

TRUTHS FROM A MOUNTAIN



43rd Annual
Biblical Viewpoints
Lectureship

November 5-9, 2023

TRUTHS FROM A MOUNTAIN

Table of Contents

Sunday AM Bible Class An Overview	Pg. 3 Dennis Pierce	Tuesday The True Way	Pg. 41 Drew Leonard
Sunday AM Worship True Love	Pg. 17 Todd Houston	Wednesday True Happiness	Pg. 48 Wayne Miller
Sunday PM Worship True Thoughts	Pg. 22 Bud Morefield	Thursday True Purpose	Outline Unavailable Jody Apple
Monday True Wealth	Pg. 37 Tracy Love		

Watch Biblical Viewpoints every Sunday morning at 8am on WEMT-TV (Fox 39) or look for us on YouTube.



43rd Annual Biblical Viewpoints Lectureship
November 5-9, 2023

AN OVERVIEW OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Dennis Pierce

Text: *Matthew 5-7*

Introduction

- I. The Sermon on the Mount is easily the most talked about sermon in history.
 - A. As a sermon it has been called the greatest sermon, the most famous sermon and the key document of the New Testament.
 - B. Many have remarked on the value of the sermon on the mount.
 1. Harry Truman, 33rd president of the United States, said, “I doubt if there is any problem in the world today - social, political or economic - that would not find a happy solution if approached in the spirit of the sermon on the mount.”
 2. The great question is, can war be outlawed from the world? If so, it would mark the greatest advance in civilization since the Sermon on the Mount. (5-star general, Douglas MacArthur)
 3. Omar Bradley, the last 5-star general in the United States Army, had this observation, “Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants. We know more about war than we know about peace, more about killing than we know about living. We have grasped the mystery of the atom and rejected the Sermon on the Mount.
 4. William Jennings Bryant put it this way, “If we desire rules to govern our spiritual development we turn back to the Sermon on the Mount.”
 5. John Quincy Adams, 3rd president of the United States said, “The Sermon on the Mount commands me to lay up for myself treasures, not upon earth, but in Heaven. My hopes of a future life are all founded upon the Gospel of Christ.”
 - C. These and many others illustrate the influence this sermon has had over the years, but the truths set forth therein, have the greatest impact on those who drink deeply from the word of

God, believe in its infallibility, trust in its promises and obey its commands.

1. The late Robert R. Taylor, Jr. of Ripley, Tennessee stated that the Sermon on the Mount, “forms the manifesto of the King, the Constitution of Christianity, the Magna Carta of the Church and the greatest Spiritual Bill of Rights ever vouchsafed man.”
2. Jesus said, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.” (*Mt. 24:35; Luke 21:33*).
3. Rest assured, the sermon on the mount will say the same thing when Jesus returns.

II. Truths from this mountain are revolutionary.

- A. By revolutionary we do not mean political or military conflict seeking to overthrow a government, but teaching that is a change from the normal or accepted way of thinking and acting in life.
 1. The accepted norms are not just how people thought in the first century, but even today it does not come natural to love your enemies or turn the other cheek.
- B. Six times in Chapter five (*vs. 21,27,31,33,38, and 43*) Jesus states, “you have heard that it was said,” or “it has been said,” followed by, “but I say to you.”
 1. The first time Jesus uses this language is in making a contrast between actual murder and anger without a cause (*5:21-22*).
 2. It is noticeable that before launching into a contrast between what He says and what has been heard, Jesus is careful to describe His attitude about the law (*5:17-18*) so that He would not be perceived as abandoning or opposing the word of God.
 3. Therefore, He makes clear that He did not come to destroy the Law or the Prophets, but to fulfill.
 4. *Romans 7:12* says, “the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.”
 5. While the sermon can be considered revolutionary in the sense that it requires a reevaluation of one’s view of life and service to God, it is perfectly consistent with all of God’s will

for man from the beginning and as set forth in the scriptures.

III. The purpose of the sermon (5:20)

- A. *Chapter 5:17-20* is not only about Jesus and His fulfillment of the law and the prophets but the consequences for breaking the commandments and the benefits for keeping them.
- B. *Verse 20* states that righteousness that doesn't exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees will keep one out of the kingdom of heaven.
 - 1. Their keeping of the commandments was only for outward appearance and not from the heart (*Mt. 15:8-9, 23:27-28*).
 - 2. The necessity of both spirit and truth, is how Jesus explained acceptable worship to the Samaritan woman (*John 4:23-24*).
 - 3. Paul writes in *Romans 10:10*, "For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."
- C. The gospel writers have much to say about the kingdom of heaven and Jesus begins his preaching by saying, "Repent for the kingdom of God is at hand." – *Matt. 4:13*
 - 1. The words, "kingdom," "kingdom of heaven," or "kingdom of God," are found nine times in the sermon.
 - 2. The first verse in the sermon (5:3) mentions the kingdom of heaven and we find it again near the end (7:21).
 - 3. Jesus came to seek and to save the lost, *Lk. 19:10*, and salvation or entrance into the kingdom of heaven requires more than what was demonstrated by the scribes and the Pharisees.
- D. The significance of the sermon on the mount may be described in several ways but understanding it to be a revelation of truths that will lead us into the kingdom of God, appears to me, to be the main purpose of Jesus on this mountain.
 - 1. When Pilate asked Jesus if He was a king, He replied, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My

voice.” – *John 18:37*

2. Two of the most famous statements from Jesus are, “You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free,” and “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me, “(*John 8:32 and John 14:6*)
 3. Our study this week will focus on truths spoken from a mountain.
- E. This lesson will provide an overview by considering the setting, the teacher, the audience and some highlights from the sermon.

Discussion

I. The Setting

- A. The opening verse of *Matthew 5* states that Jesus saw the multitudes and went upon a mountain and because of this location, the sermon that follows is called, “The Sermon on the Mount.”
1. Mountains played an important part in the history of God’s people.
 2. Abraham offered Isaac on Mount Moriah (*Gen. 22:1-2*).
 3. Moses received the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai (*Exodus 20; Deut. 5*).
 4. When the Israelites entered the promised land, they received both the blessings and the curses from Mount Gerazim and Mount Ebal (*Deut. 27-28*).
 5. Elijah’s victory over the prophets of Baal occurred on Mount Carmel, (*1 Kings 18*).
 6. Jesus was transfigured on a high mountain (*Mt. 17:1-2*) and crucified on Mount Calvary (*Lk. 23:33*).
- B. The exact location of the Sermon on the Mount is not known but the traditional view is on the northwest side of the Sea of Galilee, not far from Capernaum (*Mt. 4:13*).
1. This location would give Jesus a place from which He could be heard by the audience.
 2. He assumes the customary position of sitting as He begins the

sermon.

- C. From Matthew's account in *chapter 4*, the activities of Jesus leading up to *Matthew 5*, include His teaching around the Sea of Galilee, the calling of disciples and the healing of all kinds of sickness and disease among the people.
1. As a result of His teaching and healings, His fame spread far beyond the northern regions of the Sea of Galilee.
 2. His followers have now increased to a great multitude and have come from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and beyond Jordan to hear Him (*Mt. 4:25*).
 3. The sermon is all about what He taught – His doctrine.
 4. The text begins in *chapter 5:2*, "Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying," and ends in *chapter 7:29*, "For He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."
 5. Imagine the excitement on this occasion and the anticipation for what this amazing teacher has to say.

II. The Teacher

- A. Teaching is the practice of conveying knowledge or a skill from one person to another.
1. Synonyms include, educate, instruct, train, enlighten, etc.
 2. It is the method chosen by God to reveal Himself and His plan for man.
 3. Moses was instructed by the Lord, "Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them." - *Ex. 24:12*
 4. The Israelites are told in *Deut. 4:1*, "Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers is giving you."
 5. Some advocate that religion is better felt than told but throughout the New Testament teaching is emphasized.
 6. Others claim a desire for Jesus but are not interested in His doctrine, yet to reject His doctrine is to reject God, for He said

in *John 7:16*, “My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.”

- B. Jesus was the greatest teacher to ever live.
1. Nicodemus said of Jesus, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.”
 2. The word rabbi was an official title of honor, sometimes translated, “master,” and was a respectful address to Jewish teachers. (Strongs)
 3. Jesus identified Himself as a teacher, “You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am.” – *John 13:13*
 4. The officers sent by the chief priests and Pharisees to arrest Jesus came back empty handed and when asked why, they responded. “No man ever spoke like this Man!” – *John 13:46*
- C. Jesus was the greatest teacher because He had a purpose.
1. Teaching without purpose, and done only as an obligation or as a job, may impart knowledge but will not inspire.
 2. There must be conviction and desire for teaching to be effective.
 3. Jesus says in *John 6:38*, “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”
 4. Jesus expounds on God’s will in *verses 39-40*, “This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.
⁴⁰And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”
 5. When the disciples find Jesus talking with a Samaritan woman, no one asks why, but Jesus explains, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work.” – *John 4:34*
 6. He continues with the statement, “look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!” – *John 4:35*
- D. Jesus was the greatest teacher because He was motivated by love.
1. *Mt. 9:36*, “But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved

- with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.”
2. When Jesus made His entry in Jerusalem, He wept over the city because of what was coming upon the people (*Lk. 19:41-44*).
 3. When He wept at the death of Lazarus, some standing by said, “see how He loved him.” – *John 11:35*
 4. Love motivated His message of truth from the mountain.
- E. Jesus was the greatest teacher because He taught with authority.
1. At the conclusion of the sermon on the mount, Matthew records that He taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes. – *Mt. 7:29*
 2. Jesus speaks of His power (authority) to forgive sins (*Mt. 9:6*).
 3. When Jesus commissioned His disciples to go and teach all nations, He does so by stating that all power (authority) had been given to Him in heaven and on earth (*Mt. 28:18*).
 4. We mentioned in the introduction that Jesus often said, “you have heard that it was said,” or “it has been said,” followed by, “but I say to you.”
 5. At other times He said, “I say to you,” without making the contrast about what they had heard.
 6. These statements show that He considered Himself to have authority.
 7. People could see His authority by His knowledge of scripture, His boldness (*John 7:26*) and His ability to silence the enemies who challenged Him (*Luke 20*).
 8. He attributed His authority to the Father and said, “just as the Father has told Me, so I speak (*John 12:49-50*).
- F. Jesus was the greatest teacher because He made complicated truths simple.
1. The parables He told speak volumes of His ability to relate to people in all walks of life with stories that clarified truth.
 2. Charles Mingus has often been quoted as making this statement, “Making the simple complicated is commonplace; making the complicated simple, awesomely simple; that’s

creativity.

3. We would probably do well to elevate purpose and simplify activity.
4. The greatest teacher always got to the heart of any issue and nowhere is that more evident than in the sermon on the mount.

III. The Audience

A. We read in *Matthew 5:1-2*, “And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. ² Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:”

1. Some think the audience was only the disciples, others say the multitudes.
2. The parallel account in *Luke 6:19-20* describes those present this way, “And the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed them all. ²⁰Then He lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, and said:”
3. It was not uncommon for Jesus to speak to multitudes (*Mt. 13:2-3; Luke 5:1-3; Mt. 23:1*).
4. We read in *Mt. 7:28*, at the conclusion of the sermon, “And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching,”
5. A similar statement is found in *Luke 7:1*, “Now when He concluded all His sayings in the hearing of the people, He entered Capernaum.”
6. It seems that the audience closest to Jesus during the sermon were the disciples and further away were the people who had been following.

B. The audience was looking for the Messiah (*John 1:41, 4:24-42, 7:27*)

C. Jesus knew His audience was made up of folks with various needs and characteristics and begins by calling attention to those who were poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, etc.

D. The people were religious.

1. "You have heard," indicates they were listening to someone about the law, the prophets and moral behavior.
 2. "When you pray," or "when you fast," indicates they were people who did so.
- E. Their astonishment at his teaching (7:28) indicates they were more than casual hearers of the sermon.
1. The word translated, "astonished," means to strike out, to strike with panic, to amaze - strike out of one's senses with the outcome of being utterly amazed (dumbfounded) or left "at a loss" from witnessing the incredible (causing the viewer to gape in astonishment). – Strong's
 2. If such a speech were given today, there would be a standing ovation and an applause that no one would want to stop.
 3. These listeners walked away knowing they had just heard a masterpiece that "blew them away."

IV. Highlights of the sermon

- A. When focus is given to certain aspects of the sermon, we do not mean to elevate some of Jesus' teaching and neglect other parts.
1. Jesus held a high respect for all the law, "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." – 5:18
 2. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. – 2 Tim. 3:16-17
- B. Many of the most famous teachings of Jesus are found here and have become embedded in our memory.
1. These teachings are familiar to us and this could be a problem if not careful; You may ask how could that be?
 2. If we think we already know all about this sermon, it is possible that we could development a resistance to just how

deeply His words penetrate our souls.

3. We should always evaluate ourselves with His standard and everyone will find themselves lacking in areas of this sermon.
 4. Someone said, “The moment His teachings do not bother you, is the moment you have stopped listening to Him.”
- C. We know many teachings very well from the sermon and some are our favorites.
1. “Blessed are the meek,” is known by most everyone.
 2. “He or she is the salt of the earth,” is said by many.
 3. “Our father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,” teaches us how to pray.
 4. “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you,” gives us the assurance that God hears our prayers.
 5. “Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven,” and “Seek ye first the kingdom of God,” give promises from God.
 6. These we love to read and think about.
- D. But how much attention do we give to truths found in the sermon that are difficult?
1. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” – 5:16
 2. “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.” – 5:22
 3. “But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” – 5:28
 4. Already mentioned were the admonitions to turn the other cheek and love your enemies (5:39-44).
 5. “No one can serve two masters.” – 6:24
 6. “Why do you worry?” – 6:28
 7. “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.” – 7:1-2
8. “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
 9. These more difficult ones can be hard to face.
- E. If you want to know Jesus, the sermon on the mount is the place to go.
1. He does not soften the truth, but goes straight to the heart of our souls.
 2. Jesus is not speaking about who we are on the outside or what people think of us, but He is going for who we really are and He is making us look at the person who only you and He knows.

Conclusion

- I. *Chapter 7:21* is at the conclusion of the sermon for a reason.
 - A. This loving and powerful sermon goes to the heart of what it means to be a citizen in the kingdom of heaven, but it will benefit no one without obedience.
 1. The Lord’s final illustration of the wise man and foolish man makes clear, that the doing of what He says, is absolutely essential to remain standing through the storms of life.
 2. But more than that, disobedience will keep one out of the kingdom of heaven and will result in hearing the words from Jesus, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’ – 7:23.
- II. *Chapter 7:24-25* is also there for a reason,
 - A. “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.”
 - B. We are not to be overwhelmed by the difficulties in the keeping

of all that Jesus commands.

1. Jesus knows better than anyone of the high standard of living that He demands and that we will often fall short.
2. He said *John 10:10*, “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”
3. Live and work to be acceptable to Him and remember, “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” – *1 John 1:7*

NOTES

NOTES

TRUE LOVE *Todd Houston*

Text: *Matthew 5:38-48*

Introduction

- I. In the sermon on the mount, Jesus revealed many fundamental and foundational principles of ethics in the soon to be established kingdom.
- II. The common refrain “you have heard it was said...but I say to you...” was not set over against Moses’ law, but it was set over against the traditions of the scribes and Pharisees (*Mt. 5:17-20*).
- III. In this discussion, we ponder His correction of their faulty concept of love and seek to better grasp true love as God demands it.

Discussion

I. The Context of Jesus’ Teaching on Love: Non-Retaliatio

- A. In this section, Jesus dealt with the matter of retaliation, and He diverged radically from the Pharisaic tradition (*cf. 5:20*).
- B. They twisted the Old Testament laws concerning vengeance for injuries (*5:38ff; Ex. 21:22-27; Lev. 24:19-20; Dt. 19:19-21*).
 1. These passages prescribed judicial penalties commensurate with the injuries of a crime, not personal vengeance.
 2. The taking of the eye and knocking out of the tooth, etc. was reserved for the legal authorities, but they perverted it to allow for personal vengeance often beyond the measure of the injury.
 3. The law served two purposes, both for the good of the people.
 - a. It served as a deterrent to would be violent offenders.
 - b. It served as protection from excessive punishment.
 4. In short, the punishment was to suit the crime, and it was to be executed by the proper authorities (*cf. Rom. 12:17-13:16*).
- C. This is the consistent pattern throughout both covenants, but the Pharisaic traditions wrongly extended this to personal vengeance.

II. Kingdom Ethics Vs. The Law of the Jungle

- A. Jesus set the kingdom ethics of response to evil and care for the needy in vivid contrast to the prevailing ethics (vv. 38-42).
1. The slap on the right cheek was the most egregious insult, short of seriously injuring someone, in the ancient world.
 - a. Jewish and Roman law allowed for prosecution of such.
 - b. The expected and most natural response was to retaliate.
 - c. The kingdom's ethic is to suffer insults with grace.
 2. The tunic was the undergarment much like an undershirt; the cloak was the outer garment used also as a blanket at night.
 - a. Under Jewish law, the case was open and shut in favor of the one being targeted here (*cf. Exod. 22:26-27*).
 - b. The kingdom's ethic is willingness to divest all one's possessions for the sake of the kingdom (*Mt. 6:19ff*).
 3. Roman soldiers could legally force any subjugated person to carry his pack for one mile; Jesus said willingly carry it another.
 - a. The Jewish people to whom Jesus spoke longed for freedom from their Roman oppressors, many stood ready to revolt.
 - b. The compulsory mile was enough to drive them mad.
 - c. The kingdom's ethic is to willingly go another in service.
 4. The poor are always amongst us (*Mt. 26:11*), and God's people are to care for the truly needy (*Dt. 15:7-10; Lk. 6:38; 2 Th. 3:10*).
 - a. Such giving takes a portion of one's own security.
 - b. The kingdom's ethic is to trust God to secure our needs and care for those in need inasmuch as we are able (*Lk. 6:38*).
- B. The thrust of all of these is to emulate the meek, generous, self sacrificial spirit Jesus displayed in His life.
- C. This is a task far more easily said than done.

III. I'm Sorry, What? Love My Who?

- A. It would be difficult enough to avoid retaliation for insults, not demand what is lawful when wrongfully sued in court, serve an overlord beyond his demands without resentment, and sacrifice one's own security for the sake of a beggar, but what Jesus said

- next would have seemed ludicrous.
- B. Beyond not harming my enemies, He demands that I love them.
 - C. Yes, the same love that prompted God's gift to the world (*Jn. 3:16*), encapsulates His essential nature (*1 Jn. 4:8*), and is demanded between His children (*1 Jn. 4:7*), God expects His children to extend to their enemies (*Mt. 5:43-48; Rom. 12:20-21*).
 - D. The "law of the jungle," which the religious leaders had embraced, said love your neighbor and hate your enemy (*5:43*).
 - E. The kingdom's ethic says love every bearer of God's image, whether they seek His ways or not.
 - F. This proves humanity has long missed the true meaning of love.

IV. Biblical Love: A Choice, Not A Feeling

- A. The examples Jesus used demonstrate that love is a choice, not a feeling as the world has wrongly concluded.
- B. This is so because it runs counter to all our feelings.
 1. On those who wish us harm, we are to invoke a blessing.
 2. On those who hate us, we are to do/act for their good.
 3. For those who spitefully use and persecute us, we are to pray.
- C. For most people, this is virtually impossible; even for those who love the Lord, it is at best very difficult and challenging.
- D. However, as is true of all God's demands, He is not asking us to do anything He is unwilling to do Himself.
- E. Jesus was clear that this is simply imitating our heavenly Father as He blesses His enemies (*cf. Eph. 5:1*).
- F. This is one of the dividing lines between children of God and the children of the adversary.
- G. Jesus, as God with us, exemplified these principles for God's glory and our good (*Heb. 12:1-3; 1 Pt. 2:21-25*).

Conclusion

- I. It is relatively easy to love those who love us, as Jesus pointed out.
- II. It is in keeping with the nature of God to love those who hate us.
- III. True love is a love that chooses the good of the object of love without regard to how one feels at any given time.

NOTES

NOTES

TRUE THOUGHTS

Bud Morefield Jr.

TEXT: *Matthew 5:20-30*

Introduction

- I. Since the dawn of creation, there have been teachers who excel, but none so great as “the Word...full of grace and truth.” (*John 1:14*).
- II. The *Sermon on the Mount* contains the greatest treasures ever uttered to a class!
- III. Here in this scene, Jesus is “seated” in an authoritative teaching position, where He expounds on what it means to be truly happy testing the ideas and philosophies then and now.
- IV. This section of scripture (*Matthew 5:20-30*) contains some of the most thought provoking issues of humanity.
- V. Here, Jesus sets forth a comparison of what it means to be truly righteous, challenging each one to evaluate the heart of the matter. This lesson is called *TRUE THOUGHTS*.

Discussion

I. Righteousness That Exceeds (*Matthew 5:20*)

- A. Do not miss it! The Lord’s statement about “righteousness” is in the form of a contrast.
 1. First, the “righteousness that exceeds” is set against that of the scribes and Pharisees.
 2. Secondly, in contrast to the “righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees,” the “righteousness that exceeds” is that which will admit one to the “kingdom of heaven.”
 3. It is this contrast that catalyzes Jesus’ *Sermon on the Mount*.
- B. What is the “righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees?”
 1. Their traditions and hypocritical attitudes muddied the waters of the true meaning of the law of Moses.

2. Some have described it as a concentration only on the ceremonial concepts of the law, to the neglect of the moral/heart of the law.
 3. In fact, Jesus explains what this hypocrisy looks like in his specific exhortation to the multitude in Jerusalem (*Matthew 23*).
 - a. “They sit in Moses’ seat...” and “say, but do not do” (*Matt. 23:2-3*).
 - b. “They bind heavy burdens” (*Matt. 23:4*).
 - c. “all their works they do to be seen by men” (*Matt. 23:5*).
 - d. They “neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith” (*Matt. 23:23*).
 - e. Jesus pronounces “woe” against their specific areas of hypocrisy no less than eight times in this ardent condemnation (*Matt. 23:13-38*).
- C. What is the “righteousness that exceeds?”
1. The “righteousness that exceeds” is non-hypocritical and concerned with the heart of the matter—*TRUE THOUGHTS!*
 2. In fact, the contrast throughout the *Sermon on the Mount* is an exposition on the “righteousness that exceeds.”
 3. Jesus further develops this righteousness with His transitional phrase (or a form of it) “but I say unto you” (5:22, 26, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44; 6:2, 5, 16). This phrase also displays the authority of the Son of God on these matters of godliness.
- D. Furthermore, the gospel of Jesus Christ is that which extends to us the honor of “righteousness” in the sight of God.
1. Paul, in his letter to Titus expels the notion of salvation through one’s own “works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy He saved us” (*Tit. 3:5*).
 2. The apostle Paul, when wrenched over the self-righteous condition of his own brethren, ardently penned, “For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God” (*Rom. 10:3*).
 3. In other words, they had designed their own human

philosophy about how to be *right* with God through the law of Moses, to the neglect of the gospel of Christ, which is God's way to make men righteous!

4. In his comments on *Romans 10*, Taylor encapsulates this idea as a “complex combination of the Mosaic law and a highly detailed and long developed system of traditionalism...which was deeply entrenched, they refused subjection to the gospel as God's only plan for salvation.”¹
- E. Today, each of us has the responsibility to see beyond human wisdom, to pull back the traditions of the elitist, and let go of the doctrines of men (*Matt. 15:9*).
1. *The only way our righteousness may “exceed” that of the scribes and Pharisees is to realize our dire state in sin, cast ourselves on the mercy of almighty God, humbling ourselves in submission to His will, obeying “from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered” (*Rom. 6:17*).
 2. We must aspire to that righteousness which God offers ONLY through the gospel of Christ, to embrace the teachings of the inspired scripture, which consists of the recipe for eternal life (*2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 2 Pet. 1:3; John 6:68*).
 3. We are ONLY righteous when we obey the gospel of our Lord and Savior, and live a life of faithfulness before our God (*1 John 3:7*).
 4. Only then, will our righteousness exceed that of human wisdom—granting us entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

*As Jesus further develops the “righteousness that exceeds,” He reveals the true heart of the matter, which was contrary to the “righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.”

II. Anger That Breeds (*Matt. 5:21-22*)

A. The taking of human life (murder) has never been a matter of tolerance.

1. Cain was made a fugitive for killing his brother Abel, whose

¹ Robert R. Taylor, Jr. *Studies in Romans*, (Abilene, TX: Quality Publications, 1996), 180-181.

- blood cried out from the ground (*Gen. 4:10-12*).
2. Immediately after disembarking Noah's ark, God demanded life as a punishment for the guilty murderer. Why? "For in the image of God He made man" (*Gen. 9:6*).
 3. The law of Moses condemned murder (*Exod. 20:14; Deut. 5:17*) and demanded immediate justice—the death penalty (*Exod. 21:12; Deut. 19:11-13; Num. 35:16-21*).
- B. When Jesus said, "you have heard," it is likely a reference to the traditional interpretations of the scribes and Pharisees.²
1. Our Lord uses the phrase (or a form of it), "you have heard," no less than five times in the *Sermon on the Mount* (5:21, 27, 33, 38, 43). Oh yes, the punishment for the act of murder should be consequently judged!
 2. In danger of what judgment? "You shall appoint judges and officers in all your gates, which the Lord your God gives you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with just judgment." (*Deut. 16:18*).
 3. Sure enough, if one commits murder he will be in danger of the "judgment," at the mercy of the civil court, which the scribes and Pharisees would postulate as a just consequence.
 4. The civil courts would certainly judge an anger which had manifested itself into action (i.e. murder).
- C. Jesus aims for the true, deeper meaning here—"But I say unto you..."
1. This statement begs the question: Was the law of Moses simply concerned about one's outward actions? In other words, could a person harbor feelings of anger, hate, and murder in his heart so long as he did not pick up a weapon and slay his neighbor?
 - a. The answer is, **NO!** The "righteousness" of the scribes and Pharisees had convoluted the true meaning of God so as to remove obedience from the heart.
 - b. The Old Testament taught, "You shall not hate your

² McGarvey, J. W. & Philip Y. Pendleton, *The Fourfold Gospel*, (Cincinnati: The Standard Publishing Co., 1914), 237.

brother in your heart... You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord” (*Lev. 19:17, 18*).

2. “But I say unto you,” surely refers to the authority of Jesus over the traditions and expositions which were promulgated by the “Jewish elite” among the people.

D. *While it is true that the sin of murder carries a greater physical consequence, according to Jesus, hatred for a brother bears the same spiritual weight!

1. First, the anger which is anchored in the heart (5:22).
 - a. This “anger” has gone beyond that of *Ephesians 4:26*: “Be angry, and do not sin’: do not let the sun go down on your wrath.”
 - b. In this case, the sun has long set beneath the horizon with the anger raging in the heart—a deeply seated, hateful malice and harm for a brother.
 - c. **THE RESULT** of harboring anger in the heart against a brother is a punishable crime!
2. Secondly, the seeds of anger sprout into the hurtful language of “Raca,” a verbal expression of Aramaic origin, meaning something like “empty head,” or to “spit out” (5:22).
 - a. His anger has now escalated into an unhinged verbal remark in hateful contempt for his brother.
 - b. **THE RESULT** of spewing this from one’s heart is also a punishable crime (a reference to the Sanhedrin council).
3. Thirdly, is murdering a brother with the expression, “You fool!” (5:22).
 - a. This word “fool” does NOT quite correlate to the English expression of “unwise” or “ignorant.”
 - b. To the Jew, the expression to which Jesus is referring carries a heavy condemnation, meaning “senseless wickedness” (Mounce).
 - c. “It expresses a stronger degree of reproach and contempt

than Raca, and hence an intense passion and hate...”³

d. The remark *fool*, Clarke writes, is a “term implied, among the Jews, the highest enormity, and most aggravated guilt”⁴

e. THE RESULT is punishable by “hell fire” (γέεννα).

E. What may we conclude from this section of the *Sermon on the Mount*?

1. Jesus points them back to the **root of murder**—anger for another, which has been called “murder in the making.”
2. Even in our society today, one may harbor anger and hatred within his heart and never find himself within the walls of a courtroom, but he has a greater Judge, and He will judge righteously (*2 Cor. 5:10*).
3. We conclude that “Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him” (*1 John 3:15*).
4. *Raca* and *fool* are the ugly blossoms stemming from a deep rooted problem in the heart, sins which God cannot overlook crimes which are punishable by eternal death (*Matt. 5:22; 1 John 5:15; Rev. 21:8*).
5. “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you” (*Eph. 4:32*).
6. “Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; ¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. ¹⁴ But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection”

³ H. Leo Boles, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew*, (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Co., 1956), 136.

⁴ Adam Clarke, “Commentary on Matthew 5,” *The Adam Clarke Commentary*, <https://www.studyilght.org/commentaries/eng/acc/matthew-5.html>, 1832 [accessed 9/22/23].

(*Colossians 3:12-14*).

III. Relationships That Need (*Matthew 5:23-26*)

- A. THE PROBLEM: Continuing with the context, Jesus describes the problem.
1. This one comes to offer his worship to God, but “remembers” there is an unresolved situation with a brother.
 2. This is a problem that has been permitted time to fester. The maturation of this issue between two brethren has resulted in a broken relationship.
 3. In fact, he “remembers” it! It’s on his conscience.
- B. THE PRESCRIPTION: What must he do? What is the prescription?
1. Should one go ahead with worship and then resolve the issue? On the contrary!
 2. First, one must fix the relationship that is broken (*Matt. 5:24*).
 3. Secondly, once the issue has been resolved, he is now implored to go and offer his gift.
- C. PREVENTATIVE MEASURES: Actually, Jesus lays down preventive measures for a problem like this (*Matt. 5:25a*).
1. *Agree* with him means to “be well affected or kindly disposed towards” (Mounce). The English Standard Version renders this Greek word as “Come to terms” (ESV).
 2. *Adversary* literally means “an opponent in a lawsuit” (Mounce, Strong, Thayer).
 3. Luke may give us the full thrust of this phrase: “When you go with your adversary to the magistrate, make every effort along the way to settle with him...” (*Luke 12:58*).
 4. It is better if one does everything in his power to fix the issue up front so as to prevent it from escalating out of control!
- D. THE PENALTY: Finally, He concludes with the results of unresolved problems between brethren (*Matt. 5:25b-26*).
1. The judge would deliver the debtor to the officer, who in

turn would imprison him.

2. He will remain suffering in prison to pay off the debt.
3. Here, Jesus alludes to a civil circumstance in order to teach a lesson regarding the extent of the consequences of unresolved offenses.
4. Benjamin Franklin wisely remarked, “Whatever is begun in anger ends in shame.”
5. Why subject oneself to a life of such anger, hatred, insults, and murder? Harboring hatred in the heart renders one unwise, unhealthy, and unsettled.
6. These are **relationships that need mending!** Our relationship with the Father—our worship—depends on it.

IV. LOOK THAT LEADS (*Matt. 5:27-30*)

- A. Once again, Jesus gives the “word on the street,” concerning the law, in contrast to the intent of God’s law.
 1. Indeed, the law had taught “you shall not commit adultery” (*Exod. 20:14; Deut. 5:18*).
 2. In fact, the punishment of such action was death by stoning for all involved (*Lev. 20:10*). Those who brought to Jesus a woman caught “in the very act” of adultery acknowledged this crime and its consequences in accordance with the law of Moses (*John 8:4, 5*).
 3. Once again, the physical act (adultery) may carry a weightier physical consequence—in this case, the death penalty—however, Jesus goes on to explain the point at which one is guilty of sin.
- B. “But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”
 1. The word “looks” (βλέπων) is a present, active, participle (Mounce, Thayer), indicating a kind of “look” surpassing the recognition of beauty.
 2. The ESV captures this sentiment: “But I say to you that everyone who **looks at a woman with lustful intent** has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (ESV,

- emph. added).
3. The word “lust” means “to set the heart upon” (Mounce, Strong).
 4. This is not just seeing a woman, but a “look” that leads to lust in the heart.
 5. John describes this *look*: “For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, **the lust of the eyes**, and the pride of life is not of the Father but is of the world” (*1 John 2:16*, emph. added).
 6. The process which James describes does not condemn seeing, but the look which births sin: “But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death” (*Jam. 1:14, 15*).
- C. When referring to adultery in the mind, someone today may chime, “One may look at the menu all he wants, as long as he doesn’t order anything,” but such thinking is contrary to the teachings of Christ!
1. Jesus says, when one “looks” with lust “he has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”
 2. Now, before one gets too hasty in “divorcing” his or her spouse over that which is considered mental/heart adultery (i.e. pornography), please know that, according to Jesus, the one and only reason for divorce is the physical act of “fornication” (*porneia*): “saving for the cause of fornication” (*Matt. 5:32*); “except it be for fornication” (*Matt. 19:9*).
 3. For one to broaden the usage of the term *porneia* to include “adultery in the heart” is NOT a liberty which the New Testament allows. A study of the term reveals its exclusivity to the act of fornication.
 4. Although the act of adultery may have physical consequences outweighing that of “adultery in the heart,” according to Jesus, both are sins punishable by “hell”

(*γέεννα*, *Matt. 5:29*).

- D. Today, Satan continues to make sin attractive, acceptable, and very easily accessible.
1. Our society is plagued with the glorification of sexual immorality and *lust*: from the “cultural norms” portrayed in Hollywood and social media, to many of the latest trends and styles that are supposed to make one “attractive” and “desirable.”
 2. The devil is techno savvy, making pornography readily accessible. He finds a way to interrupt our faithfulness at godly living through the temptations of a device in the hand, a magazine in the mail, and a television or computer in the privacy of our homes.
 3. He creates the sort of lie that says, “you can look, as long as you don’t touch.”
- E. Finally, the Lord concludes His exhortation on adultery by describing the seriousness of sin (*Matt. 5:29-30*).
1. Sin makes its way into the heart by our human senses—in this case, the eyes for looking with intent to lust.
 2. Therefore, if it is the eye that causes one to sin, “pluck it out;” if it is the hand, “cut it off.”
 3. The Lord is not speaking in literal terms here, but the picture certainly captures the essence of sacrifice in order to gain eternal life.
 4. Paul catches this idea when writing to the Galatians, “And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (*Gal. 5:24*); as well as those at Colosse, “Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (*Col. 3:5*).
 5. The sinner who was baptized to wash away sins (*Acts 22:16*) is a new creature. He no longer lives to serve sin, but lives to please a loving God: “And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as

instruments of righteousness to God” (*Rom. 6:13*).

6. If the temptation of lust is too great, it may require one to cut himself off from a certain job, a relationship, or from a particular situation. Is the expense of disconnecting the internet, foregoing television services, or deleting one’s social media account too much to pay for a pure heart!?
 7. What if King David had not positioned himself at Jerusalem? What if he had pulled himself away from the rooftop upon seeing Bathsheba? Perhaps David’s life would have panned out much differently (*2 Sam. 11-12*).
- F. For the second time in this section, Jesus provides the DETERRENT needed to dissuade one from allowing lust to pervade the heart—the punishment of eternal fire (*γέεννα, Matt. 5:30*).
1. May we remember Lot’s wife, who failed to keep her eyes focused on the will of God (*Luke 17:32*).
 2. Heed the wisdom of Solomon and “Let your eyes look straight ahead, and your eyelids look right before you” (*Prov. 4:25*).

Conclusion

- I. This portion of the greatest sermon ever taught has been summarized through the following lens: The righteousness that exceeds, an anger that breeds, relationships that need mending, and a look that leads to adultery in the heart.
- II. When Jesus had concluded His *Sermon on the Mount*, the people were astonished at His teaching, ²⁹ for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes (*Matt. 7:28, 29*).
- III. Although the traditional interpretations of the scribes and Pharisees had clouded God’s will for humanity, Jesus taught that TRUE THOUGHTS were the heart of the matter, therefore, setting the tone for the redemptive law of Christ (*Jn. 1:17; Rom. 10:4*).
- IV. “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life” (*Prov. 4:23*).

SOURCES

- Boles, H. Leo. *A Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew*. Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Co., 1956.
- Butt, Kyle. “What is ‘Sexual Immorality’ in Matthew 19:9?” *Apologetics Press*. <https://apologeticspress.org/what-is-sexual-immorality-in-matthew-199-4778/> [accessed 9/27/23].
- Camp, Franklin. “Exceeding Righteousness Necessary to Entering the Kingdom.” In *The Sermon on the Mount*, edited by Garland Elkins & Thomas B. Warren, 86-97. Jonesboro, AR.: National Christian Press, INC., 1982.
- Connally, Andrew M. “Lust In The Heart.” In *The Sermon on the Mount*, edited by Garland Elkins & Thomas B. Warren, 116-120. Jonesboro, AR.: National Christian Press, INC., 1982.
- Clarke, Adam. “Commentary on Matthew 5.” *The Adam Clarke Commentary*. <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/acc/matthew-5.html>. 1832 [accessed 9/22/23].
- Jackson, Wayne. “Is Lust Fornication?.” *Christian Courier*. <https://christiancourier.com/articles/is-lust-fornication> [accessed 9/28/23]
- McGarvey, J. W. & Philip Y. Pendleton. *The Fourfold Gospel*. Cincinnati: The Standard Publishing Co., 1914.
- Mounce, William D. *Mounce Concise Greek-English Dictionary*. E-Sword Bible Software.

Newell, Clifford. "Righteousness That Exceeds." In *Arise To Truth Lectureship: The Sermon on the Mount*, 11-21. Bluff City, TN: Mountain View Church of Christ, 1998.

Strong, J. *Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries*. E-Sword Bible Software.

Taylor, Robert R. Jr. *Studies in Romans*. Abilene, TX: Quality Publications, 1996.

Thayer, Joseph. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

NOTES

NOTES

FINDING TRUE WEALTH

Tracy Love

Text: *Matthew 6:19-34*

Introduction

- I. The words of the “Sermon on the Mount,” are best understood as “Kingdom Principles,” that should govern our walk with Christ
- II. There are always distractions to our walk with Christ.
- III. Jesus promises us the best life. (*John 10:10*)

Discussion

I. Work for Heavenly, not earthly, rewards (*Vv. 16-21*).

- A. Jesus discusses the treasures on earth versus the treasures in heaven.
- B. Jesus demonstrates the poor investment in working for treasures on earth.
- C. Jesus displays that our heart is always found in our investments.

II. Healthy sight sees Heavenly rewards as good (*Matthew 6:22-23*).

- A. Perfect sight represented by the eye, gives a clear view of a more abundant life
- B. Bad sight represented by the eye, gives a distorted view of life, with improper priorities.

III. It is not possible to live for both the earthly and the eternal (*Matthew 6:24*).

- A. A divided devotion is not possible.
- B. A divided devotion is not permissible.

IV. Rather than living for earthly things, trust God to provide the earthly while you seek the eternal (*Matthew 6:25-34*).

Conclusion

- I. As God's children, we are blessed to have an abundant life found in Him. May we never be distracted into a life that is less than what God has planned, prepared and promised each of us.

NOTES

NOTES

THE TRUE WAY

Drew Leonard

Text: *Matthew 7:12-29*

Introduction

- I. The “Sermon on the Mount” (*Mat. 5-7*) has a few specific functions in the broader scope of Matthew's “Gospel.”
 - A. It is the *first of five* major discourses, which is how Matthew's “Gospel” is divided (*cf. Mat. 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1* [“when Jesus had finished these . . .”] and *26:1* [“when Jesus had finished all these words”], which might be more conclusive).
 - B. It, along with the “Olivet Discourse” (*Mat. 23-25*) is *one of two* “Mountain Sermons,” which, together, forms a bracket to wrap around the core of the book; *Matthew 5-7* corresponds to *Matthew 23-25* in a major way, then:
 1. Following Jesus' way results in redemption/deliverance (so, *Matthew 5:1-12; 7:14,24,25; 24:13,22; 25:34,46*).
 2. Rejecting Jesus' way results in judgment/demise (so, *Matthew 7:13,15-23,26,27; 24:28,39,51; 25:10-12,26-30,41,46*).
 3. The *immediate* context has Jesus “facing off” with the Jewish abuse, but the *remote* context applies it to us.
 - C. Both, the whole book (of Matthew's “Gospel”) and our specific unit (*Mat. 7:12-29*) continue to make the same one point:
people must choose rightly!
- II. And, dipping back into *Matthew 5:17-20*, Jesus sets up a contrast with the abusive/exploitative people (Jewish elites, in the immediate context [*cf. Mat. 5:21-48*]), saying that one must reject that “way” to “choose” the right “way” that actually models itself after Jesus (the ideal human [*Gen. 1:26,27*]).
 - A. *Matthew 7:12* broadly presents what “the right way” looks like.
 - B. Out of *Matthew 7:12*, which is broad, Jesus produces 4 “road signs” for people to follow . . .

1. Narrow Road Ahead (*Mat. 7:13,14*)
2. One Way Street . . . Wrong Roads Ahead (*Mat. 7:15-20*)
3. Danger Ahead . . . Slippery When Wet (*Mat. 7:21-23*)
4. Destination Ahead (*Mat. 7:24-29*)

Discussion

I. Narrow Road Ahead (*Mat. 7:13,14*)

- A. Against the backdrop of various “gates” in cities, with which first-century people would be familiar, Jesus envisions two different gates.
 1. The broad gate would require little and be easy to enter.
 2. The narrow gate might require . . .
 - a. Patience, waiting one's turn, to enter (*cf. Rom. 8:25*).
 - b. Attention, no drifting off course (*cf. Heb. 2:1; 6:19*).
- B. Jesus insists that the “narrow way” is right, in spite of the . . .
 1. Popular
 2. Populace
- C. The implications for people of faith are numerous; a minority is not be criticized as such.

II. One Way Street . . . Wrong Roads Ahead (*Mat. 7:15-20*)

- A. With the idea of false prophets, who would lead astray by deception, Jesus might insist that staying the right direction on the right road would require . . .
 1. Awareness (*cf. Mat. 24:4,5,11,24; Rom. 13:11,12; 1 Thes. 5:4-10*).
 2. Discerning (*cf. Heb. 4:12; 1 John 4:1*).
 3. Character (*cf. Mat. 5-7*).
 - a. This is Jesus' primary point; the two types of trees stand as a compare-and-contrast; His point is not about isolated acts but “the big picture,” one's collective character.
 - i. The Old Testament has a “slow” method of discerning false prophets (*cf. Deut. 18:15-22*).

- ii. Jesus, on the other hand, is “quick” about discerning false prophets: is one's overall character good or bad? productive or destructive? what is one's “gut feeling”? is something “off”? does one have a “nourishing,” “edifying” character or not (*cf. Mat. 7:12; 2 Cor. 10:8; 12:19; 13:10*)?
 - b. One's character will expose him to be either a good tree or a bad tree.
- B. People of faith must be aware of false, competing routes and remember to stay on the located and appropriate course.

III. Danger Ahead . . . Slippery When Wet (*Mat. 7:21-23*)

- A. With the background of Roman roads and routes, especially in the Palestinian area, Jesus tells his audience of dangers from others.
- B. Navigating one's route in spite of danger might require . . .
 - 1. Alertness (of the right criteria [not “mighty deeds”] that validates “safety” [*cf. 2 Cor. 12:1-10*]; powerful, personal experiences do not prove “safety” but are often deceptive and misleading); again, overall “character” (as modeled after Christ) is the criteria for legitimate “safety.”
 - 2. Preparation.
 - a. “That day” slips over from the Old Testament; the understanding of the phrase is different in the New Testament; now, the “that day” (in this context) involves resurrection, 2nd coming, etc.
 - b. The “final (that) day,” here, is prefigured in A.D. 70.

IV. Destination Ahead (*Mat. 7:24-29*)

- A. With two houses, final destinations, as the metaphor, Jesus insists, again, on the choice to follow one of two routes; to end at the right final destination, one requires . . .
 - 1. The right/real map (so, Jesus' words [*cf. Mat. 7:24,25*],

- divine).
 - a. Not rabbinic speculations (*cf. Mat. 5:21-28; 19:3-ff.*).
 - b. Not the Academy but truth, fact.
- 2. The right/real goal/destination (so, truth as embodied in Jesus of Nazareth as God-in-the-flesh [*cf. Mat. 16:16,18*]).
 - a. Not the temple on the rocks (*cf. Mat. 24:2 = Mk. 13:1*).
 - b. Not human constructs, but more.
- B. The right/real destination is our being all that we were designed by God to be, His very image (*cf. Gen. 1:26,27*) as modeled after Jesus.

Conclusion

- I. Jesus has given 3 major metaphors to show that people have a “choice” to make; there are . . .
 - A. Two gates.
 - B. Two trees.
 - C. Two houses.
- II. For the Jewish context, they must choose . . .
 - A. To “stay” committed to the abusive and exploitative institution or to take the road out of Jerusalem with Jesus (*Mat. 24*).
 - B. To be the withered tree of Jewish nationalism (*Mat. 21:18-22*) or to become a faithful and productive tree with Jesus.
 - C. To be the dejected and desolate house of robbers and thieves (*Mat. 21:12-17; 23:38* [using *Jer. 7:11,14; 26:6,9* and the broader context of the 586 B.C. cataclysm by Babylon]) or to restructure a faithful house with Jesus.
- III. For us, the points are the same; will we . . .
 - A. Take the narrow, unpopular and underpopulated path?
 - B. Be the productive and fruitful tree?
 - C. Be the solid, firm and concrete house?

PRIMARY REFERENCES

Hays, Richard, *The Beginning of Birth Pangs*, Duke Chapel. November 15, 2009. Sermon. Print.

Lewis, Jack, *The Gospel According to Matthew: Part 1, 1:1-13:52*, R.B. Sweet, Co., Inc. Austin, TX. 1976. Print.

Rogers, Richard, *Life of Christ*, Sunset Institute Press. Lubbock, TX. 2002. Print.

Wright, N.T., *Matthew for Everyone: Part 1*, WJK Press. Louisville, KY. 2002. Print.

NOTES

NOTES

TRUE HAPPINESS IN LIFE

Wayne Miller

Text: *Matthew 5:1-12*

Introduction:

- I. When you turn your Bible to *Ecclesiastes 2*, King Solomon chase pot of gold called 'Happiness.' Solomon was far and away the most powerful man in the world at his time and one of the richest men who ever walked on the earth.
- II. Solomon decided to enjoy himself, find out about happiness. He found three dead ends: he tried experiencing pleasure (2:3, 10); achieving success (2:4, 9); and accumulating things (2:7, 8).
- III. Now, an amazing thing is some 3000 years later, people are still chasing these same avenues trying to achieve happiness. Happiness is thought to consist in: riches, recognition, relationships, recreation, only to discover lasting and true happiness will not come from them.
- IV. In *Matthew 5:1-12*, Jesus announced the secret to true and lasting happiness in the Beatitudes, the attitudes we should BE. Jesus emphasizes that human lives can be happy only when human hearts are right.

Discussion

I. PREPARATION FOR THE SERMON 5:1, 2.

- A. The crowds seen by Jesus are mentioned in *Matthew 4:25*.
- B. Seeing those crowds, Jesus went up on a mountain, sat down, and began to teach. Notice: His disciples came to him!
- C. While standing is usual posture for teachers today, sitting was usual posture for formal teaching. In Jewish synagogues, the teacher sat (*Luke 4:20*).

II. PREPARATION FOR CITIZENSHIP 5:3-12.

- A. In the eight Beatitudes, there are three parts to each one: a blessing, a quality, and a reward.
1. The Blessing.
 - a. We can legitimately translate ‘blessed’ as ‘happy’ as long as we do NOT define in a superficial way world does.
 - b. Word introduces someone who is to be congratulated, someone whose place in life is an enviable one.
 2. The Qualities, traits we need to be blessed and happy.
 - a. We need to be *poor in spirit*, aware of our spiritual poverty.
 - b. We need to *mourn* over our spiritual destitution.
 - c. We need to be *meek, gentle* to yield to God and His Word.
 - d. We need to *hunger and thirst for righteousness*.
 - e. We need to be *merciful*, more concern for others than self.
 - f. We need to be *pure in heart* to focus on the things of God.
 - g. We need to be *peacemakers* who actively pursue peace.
 - h. We need to remain faithful to Christ when we are *persecuted for the sake of righteousness*.
 3. The Rewards. Each one closes with an anticipate promise.
 - a. Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
 - b. They shall be comforted.
 - c. They shall inherit the earth.
 - d. They shall be satisfied.
 - e. They shall receive mercy.
 - f. They shall see God.
 - g. They shall be called children of God.
 - h. Theirs is the kingdom of heaven, their reward is great.
- B. Some of these rewards seem to focus on this life, and others seem more directed to the life to come. Each blessing has partial fulfillment here and complete fulfillment in the life to come, two parts of the same blessing.

C. Imagine a beautiful place you have looked at pictures, dreamed and long to go there. At last, you get to make the trip. As you get closer, countryside becomes more and more like you anticipate. Finally, you turn a corner, there you are! You reached your destination and it's more beautiful than you could have imagined and anticipated. For the faithful citizen in Christ's kingdom, life is the "trip," and death is "turning the corner."

Conclusion:

- I. These words from Jesus, the Beatitudes, are life changing words.
- II. Truth is, they are NOT just for the spiritual elite but for every Christian. Many of the Beatitudes are the exact opposite of what we want to do and see done in others. While they are easy to read, they take spiritual discipline to apply in living for Jesus.
- III. These spiritual standards come about in life only through surrender to the Savior. May God help each of us embrace and embody the happiness found in the teachings of Jesus.

NOTES

NOTES