what was only implied by the Law of Moses.

Matt 5:18 Not the least stroke of the pen (the letter yod, the smallest of the Hebrew letters, which was often omitted) not the dot (the vowel marks in the Hebrew, which was not even in the original text) will disappear from the Law (of Moses) until everything is fulfilled.

But… Everything is fulfilled in Christ. He is the fulfillment of the Law.

17:19-20 Therefore… Here is what you should do. Your righteousness must certainly surpass that of the Pharisees.

“whoever practices and teaches these commands (the SOTM) will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

Q: Why, then, must our righteousness exceed that of the Pharisees? (because of what we have that they did not). We are taking the kingdom of God to a new level. Jesus: the least in the kingdom is greater than John the Baptist.

This is the real thing. The kingdom of God is at hand. It has arrived. What was good enough before no longer is.

“From those to whom much has been given, much will be expected.” (Luke 12:48)

The Pharisees were extremely devoted to the smallest possible part of the Law, but this is not sufficient for entrance into Jesus’ kingdom.

Why? Because “Those who do these things will live by them” Lev 18:5

We are talking about life in the kingdom of God.

These are the new, Kingdom expectations for practical living. Matt 5:3-10 Kingdom attitudes. (poor in spirit, mourn, meek, thirst for righteousness, merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers)

Matthew 5:21-48 Practical living in the Kingdom of God. The radical ethic of the Kingdom of God. (read the whole thing)

Matt 5:21-48 Jesus spiritualizes the Law of Moses. “It was said to you of old….”

These are practical principles for life in the Kingdom of God. Jesus moves from the actions (Old Testament) to the motives of the heart and to the thoughts.

The following are examples and not a comprehensive list.

Notice Matthew 5:22 But I tell you… Jesus here is implying he is speaking with absolute authority, direct from God.

Which explains Matthew 7:28-29

v. 21-26 -Don’t murder becomes don’t use fighting words “you fool” or hold bitterness in your heart.

v. 27-30 -Don’t commit adultery becomes don’t entertain lust in your heart.

v. 31-32 -Men can divorce their wives for any reason becomes don’t divorce except for marital unfaithfulness.

v. 33-37 -Fulfill you oath becomes let your yes be yes. Don’t even make oaths.

v. 38-42 -An eye for an eye becomes do not resist and evil person and go the second mile

v. 43-47 -Love your neighbor becomes love your enemy

v. 21-26 Don’t murder becomes don’t use fighting words “you fool.” or hold bitterness in your heart.

Note v. 22 If not you are liable to hell.

v. 23-24 Like we saw earlier, I desire mercy, not sacrifice. We should obey God in the way we worship, but having the right heart toward others and showing them grace is more essential.

During Covid 19 we are in each other’s faces more than we are used to, yes?

Let us watch our words and even our thoughts toward one another.

And if we “blow it.” Let’s get it right immediately. Amen?

Matt 5:27-30 Do not commit the act becomes do not even think about committing the act.

Brothers, whether married or single, do not even think about the act.

Pornography is the most insidious poison in our culture. It will kill you.

If you struggle with lust or pornography, you have to come into the light.

Do whatever it takes to cut it off.

If you eye causes you to sin cut it off.

If you access to Instagram or facebook or even the internet in general causes you to sin, CUT IT OFF!!!

If your gym membership causes you to sin….

Some of us like to find out what we can get away with. What can I do and still not be sinning? This is the wrong question to ask.

How can I stay as far as possible from this sin?

Matt 5:31-32. God has always hated divorce, but as Jesus says in Matt 19, God allowed it for the Jews because of their hard hearts.

In the kingdom of God, Don’t even think about it. Period. God hates divorce, and you should too. (Malachi 2:16)

Some have almost hoped their spouse would commit marital unfaithfulness so they can have an out.

Matt 5:33-37 Do not make oaths. Simply let your word be your word.

Matt 5:38-42 It was said, “an eye for an eye…” Lev 24:20, Ex 21:24-25, Deut 19:21

Jesus: But I, the Son of God, the one who ushers in the kingdom of God say….

Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the cheek…

Give your cloak (the more valuable item) as well

And go the extra mile…

Jesus uses three examples. He REALLY wants us to get this.

Folks, this is a radical ethic here!

Turn the other cheek…Scholars tell us this is probably not about a violent act but about someone insulting someone else.

Turning the other cheek probably is more in reference to being insulted than physically beaten.

If someone punches you, cover yourself up or possibly try to get away, but do not invite the person to hit you again.

Someone sues you for your shirt, give him your coat as well… Be willing to be taken advantage of if it will help the kingdom of God.

About going the extra mile: The Romans had a law that a soldier could commandeer and non-Roman citizen to carry their things (actually 1000 paces).

The Jews deeply resented this, but Jesus said to be willing to do more than you are asked.

This applies in our obedience to the law, to our paying our taxes, to serving our bosses.

Q: How literally should we take Matthew 5:38-42 in light of Matthew 10:16

Should we be something like a door mat?

Ex: Acts 23:1-7 Paul: “God will strike you, you whitewashed wall!” Later Paul defends himself by invoking his Roman citizenship.

Acts 16:37 Paul defends his rights as a citizen, not for his sake but for the sake of the church. Acts 22:25

John 18:19-23 Jesus: If I spoke the truth, why do you strike me?

When does wise as a serpent come in and when does harmless as a dove come in?

Suggestion:

1. First of all, probably we need to grow more in letting ourselves be abused for the sake of Christ rather than learning when to defend ourselves.

2. Always “go the extra mile (beyond that required by the “law”) even if you do defend yourself.

3. Generally defend the rights of others and be willing to give up your own rights.

4. Go the extra mile and turn the other cheek if it will

 Lead to peace

 If the hurt to you is relatively small (not in the hospital, not going bankrupt)

 If doing so does not bring harm to others

 If we can reasonably predict that more good than harm will be done in the big picture.

 If doing so is not “foolish” even in the eyes of a reasonable Christian.

5:43-47 Love your enemies.

Perhaps the most radical command Jesus ever gave. This is the ethic of the Kingdom of God.

Illustration from our debate with Shmuley Boteach and Shabir Ally.

Jesus: You have heard it said, “Love your neighbor” (Lev 19:18, your fellow Jew) and “hate your enemy.” This second is NOT in the Scripture!

Do you have enemies? A brother or sister who despises you or blatantly takes advantage.

A boss who repeatedly lies to you.

A non-Christian who laughs at you.

We love Muslims and political opponents and racists and even terrorists.

It is not inconceivable it could even be a brother or sister.

Q: What does “love your enemies” mean?

It means sincerely seeking their good above your own. This is unique to Christianity.

v. 45 If you do so you will be like God.

Summary 5:48 Be perfect, complete, mature. Teleon. This is the calling in the kingdom of God. A high calling! This is a call to be like God. Be conformed to God’s character.

We need to continually strive for growth in all of these areas. Are you making progress?

The goal of the Christian life is something we will never fully attain. It calls us ever higher.

But God, in his grace, will make up the difference. Thanks to God!!!

Matthew 6:1-18 The point: If you serve the church or the poor, pray, fast with “mixed motives” then there will be no blessing to you.

Q: In your service and worship, do you have “mixed motives” Is it about being seen for you? Do you seek the praise of people?

Matthew 6:15 an important passage, but see Matthew 18:21-35

Matthew 6:19-34 Kingdom values.

v. 20 store up treasure in heaven. Q: What does that mean to you?

Let your motivation be with regard to things which cannot be seen.

If you can buy it, then you should not store it up.

Things you can buy Things you cannot buy

Medicine health

Books knowledge of God, wisdom

Position favor with God

Attention love

Matthew 6:24 Jesus makes it quite black and white.

Matthew 6:25 The key passage in this section. Literally “Do not give a thought to your life.” This is an incredibly high standard.

This is what it means to seek the kingdom first (Matt 6:34)—to not give a thought to your life.

This is the meaning of Matthew 6:22-23. It took me 35 years to “get” this passage.

Jesus is saying that if you get this principle, you get everything, but if you do not get this principle, you get nothing. This concept is very similar to Matthew 22:36-40 “the greatest commandment.”

So, what do you worry about?

Matt 7:1-5 Do not judge

Matthew 7:6 But do make wise judgments.

I am not judging this person, but wisdom says to be careful.

When we study with people… This is a heart issue for us.

Matthew 7:12 The Golden Rule.

(aside: In marriage, apply the Platinum Rule: Do to others what they would want you to do to them)

Matthew 7:13-27 How to get into the kingdom vs. how to live in the kingdom (5:1-7:12)

Small is the gate, and narrow the road. Q: How do you feel about this?

7:15-20

Who is the false prophet? He whose message, if accepted, would keep you from entering the kingdom of Heaven.

How can we know?

1. by their fruit. v. 16-20

2. whether they are doing God’swill. v. 21-23 many will be shocked.

Matthew 7:24-27 Final thoughts.

Q: What is the rock?

Take-home lesson: Do these things!!!!!!

 What in Matthew 5:3-7:12 do you need to put into practice?