

3rd Quarter 2020 Bible Study Outline



THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT - STUDY 1

(Matthew 5: 1-2)

INTRODUCTION:

1. In **Matthew 5-7**, we have the most famous sermon ever preached...
 - a. Commonly referred to as "**The Sermon On The Mount**".
 - b. It has touched more hearts and inspired many more sermons than any other.
2. But what is Jesus saying in this sermon?
 - a. What is the "THEME?"
 - b. What is the "CONTENT" of this sermon?
3. In this study of "**The Sermon On The Mount**," we shall try to answer these questions.

I. THE THEME:

A. The Setting Leading Up To The Sermon...

1. In **Matt.3:1-3**, we read of the preaching of John the Baptist.
 - a. Who was sent to prepare the way of the Lord.
 - b. The theme of his preaching concerned "**the kingdom of heaven**".
2. In **Matt.4**, we read of the beginning of Jesus' ministry.
 - a. After His temptation, Jesus starts to preach a message similar to John's - **Matt.4:17**.
 - b. His preaching in Galilee pertained to the "**gospel of the kingdom**" - **Matt.4:23**.

B. A Phrase Used Repeatedly Throughout The Sermon...

1. "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" - **Matt.5:3**.
2. "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" - **Matt.5:10**.
3. "...shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven" - **Matt.5:19**.
4. "...shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" - **Matt.5:19**.
5. "...will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven" - **Matt.5:20**.
6. "Your kingdom come" - **Matt.6:10**.
7. "But seek first the kingdom of God" - **Matt.6:33**.
8. "...shall enter the kingdom of heaven" - **Matt.7:21**.

The SETTING and the particular PHRASE used leads us to conclude that the "THEME" of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount is: **"THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN."**

With this in mind, let's now consider the "CONTENT" of the sermon...

II. THE CONTENT AND ITS BASIC DIVISION:

A. The "Citizens" of The Kingdom...

1. Their character and blessedness - **Matt.5:3-12.**
2. Their relation to the world - **Matt.5:13-16.**

B. The "Righteousness" of The Kingdom...

1. In contrast to the "traditional interpretations and applications" of the Law - **Matt.5:17-48.**
2. With respect to man's relation to God - **Matt.6:1-33.**
3. With respect to man's relation to man - **Matt.7:1-12.**

C. The "Exhortation to Enter" The Kingdom...

1. The "beginning" of the way - **Matt.7:13-14.**
2. The "progress" along the way - **Matt.7:15-20.**
3. The "end" of the way - **Matt.7:21-27.**
 - a. Contrasting "sayers" with "doers" **Matt.21-23.**
 - b. Contrasting "hearers" with "doers" **Matt.24-27.**

From the "CONTENT," we can see why some have called this sermon of Jesus "THE MAGNA CARTA OF HIS KINGDOM" or "THE MANIFESTO OF THE KING."

Before we examine the sermon closely, let's define the expression "KINGDOM OF HEAVEN" so we can better appreciate and apply the teachings of Jesus found in this sermon...

III. DEFINING "THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN":

A. Comparing It With "The Kingdom of God"...

1. Some try to make a distinction (e.g., Scofield Reference Bible).
2. But a quick comparison of the gospels indicate that the terms refer to the same thing.
 - a. Compare **Matt.4:17** with **Mk.1:14-15.**
 - b. Compare **Matt.5:3** with **Lk.6:20.**
 - c. Compare **Matt.13:31** with **Mk.4:30-31.**
3. We find that Matthew used the expression "kingdom of heaven" almost exclusively, while the other gospel writers used the phrase "kingdom of God"
4. It may be that since Matthew wrote his gospel to the Jews, he chose to use the phrase "kingdom of heaven"..
 - a. Because of the Jews' reluctance to use the name of God (out of reverence)
 - b. Because of the Jews' misconception of the coming kingdom

- i) Many anticipated a physical kingdom
- ii) The expression "heaven" (literally, "heavens") would emphasize a spiritual kingdom

B. The "Kingdom of Heaven" Involves Four Inter-related Concepts...

1. God's Kingship, Rule, or Recognized Sovereignty.

- a. The term "kingdom" as used by the Jews often stressed the abstract idea of rule or dominion, not some geographical area surrounded by physical boundaries.
- b. Possibly used this way by Jesus in **Lk.17:21**.
- c. It is used this way by Jesus in **Matt.6:10** ("Thy kingdom come; Thy WILL be done...").
- Thus, the "kingdom of heaven" is wherever the God of heaven is allowed to RULE in the hearts of men.

2. It Is Spiritual In Nature.

- a. Not a physical kingdom - **Jn.18:36**.
- b. But one that is spiritual - **Rom.14:17**.

3. Its Visible Manifestation Today Is In The Form of The Church of The Lord.

- a. Which is the community of souls in whose hearts God reigns as Sovereign.
- b. That the church constitutes the kingdom on earth, consider:
 - i) How the term "church" and "kingdom" were used interchangeably - **Matt.16:18**.
 - ii) Comments made to those who were in the church - **Col.1:13; 1Thess.2:12**.
 - iii) The description of those in the churches of Asia - **Rev.1:4,6,9**.

4. It Also Involves The "New Heavens And New Earth".

- a. The "kingdom of heaven" has a future element as well as a present one.
- b. Its future aspect is spoken of by:
 - i) Jesus in **Matt.25:34**.
 - ii) Paul in **1Cor.15:50; 2Tim.4:18**.
 - iii) Peter in **2Pet.1:10-11**.
- c. Peter described the coming of its future state in **2Pet.3:10-13**.

C. So It Is Proper To Think of The "Kingdom of Heaven" In Both A "Present" And "Future" Sense...

1. In the PRESENT sense...

- a. It is found wherever the SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD is accepted in the hearts of men.
- b. It is a SPIRITUAL KINGDOM, for God rules in the hearts of men.
- c. Its outward manifestation today is the LORD'S CHURCH.
- d. The kingdom was "INAUGURATED" on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2.

2. In the FUTURE sense...

- a. The kingdom will be "CONCLUDED" with the coming of the Lord.
- b. It will be that "NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH" described by Peter and John.
- c. It will be experienced only by those in the church who are submitting to God's will - **Matt.7:21-23; 2Pet.3:13-15a**.

CONCLUSION:

1. With this understanding of the "kingdom of heaven," we should then...
 - a. Appreciate the CHARACTER and BLESSEDNESS of the citizens of the kingdom (**Matt.5:3-16**).
 - b. Understand the need for the RIGHTEOUSNESS expected of its citizens (**Matt.5:17-7:12**).
 - c. Respond to the EXHORTATION TO ENTER the kingdom if we've not done so (**Matt.7:13-27**).

2. Our next study will concentrate on "THE BEATITUDES" (**Matt.5:3-12**), and examine the character and blessedness of those who are citizens of the kingdom of heaven.

Have you responded to the exhortation to enter the kingdom? Remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ to Nicodemus in **Jn.3:3-5**...

Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, UNLESS ONE IS BORN AGAIN, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, UNLESS ONE IS BORN OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

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THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT - STUDY 2

The Beatitudes (Matthew 5: 3-12)

INTRODUCTION:

1. As we begin to take a closer look at "**The Sermon On The Mount**," we notice first that section referred to as "**The Beatitudes**" in verses 3-12.
 - a. Here, we find Jesus discussing the blessedness of those who possess certain qualities.
 - b. It is as though Jesus was answering two questions the people might have been asking:
 - i) Who are the citizens of this "kingdom of heaven"?
 - ii) What benefits do they receive?
2. Our treatment of this passage will be somewhat different than normal.
 - a. Most people try to examine each beatitude in detail before moving on to the next.
 - b. But let us look at the entire section in an overall fashion from two different perspectives.

First, let's look at "**The Beatitudes**" by asking: "**Who Are The Citizens of The Kingdom?**".

I. THE CHARACTER REQUIRED OF THE CITIZENS OF THE KINGDOM:

A. One Which Involves Several Inter-related Qualities...

1. Only those who possess ALL of these qualities are truly citizens of the kingdom of heaven
2. For it should be evident that some...
 - a. May be "poor in spirit," but do not "hunger and thirst after righteousness".
 - b. May "mourn," for their sins but are not "pure in heart".
 - c. May be "meek," but are not "peacemakers".
 - d. May be "persecuted," but not "for righteousness' sake".
3. It takes ALL of these qualities, and in this sense the passage is similar to **2Pet.1:5-11**.
 - a. Where various qualities are also listed.
 - b. Where each of them are needed TOGETHER to assure that "**an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom**"

B. Therefore, Citizens of The Kingdom of Heaven Are Those Who...

1. Are "Poor In Spirit"

- a. **"To be poor in spirit is to have a humble opinion of ourselves; to be sensible that we are sinners, and have no righteousness of our own; to be willing to be saved only by the rich grace and mercy of God"** (BARNES)
- b. That is, convicted of one's own spiritual poverty
 - i) Exemplified by the tax collector in **Lk.18:13**.
 - ii) Such people God will accept into His good favour - **Isa.57:15; 66:1-2**.
- c. The opposite of "poor in spirit" is to be "proud of heart," and such people are more like:
 - i) The Pharisee in **Lk.18:9-14**.
 - ii) The Laodiceans in **Rev.3:17-19**.

2. "Mourn"

- a. To mourn in a specific sense over one's own spiritual poverty, one's sinfulness.
- b. Like David did after his adultery with Bathsheba - **Ps.51:3-4**.
- c. Note the relationship between these first two characteristics.
 - i) Unless one is first "poor in spirit"
 - ii) They will not "mourn" over their spiritual poverty.

3. Are "Meek"

- a. That is, gentle, easy to be entreated.
 - i) Would rather suffer injury than inflict it.
 - ii) Not out of weakness, but out of humility, realizing one's own poverty of spirit, one's own sinfulness.
- b. A good example of meekness is Moses.
 - i) He was certainly not a weak or timid man - **Exod.32:19-20; 30-34**.
 - ii) But when personally attacked, he was very humble - **Num.12:1-3**.

4. "Hunger And Thirst For Righteousness"

- a. That is, looking for the righteousness which will meet:
 - i) Their spiritual poverty.
 - ii) Their mourning over the same.
- b. To "hunger and thirst" suggests not a half-hearted search, but one exemplified by:
 - i) David in **Ps.42:1-2; 19:12-14**.
 - ii) Paul in **Phil.3:7-15a**.

5. Are "Merciful"

- a. Loving towards those in misery (e.g., the "Good Samaritan").
- b. Possessing a forgiving spirit toward those who sin against them (HENDRICKSEN).
 - i) E.g., Jesus in **Lk.23:34**.
 - ii) E.g., Stephen in **Acts 7:60**.
- c. Jesus stressed this characteristic on several occasions...
 - i) Later in His sermon, in teaching on prayer - **Matt.6:14-15**.
 - ii) In His parable of "The Unforgiving Servant" - **Matt.18:21-35**.
- d. This virtue grows **"out of our personal experience of the mercy of God."** (LENSKI)

6. Are "Pure In Heart"

- a. **"Singleness of heart, the honesty which has no hidden motive, no selfish interest, and is true and open in all things."** (LENSKI)
- b. Refers to one who is sincere, honest, without hypocrisy.
- c. That such a quality is necessary to see God - **Ps.24:3-4** .

7. Are "Peacemakers"

- a. These are those who devote their lives to making peace by following the Prince of Peace
 - i) Involves effort to be at peace with all men - **Rom.12:18-21** .
 - ii) Involves helping others to be at peace with God by proclaiming the gospel of peace - **Rom.5:1** and **Eph.6:15** .
- b. **"At peace with God and thus themselves filled with sweet peace, they live in peace, if possible, with all men and work to keep and to make peace where peace is threatened or lost. Theirs is the work of true Christians who follow in the footsteps of the Prince of Peace."** (LENSKI)

8. Are "Persecuted For Righteousness' Sake"

- a. **"The tense and voice of the verb used here may be regarded as permissive:**
 - i) **"Who have allowed themselves to be persecuted, or have endured persecution"**
 - ii) **"The idea is that they did not flee from it but willingly submitted to when it came to them."** (LENSKI)
- b. In what way, is explained in **verse 11**, and includes being:
 - i) Reviled or reproached
 - ii) Persecuted
 - iii) Slandered falsely - All for Jesus' sake.
- c. That such persecution would often afflict those who are citizens of the kingdom, see **Acts 14:21-22; Phil.1:29-30; 2Tim.3:12** .

Such are the **Characteristics of The Citizens of The Kingdom of Heaven**. But is it worth it?

To answer that, let's now look at the **"The Beatitudes"** from the viewpoint of another question: "WHAT BENEFITS DO CITIZENS OF THE KINGDOM RECEIVE?" That is...

II. THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE CITIZENS OF THE KINGDOM:

A. Their Condition Can Be Summed Up In One Word: "Blessed"

1. This word stands at the beginning of the sermon, and is used nine times in nine verses.
2. It can literally mean, **"how very happy"** is the one described.
3. We can infer from verse 12 that "blessed" involves great joy and gladness (**"rejoice and be exceedingly glad"**)

B. Their Blessedness Is Understandable In Light of The Benefits Received.

1. **"Theirs Is The Kingdom of Heaven"**
 - a. As defined in the previous lesson...
 - i) They are under the kingly rule of God.

- ii) They are in a spiritual kingdom which today involves being in the "church," the PRESENT manifestation of the "kingdom of heaven". It will also involve the "new heavens and new earth" in the kingdom's FUTURE and eternal manifestation.
 - b. Note that the first (**5:3**) and last (**5:10**) beatitude include this expression, which imply that the blessings in between likewise apply to those in the kingdom.
 - c. Just as the kingdom is both present and future, we shall observe that the blessings described involve both the present and future also.
2. **"They Shall Be "Comforted"**
- a. This is in reference to those who mourn over their sins and spiritual poverty.
 - b. They are comforted even NOW - **2Cor.1:3-5**.
 - c. They shall be comforted in the FUTURE also - **Rev.21:1-4**.
3. **"They Shall Inherit The Earth"**
- a. In one sense, they inherit it now:
 - i) As a result of putting the kingdom of God first - **Matt.6:33; Mk.10:29-30**.
 - ii) Though they may have less than some who are wicked, God enables them to enjoy it more! - **Eccles.5:19-6:2**.
 - iii) This explanation seems to be consistent with the context of **Psalms 37**, from which the phrase was taken - **Ps.37:1-11, 16-29**.
 - b. But in another sense, there yet remains a promise concerning a "new earth" for those in the kingdom now - **2Pe 3:10-13**.
4. **"They Shall Be Filled"**
- a. That is, with the righteousness which we so desperately need, found only in Christ - **Phil.3:8-9**.
 - b. Received presently, through the precious blood of Christ - **Rom.5:9**.
 - c. Received in fulness when adorned in the white linen of righteousness in preparation for the marriage of the Lamb - **Rev.19:5-9**.
5. **"They Shall Obtain Mercy"**
- a. Those in the kingdom enjoy forgiveness of sins through the blood of Jesus - **Rev.1:5-6**.
 - b. They shall also be shown mercy in escaping the righteous wrath of God in the Day of Judgment - **Rom.5:9**.
6. **"They Shall See God"**
- a. Presently, citizens of the kingdom can see God through their Lord Jesus Christ - **Jn.14:6-7**
 - b. But in the future, we shall see him face to face - **Rev.21:3; 22:3-4**.
7. **"They Shall Be Called Sons of God"**
- a. Even now we are called the sons of God - **1Jn.3:1-2**.
 - b. How much more so, in the future! - **Rev.21:5-7**.

CONCLUSION:

1. Perhaps we can better understand why those in the "kingdom of heaven" are truly "Blessed."
2. Certainly the benefits of the kingdom outweigh anything this world has to offer, or any persecution it might inflict!
3. But the "blessedness" of the citizens is only for those who have the "characteristics" of the citizens in ever-increasing measure. Do We?

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THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT - STUDY 3

Salt And Light (Matt.5:13-16)

INTRODUCTION:

1. **"The Beatitudes"** described the Character and Blessedness of the citizens of the kingdom.
2. In the final beatitude, Jesus described the attitude the world would often display towards the citizens of the kingdom (**Matt.5:10-12**).
3. Jesus now proceeds to describe the opposite: The influence of the kingdom upon the world.
4. He does this by using two metaphors: **"salt"** and **"light"**.

I. "YOU ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH" (Matt.5:13):

A. Salt Has Several Characteristics...

1. It is white, enhances flavour or taste, preserves, etc.
2. In this context, Jesus probably refers to salt's ability to enhance flavour in His illustration.
 - a. Notice: "...but if the salt loses its flavour... (taste)"
 - b. Salt has the ability to give flavour or taste to that which is otherwise bland or tasteless.
 - c. Job mentioned this ability in **Job 6:6**.

B. Through The Metaphor of "Salt"...

1. Jesus illustrates that the relationship of the citizens of the kingdom to the world is one of:
 - a. Making the world palatable (bearable) to God, and to others as well.
 - b. Perhaps making it possible for God to continue to bear with this world and its "distasteful" wickedness
2. The idea that the "righteous" few can make it is easier for God to forbear the many wicked is illustrated:
 - a. In Abraham's conversation with God over Sodom - **Gen.18:20-32**.
 - b. In God's dealing with Jerusalem - **Jer.5:1**.

So, from God's point of view, the citizens of the kingdom give the world its good "flavour"!

C. Jesus Goes On To Warn Against Losing Our Flavouring Ability!

1. With pure salt...
 - a. It actually never loses its flavour.
 - b. But when mixed with impurities, salt can lose its ability to enhance flavour.
2. We too can lose our ability to be a "flavouring agent" for the world...
 - a. If we allow "impurities" into our lives - **1Cor.15:33**.
 - b. Therefore, we need to keep ourselves from sin - **Eph.5:3-7**.

D. If We Lose Our "Flavour"...

1. How are we going to be "seasoned"? (impurities prevent us from being useful)
2. We will be thrown out!
 - a. Is Jesus teaching the possibility of losing our salvation?
 - b. He certainly does elsewhere! - **Matt.13:40-43; Rev.3:15-16**.

First of all, then, we are told of the relationship of the citizens of the kingdom to the world **From God's Point of View: "You are the salt of the earth."**

Continuing, we find Jesus teaching concerning the citizens of the kingdom as to their **Primary Function** in the world...

II. "YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD" (Matt.5:14-16):

A. Used By God To Transmit His Glory To The World!

1. They are "lights" in a dark world - **Phil.2:14-15**.
2. Their purpose is to proclaim the praises of God! - **1Pet.2:9; Eph.5:8b-9**.

B. They Are Not A "Light" In And of Themselves...

1. Only in the Lord - **Eph.5:8a**.
2. Christ is the "true" or "original" Light - **Jn.8:12**.
3. Citizens of the kingdom are simply "luminaries" reflecting The One True Light, just as the moon reflects the sun - **2Cor.4:6**.

C. Citizens of The Kingdom Have A Two-fold Responsibility As "The Light of The World"...

1. They must be VISIBLE or CONSPICUOUS.
 - a. Implied by Jesus in His use of a "city" and a "lamp-stand" as metaphors.
 - b. Jesus therefore expects His followers to be SEEN by the world - e.g., **Jn.13:35; 17:21**.
2. They must RADIATE (give light).
 - a. This principle conveyed by the idea of the lamp.
 - i) Designed to SHINE on a lamp-stand.
 - ii) Not put under a basket or bushel.
 - b. This principle explicitly stated in "let your light SO SHINE before men".

3. The purpose of such VISIBLE RADIATION is so that men may GLORIFY THE FATHER in heaven - e.g., **1Pet.2:11-12; 2Cor.9:12-13** .

CONCLUSION:

1. Why be concerned with being "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world"?
2. Because of the One Who is described as "YOUR FATHER WHO IS IN HEAVEN"!
 - a. This expression should remind us that God is both:
 - i) TENDER (a term of tenderness)
 - ii) and MAJESTIC (He is "in heaven")
 - b. Such a Majestic Being Who is willing to be our Father makes Him:
 - i) Worthy to be pleased!
 - ii) And worthy to be praised!
3. We who claim to be the children of God, and citizens of the kingdom, are we:
 - a. Pleasing to our Father (by being "the salt of the earth")?
 - b. Praising Him (by being the "light of the world")?

If not, then may the prayer of David in **Ps.51:10-15** become our own.

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THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT - STUDY 4

Jesus And The Law (Matt.5:17-19)

INTRODUCTION:

1. Having described the CITIZENS of the kingdom, Jesus now proceeds to describe the RIGHTEOUSNESS of the kingdom, which takes up the bulk of His sermon
2. He begins by correcting a false impression some may have had about His relationship with the Law of Moses and the Prophets...

I. "I DID NOT COME TO DESTROY BUT TO FULFILL":

A. Some May Have Thought Jesus Intended To Totally Disregard The Law...

1. That His coming and teaching would regard the Old Law in a negative light
2. For the expression "to destroy" means literally to "to destroy utterly, to overthrow completely" (VINE)

B. On The Contrary, His Purpose Was To "Fulfill" The Law And The Prophets...

1. For they FORETOLD THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH (Christ).
 - a. There are about 330 prophecies concerning the Christ in the Law and the Prophets.
 - b. For example, **Deut.18:15,18-19; Isa.53:1-12**.
2. For they FORETOLD THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.
 - a. One example is **Dan.2:44**.
 - b. Jesus was preaching that the fulfillment of that prophecy was now at hand - **Mk.1:14-15**
3. For they also FORETOLD THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW AND DIFFERENT COVENANT (LAW) FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD
 - a. See **Jer.31:31-34**.
 - b. That Jesus brought in this new covenant is confirmed in **Heb.8:6-13**.

C. Therefore, Until The Law And The Prophets Were Fulfilled, Jesus Taught That...

1. The Law would be as permanent as the heavens and the earth - **Matt.5:18**.
 - a. As He said in **Lk.16:17**, "**It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail.**"
 - b. There would be no change at all, until it was fulfilled.
 - c. Not even a "jot" or a "tittle" (Hebrew grammatical markings, similar to the dotting of an "i" or the crossing of a "t").
2. A person's treatment of the Law (while still in force) would affect their standing in the kingdom - **Matt.5:19** HOW?...
 - a. Remember that the kingdom has a FUTURE aspect - **Matt.7:21-23**.
 - b. Those who lived before the coming of the kingdom in its PRESENT sense (i.e., the church) could still be in the kingdom in its FUTURE sense - **Matt.8:11** (e.g., Abraham, Isaac, Jacob)
 - c. Their standing would be affected by their treatment of whatever Law of God was in effect when they were alive!
 - d. For example, notice what Jesus said would happen to the "sons of the kingdom," those Jews who by the Law had the right to inherit the kingdom but did not appreciate its fulfillment in the coming of Jesus Christ! - **Matt.8:12**.

D. An Important Question To Consider: "Did Jesus Fulfill The Law?"

1. If He DID NOT...
 - a. He must have failed His purpose in coming to this earth! - **Matt.5:17**.
 - b. We had better observe the Law in its strictest sense! - **Matt.5:18-19** (including circumcision, and not eating unclean meats!)
2. If He DID...
 - a. He accomplished His purpose! (notice **Jn.17:4**).
 - b. We should not be surprised to find a NEW Law or Covenant governing God's people now
3. Indeed, Jesus MUST have fulfilled the Old Law...
 - a. For there has been changes:
 - i) In the PRIESTHOOD - **Heb.7:11-14**.
 - ii) In the LAW ITSELF - **Heb.7:18-19,22**.
 - b. Even as the Law itself foretold, it has been replaced by a New Law - **Heb.8:6-13**.

Though Jesus ultimately fulfilled the Law and the Prophets, at the time He was preaching the Sermon they had not been fulfilled. So, true to His statement in verse nineteen, He taught His disciples to be faithful to God's Law as it then stood.

But what about the contrasts found in **Matt.5:21-48**? Are not these to be viewed as comparisons between the OLD Law and the NEW Law? Here are some thoughts on these lines...

II. THE NATURE OF THE CONTRASTS MADE BY JESUS:

A. Many Understand Jesus To Contrast The "Old" With The "New" ...

1. Comparing the "Law of Moses" with the "Law of Christ" which would govern His kingdom.
2. This in essence has Jesus teaching:
 - a. That the "Old Law" only condemned the OUTWARD actions.
 - b. But that the "New Law" introduced by Jesus condemned the INNER conditions which led to the outer actions.

B. I Understand That The Contrast Jesus Made Is Different...

1. Rather, it was a contrast between:
 - a. The "TRADITIONAL INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION" Of The Law of Moses
 - b. And the "RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE KINGDOM" that Jesus would require of His disciples
2. And that in fact Jesus demonstrated that the righteousness of the kingdom...
 - a. Is not only contrary to the manner Jewish leaders of old interpreted and applied the Law
 - b. But was in harmony with the original spirit of the Law as given to Moses and the Israelites.

C. Reasons For Such A View...

1. The other view would seem strange in light of **verse 19**.
 - a. Jesus had just warned against any alteration of the commandments of the Law!
 - b. The first view has Jesus doing the very thing He had just warned against!
2. If Jesus was referring to what Moses had commanded in the Law itself, it is more likely different wording would have been used.
 - a. At other times, when Jesus was definitely referring to what the Law actually said, He would say things like:
 - i) **"Moses commanded" - Matt.8:4 .**
 - ii) **"It is written" - Matt.4:4,7,10 .**
 - b. Instead, we find Jesus repeatedly using phrases more likely to refer to "oral teachings and interpretations" rather than the revealed written Word of God:
 - i) **"You have heard that it was said to those of old" - Matt.5:21,27 .**
 - ii) **"Furthermore it has been said" - Matt.5:31 .**
 - iii) **"Again you have heard that it was said to those of old" - Matt.5:33 .**
 - iv) **"You have heard that it was said" - Matt.5:38,43 .**
3. In two of the contrasts, Jesus refers to statements not even found in the Law of Moses!
 - a. **"...and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment" - Matt.5:21 .**
 - b. **"...and hate your enemy" - Matt.5:43 .**
- Here, Jesus was reacting, not to the Law itself, but to the way the Law was often used!
4. We should also remember that the "Law and the Prophets" were just as concerned with the INNER thoughts of the heart as the Law of Christ is - **Deut.6:4-7; Isa.29:13-14 .**

CONCLUSION:

1. In this study we have stressed two things:
 - a. Jesus came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets, and He did!
 - b. That the contrasts to follow in **Matt.5:21-48...**
 - i) Are between the traditional interpretations and applications of the Law of Moses and righteousness expected of those in the kingdom of heaven.
 - ii) Not between the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ!
2. Jesus has more to say about the righteousness of those in the kingdom, which will be considered in our next study.

3rd Quarter 2020 Bible Study Outline



THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT - STUDY 5

The Righteousness of The Scribes & Pharisees (Matt.5:20)

INTRODUCTION:

1. As Jesus prepares to contrast the righteousness of the kingdom with the traditional interpretation and application of the Law, He does so with a strong warning to those who would enter the kingdom of heaven.
2. Found in **Matt.5:20**, Jesus warned them that **"unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven"**!

To appreciate and be able to apply what Jesus said, it might help to define "the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees"...

I. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES DEFINED:

A. They Were Known To "Say And Not Do" - Matt.23:1-4.

1. Though they were often teaching the truth, they did not practice what they preached!
2. From them many got the saying "Do as I say, not as I do".

B. They Were Known To Do Things To Be Seen of Men - Matt.23:5-7.

1. They enjoyed wearing religious garments that separated them from others, and delighted in having places and titles of honour.
2. Does this sound like any of our religious leaders today?

C. They Were Known To Neglect Parts of God's Law - Matt.23:23-24.

1. In their case, they would emphasize the "lighter" matters of the law, while neglecting the "weightier" commands.
2. Or as we would say today, they "majored in minors and minored in majors".

D. They Were Lovers of Money - Lk.16:13-15.

1. "Mammon" was their god, though they would be quick to deny it and try to justify themselves before men.
2. Does this sound like any of the "prosperity" preachers we see and hear today?

Such was the level of "righteousness" the scribes and Pharisees had as a group! Why must our righteousness exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees? THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE KINGDOM DEMANDS MORE!

II. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE KINGDOM:

A. We Learn In The Sermon On The Mount that...

1. We cannot "say and do not" - **Matt.7:21.**
2. We cannot "do things to be seen of men" - **Matt.6:1.**
3. We cannot "neglect" ANY commandments of God's law - **Matt.5:19.**
4. We cannot be "lovers of money" - **Matt.6:24.**

B. This Should Serve As A Warning To Any Who Think They Can Be Faithful Christians, Citizens of The Kingdom, "But"...

1. DO NOT combine profession of faith with good deeds - **Jam.2:14-17; 1Jn 2:4-6; 1Jn,3:18.**
2. DO NOT keep their personal, private lives consistent with their public appearance and profession - **Mk.4:22.**
3. DO NOT make diligent effort to observe ALL that Jesus commanded - **Matt.28:20; Jn.8:31-32; 2Jn.9.**
4. DO NOT remain free from the enticement of materialism - **1Tim.6:9-10; 1Jn.2:15-17.**

CONCLUSION:

1. Without question, then, our righteousness as citizens of the kingdom must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees.
2. But how can our righteousness be consistent with that demanded by our King? It is possible only by the GRACE of God...
 - a. Whereby His MERCY provides forgiveness to those in Christ - **1Jn.1:9.**
 - b. His STRENGTH also makes it possible to live according to the "righteousness of the kingdom of heaven"! - **Phil.4:13.**

In our next study, we will begin to notice examples Jesus gave as to HOW our righteousness must exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees...

3rd Quarter 2020 Bible Study Outline



THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT - STUDY 6

Murder And Anger (Matt.5:21-26)

INTRODUCTION:

1. In what way is our righteousness to exceed the "righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees" (Matt.5:20)?
2. Jesus now begins to illustrate how through a series of contrasts, the first concerning **Murder And Anger (Matt.5:21-26)**.

I. THE "TRADITIONAL INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION" CONCERNING THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT (ON MURDER) - Matt.5:21:

A. Notice The Word "Traditional"...

1. In other words, that which had been taught by the "traditions of the elders" (Matt.15:2).
 - a. That Jesus is referring to such is in view of His preparatory remarks: "You have HEARD that it was SAID to those of old".
 - b. Referring to ORAL traditions rather than the WRITTEN Law.
2. Which traditions had likely been accepted by the "scribes and Pharisees".

B. The "Traditional" Interpretation And Application of The Sixth Commandment...

1. Is seen in the phrase "whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment".
2. The term "judgment" likely refers to the local courts of their day.
3. This interpretation may sound fine, but evidently did not go far enough in how the Law should have been interpreted...

II. THE TEACHING OF JESUS AND "KINGDOM RIGHTEOUSNESS":

A. Jesus Applies The Sixth Commandment As The Law Originally Intended (And Taught Elsewhere In The Law)...

1. Murder is wrong but so also are the emotions which often lead to murder - **Prov.6:16-19**.

- a. Not only are "hands that shed innocent blood" (murder) an abomination to the Lord.
 - b. But also "heart that devises wicked plans" and "one who sows discord among brethren".
2. This being true, the Law should have been interpreted and applied accordingly.
3. This Jesus does in **Matt.5:22...**
- a. Anyone angry with his brother without a cause should be in danger of the "judgment".
 - i) That is, the local courts through Palestine.
 - ii) Which were normally reserved for common criminals.
 - b. One who says to his brother "Raca!" (blockhead!) should be in danger of the "council"
 - i) That is, the Sanhedrin council.
 - ii) Which was the high court normally reserved for special criminals.
 - c. One who says "You fool!" would be in danger of "hell fire".
 - i) That is, Gehenna.
 - ii) The place of everlasting torment - **Mk.9:43-48**.
4. In this way, the "traditional interpretation and application" of the Law fell far short of what it should have been.
- a. The "righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees" had just been condemning murderers when those with hateful emotions were just as guilty!
 - b. The "righteousness of the kingdom" is in harmony with the original intent of the Law - notice **Gal.5:19-21**.

B. Jesus Continues To Emphasize The Serious Nature of Such Emotions By Illustrating How They Affect Our Relationships With God And Man (Matt.5:23-26)...

- 1. We should not try to worship God when we are "at odds" with a brother.
 - a. Repair your strained relationship with a brother before worshipping God - **Matt.5:23-24**.
 - b. Otherwise, it won't do us any good - **1Jn.4:20-21**.
- 2. We should be quick to "make amends" lest uncontrolled anger cause us to wind up in court, and possibly prison! - **Matt.5:25-26**.
 - a. Many "hot-heads" have let their anger push them to do things that sent them to prison!
 - b. But notice how those in the kingdom are to act - **Rom.12:18-21**.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. In the first contrast between the "**righteousness of the kingdom**" and the "**traditional treatment of the Law**", Jesus has...
 - a. Declared that the ancients did not go far enough in applying the Law.
 - b. Illustrated how it should be applied by those seeking to surpass the "righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees".
- 2. We have seen that the "righteousness of the kingdom" is actually in harmony with the Law and the Prophets!

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THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT - STUDY 7

Murder And Anger (Matt.5:21-26)

INTRODUCTION:

1. In what way is our righteousness to exceed the "righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees" (**Matt.5:20**)?
2. Jesus now begins to illustrate how through a series of contrasts, the first concerning **Murder And Anger (Matt.5:21-26)**.

I. THE "TRADITIONAL INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION" CONCERNING THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT (ON MURDER) - Matt.5:21:

A. Notice The Word "Traditional"...

1. In other words, that which had been taught by the "traditions of the elders" (**Matt.15:2**).
 - a. That Jesus is referring to such is in view of His preparatory remarks: "You have HEARD that it was SAID to those of old".
 - b. Referring to ORAL traditions rather than the WRITTEN Law (cf. earlier lesson on "Jesus & The Law").
2. Which traditions had likely been accepted by the "scribes and Pharisees".

B. The "Traditional" Interpretation And Application Of The Sixth Commandment...

1. Is seen in the phrase "whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment".
2. The term "judgment" likely refers to the local courts of their day.
3. This interpretation may sound fine, but evidently did not go far enough in how the Law should have been interpreted...

II. THE TEACHING OF JESUS AND "KINGDOM RIGHTEOUSNESS":

A. Jesus Applies The Sixth Commandment As The Law Originally Intended (And Taught Elsewhere In The Law)...

1. Not only is murder wrong, but the emotions which lead to murder as well - **Prov.6:16-19**.
 - a. Not only are "hands that shed innocent blood" (murder) an abomination to the Lord.
 - b. But also a "heart that devises wicked plans" and "one who sows discord among brethren" (due to anger).
2. This being true, the Law should have been interpreted and applied accordingly,
3. This Jesus does in **Matt.5:22...**
 - a. One who is angry with his brother without a cause should be in danger of the "judgment".
 - i) I.e., the local courts through Palestine.
 - ii) Which were normally reserved for common criminals.
 - b. One who says to his brother "Raca!" (blockhead!) should be in danger of the "council".
 - i) That is, the Sanhedrin council.
 - ii) Which was the high court normally reserved for special criminals.
 - c. One who says "You fool!" would be in danger of "hell fire".
 - i) That is, Gehenna.
 - ii) The place of everlasting torment - **Mk.9:43-48**.
4. In this way, the "traditional interpretation and application" of the Law fell far short of what it should have been.
 - a. The "righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees" had just been condemning murderers when those with hateful emotions were just as guilty!
 - b. The "righteousness of the kingdom" is in harmony with the original intent of the Law - notice **Gal.5:19-21**.

B. Jesus Continues To Emphasize The Serious Nature of Such Emotions By Illustrating How They Affect Our Relationships With God And Man (Matt.5: 23-26)...

1. We should not try to worship God when we are "at odds" with a brother
 - a. Repair your strained relationship with a brother before worshipping God - **Matt.5:23-24**.
 - b. Otherwise, it won't do us any good - **1Jn.4:20-21**.
2. We should be quick to "make amends" lest uncontrolled anger cause us to wind up in court, possibly prison! - **Matt.5:25-26**.
 - a. Many "hot-heads" have let their anger push them to do things that sent them to prison!
 - b. But notice how those in the kingdom are to act - **Rom.12:18-21**.

CONCLUSION:

1. In the first contrast between the "**righteousness of the kingdom**" and the "**traditional treatment of the Law**", Jesus has...
 - a. Declared that the ancients did not go far enough in applying the Law
 - b. Illustrated how it should be applied by those seeking to surpass the "righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees".
2. We have seen that the "righteousness of the kingdom" is actually in harmony with the Law and the Prophets!

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THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT - STUDY 8

Concerning Adultery (Matt.5:27-30)

INTRODUCTION:

1. As we continue our study of "**The Sermon On The Mount**" we find Jesus still discussing "**The Righteousness of The Kingdom**".
2. Having dealt with the subject of "**murder**," He now addressed the subject of "**adultery**" (**Matt.5:27-30**).
3. As we consider His words on this subject (and the ones to follow concerning divorce), it may be that we find His teachings hard to accept...
 - a. But Jesus DID warn us (in **verse 20**) that the righteousness expected of those who would be citizens of His kingdom is one with very high standards.
 - b. Therefore, if we truly desire to be citizens of that kingdom, we must be willing to accept whatever Jesus requires of us!

I. JESUS GOES BEYOND THE "TRADITIONAL INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION" OF THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT (Matt.5:28-30):

A. The "Traditional Interpretation And Application"...

1. Evidently stressed that as long as one did not commit the actual act, one was not guilty
2. Thereby emphasizing the "letter" of the Law, but not appreciating the "spirit" behind it.

B. But Jesus Interprets And Applies The Law Differently...

1. One does not have to commit the physical "act" to be guilty of adultery.
2. One is just as guilty when one "looks at a woman to lust for her".
3. Note: Not the "looking" only, but "to lust" for her is what is wrong.
 - a. "to lust" means to have a strong desire for, to possess and dominate completely.
 - b. A person may look at another with admiration for beauty and not be guilty of "lust".

C. Jesus' Interpretation Was In Keeping With What The Law of Moses Actually Taught!

1. Notice that the 10th Commandment condemned coveting a neighbour's wife - **Exod.20:17**

2. Even in the time of Job, to "look at a woman to lust for her" was wrong - **Job 31:1**. So serious is such "lusting," Jesus goes on to say what we should do with respect to the lustful eye or any other stumbling-blocks...

II. JESUS' PROGNOSIS FOR THE LUSTFUL EYE AND OTHER STUMBLINGBLOCKS (Matt.5:29-30):

A. "Pluck It Out And Cast It From You"...

1. Jesus is not being literal here, for one could still stumble with the left eye or hand.
2. The key to understanding this passage is found in **Matt.18:7-9**.
 - a. The "eye" and "hand" represent "offenses".
 - i) Offenses are "stumbling-blocks" that lead a person to sin.
 - ii) These would be enticements to do wrong or beguiling allurements.

B. The Meaning of Jesus' Teaching...

1. "Take drastic action in getting rid of whatever will naturally tempt you to sin".
2. Such should be the case in regards to ALL sin, as well as the sin of adultery.

III. IMPORTANT LESSONS TO BE LEARNED:

A. The Present Is Not Our Only Life; We Are Destined For Eternity!

1. The future holds the possibility of "hell" (GEHENNA - the place of everlasting torment).
2. What we do or not do in this present life will determine our place in the future life.

B. Nothing, No Matter How Precious, Should Be Allowed To Doom Our Glorious Destiny!

1. God's goal for us is the "kingdom of heaven" in all its eternal glory!
2. What on "earth" can be worthy of losing that?

C. Sin, Being A Very Destructive Force, Must Not Be Pampered!

1. Sin is to the soul what cancer is to the body.
 - a. Delay can be deadly!
 - b. Half-way measures and half-hearted efforts will only give sin time to wreak havoc!
2. "Radical surgery" is what is required to treat the "cancer" of sin!
 - a. Cut off those things that might lead you to look upon others to lust after them.
 - b. Such stumbling-blocks might be certain books, movies, pictures, dresses, situations, etc.
 - c. How much better to dwell upon such things as mentioned in **Phil.4:8**!

CONCLUSION:

1. The affect of what Jesus taught is certainly challenging!
2. But if it wasn't possible, Jesus would not require it of us - **Matt.11:28-30; 1Jn.5:3**.
3. Of course, in our efforts we are not alone, for God and Jesus are with us! - **Phil.2:12-13; 4:13**. It is important to keep this in mind, especially in our next study on the subject of **divorce**...

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THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT - STUDY 9

The Effects Of Divorce (Matt.5:31-32)

INTRODUCTION:

1. As we continue our study of "**The Sermon On The Mount**," we find Jesus in our text still discussing "**The Righteousness of The Kingdom**"
2. Having dealt with the subjects of "**murder**" (21-26) and "**adultery**" (Matt.27-30), He now addresses the matter of "**divorce**" (Matt.31-32).
3. The effect of what Jesus teaches on this subject is even more challenging than His comments on adultery, but please keep in mind...
 - a. Jesus DID warn us in **verse 20** that the righteousness of those who would be citizens of His Kingdom is one with very high standards.
 - b. If we truly desire to be citizens of that kingdom, we must be willing to accept whatever Jesus may require of us.
 - c. We should take courage from the fact that we are not alone in our efforts to do God's Will, and that whatever strength is needed, He will provide (**Phil.2:12-13; 4:13**).

On the subject of divorce, then, let's consider first...

I. THE "TRADITIONAL INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION" OF THE LAW (Matt.5: 31):

A. "Whoever Divorces His Wife, Let Him Give Her A Certificate of Divorce"...

1. This was the "traditional" interpretation of **Deut.24:1-4**.
2. In applying the Law, they had focused in on the mention of giving a certificate of divorce
3. That is, they concluded divorce was permissible as long as a certificate of divorce was given to the wife

B. But Is This What The Law Actually Said?

1. Please read **Deut.24:1-4** again carefully...

- a. **Verses 1-3** are simply describing a particular situation.
 - b. It is in **verse 4** that Moses actually commands what must not be done.
 - c. Which was: **"her former husband who divorced her must not take her back to be his wife after she has been defiled; for that is an abomination to the Lord"**.
 - d. This passage simply forbids a man to remarry his wife after she had been married to another (**Jer.3:1**).
2. But the Scribes and Pharisees had interpreted it to permit divorce as long as a certificate of divorce was given to the wife.
 - a. Is this a proper interpretation and application?
 - b. What does Jesus say?

II. JESUS' INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION OF THE LAW ON DIVORCE (Matt.5:32):

A. "Whoever Divorces His Wife For Any Reason Except Sexual Immorality Causes Her To Commit Adultery"...

1. The only acceptable grounds for divorcing a wife is ADULTERY.
2. Otherwise, divorcing a wife **"causes her to commit adultery"**.
3. How? By putting her in a position where she is likely to remarry, in which she becomes **"defiled"** and cannot return to her husband again (**Deut.24:4**).
4. Isn't that what the Law stated in **Deut.24:4** and **Jer.3:1**?
 - a. That is why the first husband couldn't take her back.
 - b. Even if her second husband had died!
 - c. Because the wife had become "defiled"!
5. Notice these commentary by KEIL & DELITZSCH...

"The second marriage of a woman who had been divorced is designated by Moses a defilement of the woman... a moral defilement, that is, blemishing, desecration of the sexual communion which was sanctified by marriage, IN THE SAME SENSE IN WHICH ADULTERY IS CALLED A DEFILEMENT in Lev.18:20 and Num.5:13,14..."

"Thus the second marriage of a divorced woman was placed implicit upon a par with adultery, and some approach was made towards the teaching of Christ concerning marriage (Matt.5:32)..."

"If the second marriage of a divorced woman was a moral defilement, of course the wife could not marry the first again even after the death of her second husband... because the defilement of the wife would be thereby repeated, and even increased, as the moral defilement which the divorced wife acquired through the second marriage was not removed by a divorce from the second husband, nor yet by his death."

6. Therefore, Jesus was simply making very clear what the Law itself implied: **THAT TO DIVORCE A WOMAN EXCEPT FOR SEXUAL IMMORALITY WOULD CAUSE HER TO BE DEFILED (WHEN SHE REMARRIED)!**
7. This interpretation and application of the Law by Jesus is in harmony with Paul's understanding of the Law - **Rom.7:1-3**.

- a. A woman was bound by the Law to her husband as long he lived.
- b. If she married another while her first husband was still living (implying a certificate of divorce was given), she became an adulteress (That is, she is defiled)!

B. "Whoever Marries A Divorced Woman Commits Adultery"...

- 1. Jesus goes on to say that anyone who marries a person who has been divorced (literally, "put away") also commits adultery!
- 2. Jesus does not use the definite article in reference to one put away, therefore He seems to refer to ANY "put away" person!
 - a. That is, a person "put away" for reasons OTHER than adultery cannot remarry.
 - i) Because such would "cause them to commit adultery".
 - ii) Or to put it in Old Testament terms "become defiled".
 - b. Nor can a person "put away" for the reason of adultery remarry.
 - i) For such a person is an "adulteress" or "adulterer".
 - ii) As such, is "defiled" and would cause anyone who married that person to commit adultery!

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Elsewhere (**Matt.19:3-12**) Jesus elaborates as to who has the right to divorce their spouse and be free to remarry - that is, an innocent spouse who divorces their guilty spouse because of fornication.
- 2. But in this passage, Jesus teaches that the righteousness of the kingdom demands...
 - a. That a man cannot divorce his wife without causing her to commit adultery (by her subsequent marriage), unless she has already committed adultery.
 - b. That whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery
- WHAT IS SAID ABOUT A MAN DIVORCING HIS WIFE WOULD ALSO BE TRUE ABOUT A WOMAN DIVORCING HER HUSBAND, IN VIEW OF **Mk.10:11-12**.
- 3. Therefore, a careful study of the Law concerning divorce would reveal...
 - a. That Jesus' teaching was really in harmony with the Law itself.
 - b. But the "traditional interpretation and application" of the Law had missed the mark by placing emphasis upon the mention of giving a certificate of divorce.
- 4. As difficult as Jesus' (and the Law's) teaching on the subject of divorce might seem in today's permissive and immoral society, those who respect the authority of Jesus Christ will abide by His teaching, knowing all the while...
 - a. That He provides forgiveness for any failures to live by His teachings in the past!
 - b. That He provides whatever strength we may need to live by His teachings now and in the future!

Our next study will dwell on Jesus' teaching on the matter of **Oaths**...

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THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT - STUDY 10

The Swearing of Oaths (Matt.5:33-37)

INTRODUCTION:

1. We have examined the teachings of Jesus concerning **murder, adultery, and divorce.**
2. Now, in **verses 33-37** of Matthew 5, we find Jesus dealing with the **swearing of oaths.**
3. We will look at what Jesus taught from the viewpoint of four questions...

The first is: **"What did the Law of Moses actually teach concerning the swearing of oaths?"**

I. THE TEACHING OF THE LAW ON OATHS OR VOWS:

A. 3 Passages Are Clear On The Teaching of Law Concerning Swearing of Oaths or Vows...

1. **Lev.19:12**
2. **Num.30:2**, and
3. **Deut.23:21.**

B. In Each Case, The Emphasis Was On "Truthfulness" & "Faithfulness"

1. A person must be truthful when he swears an oath; he must truly mean it.
2. He must also be faithful in keeping the oath; he must carry out his word.

C. This Emphasis On Truthfulness Was Stressed By The Psalms And Prophets As Well

1. First, in the Psalms - **Ps.15:1-2; 24:3-4.**
2. The Prophets often bemoaned the lack of truth in the heart also - **Jer.5:1-2; Hos.4:1-2.**

So the teaching of the Law was clear: Vows to the Lord should be true and faithfully kept.

Our second question is, **"How did the Jews, and the Scribes and Pharisees, in particular traditionally interpret and apply the Law?"**

II. THE TRADITIONAL INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION:

A. From Jesus' Comments In Matt.34-36, It Appears The Emphasis Had Shifted...

1. FROM truthfulness in all things.
2. TO honouring only those vows sworn "to the Lord".

B. So That In Application, Vows Made Not "To The Lord" Were Not As Binding...

1. That the Jews had made such arbitrary distinctions between their vows is seen in **Matt.23:16-19**.
2. Because of this distinction, daily conversations were often spiced with meaningless oaths to make impressions; for example:
 - a. "I swear by heaven".
 - b. "I swear by the throne of God".
 - c. "I swear... by the earth... by Jerusalem... by the altar... by the temple... by my head..."

By shifting the emphasis from TRUTHFULNESS to honouring only those vows made TO THE LORD, the Jews in their application of the Law justified the use of meaningless vows.

This leads to our third question: **"What did Jesus teach in response to this abuse of the Law concerning oaths and vows?"**

III. THE TEACHING OF JESUS:

A. He Exposed Their Hypocrisy In Making Arbitrary Distinctions...

1. **Matt.23:20-22** clearly shows that when one swears by...
 - a. "the temple"
 - b. "the throne of God" ...he is swearing by the LORD also!
2. **Matt.5:34-36** also teaches that one cannot swear by these things without involving God.
 - a. Heaven is the throne of God
 - b. Earth is His footstool
 - c. Only God can change our hair colour (without the use of dyes)
3. THEREFORE, ANY OATH AT ALL IS AN OATH "TO THE LORD"!

B. Instead of Making Such Oaths, Jesus Enjoined A Practice In Harmony With The Law Concerning "Truthfulness In The Heart"...

1. Let your "yes" mean "yes".
2. Let your "no" mean "no".

Anything more than this would be evil and contrary to speaking "truth in his heart" (**Ps.15:1-2**).

In exposing the hypocritical distinctions made by the scribes and Pharisees in their oaths, and in commanding us to speak simply and truthfully, the words of Jesus have led many to ask our fourth and final question: **"Did Jesus forbid even those oaths made in court?"**

IV. MAKING OATHS IN JUDICIAL MATTERS:

A. Arguments In Support of Christians Swearing Oaths Under Certain Conditions...

1. Both Jesus and James qualified their statements concerning oaths.
 - a. **Matt.5:34ff** - "swear not at all" is immediately qualified by Jesus to refer to flippant and hypocritical oaths commonly voiced by the people.
 - b. **Jam.5:12** - the command "do not swear" is also qualified by James to refer to the same kind of meaningless oaths.
2. Also, consider the following points:
 - a. God has sworn an oath to us - **Heb.6:16-18**.
 - b. Jesus was willing to answer under oath before the Sanhedrin court - **Matt.26:63-64**.
 - c. Paul made solemn oaths in his epistles - **2Cor.1:23; Gal.1:20**.
 - d. An angel of God swore an oath - **Rev.10:5-7**.

B. In Light of These Arguments...

1. Some believe that Jesus and James were only condemning the flippant, profane and hypocritical oaths...
 - a. Used to only impress others.
 - b. Used to spice daily conversations ...but were never intended to be kept.
2. And that the EXCEPTION to not swearing oaths can be:
 - a. Solemn oaths made in judicial circumstances.
 - b. Oaths on occasions of solemn religious importance (e.g. Wedding and the case of Paul)

C. Generally, It Is Better To Take The "Safe" Course...

1. In other words, to "**swear not at all**".
2. Fortunately, we are allowed the option to "confidently affirm" in judicial matters.
 - But we should not judge those brethren who themselves solemnly and honestly "swear oaths" in judicial matters.

CONCLUSION:

1. Again we see that the "righteousness of the kingdom" exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees. Whereas they would often spice their statements with vows and oaths in order to be believed... Citizens of the kingdom however, are to be so truthful that their simple "yes" means "yes" and their "no" means "no".
2. We should be so truthful and trustworthy as the disciples of Christ that it would not be necessary for us to swear oaths or have to say "I promise" to be trusted.
3. But, can this be said of us? Can others "bank" on our words? When we say we will do something, is it as good as done?

Our next study examines the teaching of Jesus concerning **vengeance**...

3rd Quarter 2020 Bible Study Outline



THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT - STUDY 11

Taking Revenge (Matt.5:38-42)

INTRODUCTION:

1. As we continue our study of Jesus' "**Sermon On The Mount**," bear in mind that we are still discussing the "**The Righteousness Of The Kingdom**".
2. We have seen Jesus contrast this "righteousness" to that of the scribes and Pharisees, in how they interpreted and applied the Law to such matters as:
 - a. Murder (**Matt.21-26**).
 - b. Adultery (**Matt.27-30**).
 - c. Divorce (**Matt.31-32**).
 - d. Swearing Oaths (**Matt.33-37**).
3. In this lesson, we shall consider what Jesus taught concerning "**vengeance**". First, by comparing...

I. THE LAW OF MOSES AND "THE TRADITIONAL INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION":

A. Concerning The Statement: "An Eye For An Eye, And A Tooth For A Tooth"...

1. It is found in **Exod.21:24-25**.
2. A parallel passage is **Deut.19:21**.

B. From The Context, It Can Be Seen That These Statements Were Actually Laws For The Civil Courts To Apply...

1. Notice carefully **Deut.19:15-21; Exod.21:22-23**.
2. They were given to guide the priests in dishing out proper punishment.

C. It Appears That The Scribes And Pharisees Had...

1. Interpreted these statements so as to justify PERSONAL revenge!
2. Applied them by frequently taking matters of revenge into their own hands - Just As Many People Do Today!

D. But The Law of Moses Repeatedly Forbid "Personal" Vengeance...

1. Consider **Lev.19:18; Prov.20:22; 24:29**.
2. Both in the Old Testament and the New Testament, the matter of vengeance was to be left up to God and His duly appointed agents: Civil Governments - **Rom.12:19; 13:1-4**.

Therefore, there is really no difference between what the Law taught and what we find in the New Testament; there is no place for personal vengeance in the lives of children of God.

II. THE "RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE KINGDOM" AS TAUGHT BY JESUS:

A. Jesus Proclaimed Two Principles...

1. **Do Not Resist An Evil Person (Matt.5:39a).**
 - a. Not only should you not take vengeance into your own hands...
 - b. But don't even oppose (resist) the evil person when the evil is being done!
2. **React To The Evil Being Done, By Doing Good! (Matt.5:39b-42).**
 - a. This principle is illustrated by Jesus with several examples...
 - i) Reacting to PHYSICAL ABUSE (**Matt.5:39b**)
 - a) "Turn the other cheek"
 - b) This may refer to offering the other cheek as an expression of love.
 - ii) Reacting to a CIVIL SUIT, by giving more than what the person is suing for! (**Matt.5:40**).
 - iii) Reacting to GOVERNMENT OPPRESSION, by offering to do more than what is being demanded of you! (**Matt.5:41**).
 - iv) Reacting to THOSE ASKING FOR HELP, by giving them what they ask for! (**Matt.5:42**).
 - b. In each case, the principle is the same.
 - i) We are not to resist the person...
 - a) Who would mistreat us.
 - b) Who would try to deprive us of our possessions.
 - ii) Instead, react in a positive manner...
 - a) Demonstrate love towards them.
 - b) Do so by giving them freely MORE than they were hoping to gain by force, oppression, or manipulation!

B. Is This To Be Taken Literally?

1. Why not?
 - a. We have several Old Testament examples...
 - i) JOSEPH, in forgiving his brothers - **Gen.45:4-15**.
 - ii) DAVID, in sparing the life of Saul - **1Sam.24:8-15**.
 - iii) ELISHA, in feeding the army of the Arameans - **2Kg.6:8-23**.
 - b. We also have several New Testament examples...
 - i) Jesus, our Perfect Example - **1Pet.2:20-23**.
 - ii) Stephen, when he was being stoned - **Acts 7:59-60**.
 - iii) Hebrew Christians, who "joyfully accepted" plundering of their goods - **Heb.10:32-34**.
2. If not, then how do we apply these words of Jesus?

- a. What does Jesus mean?
- b. Give some examples of how to apply these teachings...

C. Are We To Apply It "Unconditionally"?

1. That is, must we decide who is "worthy" to receive this kind of treatment?
 - a. Jesus does not give us any indication that we are to use "discretion".
 - b. Paul does give some qualifying instructions (e.g., **2Thess.3:10**)...
 - i) But it applies to those who are Christians.
 - ii) And we have a responsibility to "judge" those in the church, leaving those outside to God - **1Cor.5:9-13**.
2. We find striking the attitude of the Christians of the second century, A.D.:
 - a. **"Do good, and give liberally to all who are in need from the wages God gives you. Do not hesitate about to whom you should not give. Give to all. For God wishes gifts to be made to all out of His bounties."** (Hermas, 135 A.D.)
 - b. **"And he said to love not only our neighbours but also our enemies, and to be givers and sharers not only with the good but also to be liberal givers towards those who take away our possessions."** (Irenaeus, 185 A.D.)
 - c. **"Do not judge those who're worthy and who're unworthy, for it is possible for you to be mistaken in your opinion. In the uncertainty of ignorance it is better to do good to the unworthy for the sake of the worthy, than by guarding against those who are less good not to encounter the good. For by sparing and trying to test those who are well-deserving or not, it is possible for you to neglect some who are loved by God, the penalty for which is the eternal punishment of fire. But by helping all those in need in turn you must assuredly find some who are able to save you before God."** (Clement of Alexandria, 190 A.D.)
 - Please, let us take note that these statements were written at a time when Christians were constantly mistreated, abused, and manipulated by others!

CONCLUSION:

1. Summarizing the teachings of Jesus concerning vengeance...
 - a. Do not resist evil.
 - b. Respond to evil by doing good in turn.
2. The teachings of Jesus in this passage are admittedly challenging, and opposed to what we might call "human nature".
3. But we are called upon to be "partakers of the divine nature" (**2Pet.1:4**); in other words, to be more like God than men.
4. And as it is vivid in Scripture, it is in order to be truly "sons of your Father in heaven" that Jesus teaches a standard of righteousness that far exceeds that of the Scribes, Pharisees, and most people today!

At the very least, let us spend much time and energy in seeing how we can apply this passage to our lives, and NOT in trying to explain that it doesn't really mean what it appears to say!