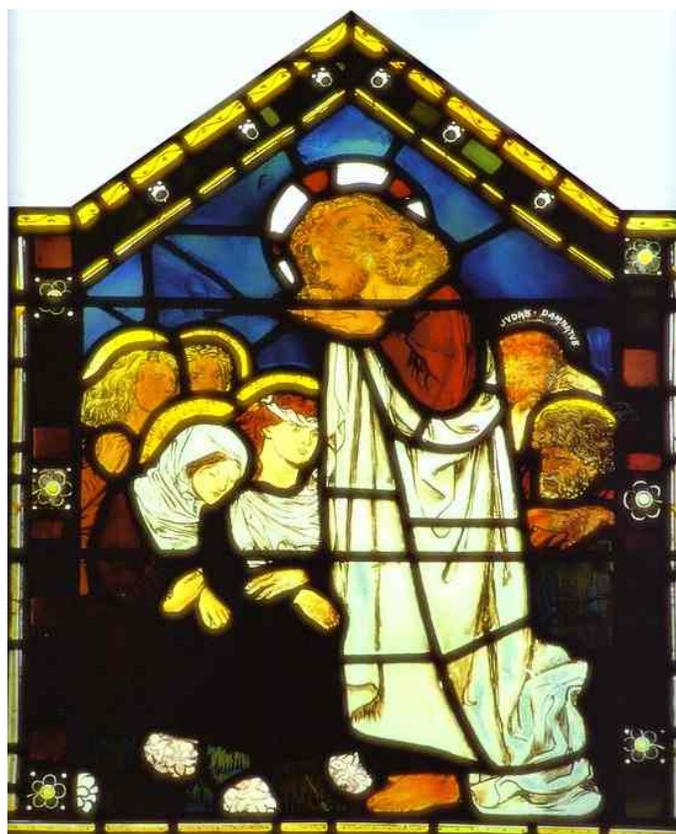


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The Sermon On The Mount



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Front Cover

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, stained glass window located in All Saints Church, Selsley, Gloucestershire, UK (1861), depicting Jesus delivering the Sermon on the Mount. Only the center window panel of a three-panel work is shown (see below). The disciples presented are Mary, Mary Magdalene, John, Peter, James and Judas.



FOREWORD

"The Sermon on the Mount is probably the best-known part of the teaching of Jesus, though arguably it is the least understood, and certainly it is the least obeyed" (Stott, p. 15). That judgment has been expressed by many and is sadly true. Unfortunately, to say that the Sermon on the Mount is the best-known part of Jesus' teaching does not say very much, as so little of Jesus' teaching is known today. Even that which is known is not understood. How can one only know small pieces of Jesus' teaching and expect each piece to be understood apart from the whole? And the notion of obedience has fallen on hard times even among those who claim to be followers of Jesus.

The Sermon speaks to those who would be citizens of the kingdom of God. All of Jesus' teaching centered on God's kingdom, but while many of Jesus' parables highlight the worth of the kingdom and the pressing need to enter the kingdom, they do not tell us of the character of kingdom citizens. Similarly, while the miracles of Jesus mightily show that the kingdom of God has come (Matthew 12:28; Luke 11:20), they do not tell us of the demands of the kingdom. But the Sermon on the Mount does both. It presents the character of those in God's kingdom and it sets high standards for all kingdom citizens.

Our task in this study is to humbly submit ourselves to the teaching of Jesus. There are many interesting aspects of the Sermon on the Mount and we may, as we are able, consider some of these. For example, when was the Sermon delivered during the ministry of Jesus? How does the Sermon fit within Matthew's overall narrative? Or, how did Jesus' teaching compare to the Pharisees of His day?

But we must understand that such questions do not get at the heart of the Sermon. Jesus speaks to us. And He wants us to listen. The central truth about God's kingdom is that it is the domain of God where He rules. God rules! And those who would be citizens of His kingdom must submit to His will. The Sermon on the Mount ends with Jesus declaring "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (7:21) and "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken to a wise man who built his house on the rock" (7:24).

A copy of the full text of the Matthew's Sermon on the Mount and Luke's companion Sermon on the Plain is provided from the New King James Version and the English Standard Version. It would be wise to read the full sermon at one sitting several times during the course of this study. Always do so with a pencil in hand to mark the critical points and relationships within the text.

Bro. Paul Earnhart has written an excellent exposition on the Lord's Sermon entitled Invitation to a Spiritual Revolution: Studies in the Sermon on the Mount (Fisher, 1999). The class schedule gives readings from Earnhart's book for each lesson. You will be greatly benefited if you choose to read it during the study. Two other fine works by conservative evangelicals are those by John R.W. Stott, The Message of the Sermon on the Mount (IVP, 1978) and D.A. Carson, The Sermon on the Mount: An Evangelical Exposition of Matthew 5-7 (Baker, 1978).

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT
Class Schedule

<u>Lesson</u>			<u>Topic</u>	<u>Invitation*</u>
	<i>Matthew</i>	<i>Luke</i>		
1	4: 23-5: 1	6: 17-20	Introduction	Foreword, p.1-3
2	5: 1-12	6: 20-26	Beatitudes	p.4-18
3	5: 13-16 5: 17-20		Similitudes Christ and the Law	p.19-30
4	5: 21-26 5: 27-30		Anger Lust	p.31-45
5	5: 31-32		Divorce	p.46-48
6	5: 33-37 5: 38-42	6: 29-30	Oaths Retaliation	p.49-57
7	5: 43-48 6: 1-4	6: 27-28 6: 32-36	Love Enemies Practicing Righteousness	p.58-75
8	6: 5-15 6: 16-18	11: 1-4	Lord's Prayer Fasting	p.76-96
9	6: 19-24 6: 25-34	12: 32-34 12: 22-31	Treasure in Heaven Anxiety	p.97-117
10	7: 1-6 7: 7-11	6: 37-42 11: 9-13	Judging Others Ask, Seek, Knock	p.118-126
11	7: 12 7: 13-14 7: 15-20	6: 31 6: 43-45	Golden Rule Narrow Gate Tree and Its Fruit	p.127-140
12	7: 21-23 7: 24-27 7: 28-29	6: 46 6: 47-49	Lawless Workers Wise and Foolish Man Teacher of Authority	p.141-162
13	Review			p.163-164

* *Suggested Reference Book: Earnhart, Paul. Invitation to a Spiritual Revolution: Studies in the Sermon on the Mount. Fisher, 1999.*

The Sermon on the Mount – An Overview

Two Key Themes: **Kingdom** and **Righteousness**

Context: Matthew 4:23 "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, **preaching the gospel of the kingdom**, and healing all kinds of sicknesses and all kinds of disease among the people."

The Sermon

The Beattitudes: Character of Kingdom Citizens

Blessed are the poor in spirit,	for theirs is the kingdom of heaven .
Blessed...mourn	
Blessed...meek	
Blessed...hunger/thirst	
Blessed...merciful	
Blessed...pure in heart	
Blessed...peacemakers	
Blessed...persecuted for righteousness sake,	for theirs is the kingdom of heaven .



inclusio

The Similitudes: Kingdom Citizens are Salt and Light

Kingdom Law

5:17 "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."

The Righteousness that Exceeds

5:20 "For I tell you, unless your **righteousness** exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter **the kingdom of heaven**."

The Righteousness Not To Be Seen

6:1 "Take heed that you do not do your **righteousness** before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven."

The Righteousness To Be Sought

6:33 "But seek first **the kingdom of God** and his **righteousness**, and all these things will be added unto you."

The Righteousness To Be Practiced

7:12 "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, **do** also to them, for this is **the Law and the Prophets**."

7:28-29 "And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."



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Matthew's and Luke's Sermon The first sermon of Jesus that Matthew records is universally called the *Sermon on the Mount*¹ since the setting in Matthew is upon a mountain. Some of the same teaching is recorded by Luke. Whereas Matthew places the sermon at what appears to be the beginning of Jesus' ministry, Luke places it during what is believed to be the second year of Jesus' ministry. Consequently, either the various gospel accounts are not chronological (which we know must be the case) or, perhaps, Luke is recording a different sermon of Jesus that has similar themes. The latter is sometimes argued since the setting of Luke's account is on a "level place"; hence, it is usually referred to as the *Sermon on the Plain*. However, even mountainous areas have level places. Note the following similarities between Matthew's and Luke's sermon:

1. Both are delivered specifically to the disciples (Mt 5:1; Lk 6:17).
2. Both began with a collection of Beattitudes (Mt 5:2-12; Lk 6:20-23), even though, Luke's account only contains four of the Beattitudes and includes corresponding Woes not given by Matthew.
3. Although Luke's sermon (30 verses) is significantly shorter than Matthew's (107 verses), the order of sayings is essentially the same.
4. Both end with the story of the wise and foolish men who built houses on rock and sand, respectively (Mt 7:24-27; Lk 6:46-49).

For the purposes of this study, Matthew's Sermon on the Mount and Luke's Sermon on the Plain will be assumed to be two records of the same sermon. Also, since Luke is widely believed to provide the truer chronological record of Jesus' ministry, the Sermon on the Mount/Plain must have been given during the second year of Jesus' ministry.

One important consequence of this is that by the second year of His ministry Jesus already had several significant confrontations with the Pharisees. This background helps in understanding the sermon.

The Gospel of Matthew If the Sermon on the Mount was not given until the second year of Jesus' ministry why does Matthew place it at the beginning of his record of Jesus' ministry? In other words, why is Matthew's account not chronological?

Several have noted an interesting feature of Matthew's Gospel. Five times within the Gospel, Matthew records a major discourse of Jesus and concludes each section with the saying "And so it was, when Jesus ended these sayings..." or something similar (Mt 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1). This suggests the following outline of Matthew (adapted from Green, p.30):

- Mt 1-4 Narrative: Genealogy, Infancy, Baptism, Beginnings of Ministry
- 5-7 1st Discourse.....*Sermon on the Mount*
- 8-9 Narrative: Jesus' Miracles of Healings
- 10 2nd Discourse.....*The Mission Charge*
- 11-12 Narrative: Rejection of John and Jesus by the Jews
- 13 3rd Discourse.....*Parables of the Kingdom*
- 14-17 Narrative: Miracles, Controversies, Peter's Confession, Transfiguration
- 18 4th Discourse.....*The Church*
- 19-22 Narrative: Journey toward Jerusalem
- 23-25 5th Discourse.....*Judgment and the End of the World*
- 26-28 Narrative: Last Days, Death and Resurrection of Jesus.

¹ Augustine was the first to use the term "Sermon on the Mount"; it has become the preferred designation since the Reformation period.

The narrative portions of the Gospel are chronological, but alternating with these narratives sections are the discourse materials which are not. The most widely proposed explanation of this arrangement is that Matthew was trying to present Jesus as the New Moses. Further, just as Moses gave the Law with its five books (i.e. the Pentateuch), so Jesus is the New Lawgiver as seen by the five pairs of narratives/discourses. The Sermon on the Mount (and didn't Moses go up on a mountain to receive the Law?) would appropriately be placed first as Jesus' foundational law. This structural scheme was first proposed by B.W.Bacon (1918; although many Christians before had drawn a parallel between Jesus and Moses), but it is not widely accepted for the simple reason that Matthew does not give any indication that this was his purpose. Determining the structure of Matthew goes beyond the scope of this study, but perhaps it can be seen that reasons other than chronological could have dictated the form of Matthew's Gospel.

Sermon or Collection of Sayings? It is often suggested that the Sermon on the Mount was not really a sermon at all, but rather a collection of Jesus' sayings. Or, less radically, it may have been a sermon, but some of the sayings included within this sermon came from other occasions. First, one cannot deny that Jesus taught on this occasion without denying the integrity of the text. Both Matthew and Luke clearly portray Jesus as teaching. Whether additional sayings of Jesus originally spoken on another occasion were included within the text of this sermon is less clear. As noted earlier, Luke's Sermon on the Plain is significantly less than Matthew's Sermon on the Mount, but Luke does record outside the Sermon of the Plain other sayings that are parallel to the sayings within Matthew's sermon (see Class Schedule for examples). There are two possible explanations. Either Matthew did combine sayings from other occasions and included them within this sermon, or Jesus spoke similar sayings on multiple occasions. It not important for our purposes to determine which is the case.

Matthew 4:23 – 5:1

- ²³ And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.
- ²⁴ Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them.
- ²⁵ Great multitudes followed Him—from Galilee, and *from* Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.
- ¹ And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him.

Luke 6:17-20

- ¹⁷ And He came down with them and stood on a level place with a crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear Him and be healed of their diseases,
- ¹⁸ as well as those who were tormented with unclean spirits. And they were healed.
- ¹⁹ And the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed *them* all.
- ²⁰ Then He lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, and said:

Comments/Questions

1. Matthew's summary statement of Jesus' activities suggests a fairly broad ministry. Note the language: *all* Galilee, *all* kinds of sickness, *all* kinds of diseases, *all* Syria, *all* sick (and Luke's "healed them *all*").
 - a. What are the indicators that this is a time when Jesus enjoyed great popularity with the people?

 - b. Note the geographical extent of the multitudes that followed Jesus.

2. What is the three-fold description of Jesus' activities as given by Matthew? (4:23)
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)

3. Both John the Baptist and Jesus preached a call for repentance "for the kingdom of God (was) at hand" (Mt 3:2; 4:17). Coupled with the statement that Jesus "preached the gospel of the kingdom" (4:23), we should be impressed with the idea that kingdom preaching was typical of Jesus' instructions. As we will study, it also forms the primary background to the Sermon on the Mount.

4. The first key to understanding a discourse is to determine who is being addressed. Two groups of people are identified in this section.
 - a. To which group is Jesus' sermon addressed?

 - b. What is the apparent reason Jesus went up on a mountain to teach his disciples?

5. The traditional site for this sermon is the "Mount of the Beattitudes" on the northern shores of the Sea of Galilee.

6. Jesus was seated while teaching which was consistent with the traditional practice of a Jewish rabbi.

7. Read the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7).

Introduction The Beatitudes are certainly the best known portion of Jesus' best known sermon. At the very start of Jesus' sermon to His disciples, He sets forth the blessings of kingdom citizens.

Matthew 5:2-12

- 2 Then He opened His mouth¹ 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 filled.
 7 Blessed *are* the merciful,
 For they shall obtain 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 they revile and
 persecute you, and say all kinds of evil
 against you falsely for My sake.
 12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for
 great is your reward in heaven, for so
 they persecuted the prophets who were
 before you.

Luke 6:20-26

- 20 Then He lifted up His eyes toward His
 disciples, and said:
 "Blessed *are you* poor,
 For yours is the kingdom of God.
 21b Blessed *are you* who weep now,
 For you shall laugh.
 21a Blessed *are you* who hunger now,
 For you shall be filled.
 22 Blessed are you when men hate you,
 And when they exclude you,
 And revile *you*, and cast out your name
 as evil,
 For the Son of Man's sake.
 23 Rejoice in that day and leap for joy!
 For indeed your reward *is* great in
 heaven,
 For in like manner their fathers did to
 the prophets.
 24 "But woe to you who are rich,
 For you have received your consolation.
 25 Woe to you who are full,
 For you shall hunger.
 Woe to you who laugh now,
 For you shall mourn and weep.
 26 Woe to you when all men speak well of
 you,
 For so did their fathers to the false
 prophets.

¹ **"He opened His mouth and taught..."** This is a simple example of an ancient idiom. We would simply say that "He began to teach," but "opened his mouth" is a fairly common idiom found in the Bible. This also illustrates how modern translations treat idiomatic expressions. Those that seek to be literal or formally equivalent typically retain the expression (NASV, NKJV, ESV), but most modern translations replace the idiom with a modern expression.

Comments/Questions

1. A "beatitude" is a literary form where a blessing is pronounced upon an individual. The term is most commonly associated with the blessings pronounced by Jesus at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount. However, beatitudes are recorded throughout the Bible.

Beatitude: Latin *beatitudo* meaning "blessedness," "happiness," "felicity." The English term "blessed" in the Sermon on the Mount is a translation of the Greek *makarios*.

- a. Note these that are contained within the wisdom literature of the Old Testament (Psalms 1:1; 2:12; Proverbs 8:34), the Gospels (Matthew 13:16; John 20:29), and Revelation (14:13; 22:14).
- b. Several other beatitudes pronounced by Jesus are recorded in the Gospels. Locate at least one other beatitude in Matthew (outside the Sermon on the Mount).

2. By far, most translations start each beatitude with the expression "Blessed are..." (or something similar). Yet, at times it has been suggested that a better translation instead of "blessed" would be "happy" and is used by some paraphrases (e.g. Phillips, Today's English Version, and Living Bible).

- a. What is the difference between "blessedness" and "happiness"?
- b. Which seems to fit better with the nature of the beatitudes?

[Interestingly, the only committee translation that used the translation "happy" (the Jerusalem Bible), reverted back to "blessed" with its latest revision (the New Jerusalem Bible).]

3. The number of beatitudes in Matthew's account of the Sermon on the Mount is debated. The most natural counting would give 9 beatitudes; one each in verses 3 to 11. Some would say verse 12 contains another beatitude bringing the total to the nice number of 10. On the other hand, many think verse 11 is simply a restating of verse 10 and therefore reduce the number to 8. Or, to arrive at the other perfect number 7, some omit verse 10 saying that it does not describe the individual's character.

- a. What do you think?
- b. Note that the blessing associated with both the first (v.3) and eighth (v. 10) beatitude is that "theirs is the kingdom of heaven". These expressions appear to serve the function of "bookends". That is, all the beatitudes are to be understood in the context of the "kingdom of heaven". If so, then perhaps 8 beatitudes is correct.

4. Compare Matthew's account to Luke's.
- a. Matthew's beatitudes are written in the third person (except v.11); Luke's are in the second person. Which seems more natural considering those who Jesus was addressing?
- b. Compare the wording of three of the common beatitudes in Matthew and Luke:

Matthew	Luke
Blessed <i>are</i> the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.	Blessed <i>are you</i> poor, For yours is the kingdom of God.
Blessed <i>are</i> those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.	Blessed <i>are you</i> who weep now, For you shall laugh.
Blessed <i>are</i> those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.	Blessed <i>are you</i> who hunger now, For you shall be filled.

In what way is Matthew's account clearer?

Note Matthew almost always uses the expression "kingdom of heaven" instead of the "kingdom of God". This is widely believed to reflect the Jewish hesitancy to speak the name of God. Thus, Matthew, a Jew writing for Jewish Christians, showed the same restraint.

- c. Each of the four beatitudes recorded by Luke has a corresponding woe. What do these woes emphasize about the state of those who are not kingdom citizens?
5. State in your own words the essence of each of the qualities of the Beatitudes.
- Poor in Spirit –
- Mourn –
- Meek –
- Hunger/Thirst for Righteousness -
- Merciful –
- Pure in Heart –
- Peacemakers –
- Persecuted -

6. Is it possible to possess one or two of these qualities and not the others and to receive the blessings stated?

7. When are the blessings pronounced by Jesus to be realized? In other words, when are those who mourn to be comforted, etc.?

8. Can you think of other New Testament passages which reflect the same qualities as those enunciated in the Beatitudes?

Poor in Spirit –

Merciful -

Mourn –

Pure in Heart -

Meek –

Peacemakers -

Hunger/Thirst for Righteousness -

Persecuted –

9. Can you think of Biblical characters which reflect the qualities of the Beatitudes?

Poor in Spirit –

Merciful -

Mourn –

Pure in Heart -

Meek –

Peacemakers -

Hunger/Thirst for Righteousness -

Persecuted –

10. Read the Beatitudes again. What do feel is the most challenging aspect of these?

Introduction Having first presented the character of His disciples in the Beatitudes, Jesus teaches a great paradox: Those that are hated by the World are the very ones who preserve the World. Jesus then corrects those who claimed that He was destroying the Law by saying that He fulfilled the Law.

Matthew 5:13-16

- ¹³ "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.
- ¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.
- ¹⁵ Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house.
- ¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Comments/Questions

1. In your own words, what is the gist of these verses?

2. Consider other translations of the salt statement:

"But if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?" KJV, ASV
"But if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?" ESV (& most modern)

 - a. In what way are disciples "the salt of the earth"?

 - b. Is this an intrinsic quality? In other words, are disciples *automatically* and *without fail* the salt of the earth?

3. Luke records the salt statement of Jesus in a different context: immediately after Jesus' warns those who would follow Him on the cost of discipleship (Luke 14:34-35). How does the salt statement fit that context?

4. Is the same point being made by both the "You are the salt of the earth" and "You are the light of the world" statements? Or does each statement make a different point?

5. What is the service that Jesus' disciples provide by being "the light of the world"?

Matthew 5:17-20

- 17 "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.
- 18 For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.
- 19 Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.
- 20 For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

Comments/Questions

6. What may Jesus be suggesting by starting this section with "Do not think..."? (Compare charge may against Stephen in Acts 6:14.)

7. The two key words in verse 17 are "destroy" and "fulfill". Alternate translations are "abolish" (RSV, NIV, NASV, NAB, NRSV, ESV) and "complete" (REB, NJB), respectively. These two words are put in opposition to each other, thus the meaning of one is tied to the meaning of the other.

a. Who would have said that Jesus was "destroying" the Law?

b. How did Jesus "fulfill" the law?

8. The "jot" ('*letter*' NRSV; '*smallest letter*' NASV, NIV; '*iota*' ESV) refers to the Hebrew letter *yodh* which is the smallest consonant in the Hebrew alphabet (note: *iota* = smallest letter in Greek alphabet). The "tittle" ('*stroke of a letter*' NRSV; '*stroke*' NASV; '*least stroke of a pen*' NIV, '*dot*' ESV) is less certain, but usually thought to refer to the small strokes that distinguish one letter from another, e.g. compare O and Q. What does this say about Jesus view of the integrity of the Old Testament scriptures?

Jesus' Use of the Term "Amen"

Amen is an interesting word simply from the standpoint that it is spelt the same in Hebrew, Greek and English. It simply means "So it is" or "So be it". In using the term, one is expressing agreement to the truthfulness of some statement or the hope that the statement will come to pass. We normally restrict its use to the close of prayers. As such, it is appropriate for the both the one leading in prayer and the one following to say Amen.

But in the Gospels, Jesus is the only one to use the term and it is always at the beginning of some statement, not at the end. In the KJV, it is always translated "Verily" as in "Verily, I say unto you..." Unfortunately, modern translations use a variety of terms to translate the word (e.g. 'truly', 'assuredly') and thus disguise the fact as to how common it is. Jesus uses it about 100 times to introduce some statement. For example, Matthew 5:18, 26; 6:2, 5, etc. What does Jesus intend for us to understand by his using the expression "Amen, I say unto you..." to introduce these pronouncements? Jesus is emphasizing his authority to make the pronouncement. 'As I say to you, so it is!'

Interesting, John in his Gospel almost always uses a double amen. For example, in Jesus discussion with Nicodemus in John 3. v.3, 5, 11, "Verily, Verily I say unto you" giving even greater emphasis to Jesus' authority.

9. Jesus clearly said that the Law (and the Prophets) would not pass away "until all is fulfilled". Any time indicators in the text as to when this would be?

10. Keeping the commandments says something about one's relationship to the kingdom. In particular, kingdom citizens are expected to obey and teach the commandments of God.
 - a. Are the commandments in verse 19 those of Law and the Prophets, or do they refer to Christ's commandments (some of which he will shortly be discussing)?

 - b. Are those who are "called least in the kingdom of heaven" in the kingdom of heaven?

 - c. Who are "the greatest in the kingdom of heaven"? Mt 18:1-4; Mt 20:26.

 - d. Considering the Beatitudes, are any in the kingdom who are not great?

11. Jesus was obviously not impressed (nor pleased) with the "righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees".
 - a. Briefly, who were the scribes? And who were the Pharisees?

 - b. What was Jesus' view of the Pharisees? (Consider e.g. Mt 15:3, Mk 7:9, Mt 23:4)

 - c. What was wrong with "the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees"?

Introduction Jesus offers his disciples six illustrations of what righteousness in his kingdom demands, thus demonstrating the shortcomings of the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees.

Matthew 5:21-26

- ²¹ “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.’
- ²² But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire.
- ²³ Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you,
- ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.
- ²⁵ Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison.
- ²⁶ Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny.

Comments/Questions

1. Jesus introduces each of the six illustrations with the expression “You have heard that it was said...” followed by “But I say to you...”. Either Jesus is presenting his teaching in contrast to what the Old Testament taught (hence, these are sometimes called antitheses), or he is presenting his teaching in contrast to what some said the Old Testament taught. It may be too early to decide which option is correct until we study each saying, but consider the following.
 - a. When Jesus referred to the Old Testament, how did he typically introduce its sayings? (see Mt.4:5, 7, 10; 11:10; 21:13)
 - b. Do you think most Jews in Jesus day *read* and studied the law for themselves, or *heard* the law expounded by teachers of the law?
 - c. Who were the most respected teachers of the law?
2. The first example relates to the sixth of the Ten Commandments, “You shall not murder” (Ex.20:13; Dt.5:17), and the resulting judgment (Num.35:29-30). There was no dispute about the wrongness of murder, but based on Jesus continuing statements, what apparently was not considered as wrong?

3. Jesus makes three statements:

Angry with brother	→	In danger of the judgment
Says to brother "Raca"	→	In danger of the council
Says to brother "Fool"	→	In danger of hell fire

a. The additional description "without a cause" (KJV, NKJV) is not found in the earliest manuscripts, but does it properly portray the type of anger intended by Jesus?

b. "Raca" is the Aramaic word for "empty" and thus was an insult with the impact of "empty-headed" (NRSV 'insult', NASV, REB 'good for nothing', NJB, CHSB 'Fool', NAB 'abusive language', NET 'numbskull'). The "council" apparently has reference to the Jewish Sanhedrin (so, NAB, NJB, CHSB; NET 'highest court', NASV 'supreme court'!?)

"Fool" translates the Greek word *more* from which we get our word 'moron' (so, CHSB; NAB 'holds in contempt')

c. It has been suggested that Jesus intends a progression with each succeeding statement being stronger than the last and with a progressively stronger punishment. For example, the NET translation renders the punishment as "court", "highest court", "hellfire". Does this thought have any merit?

4. Jesus gives two examples of how this understanding of dealing with one's brother works in practice.

a. Why the urgency in reconciling with one's brother before offering one's gift at the altar?

b. In both examples is the central character the guilty party?

5. Reconsider the question of whether Jesus is critiquing the Old Law or the interpretation given to the Old Law by the scribes and Pharisees.

a. Was it acceptable under the Old Law to be angry with or show contempt toward another?

b. How might have the legalist Pharisees justified anger with another?

6. Is there any particular danger associated with calling another "empty-headed" or "fool" as compared to other insults?

Matthew 5:27-30

- ²⁷ "You have heard that it was said to those of old, '*You shall not commit adultery.*'
- ²⁸ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.
- ²⁹ If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.
- ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

Comments/Questions

7. Jesus' second illustration concerns the seventh of the Ten Commandments, "You shall not commit adultery" (Ex. 20:14; Dt.5:18).
- a. Jesus makes clear that the sin of adultery can include more than the actual act. It includes the impure thoughts of the heart. Is all lust sin? If not, what is it about lust in this passage that makes it sin?
- b. Was this a new commandment instituted by Jesus, or was lust even improper under the Old Law? (Job 31:1, 9-12; Ex.20:17)

[Interestingly, in a Greek version of the Old Testament, the word used for "covet" in Ex.20:17 is the same word used by Jesus translated "lust".]

8. Jesus' graphic instruction on plucking out an eye or cutting off a hand highlights the importance of purity.
- a. Which of the beatitudes speak to this point?
- b. Why is it the right eye and the right hand that Jesus' mentions?
9. Consider Paul's instruction in Colossians 3:5. How does his instruction reflect the Lord's teaching?

Introduction Jesus just emphasized the importance of purity in our thoughts by equating lust with the act of adultery itself. He continues with his third illustration of the righteousness demanded by the kingdom: divorce for any cause and remarriage is also adultery.

Matthew 5:31-32

- ³¹ "Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.'
³² But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.

Comments/Questions

1. A "certificate of divorce" is only mentioned twice in the Old Testament: Deuteronomy 24:1-2 and Jeremiah 3:8. From the passage in Deuteronomy, the certificate of divorce appears to serve two functions: (1) a woman given a certificate of divorce could marry another man, but (2) the man who divorced his wife and gave her a certificate of divorce could not in the future take her back as a wife. It is generally held that these provisions were for the protection of wives. The passage in Jeremiah illustrates this situation by speaking of the Lord giving Israel a certificate of divorce because she played the harlot.

- a. In Deuteronomy 24, on what basis can a man give his wife a certificate of divorce?
- b. A debate occurred in Jesus' day and continues even today as to what "some uncleanness" (ASV "some unseemly thing"; RSV, NASV, ESV "some indecency", HCSB "something improper", NRSV "something objectionable") means. The root meaning of the word is 'nakedness'. Thus, the School of Shammai limited the expression to sexual immorality, whereas the School of Hillel gave it a very broad meaning to include about any imaginable objection a husband might have against a wife. Any thoughts?

(Edersheim cautions, however, that not even the Shammaites were that strict in their practice of limiting divorce to cases involving sexual immorality. In other words, divorce for any reason was commonly practiced [*Life and Times*, II, p.333]. Davies and Allison state "On the whole, and despite a few rabbinic texts which mourn divorce..., the impression one gains from ancient Jewish sources is that divorce was relatively easy and was not considered a grave misdeed [*Matthew*, I, p.528].)

2. As has been suggested in earlier lessons, it appears that a major purpose of Jesus in this section is to contrast the righteousness required of kingdom citizens to that of the Pharisees and scribes. Thus it would be helpful if we could understand how the Pharisees viewed divorce.

- a. In verse 31 when Jesus is stating what had been said, what is the thrust of that statement? In other words, what point does the statement make?

Does the statement speak to the reason for the divorce?

- b. In Matthew 19:3, the Pharisees ask Jesus the question if it was lawful for a man to divorce his wife *for any reason*. How do you think those Pharisees would have answered that question? (see 19:7)
- c. In the parallel account to Matthew 19 in Mark 10, how is the question of the Pharisees phrased differently? (10:2)

When Jesus responded by asking them what the Law of Moses said, what does their response omit?

What does this suggest about their attitude toward the reason for divorce? In other words, do you think they were strict or liberal in their understanding of Deut. 24?

- 3. Jesus teaching on divorce highlights the string of consequences that follow.
 - a. Does the man sin who divorces his wife? (Note that, unlike the other gospel accounts, nothing is said of his remarrying.)

If so, what is his sin?
 - b. Does the woman sin who is divorced?

In what way is she "caused" to commit adultery?
 - c. Does the one who marries the divorced woman sin?
- 4. The exception clause "except for sexual immorality" is only given in Matthew's gospel (5:32 and 19:9). "Sexual immorality" (NKJV, ESV, HCSB; Gk *porneia*) is also translated "fornication" (KJV, ASV), "unchastity" (RSV, NASV, NRSV, REB), "sexually unfaithful" (NET), "marital unfaithfulness" (NIV), and "lewd conduct" (NAB). Most agree that the term represents a broad range of sexual sins, although some have argued for a narrow definition (e.g. fornication or incest).
 - a. In taking this position is Jesus basically taking the position of the School of Shammai? (cf. Question 1b)
 - b. For whom does the exception clause apply? In other words, if the wife *is* guilty of "sexual immorality", does her husband sin in putting her away? Does she sin if she remarries? Does the man who marries her sin?

Introduction As in the previous illustrations, Jesus continues to speak to how one ought to relate to those about him. Our relationships are obviously important to Jesus.

Matthew 5:33-37

- ³³ "Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.'
³⁴ But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne;
³⁵ nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.
³⁶ Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black.
³⁷ But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

Comments/Questions

1. Although not a direct quote, Jesus' assertion of what was said to those of old can be found in Leviticus 19:12, Exodus 20:7, and Deuteronomy 5:11.
 - a. What is the emphasis in these passages?
 - b. What is also implied in these passages that is explicitly stated in Deuteronomy 6:13 and 10:20?
2. Numbers 30:2 speaks of both *vows* and *oaths*. What is the difference between them? What do they have in common?
3. Jesus, in giving his expectations, mentions four things one ought not to swear by: heaven, earth, Jerusalem, or one's head. On the face of it, these seem to be unrelated to the idea of swearing falsely. But apparently what did the Pharisees practice that necessitated Jesus making this point? (See Mt.23:16-22)
4. Oath taking is not uncommon in the scriptures. Note the one making the oath in these passages?
 - a. Acts 2:30
 - b. Hebrews 6:13-17
 - c. Hebrews 7:20-22
 - d. Matthew 26:63-64
 - e. Romans 1:9; 9:1
 - f. 2 Corinthians 1:23; 11:31
 - g. Galatians 1:20
 - h. Philippians 1:8

5. How do you reconcile the fact that God, Jesus, and Paul made oaths with the apparent command of Jesus not to make oaths?

Matthew 5:38-42

Luke 6:29-30

³⁸ "You have heard that it was said, '*An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.*'
³⁹ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.
⁴⁰ If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have *your* cloak also.
⁴¹ And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.
⁴² Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.

²⁹ To him who strikes you on the *one* cheek, offer the other also. And from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold *your* tunic either.
³⁰ Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him who takes away your goods do not ask *them* back.

Comments/Questions

6. Note the differing Old Testament contexts where the principle "eye for an eye" is found:
Exodus 21:23-24
Leviticus 24:20
Deuteronomy 19:13, 21
- a. Was this principle to govern individuals in their personal relationships or judges as the dispensers of justice? (Consider Leviticus 19:18)
- b. Even in the Old Testament was this principle always to be followed? (Consider Exodus 21:26-27)
7. On the other hand, is Jesus giving principles for individuals or judges? (Consider Romans 13)
8. If Jesus is attacking the Pharisees' understanding in this matter, what apparently were they doing?
9. In what way do Paul's comments in Romans 12:17-21 help illuminate Jesus remark on not resisting an evil person?
10. Are we to understand these examples as absolute? For example, are we to give to *everyone* who asks? (Consider 2 Thessalonians 3:10)

Introduction In his sixth and last illustration, Jesus broadens his teaching in the fifth illustration about not retaliating against one's enemies to loving one's enemies. In Matthew's account, Jesus then continues his attack on the self-righteousness of the Pharisees.

Matthew 5:43-48

- 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, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,
- ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father 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 have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?
- ⁴⁷ And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more *than others*? Do not even the tax collectors do so?
- ⁴⁸ Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Luke 6:27-28, 32-36

- ²⁷ "But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,
- ²⁸ bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you
- ³² "But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.
- ³³ And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.
- ³⁴ And if you lend *to those* from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back.
- ³⁵ But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil.
- ³⁶ Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

Comments/Questions

1. Although Luke's Sermon on the Plain contains some of the same teaching as Matthew's Sermon on the Mount, it is much briefer and in this selection of material it is ordered differently than Matthew's account. Notice that Luke 6:29-30 relates back to Matthew's fifth illustration and Luke 6:31 (the golden rule) will not be recorded in Matthew's account until 7:12. Whereas Luke uses the term "sinners", what is the corresponding term used by Matthew? Why are different terms used?
2. Does the Old Testament teach the principle to "hate one's enemies"? Consider Leviticus 19:18, 33-34; Exodus.23:9; Deuteronomy 10:19; Job 31:29-30; Proverbs 25:21-22. Give careful thought.
3. How had the Pharisees restricted the definition of "neighbor"? (Lk.10:25-37)

4. The principle to "love one's enemies" is based on the character of God. How does God demonstrate "love for enemies"?
5. Matthew's account concludes with the admonition to "*be perfect*" and Luke's with "*be merciful*". What's the significance of each expression? Are different points being made?

Matthew 6:1-4

- ¹ "Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven.
- ² Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.
- ³ But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,
- ⁴ that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.

Comments/Questions

6. Having concluded his six illustrations as to how kingdom citizens are to be more righteous than the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus now gives three warnings to kingdom citizens on how they present their righteousness before others. Consider 6:1-18. Does verse 1 serve as a heading to all three warnings?
7. Strangely, the NKJV uses the term "charitable deeds" throughout this passage. What terms do other translations use in verses 1-4?
8. Was almsgiving expected of God's people? (Deut.15:11; Ps.41:1; Prov.19:17)
9. Jesus gives two commands "when you do a charitable deed": (1) "do not sound a trumpet before you", and (2) "do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing".
 - a. Any difference in emphasis between those two statements?
 - b. In what way are those "who sound a trumpet" hypocritical?
10. The NKJV adds the word "openly" at the end of verse 4 (compare modern translations). Does this correctly give the thrust of the passage?

Introduction Having warned of those hypocrites that loved to be seen for their almsgiving, Jesus now warns of those who loved to be seen for their praying and fasting.

Matthew 6:5-15

- ⁵ "And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.
- ⁶ But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who *is* in the secret *place*; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.
- ⁷ And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen *do*. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.
- ⁸ "Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.
- ⁹ In this manner, therefore, pray:
- 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 forgive our debtors.
- ¹³ And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the kingdom and the power
and the glory forever. Amen.
- ¹⁴ "For if you forgive men their trespasses,
your heavenly Father will also forgive
you.
- ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive men their
trespasses, neither will your Father
forgive your trespasses.

Luke 11:1-4

- ¹ Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, *that* one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."
- ² So He said to them, "When you pray, say:
- Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done
On earth as *it is* in heaven.
- ³ Give us day by day our daily bread.
- ⁴ And forgive us our sins,
For we also forgive everyone who is
indebted to us.
And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one."

Comments / Questions

1. Jesus condemns the praying announced by trumpets or on the street corner and approves of the praying in one's room.
 - a. Are we to understand that the *place* of prayer is the primary factor in determining acceptable prayer?
 - b. Is any *public* prayer acceptable?
 - c. In this section, Jesus is not teaching what constitutes proper prayer, but rather telling us that mindset that prevents proper prayer from taking place. What specifically is Jesus warning against?

2. Jesus speaks of a reward being given both to those who pray with the wrong motive and to those with the right motive.
 - a. Is receiving a reward the *most important* motivation for prayer? Consider carefully.
 - b. The NKJV says that the reward of the Father will be done "openly". What do you suppose that means?

Other modern translations omit "openly" since it is not found in the preferred Greek text. How does that change the meaning of the Father's reward?

3. Jesus condemns either "vain repetitions" (NKJV) or the heaping up of "empty phrases" (ESV).
 - a. What differences do these phrases suggest? Is either translation preferable to the other? (Check other translations)
 - b. Why are "many words" unnecessary?
4. The "Lord's Prayer" or "Model Prayer" begins by focusing on God and ends by focusing on ourselves. Note that in Luke's gospel the Model Prayer is not given in the Sermon on the Plain, but on another occasion in response to the disciples request to Jesus.
 - a. What three requests (petitions) are stated about our Father in heaven?
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)
 - b. Some (e.g. Earnhart, p. 87) argue that the last two petitions are parallel (see punctuation of the ESV), and others (e.g. Ferguson, [The Church](#), p. 24; Stott, p.147)

argue that all three petitions are parallel (see punctuation of NIV). What is the significance of petitions being paralleled?

Since God has always been holy, always been King, and always doing his will, what is the point of these petitions?

- c. What three petitions are given concerning us?
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)
- d. Compare both Matthew's and Luke's version of the Lord's Prayer as given in the NKJV (or KJV) and a modern translation. Note the additional expressions contained in the NKJV.

Matthew 6:16-18

¹⁶ "Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

¹⁷ But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face,

¹⁸ so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who *is* in the secret *place*; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

Comments / Questions

5. God ordained fasting on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:39-31 ["to afflict" oneself = to fast]; Acts 27:9). After the Exile, four other annual fast days were observed (Zech.8:19), but whether they were ordained by God or established by men is uncertain. By the New Testament times, the Pharisees fasted twice a week (Luke 18:12); Mondays and Thursdays according to the Mishnah.
6. Other fasting periods in the Old Testament was associated with calamity: either national (Judges 20:26; 2 Chr.20:3; Ezra 8:21; Neh.9:1; Jer.36:9) or individual (2 Sam.12:16; Ps.35:13; Dan.9:3). What other acts or attitudes are associated with fasting in these verses?
7. Even in OT, God condemned insincere fasting: Isaiah 58; Jeremiah 14:12; Zech.7:5-7.
8. Fasting is sometimes coupled with prayer: 1 Sam.7:5-6; Nehemiah 1:4; Acts 13:3.
9. Relevant passages in New Testament that speak of fasting are Matt.4:2; 9:14-17//Mark 2:18-22//Luke 5:33-39; Acts 13:3; 14:23 (KJV and NKJV speaks of fasting in four verses that are not reflected in modern translations: Matt.17:21//Mark 9:29; Acts 10:30; 1 Cor.7:5.)
10. As was the case with almsgiving and prayer, the NKJV adds "openly" in speaking of the reward that the Father gives. In looking at all three, does "openly" correctly express the thought?

Introduction Jesus understood the power of material things to promote greed or apprehension, either of which could destroy his disciples.

Matthew 6:19-24

- 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 lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.
- ²³ But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!
- ²⁴ "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

Luke 12:32-34

- ³² "Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.
- ³³ Sell what you have and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys.
- ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Comments / Questions

1. It may be thought that Jesus has stopped focusing upon the Pharisees and is giving more general teaching. But consider Luke 16: 14.
2. As in his other instruction in this chapter, Jesus first tells his disciples what *not to do*, and then what *to do*.
 - a. In a nutshell, why should one lay one's treasures in heaven instead of on the earth?
 - b. Why can't one do both? That is, lay up treasure on earth *and* in heaven.
3. Is it the possession of riches that Jesus is speaking of? If no, what is it about riches that Jesus warns against?
4. What is the point Jesus is making with the metaphor of the eye being the lamp of the body?

Matthew 6:25-34

- 25 "Therefore I say to you, do not worry 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, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?
- 27 Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?
- 28 "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin;
- 29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.
- 30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?
- 31 "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'
- 32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.
- 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.
- 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Comments / Questions

5. The "therefore" of v.25 connects this section with the preceding. Whereas Jesus had just condemned covetousness, what is Jesus' concern in this section? Note John 6:27, James 5:2-3, and Hebrews 13:5.
6. What is the fundamental reason we are not to worry?
7. Only Matthew includes the phrase "and His righteousness" following the admonition to "seek first the kingdom of God." Why is that especially appropriate for Matthew? Explain what it means to "seek the kingdom of God" and, in the process, what the "kingdom of God" is?
8. Would the "first and great commandment" be a good summary for this section of the Sermon on the Mount?

Luke 12:22-31

- 22 Then He said to His disciples, "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on.
- 23 Life is more than food, and the body *is more* than clothing.
- 24 Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds?
- 25 And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?
- 26 If you then are not able to do *the* least, why are you anxious for the rest?
- 27 Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.
- 28 If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more *will He clothe* you, O *you* of little faith?
- 29 "And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind.
- 30 For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things.
- 31 But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you.

Introduction Following themes introduced in chapter 6, Jesus again considers the sin of hypocrisy and our continual need to rely upon our Father.

Matthew 7:1-6

- ¹ “Judge not, that you be not judged.
² For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.
- ³ And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?¹
⁴ Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye’; and look, a plank *is* in your own eye?
⁵ Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.
⁶ “Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.

Luke 6:37-42

- ³⁷ “Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.
³⁸ Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”
³⁹ And He spoke a parable to them: “Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into the ditch?
⁴⁰ A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.
⁴¹ And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not perceive the plank in your own eye?¹
⁴² Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me remove the speck that *is* in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the plank that *is* in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck that is in your brother’s eye.

¹ KJV, ASV *mote/beam*; Moffatt *splinter, plank*; Goodspeed *speck/beam*; Knox *speck of dust/beam*; Beck, GNB, NASV, NRSV, CEV, ESV, HCSB *speck/log*; NIV, REB *speck of sawdust/plank*; NJB *splinter/log*

Comments / Questions

1. In verses 1-5, is Jesus more concerned about his disciples removing sin from their lives or removing it from others?

2. What is the difference between judging and discerning?

And does that difference help to explain Jesus’ command to “judge not”?
 Find New Testament examples of where discernment is made or encouraged.

What is fundamentally wrong with disciples judging?

3. What broader lesson does Luke’s account suggest than just hypocritical judging?

4. Compare Romans 2:1-3; 14:4; 1 Cor.4:4-5; James 3:1.
5. Could Jesus still have the Pharisees in mind? Mt.9:10f; 12:1f; Lk.7:39; 15:1f; 18:9f
6. Verse 6 seems to offer balance to Jesus' teaching in verses 1-5. Although disciples are not judges, they must recognize not everyone will place the same value on the kingdom of God.

Matthew 7:7-11

- 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 he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.
- 9 Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?
- 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent?
- 11 If you then, being 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!

Luke 11:9-13

- 9 "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.
- 10 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.
- 11 If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if *he asks* for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish?
- 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?
- 13 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

Comments / Questions

7. The instruction to ask, seek, and knock seems too simple to believe (which may be the problem in our implementation).
 - a. What other truths are presupposed by this teaching in order for our prayers to be answered? (Mt. 6:1-7; 6:19-24; James 1:5-8)
 - b. Compare Jeremiah 29:12-13.
 - c. Compare Deuteronomy 4:29-31; Isaiah 55:6-7
8. Notice the context in which these statements are recorded in Luke.
9. The "good things" of Matthew that are given by the Father are paralleled with the "Holy Spirit" in Luke. What does that suggest about the nature of the good things given by God?

Introduction The Golden Rule summarizes the essence of Jesus' teaching regarding the Law. However, not all you hear the message of the kingdom are willing to do what it takes to enter the kingdom.

Matthew 7:12-14

¹² Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

Luke 6:31

³¹ And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise.

Comments / Questions

1. The Golden Rule is probably the most widely known teaching of Jesus. The truthfulness of it is self-evident.
 - a. To illustrate the shortcomings of men, someone devised the "Silver Rule" ("Do unto others as they do unto you") and the "Iron Rule" ("Do unto others before they do unto you").
 - b. Jewish rabbis taught a negative form of the Golden Rule; e.g. "Let no man himself do what he hates to have done to him" (Philo). How does this saying fall short?
2. Jesus contended that the Golden Rule "is the Law and the Prophets"?
 - a. What does that mean?
 - b. Is there any difference between the Golden Rule and the command to "love thy neighbor as thyself"? Compare Matthew 22: 34-40.
3. Jesus began the central section of his sermon with the statement that he did not come to abolish the Law and the Prophets (5: 17). He coupled that with the requirement that for one to enter the kingdom of heaven one's righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and the Pharisees. By saying that the Golden Rule is the Law and the Prophets, is Jesus telling us that the Golden Rule encapsulates the righteousness required to enter the kingdom of heaven?

Matthew 7:13-14

¹³ "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.

¹⁴ Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Comments / Questions

4. Having completed the central thought of his sermon, Jesus concludes the sermon by discussing those who will accept his teaching.
 - a. What is the primary point Jesus makes in this section?

- b. Why is Jesus brutally honest about the difficulties of the narrow way?
5. What is the fundamental difference between those you go by the wide way to destruction and those who go the way that leads to life?

Matthew 7:15-20

- ¹⁵ "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.
- ¹⁶ You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?
- ¹⁷ Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.
- ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit.
- ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.
- ²⁰ Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

Luke 6:43-45

- ⁴³ "For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit.
- ⁴⁴ For every tree is known by its own fruit. For *men* do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush.
- ⁴⁵ A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

Comments / Questions

6. False prophets give a false presentation of themselves. They present themselves as sheep when in fact they are wolves.
- a. If you cannot tell by their appearance, then how can one discern which prophets are true and which are false?
- b. Is one's "fruit" an *absolute* measure of one's nature? That is, does it *always* give a true indication?
7. Luke couples the analogy of the fruit with the analogy of the type of treasure in one's heart. Does either of these analogies deny that men have a choice? In other words, is it our choice whether we are a good or bad tree or a good or evil man?

LESSON 12 LAWLESS WORKERS/WISE & FOOLISH MAN/TEACHER OF AUTHORITY

Introduction Jesus continues his conclusion by describing those who would accept his teaching.

Matthew 7:21-23

²¹ "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

²² Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'

²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

Luke 6:46

⁴⁶ "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?"

Comments / Questions

1. Jesus says that it is possible for one to call Jesus "Lord" and yet not to treat Jesus as Lord.
 - a. Just as there are false prophets, there are false disciples. But do false disciples think they are false?
 - b. What is the distinction between true and false disciples?
2. False disciples acted in the "name" of the Lord.
 - a. What three things did the false disciples do?
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)
 - b. Did they really "cast out demons" and "do wonders"? Give careful thought.
 - c. What does it mean to act in the "name" of someone else?
3. Those who do the will of the Father shall enter the kingdom of heaven (God).
 - a. Is this speaking of the present or the future?
 - b. Hasn't the whole thrust of Jesus' sermon been on how to enter the kingdom? Explain.
4. How does one practice lawlessness ('iniquity' KJV)?

Matthew 7:24-27

²⁴ "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them,

I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:

²⁵ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

²⁶ "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand:

²⁷ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

Luke 6:47-49

⁴⁷ Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like:

⁴⁸ He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock.

⁴⁹ But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation,

against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great."

Comments / Questions

5. There are only two fundamental options that man may choose. Either one can enter the narrow gate or the wide gate, be a good tree or a bad tree, be a doer or a transgressor of God's will, and be a wise or foolish builder. Who is the wise builder? Are we surprised?
6. The work of the both the wise and the foolish builder was tested. The wise builder's house survived the storm, but the foolish builder's house did not. What is the lesson Jesus is trying to teach?

Matthew 7:28-29

²⁸ And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching,

²⁹ for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Comments / Questions

7. We have noted that much of Jesus' teaching was rooted in the Old Testament, so why were the people astonished at his teaching?
8. In what way was Jesus teaching different than the scribes?

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