

The Sermon on the Mount Matthew 5

Matthew 5:1 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

The traditional location was Horns of Hattin, a mountain about seven miles south of Capernaum, near the Sea of Galilee. When he was set, Eastern teachers usually sat while teaching. Disciple means a learner.

Matthew 5:2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

Opened his mouth and taught to the New Dispensation what the law given from Sinai was to the Old. That was the moral law of Judaism, this is the moral law of Christianity; that was given from “the Mount that could not be touched,” this was given from the Mount of blessing.

Matthew 5:3 Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed. There follow nine beatitudes, each of which pronounces a blessing upon those who have the following characteristics. The word “blessed” is first applied to God, and means more than “happy,” as it has sometimes been translated. Happiness comes from earthly things; blessedness comes from God. Blessedness is not bestowed without a reason ... the reason for blessedness follows each beatitude.

The poor in spirit, the humble ...”in contrast to the haughty; The same state of mind is referred to when He speaks elsewhere of a contrite and broken spirit ... Is the kingdom of heaven. Such shall become members of the kingdom that Christ will establish. The Jews will be rejected from this kingdom because of their spiritual pride.

Matthew 5:4 Blessed *are* they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are they that mourn. Not all mourners, for there is “a sorrow of this world that worketh death.” Godly sorrow is meant, a mourning over our sinfulness.

II Corinthians 7:10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

Matthew 5:5 Blessed *are* the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are the meek. The mild, the gentle, opposed to the proud and haughty ... The word translated "meek" was commonly used to describe a wild animal now trained for service, such as a horse, donkey or an ox. Shall inherit the earth ... Literally the land: Canaan was described as "a land flowing with milk and honey" in the Kingdom of God the milk and honey will flow from the hearts of men ... becoming the type or shadow of all blessings.

It is the heavenly land especially that we eventually inherit.

Who is this who teaches from a mount like Moses?

Matthew 11:27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and [*he*] to whomsoever the Son will reveal [*him*].

Again we have the words from Christ which demand that we hail Him as God Incarnate, or a fool. That only He knows the Father, that He will give all the weary rest, that only those may know God to whom Christ reveals Him - these are all statements that cannot be reconciled with ordinary man. Christ was more than a man, and every line of the New Testament emphasizes this fact.

Matthew 11: 28 Come unto me, all [*ye*] that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke [*is*] easy, and my burden is light.

These last three verses of Matthew 11 are called the Great Invitation. Those invited are "all ye that labor and are heavy laden." Christ's teaching has a special appeal for the poor, the downtrodden, the

despised, rejected, and suffering of earth; but it is incorrect to assume that only these are invited. Rather, all people are invited to fly unto Jesus for peace and redemption; and, in one sense or another, at one time or another, by some means or another, every soul ever born into this world is "weary," "heavy laden," and troubled by the common sorrows and calamities to which flesh is heir. In this larger view of the unmitigated sorrow in which all men dwell, the Great Invitation excludes no one. The common burden of sin, sickness, death, doubt, disillusionment, and sorrow is an invariable heritage of every man coming into the world.

"...for I am meek and lowly in heart ..." Jesus is saying: "I am well trained in God's service, we are to emulate Him and become like Him.

Matthew 5:6 Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are they that hunger, etc. This implies the disciple is aware of his spiritual needs from God from whom all blessings flow.

John 6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

"...for they shall be filled ... well-fed as the Greek word implies.

Matthew 5:7 Blessed *are* the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the merciful ..." The merciful, those who, instead of resenting injury, are ready to forgive, shall obtain the divine mercy. The Lord's prayer implies that we must forgive if we expect to be forgiven.

Matthew 5:8 Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Blessed are the pure in heart ...” The Jew, under the rule of the Pharisees, cared little for the state of the heart, they kept outward forms and revered the appearance of things.

Jesus, however, demands that the heart, the affections, the mind, shall be purified, as the fountain from whence flows our moral and religious life. A pure heart begets a pure life; an impure heart, a corrupt life. They shall see God ... a Hebrew-ism inherit His Love.

Matthew 5:9 Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are the peacemakers ...” Not the soldiers of a warrior king, such as the Jews expected from a Davidic Messiah but the men who, in the name of the Prince of Peace, go forth to proclaim peace and good will among all men. Christ is the great Peacemaker.

Matthew 5:10 Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake ...”

The Jews expected a conquering kingdom, and its citizens to be lords among the nations, but Christ pronounces a blessing on those who are persecuted, for righteousness these words have sustained and cheered on to glory many a martyr.

Matthew 5:11 Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Blessed ... when men revile you ...” This is a personal application of what has just preceded. Some of those who listened were reviled by the Jews, and persecuted unto death.

Matthew 5:12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad ...” On account of persecution. The reason why they may justly rejoice is given Great is your reward in heaven. So persecuted they the prophets. Isaiah is said to have been sawed asunder; Jeremiah was thrown into a dungeon and threatened with death; Elijah was hunted by Ahab and Jezebel.

Matthew 5:13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

Ye are the salt of the earth ...” Salt preserves from corruption. The disciples of Christ preserve the world from general corruption. Whatever becomes utterly corrupted is doomed to be destroyed.

But if the salt have lost its savour ...” Salt is worthless if it has lost its qualities. It preserves no longer ... So, too, if those who are the salt of the earth cease to communicate saving power, they are fit only to be cast out, and Christ will cast such out of his mouth (see Rev. 3:16).

Matthew 5:14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid

Ye are the light of the world ...” The business of the church is not only to save, but to enlighten. Christ is light, and his disciples must be light. A city set on an hill. Anciently cities, for defense, were placed on hills. Such cities are seen from afar. So must the church give forth its light.

Matthew 5:15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

Light a candle and put it under a bushel ...” A lamp. It would be foolishness to light a lamp and put it under a bushel measure.

Matthew 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Even so, let your light shine ...” Like the city set on a hill, or the lighted lamp on a stand. We are told to ... let our light shine ... Before men. That they may see your good works ... results ... That they may glorify the Father in heaven. Christ is the Light; we will shine reflected light if we walk in His light. If we give forth light it will honor God.

Who is this who teaches us from a mountain like Moses but does it with sweetness and grace rather than fire and brimstone? God Himself made in fleshly tabernacle among men ... this is a new and better covenant than the old ...

Hebrews 12:18-23 For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, 19 And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which [*voice*] they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: 20 (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: 21 And so terrible was the sight, [*that*] Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) 22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, 23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

Matthew 5:17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.

Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets ...” His teaching was so opposed to the teachings of the scribes and Pharisees that some might assert that He was a destroyer of the law. He replies that He has not come to destroy it, but to fulfill. To complete its purpose. He was the end of the law. The law was a “schoolmaster to bring us to Christ” (Gal. 3:24

Matthew 5:18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

One jot or tittle ...” Jot means the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet, while tittle refers to a simple turn by which one letter is distinguished from another. The expression is like dot of an l or a cross of a t. Till all be fulfilled. “Till,” “implies that after the great events of Christ's life, and the establishment of his kingdom, the old dispensation, as a dispensation of the letter and yoke of bondage, as a system of types and shadows, will pass away, and has passed away.

Love to God and our fellow man, will last forever.”

Matthew 5:19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Shall break one of the least of these ...” The Pharisees taught that some commands were more important than others, and that it was a trivial matter to break the smallest commands. Shall be least. He may get into the kingdom, possibly, but he will have very low spiritual rank.

Matthew 5:20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Your righteousness shall exceed. The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees ... They claimed to be the teachers and examples of righteousness, but they lacked the humble spirit of true obedience.

Romans 3:10-11 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 3:11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. 3:13

Their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips: 3:14 Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness: 3:15 Their feet *are* swift to shed blood: 3:16 Destruction and misery *are* in their ways: 3:17 And the way of peace have they not known: 3:18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

Matthew 5:21 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

Ye have heard. Jesus now gives the law a new form to adapt it to his kingdom. It takes a new, a deeper, a more spiritual shape and meaning. By them of old time. In this case, Moses in the Old Testament.

Genesis 9:6 Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

Ex. 20:13 Thou shalt not kill.

Deut. 5:17 Thou shalt not kill.

The ten commandments. Christ, the Divine Lawgiver, modifies it ... In danger of the judgment. The civil courts. The law provided in every city a court of seven judges, who could sentence a criminal to death (Deut. 16:18).

Matthew 5:22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

But I say unto you. YHWH God had spoken the Decalogue to Israel. Christ now assumes the right to amend it. Such a claim is based on a claim of divinity. Whosoever is angry with his brother ... Jesus goes back of the murderous act, and forbids the anger and the reproachful

words that precede it and lead to murder. Raca ... An slang word of contempt; “empty head,” that is, a heretic. The council ... The Sanhedrim, the highest court of Israel. It corresponded to our Supreme Court, and had seventy members. Thou fool ... The original implies a stupid, wicked fool. Of hell fire ... The Greek is “the Gehenna of fire.”

Matthew 5:23 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

Matthew 5:24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar. This springs immediately out of the modification of the law, Thou shalt not kill, which required that there should be no anger with a brother. If about to offer a gift on the altar, and the remembrance comes that a brother hath anything against thee, leave the gift, go and make it right with him, and then offer thy gift. This shows that one guilty of wrongs to his fellow-man cannot offer acceptable worship of God.

Matthew 5:25 Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

Agree with thine adversary quickly. By adversary is meant an opponent in a lawsuit who is supposed to have a just claim, in this case a creditor. Officer ... The same as our sheriff. Under all the old laws debt could be punished with imprisonment.

Matthew 5:26 Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

Thou shalt not come out from thence. After the debtor was cast into prison he was held until the debt was paid, and if it were not, he

remained in prison until he died. Farthing ... A small, copper coin. The Lord would warn us to make everything right before it is too late. Before the judgment there is a chance; after it there is nothing but payment.

Matthew 5:27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

Matthew 5:28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Thou shalt not commit adultery. The Jewish rabbins held that a man was guiltless who did not commit the act. Christ, as he always did, lays the laws upon the heart. If it is impure, full of unholy desires, one is guilty. It is our duty to keep the heart pure.

Matthew 15:18-20 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. **15:19** For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: **15:20** These are *the things* which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.

Matthew 5:29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell.

If thy right eye offend thee. The eye that giveth a lustful look. A licentious passion, or anything that tempts to sin, whether thoughts with bad friends, or surroundings. Pluck it out. Cast it far from you what would lead to sin. It is profitable. Better to suffer deep mortification by self-denial than to be judged worthy of hell. Body. Used for the whole man.

Matthew 5:30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell.

If thy right hand. The same thought as in verse 29, with a new illustration.

Matthew 5:31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

Matthew 5:32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

Whosoever shall put away his wife. The divorce laws were very lax among the Jews.

A man could put away his wife “for any cause” (Matt. 19:8). Moses directed a legal letter of divorcement (Deut. 24:1). Christ positively forbids divorce except for unchastity. Marriage is a divine institution, and the obligation is for life (Matt. 19:3–9; Rom. 7:1–3; 1 Cor. 7:10–17).

Matthew 5:33 Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

Thou shalt not forswear thyself. (See Lev. 19:12; and Num. 25:2.) The Jews held that this only prohibited swearing falsely and by the name of God.

Matthew 5:34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:

Matthew 5:35 Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.

Swear not at all. Christ does not forbid judicial oaths

Neither by heaven ... The Jews held that it was impious to swear by the name of God, but that one could swear “by heaven,” “by the earth,”

“by Jerusalem.” One was God's throne, the second his footstool, Jerusalem the city of the Messiah King, all too holy for profanation.

Matthew 5:36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

By thy head. Senseless, since the oath could have no meaning.

Matthew 5:37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

Let your speech be, Yea, yea. All foolish appeals are forbidden. A simple statement is all Christ permits. All beyond is evil, “and cometh of evil.” Indeed, it makes one doubt the truth of him who has to confirm every assertion by an oath.

Matthew 5:38 Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. The law quoted is found in Exod. 21:23–25 and Lev. 24:18–20. Designed to limit violence.

He who took a life should lose his life; he who robbed another of an eye should be punished by the loss of an eye. The Jews perverted it to justify *private* retaliation.

Matthew 5:39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

Resist not evil. Jesus does not forbid the judicial application of the law, but personal revenge, such as was common among the Jews. Instead of turning upon those who injure us, and becoming a party to personal feuds, it is the duty of Christians to suffer meekly.

Matthew 5:40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have *thy* cloke also.

If any man would sue. That is, is about to sue thee. Take thy coat. The inner garment, the tunic or shirt. Cloak ... The outer garment, the covering at night. It could not be held by a creditor (Exod. 22:26–27). Better to give it up, too, than to engage in litigation. Many a poor soul has realized this when it was too late, and the lawyers had divided his property. Avoid lawsuits.

Matthew 5:41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

Compel thee to go a mile. In those days, when there were no cars, air planes or trains, it was common for any Roman traveling to impress men to assist them on the route. It was an oppressive, exaction. Christ directs to yield the service, and double it rather than refuse it. A mile. A Roman word from *mille*, a thousand ... A Roman mile was a thousand paces, 1,520 yards.

Matthew 5:42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

Give to him that asketh thee. Palestine swarmed with blind, lepers, and maimed, who were dependent on charity. Turn not away. The Lord does not bid to give to *every* one, not to loan to *every* one, for this would not be a blessing, but to have a spirit that will be ready to do so whenever it is right.

Matthew 5:43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

Thou shalt love thy neighbor. See Lev. 19:18. The Jews gave the command a very limited application. It embraces any one so near us as to need and to receive our acts of kindness. Hate thine enemy. A Jewish perversion no where did the Law tell us to hate our enemies. The Essenes in the Damascus document said this ... Plato praises the Athenians because they hated the Persians more than any of the other Greeks.

Matthew 5:44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you

I say ... Love your enemies. The fundamental law of Christ's kingdom. Henceforth love is to be boundless as the ocean. His own earthly life is its perfect application. The enemies are to be conquered by love. See John 3:16. Love will return blessing for cursing, good will for hating, prayers for evil treatment and persecution. Christ on the cross prayed for his enemies; so did Stephen, the first Christian martyr.

Matthew 5:45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

That ye may be children of your Father. We are God's children when we have the spirit of our Father.

Matthew 5:46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

Do not even the publicans so? The publicans, the gatherers of the Roman tribute, were generally odious, and deemed the scum of the earth, but even they loved those who loved them.

Matthew 5:47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others?* do not even the publicans so?

Salute your brethren only. The Jews usually disdained to speak to a Gentile, a publican, or a "sinner," but would salute orthodox Jews. Even the Gentiles, the heathen nations, had enough of love for this. Unless the disciples could love better than the Jews, they would be on a level with publicans and heathen gentiles.

Matthew 5:48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Be ye therefore perfect. To carry out fully this great law of love would lift man to the Divine standard of perfection. This must be our aim in life. We have before us as a pattern for the perfect God; we have the Divine perfection embodied in Christ. It will require a constant struggle while in the flesh to come near so high an ideal, but it must be our continual aim.

We have placed before us, as a model, the perfect ideal,

Colossians 3:1

Sources: KJV Bible, the Word.com, B. W. Johnson's People's New Testament Commentary, Coffman's Commentary, Clarkes commentary & e-Sword