

The Sermon on the Mount Part 6

Matthew 5:17-20

Thesis: We are a people who follow Jesus, who listen to the voice of God, and who get in action around what the Lord is saying through the power of his Holy Spirit.

Text: Matthew 5 – 7

The Sermon on the Mount is one of the most famous passages in the Bible. People refer to it and quote from this teaching of Jesus all the time.

These words of Jesus are revolutionary, radical, and relational (righteousness). I wonder if the words of Jesus have lost their cutting edge in our lives because of familiarity.

God is showing me wonderful things from his Word. And, the Lord is using The Sermon on the Mount to transform me.

So, I am asking the Lord to encourage you by his Holy Spirit and to speak to us as we spend time on Matthew 5 – 7 over the next months.

What we have considered so far in our time looking at The Sermon on the Mount.

In a message last November, we got through an overview of The Sermon on the Mount on 11'10'24.

Then, we looked at Matthew 5:3-5: The Poor in Spirit, The Grieved, and The Unimportant on 11'17'24.

In a message on 11'24'24, we looked at Matthew 5:6-8: The Hungry, The Merciful, and The Pure in Heart.

In a message on 7'13'25, we considered Matthew 5:9-12: The Peacemakers, The Persecuted, and the Misunderstood. Actually, we only considered what it means to be a peacemaker.

In a message on 7'20'25, we finished looking at our kingdom identity from Matthew 5:9-16: The Peacemakers, The Persecuted, and the Misunderstood. We also sought to understand three illustrations of the way we show up in this world as a part of our kingdom identity: as salt, light, and a city on a hill.

Today, we want to begin looking at the second Main Section of The Sermon on the Mount: Matthew 5:17 – 7:12. This is the main body of teaching. In this section, Jesus tells us what he means for his followers to be righteous. Righteousness is living in right relationship with God and others. It is a character trait that creates justice and peace in the world.

Here is an important perspective to keep in mind:

As we look at The Sermon on the Mount, I will share with you what I am learning and processing, some of which is new to me. **But please understand: The Lord can speak to you through his Word without all this teaching I am doing and without all the research we are processing. What we are doing together is to help us enter into the context of this Word, and to let the Lord speak to us in our current context.** The Lord can do that through the Holy Spirit whenever you open God's word and read it devotionally or study it thoroughly. Getting into God's Word and listening for The Voice is one of the most important spiritual practices the Lord has given us for growing in our relationships with God and others. **I pray that our time in The Sermon on the Mount will stir in you a greater love for God, for God's word, and for the leadership of Jesus in your life.**

Consider While Reading:

The first hearers of these words were mostly low-status, powerless Israelites on the fringes of mainstream society ([The Bible Project](#), Weekly Playlist, January 1-7). They were the impoverished, the infirmed, the unimportant, the oppressed, and the ignored.

Overview:

"The introduction (5:3-16) announces the surprising and counterintuitive identity of those who are a part of God's Kingdom. Then comes the main body of teachings (5:17-7:12), where Jesus explains further what he means when he calls his followers to be 'righteous.' Finally, Jesus concludes the sermon (7:13-27) by calling people to make a choice about how they're going to respond" ([The Bible Project](#), Weekly Playlist, January 1-7).

The Sermon on the Mount is carefully designed and organized.

1. **There are 3 main parts to The Sermon on the Mount.**
 - a. The middle part is divided into 3 parts.

- b. Each of the parts of the middle part is divided into 3 parts.
 - c. Right at the center of the center of The Sermon on the Mount is the Lord's Prayer.
- 2. **The Bible tells us what it means for God's Kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven.**
 - a. The kingdom of God coming to earth is the one of the main themes of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation.
- 3. **From the beginning, humans rebelled and started to build their own kingdom by their own wisdom.**
- 4. **So, God chose one family, Israel, to join him in his mission.**
 - a. And, God offered them his wisdom.
 - b. That wisdom was called the Torah—the teaching.
 - c. Beginning on with Moses on Mt. Sinai, God entered into a covenant with Israel.
 - d. **The goal was for Israel, one nation, to be transformed by God's wisdom, so that they could represent God's Kingdom before all the nations and to lead the nations back to God.**
- 5. **In Jesus' day, the kingdom of God was nowhere to be seen.**
 - a. Instead, Israel was under the rule of the Roman Empire and Roman oppressors.
- 6. **So, why wasn't God's Kingdom coming?**
 - a. Some religious leaders-- the **Pharisees**-- believed Israel was not being faithful enough to the Torah.
 - b. Other religious leaders—the **Sadducees**—said it would be best if Israel found a way to cooperate with Rome. They were the power brokers in Jesus' day.
 - c. Some people ran to the hills to become freedom fighters against Rome. They were known as the **Zealots**.
 - d. Others **withdrew to the desert**, waiting for God to use them to start the new Israel.
- 7. **But walk around the country of Israel, like Jesus did in his day, and here is what you would find.**
 - a. You would find mostly normal people.
 - b. They were trying to figure out how to live their lives as best they can.
 - c. Most people were living in poverty and were carving out a subsistence living.
 - d. There were lots of poor and sick people.
 - e. They were oppressed by high taxes.
 - f. Rome had taken their land away from them.
 - g. Most people were struggling to pay the heavy taxes imposed on them by their Roman occupiers.
 - h. In essence, the people of Jesus' day were powerless and hopeless.

8. **Jesus went to these people** healing the sick, setting free the demonized, mending broken hearts, and bringing salvation.
 - a. Jesus came with good news.
 - b. And, Jesus told these people that the kingdom of God was arriving.
 - c. People came from all over to hear his teaching and to get healing, deliverance, and encouragement.
9. **One day, Jesus went up to a tall hill or small mountain and said, "The arrival of kingdom of God is starting here and now with you."**
 - a. The kingdom of God was starting with the powerless, the weak, and the nobodies.
 - b. **Where can you go to see God's presence and blessing?**
 - i. You see God's presence and blessing among the poor in spirit, the crushed, and the defeated.
 - ii. The kingdom of God was not coming first among the wealthy and the powerful.
 - iii. The kingdom of God was coming to the people standing right before Jesus.

The structure of The Sermon on the Mount:

There are **3 main sections** to The Sermon on the Mount.

1. **Main Section 1: Matthew 5:3 – 16. This is the introduction. Jesus tells us about the kingdom identity of his followers. Jesus gives 9 sayings about who is experiencing the good life of God's kingdom.**
 - a. **Matthew 5:3 – 12. The Good Life.**
 - i. **The Poor in Spirit (3).**
 - ii. **The Grieved (4).**
 - iii. **The Unimportant (5).**
 - iv. **The Hungry (6).**
 - v. **The Merciful (7).**
 - vi. **The Pure in Heart (8).**
 - vii. **The Peacemakers (9).**
 - viii. **The Persecuted (10).**
 - ix. **The Misunderstood (11-12).**
 - b. **Matthew 5:13. Salt of the Earth.**
 - i. "In the Hebrew Scriptures, salt is a symbol of God's long-lasting covenant relationship with Israel. So Jesus is claiming that he and his followers are carrying Israel's covenant relationship to its fulfillment" ([The Bible Project](#), Weekly Playlist, January 1-7).
 - ii. Salt is an important preservative.

- iii. Salt is a seasoning. We are to bring out the God-flavors in this world (MSG).
 - iv. A little salt goes a long way. Christians are supposed to influence rather than be influenced by the ways of this world.
 - c. Matthew 5:14 – 16. The Light of the World and a city on a hill.
 - i. According to Isaiah, one day the inhabitants of Jerusalem will reflect God's light, peace, and blessing out to all the world.
 - ii. Jerusalem is the image of the city on a hill that shines for all the world to see. We are a part of that family, heritage, and kingdom.
 - iii. Light shines in the darkness and overcomes darkness. Christians have influence way beyond themselves.
 - iv. We are to bring out the God-colors in this world (MSG).
 - v. When Jesus calls his followers "the light of the world" and "a city on a hill," he is referencing images from the prophet Isaiah. The shining city on the hill portrays God's wisdom and heavenly presence emanating from Jerusalem and filling the whole Earth. By using these images, Jesus is applying Isaiah's prophecies to himself and his followers ([The Bible Project](#)).
- 2. **Main Section 2:** Matthew 5:17 – 7:12. This is the main body of teaching. In this section, Jesus tells us what he means **for his followers to be righteous**. Righteousness is living in right relationship with God and others. It is a character trait that creates justice and peace in the world.
 - a. **Section 1 of the Middle Section:** Matthew 5:17 – 48. In this section, Jesus tells us how this righteousness relates to the **Torah**.
 - i. Matthew 5:17 – 20. Jesus fulfills the Torah.
 - 1. Jesus' teaching on righteousness brings the Torah to its completion.
 - ii. Matthew 5:21 – 32. Jesus gives six case studies on how the righteousness of Jesus fulfills the Torah
 - 1. Anger, lust, divorce, telling the truth, revenge, and enemy love.
 - iii. Matthew 5:33 – 48. Summary: be complete or whole. The purpose of the Torah is teaching people God's wisdom so that they can become mature, whole people who spread God's blessing to the world.
 - 1. Being complete or whole links back to what Jesus says: living by Jesus' teachings will fulfill the Torah and Prophets.
 - b. **Section 2 of the Middle Section:** Matthew 6:1 – 18. In this section, Jesus tells us how this righteousness relates to **religious practices**.

- i. Matthew 6:1. Living in right relationship with God and other results in a reward.
 - 1. But be careful: If you are doing your righteousness to get public praise, you will miss out on the real reward God has in store.
 - ii. Matthew 6:2 – 18. Three examples of how religious devotion can go astray.
 - 1. Generosity to the poor.
 - 2. Prayer.
 - 3. Fasting.
 - iii. Matthew 6:19 – 21. True wealth: the real reward.
 - 1. The real reward links back to Matthew 6:1. The reward is knowing and being loved by God.
- c. **Section 3 of the Middle Section.** Matthew 6:19 – 7:12. In this section, Jesus tells us how **this righteousness is expressed in right relationships with God and with neighbor**. Doing righteousness affects our relationship with God and neighbor.
 - i. Matthew 6:19 – 34. God and money.
 - 1. Our stuff tends to claim our allegiance and causes us to worry.
 - 2. Our relationship to our stuff can be one of the biggest obstacles to healthy relationships with God and others.
 - 3. Store up treasure in heaven.
 - 4. **Parable 1: Two eyes.** You can have a healthy, generous eye, or an evil, stingy eye.
 - 5. **Parable 2: Two masters you can serve—God or money.**
 - 6. Teaching on worry. We are invited to trust the generous God of creation who cares about us.
 - ii. Matthew 7:1 – 11. God and neighbor.
 - 1. Teaching on not judging others.
 - 2. Parable 1: Speck and log.
 - 3. Parable 2: Holy pearls—using discernment when we try to help and correct others.
 - 4. Ask God for the wisdom you need: ask, seek, and knock.
 - iii. Matthew 7:12. The Golden Rule.
- 3. **Main Section 3:** Matthew 7:13 – 27. In his conclusion, **Jesus calls people to make a choice as to how they are going to respond**.
 - a. The choice for how we will live our lives.
 - i. Matthew 7:13 – 14. Two paths with two different gates. One leads to life; the other leads to ruin.

- ii. Matthew 7:15 – 23. Two trees. Discerning between two kinds of leaders who claim to represent God. One tree is good; one is not.
 - iii. Matthew 7:24 – 27. Two types of houses you can build. You can ignore Jesus and build your house by your own wisdom. Or, you can listen to Jesus and build your house on the rock.
4. **Finally, every one of these parts has 3 parts.**
- a. There is a lot of design in the structure of The Sermon on the Mount.
5. **Review of The Sermon on the Mount:**
- a. **Kingdom Identity:** the sermon begins with a surprise announcement about how the good life of the kingdom of God has come to the least likely people.
 - b. **A Greater Righteousness:** in the main body, Jesus teaches how to do right by God and others.
 - c. **The Choice:** the conclusion calls for a decision. In light of what Jesus has said, what choice will you make?

Here is what Jesus is saying through The Sermon on the Mount.

- 1. God's Kingdom comes to Earth through Jesus.
- 2. In God's Kingdom, love, justice, and peace prevail.
- 3. This Kingdom is arriving first to ordinary people—the poor, the powerless, and the outsider ([The Bible Project](#), Weekly Playlist, January 1-7).

Prayer:

- 1. Lord, I pray that you speak to us, encounter us, and grant to us your Spirit of wisdom and revelation that we might know you better.
- 2. Bless our time in your word together corporately.
- 3. Bless our time in your word individually as a part of our spiritual practices.
- 4. Help us to hear your voice, God, by the power of your Holy Spirit.
- 5. Help us to fall more and more in love with you, and help us to join Jesus on his mission together with others in our spheres of influence.
- 6. May we be a people who follow Jesus, who listen to the voice of God, and who get in action around what the Lord is saying through the power of his Holy Spirit.

Let's begin to look at the second Main Section of the Sermon on Mount, beginning with Matthew 5:17-20.

A Greater Righteousness

Matthew 5:17 Don't suppose that I have come to do away with the Torah or the Prophets. I have not come to do away with them but to fill them full. 18 Because truly I tell you, until the sky and the land pass on, not one dot or one squiggle will pass on from the Torah until all things have taken place. 19 Therefore, whoever undoes one of the least of these commands, and then they teach people to do this, that person will be called least in the Kingdom of the skies. And whoever does the commands, and then teaches people to do this, that person will be called great in the Kingdom of the skies. 20 Because truly I tell you, unless your doing-what-is-right far surpasses the scribes and Pharisees, you won't be entering into the Kingdom of the skies. ([The Bible Project Translation of the Sermon on The Mount](#)).

Matthew 5:17 Don't suppose that I have come to do away with the Torah or the Prophets. I have not come to do away with them but to fill them full.

1. Jesus makes clear that he is not contradicting the law, but neither is he preserving it unchanged.
2. Jesus comes to "to fulfill" it; he brings the law to its intended goal.
 - a. Fulfillment of Scripture refers to the bringing to fruition of its complete meaning.
 - b. Jesus views his role as that of fulfilling all of the Old Testament.
 - c. It is inadequate to say either that none of the Old Testament applies unless it is explicitly reaffirmed in the New or that all of the Old Testament applies unless it is explicitly revoked in the New. Rather, all of the Old Testament remains normative and relevant for Jesus' followers (2 Tim. 3:16), but none of it can rightly be interpreted until one understands how it has been fulfilled in Christ. Every Old Testament text must be viewed in light of the person and ministry of Jesus and the changes introduced by the new covenant he inaugurated.... (Blomberg, Craig. *Matthew. Vol. 22. The New American Commentary*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992.)
3. Jesus has come to fulfil the law and the prophets.... This complex of ideas then lies behind plērōsai: Jesus is bringing that to which the Old Testament looked forward; his teaching will transcend the Old Testament revelation, but, far from abolishing it, is itself its intended culmination (France, R. T. *Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary*. Vol. 1. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985).

Matthew 5:18 Because truly I tell you, until the sky and the land pass on, not one dot or one squiggle will pass on from the Torah until all things have taken place.

1. Verse 18 affirms the authority of Scripture.
2. The Scriptures will endure for all time but with the important qualification “until everything is accomplished.” With the coming of Christ, many aspects of the law are brought to complete fruition (e.g., the need for sacrifices, on which see Hebrews). In other instances, certain requirements of the law endure until Christ’s coming again (e.g., classically, love of neighbor and God). In short, Christian application of the Old Testament must always take into account both the continuities and the discontinuities with the New Testament. (Blomberg, Craig. *Matthew. Vol. 22. The New American Commentary*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992.)
3. The law remains valid until it reaches its intended culmination; this it is now doing in the ministry and teaching of Jesus. This verse does not state, therefore, as it is sometimes interpreted, that every regulation in the Old Testament law remains binding after the coming of Jesus. The law is unalterable, but that does not justify its application beyond the purpose for which it was intended. (France, R. T. *Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary*. Vol. 1. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985).

Mathew 5:19 Therefore, whoever undoes one of the least of these commands, and then they teach people to do this, that person will be called least in the Kingdom of the skies. And whoever does the commands, and then teaches people to do this, that person will be called great in the Kingdom of the skies. 20 Because truly I tell you, unless your doing-what-is-right far surpasses the scribes and Pharisees, you won’t be entering into the Kingdom of the skies.

1. The main points of vv. 17–20 may now be paraphrased as follows:
 - a. ¹⁷I have not come to set aside the Old Testament, but to bring the fulfilment to which it pointed. ¹⁸For no part of it can ever be set aside, but all must be fulfilled (as it is now being fulfilled in my ministry and teaching). ¹⁹So a Christian who repudiates any part of the Old Testament is an inferior Christian; the consistent Christian will be guided by the Old Testament, and will teach others accordingly. ²⁰But a truly Christian attitude is not the legalism of the scribes and Pharisees, but a deeper commitment to do the will of God, as vv. 21ff. will illustrate.
2. This passage does not therefore state that every Old Testament regulation is eternally valid. This view is not found anywhere in the New Testament, which consistently sees Jesus as introducing a new situation, for which the law prepared (Gal. 3:24), but which now transcends it. The focus is now on Jesus and his teaching, and in this light the validity of Old Testament rules must now

be examined. Some [Old Testament rules] will be found to have fulfilled their role and be no longer applicable (see especially Hebrews on the ritual laws, and Jesus' teaching on uncleanness, Mark 7:19); others will be reinterpreted. Matthew 5:21ff. will be dealing with this reinterpretation, and vv. 17–20 can only truly be understood as an introduction to vv. 21ff. **To assert, as these verses do, that every detail of the Old Testament is God-given and unalterable, is not to pre-empt the question of its proper application.** If the law pointed forward to a new situation which has now arrived, that question arises with new urgency, and vv. 21ff. will go on to indicate some answers to it. **Their answers will be the opposite of legalism** (the literal and unchanging application of the law as regulations), as v. 20 has already indicated. (France, R. T. *Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary*. Vol. 1. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985).

Introduction: From The Bible Project, [What is the Sermon on the Mount?](#)

The Sermon on the Mount is Jesus' most well-known teaching....

Emphasizing humility, forgiveness, and generous care for our neighbors, Jesus encourages people to choose God's way of love, which will eventually renew all of creation. He calls this restored world God's Kingdom. This is a realm in which Heaven and Earth are inseparably combined, a place where life flourishes that's free from injustice, suffering, and death.

We're not sure if Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount as one big speech or if Matthew collected Jesus' key teachings over time and organized them into a sermon-style scene (recorded in Matthew 5-7). Either way, this sermon contains some of the most rigorous ethical demands in the Bible. It has wild ideas like "blessed are the peacemakers" and "love your enemies" and "pray for people who persecute you."

These ideas might pass for utopian ideals, but they're nonsense (and weak) in our modern empires, where leadership usually means strength and power more than vulnerability and love.

Matthew compares Jesus to Moses but takes care to show he's not the same as Moses, nor is his instruction a simple repeat of Moses' law. In Matthew 5:17, Jesus says he is not abolishing what Moses gave; he's "filling it full." Jesus' teaching deepens and expands that first instruction (Hebrew: torah) from Moses. (The Bible Project, [What is the Sermon on the Mount?](#))

Matthew compares Jesus to Moses but takes care to show he's not the same as Moses, nor is his instruction a simple repeat of Moses' law. In Matthew 5:17, Jesus says he is not abolishing what Moses gave; he's "filling it full." Jesus' teaching deepens and expands that first instruction (Hebrew: torah) from Moses.

Throughout the biblical story, God instructs people in many ways, but two teachers—Moses and Jesus—become primary human instructors. Moses was the only one who experienced God face-to-face (Exod. 33:11), and Jesus is God himself in the flesh. In Matthew's Sermon on the Mount, through Jesus, God shows up like a new Moses, arriving to rescue not only all of Israel but all of humanity.

As such, Matthew casts Jesus not only as a new Moses but also as a greater Moses. Somehow, in a speech where Jesus never tells people to respect him or to bow down, the crowds still recognize strong authority in Jesus' words. His teaching seems to have the ring of truth, and it fits with the Hebrew Bible's instruction they already know, yet it leaves them utterly astonished (Matt. 7:28).

Jesus is disrupting the common expectations of their world. Moses' teaching also disrupted the common expectations of the Egyptian empire and its Hebrew slaves. Moses taught an enslaved people to become free, not by turning to violence but by turning their attention to God and following his lead—trusting his instruction—which becomes a core theme in the Exodus narrative. That had to sound crazy to enslaved people. Just follow God and trust him to deal with their enemies? But they did, and God set them free as promised.

Like most of us throughout history, the crowds listening to Jesus assume that evil gets eradicated from our world with strong military power and the wealth it takes to build armies. But Jesus goes nowhere near that or an idea that depends on force, coercion, or violence. He promises with his life that the power of God's love, along with those who choose to embrace it, will eventually outlast and overwhelm all evil everywhere.

Don't fight evil with the power of evil, Jesus says. Instead, join God in creating goodness throughout the land. If Jesus' followers listen to his words, they will start seeing their enemies as neighbors and miracles of God who are worthy of love. All evil and every oppressor will ultimately be defeated, Jesus teaches, not with swords but with God's creative, renewing love.

Moses' law had always been pointing in this exact same direction. It always intended to form its followers into loving people who honor God by blessing every family on Earth (see Genesis 12:1-3). Jesus is now making good on that intent by finishing—or filling full—the work that Moses' instruction started.

How Jesus' Teaching "Fills Full" the Torah

In Matthew 5:17-43, Jesus opens six repeated statements with these words: "You have heard it said, and I say to you" The first part, "you have heard it said," refers to the original Torah. Some thought Jesus opposed that first instruction, but Jesus emphatically says the opposite. He doesn't think the old law is flawed or obsolete. It was limited in its scope, and he's providing fuller explanation and illustration.

Though the first law did intend to form the human heart, its instructions could be followed in vain—interpreted and followed in a way that had no meaningful effect on the follower. For instance, Jesus agrees with Moses' prohibition against murder, but his teaching suggests that avoiding murder is only a surface-level goal. One can be considerate or non-violent while still harboring contempt and hate for others. But hateful hearts won't function in the Kingdom of God, even if they are well-behaved. So Jesus refocuses his listeners to consider their actual hearts and to honestly pay attention to whom and what they truly love.

Real human life and goodness, as Jesus describes it, is not about a simple rejection of murder; it's about actively loving every person around you, regardless of their status as friend or enemy. Jesus teaches impartial love for all neighbors (not some neighbors). Jesus' life fulfills the law, and Jesus' teaching fulfills the law—he fills Moses' Torah full.

What's This "Kingdom" Jesus Talks About?

Think about an average neighborhood or village. Imagine if, one by one, its citizens started making decisions to bless one another with resources rather than hoard and fight over them. Imagine what it would be like if society at large considered vulnerability and kindness to be the highest forms of power and glory. It's a world where mutual love between citizens has made it impossible for evil to continue.

Total peace. Total safety. Total provision. Everyone experiencing the good life.

"The good life belongs to [or 'blessed are'] those who hunger and thirst for righteousness," Jesus says in the introduction of the Sermon on the Mount

(Matt. 5:6). That word “righteousness” comes from the Greek *dikaiosune*, which is about right relating with others. To be a righteous person, according to Jesus and the New Testament, we must learn how to relate rightly with all people. In other words, we learn how to love our neighbors.

Jesus says that the good life belongs to people who hunger and thirst for right relationships “because they will be filled [or ‘satisfied’].” They will, according to God’s promise, eventually live in a world where Heaven and Earth are united, where everyone else wants right relationships too—this is God’s Kingdom. Surely many in Jesus’ crowds wanted to be there now.

Notice how Jesus does not promise to take these oppressed Galileans from their bad situation straight to a better world by simply destroying their Roman oppressors. He’s teaching them that a free world doesn’t come about through harming or exterminating enemies. It comes about freely, through something more powerful.

He’s helping them experience freedom within God’s Kingdom right now by choosing to turn their attention to him and his way of love. This is why Jesus invites the people to “seek first the Kingdom” (Matt. 6:33)—to let his Sermon on the Mount instructions guide them through their wilderness, into the promised Kingdom way—and to want that more than anything.

Loving that way of life, he says, leads to a world where every need is met, every tear is wiped away, and every bit of life’s goodness gets experienced by all people.

Don’t allow worries about securing your basic needs govern the decisions you make, Jesus teaches. Instead, more than anything else, pursue God’s Kingdom way of life and right relating with all others. When we do that, we’ll find that life’s biggest needs are no longer an issue (Matt. 6:31-33). When everyone lives like that, fear and violence don’t make sense anymore because the world is altogether good. That good world is the Kingdom Jesus speaks of in his Sermon on the Mount.

How God’s World Will Be Transformed

Moses joined God in this life-renewing work back in Egypt. And Matthew portrays Jesus as a new Moses to signal that Jesus is doing the same thing. He is continuing the rescuing work God started long ago. But he’s introducing an unexpected trajectory through his Sermon on the Mount, opening humanity’s eyes to the deeper meaning of Moses’ Torah.

As it is, Jesus' teaching implies that the world won't be fixed through the elimination of human enemies or through merely escaping our world for a better utopia in the clouds. God's world—on Earth as it is in Heaven—will be transformed by changed human hearts. Jesus' frustrated Galilean crowds were probably as unhappy to hear this as we likely are. They want God's power to destroy their enemies, not God's power to bless and heal and love them. In fact, Matthew says at the end that Jesus' crowds were utterly shocked, astounded, and amazed.

Despite hearing the most intense ethical teaching they had ever heard, far greater than any legal experts or religious elites, the people still somehow knew that Jesus spoke truth. And isn't it true for each of us that, deep down, we prefer kindness and love more than hate or contempt?

"When Jesus finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed by his teaching," Matthew writes to conclude, "because Jesus taught them like one who had authority, not like their experts in the law" (Matt. 7:28, NET).

Conclusion:

Our identity: We are a people who follow Jesus, who listen to the voice of God, and who get in action around what the Lord is saying through the power of his Holy Spirit.

For reflection:

1. What is God saying to you?
2. What is getting stirred up in you?
3. Where do you sense resistance?
4. What questions do you have?
5. What are you feeling or thinking?
6. What is at least one takeaway for you today?

Ministry Time:

Announcements:

1. xx.

Other resources:

Pure Heart: Restoration of the Heart Through the Beatitudes, Tom and Donna Cole. From Margaret.

The Pure Shall See God, Francis Frangipane. From Louis Posthauer.

Sam Storms. *Biblical Studies: The Sermon on the Mount*. Edmond, OK. 2016.