

Lesson 5: Review of Matthew 5: Sermon on the Mount, Part 1

In Matthew's gospel Jesus' teaching is put forth to us as completely authoritatively—we would expect nothing less from The King of kings. His teaching was unlike anything people had ever heard before (see 7:28-29)! For people today God speaks to us through the Word (Scripture) by the Holy Spirit! Therefore, Jesus words are divine. His Word is living and active and sharp separating light from darkness, exposing the thoughts and intentions of the heart (Hebrews 6:12-13; Gen. 1:3-4; Pr. 16:2; 2 Cor. 4:5)! His words *breathe resurrection* (Bengel). It is as Luther summarized, His word “awakens *new* thoughts, new pleasures and devotions, and cleanses the heart and its meditations (Luther's Larger Catechism).

This is important as we come to Matthew's record of Jesus' *Sermon on the Mount* (Matt. 5-7). This sermon both portrays and forms disciples of Jesus (Bruner). Jesus teaches His disciples how to think and live. So as you study Matthew 5 pray, asking God for divine power to be a true follower of Jesus; one that not only hears the truth, but holds to it in righteousness.

Matthew 5 begins with Jesus sitting down to teach on a hillside. In these first words of chapter 5 Matthew subtly indicates that Jesus' teaching ministry would subordinate His healing ministry. In this sermon Jesus was preparing disciples to believe Him and trust His Word and work, equipping them to go into a sin burdened and broken world in His Name and power long after His ascension to Heaven. These disciples would bring a message of hope for sinners announcing salvation and transformation through the Gospel of God in Christ!

Matthew 5:2 says, “And Jesus opened His mouth”. O, to hear the words of God! Indeed, as we learned in a previous lesson, Emmanuel was speaking to us in this sermon. He still speaks to us today! Words that *breathe resurrection*! And here in the *beatitudes* He demonstrates the glory of His coming to us by speaking *blessing* before *command*! How does this challenge your view of God? Pay close attention to Emmanuel's message to you as He speaks a transformative message in Matthew 5:3-12.

He begins by breathing out *blessings*! Emmanuel comes to a sin corrupted world and announces blessings from Him to people who are *crushed by sin's corruption* (poor in spirit, v3); to those who are *deeply troubled over the ravages of sin* in their own life as well as the lives of those they love and care for (those who mourn, v4); and to those who are *patiently waiting for help from above* (meek, v5). He speaks blessings to people who *desire righteousness from God* (hunger and thirst for righteousness, v6), to people who, according the light of God that has shined in their hearts *practice mercy* (v7) upon others. He comes with blessing to those whose hearts are *centered on God* (pure in heart, v8), and to those who, according to the light of God, strive for the *shalom, the welfare and well-being* of people around them (peacemakers, v9).

Though Jesus is speaking to a large crowd, He is specifically addressing men and women who have responded to the grace of God by faith, believing that Jesus is Messiah. In the first twelve verse Jesus is bringing forth the marks of people who are true disciples of Jesus. These qualities are not works unto salvation but they are evidence of God's grace at work. Now Jesus, Emmanuel, speaks blessing to them, drawing them nearer and nearer to the saving knowledge of God in Christ that comes through faith!

In Matthew 5:13-48 Jesus transitions from blessings to commands. These commands are intended to create an awareness of spiritual shortsightedness and our spiritual neediness. Matthew captures Jesus' mastery of human hearts and language by leading the hearer to quickly form an opinion as the “rightness” or “wrongness” of the situations He presents. Some who read these commands will harden their hearts. But some will be broken over the truth about themselves as they stand spiritual naked before the commands of God. For these people Jesus says, blessed are you when you embrace your spiritual poverty before God, yours in the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you when you mourn over the unrighteousness of your attitudes and actions. Blessed are you when you wait patiently for God to avenge wrongs committed against you. Blessed are you when instead of demanding justice giving mercy instead. Blessed are those who want more of God to fill them than the world.

In the context of the commands Jesus turns his audience from merely agreeing philosophically with God's Law (the truth) to agreeing with the spirit of the law. This law exposes the neediness and depravity of people. Who hasn't angrily muttered in her spirit against someone else? Blessed are the “poor in spirit”. Who hasn't been eager to be reconciled to an “enemy”? Blessed are the merciful and blessed are the peacemakers! Who hasn't lusted, or committed adultery in her heart? Blessed are the pure in heart.

Are you not challenged to cry out for help from God in Christ because you are made even more aware of your need for the cleansing from sin that comes through faith in Jesus? Will you allow these beatitudes and the commands spoken by Jesus to speak to you, leading you to repent in humility? Will you receive more grace from God right now by receiving forgiveness of sins and a renewed heart and mind?

Questions for Matthew 6-7: Sermon on the Mount, Pt. 2

1. From the notes on page 1, **A)** what impressed and/or helped you? **B)** What was new to you and what are you going to do with the new insights you received?

2. Read Matthew 6:1-18. **A)** What does Jesus say about these “acts of righteousness” (6:1)? Why is what Jesus said important? **B)** What do you learn in 6:1-4 about giving? For instance, Is giving to the needy expected? What is the right way to give? What is the wrong way to give? **C)** What do you learn in 6:5-15 about prayer? Is prayer expected? What is the right way to pray? What is the wrong way to pray? **D)** Consider 6:16-18 is about fasting. Following the same pattern as B & C **E)** Which of these challenges you the most and why?

3. **A)** Matthew 6:9-13: Jesus is instructing the disciples to pray. 1) How does He teach them to begin their prayers (6:9-10)? 2) What three areas of life are included in 6:11-13? 3) What do you think makes these three areas of our lives important matters to pray about? **B)** How do you understand 6:12? (see also James 2:13) **C)** Carefully read Ephesians 4:32. Now read Matthew 6:16-18. How important is forgiveness? Is there anyone you need to forgive from your heart right now? Will you?

4. Read Matthew 6:19-34 **A)** What do you learn about priorities from 6:19-24? **B)** Where, then, would you say is your “treasure” at this point in your life? **C)** How are you encouraged and more hopeful because you meditated on 6:25-34? **D)** What verse(s) will you claim as a personal promise and why?

5. Read Matthew 7:1-6 **A)** Do you think the command “do not judge” means never to judge? If not, why not? **B)** In Matthew 7:2-4 Jesus provides wise counsel to protect us from being foolish judges. List two or three words of wisdom in these verses that are helpful in keeping you from being a self-righteous judge. **C)** What does Jesus say you should be careful to do first? (see 7:5) **D)** Which of the beatitudes do you think is best reflected by a positive application of 7:1-5?

6. Read Matthew 7:7-29 **A)** From 7:7-12 1) What do you learn about God’s willingness to hear and answer our prayers? 2) How does 7:12 fit in the context of 7:7-11? **B)** Give the verses that describe two roads. **C)** Give the verses that describe two kinds of trees. **D)** Give verses that describe two kinds of foundations. **E)** What do you think is the main warning? **F)** Write down a prayer you could pray as you review Matthew 7.