

"And the Law came in that the transgression might increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more," **Rom.5:20**

"therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith." **Gal.3:24**

Matthew 5

Chapter 5 tells us about the moral standards of the Kingdom and the brokenness that the moral law (rightly understood) will produce in God's people drawing them to their King Redeemer.

2. The Messiah defines the true nature of Kingdom life: The sermon on the Mount (5:1-7:29)

a. The character of Kingdom people (5:1-12)

The purpose of the captivity of Israel leading up to the coming of Messiah was brokenness of spirit, humility, and willingness to receive the love of God through the Messianic mission. The beatitudes summarize the kind of heart that will inherit the blessings of the Kingdom age. The word BEATITUDE comes from the Latin word for "blessing" meaning "to be congratulated".

In a real sense, what follows is a description of Jesus.

1. Attitude toward self: humble hunger for righteousness (5:1-6)

1 And when He saw the multitudes, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. 2 And opening His mouth He {began} to teach them, saying, 3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. 5 Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth. 6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

- These first beatitudes pronounce a blessing on penitent hearts. They are a promise that the pain is just about over. The key words here all are to be associated with the brokenness of spirit.

2. Attitude toward others: passion for peace (5:7-9)

7 Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. 8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. 9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

- A broken heart will be seen in a gracious social posture.

3. Attitude toward enemies: joy in face of persecution (5:10-12)

10 Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are you when {men} cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. 12 Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

- These who find their hope in Messiah will suffer persecution and ridicule. This suffering is to be put in the broader context of blessing as the Kingdom is revealed.

b. The calling of Kingdom people (5:13-16)

- If the beatitudes describe the inner character of a child of the Kingdom, the following verses tell us how that character is to impact the outer culture or world.

1. Salt: "I have been crucified with Christ" (5:13)

13 You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty {again}? It is good for nothing anymore, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.

- What is salt and what is light? Are they related to the character described in the beatitudes?
- The remnant of penitent Jews are to set the pace for the nation. They are to take care not to lose their edge as expressed in the beatitudes.

2. Light: “Christ liveth in me” (5:14-16)

14 You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do {men} light a lamp, and put it under the peck-measure, but on the lampstand; and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

c. The conduct of Kingdom people (5:17-7:27))

1. In respect to moral purity (5:17-48)

a. The letter of the law. (5:17-20)

17 Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. 18 For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished. 19 Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches {them,} he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses {that} of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.

- The standards of righteousness demanded by God is very great. Every bit of the Law's demands must be fulfilled before there can be participation in the Kingdom of God.
- Jesus claim to "fulfill" the Law's demands is best understood as a reference to His sinless life and substitutionary death.

b. The spirit of the law. (5:21-48)

- Lest there be a misunderstanding of how deeply the demands of the Law reach, we are to understand that no one leaves with confidence in his or her self-righteousness.
- This teaching is designed to convict all of their need for a savior, not confirm some over against others.

1. with respect to how we treat others (5:21-26)

21 You have heard that the ancients were told, ' *You shall not commit murder*' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' 22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be guilty {enough to go} into the fiery hell. 23 If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering. 25 Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, in order that your opponent may not deliver you to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. 26 Truly I say to you, you shall not come out of there, until you have paid up the last cent.

- These first beatitudes pronounce a blessing on penitent hearts. They are a promise that the pain is just about over.

2. with respect to how we treat marriage (5:27-32)

27 You have heard that it was said, '*You shall not commit adultery*'; 28 but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. 30 And if your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to go into hell. 31 And it was said, '*Whoever sends his wife away, let him give her a certificate of divorce*'; 32 but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for {the} cause of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

- These first beatitudes pronounce a blessing on penitent hearts. They are a promise that the pain is just about over.
- Jesus does not expect people to solve a problem of lust by removing their eye as lust is in the mind. The point is that the breaking of the law is an eternal life and death matter.
- The reference to "unchastity" in verse 32 is best understood as unfaithfulness during betrothal or in the case of unlawful marriage.
- The unlawfully divorced woman (assuming she remarries) will be an adulterous.

3. with respect to how we treat oaths (5:33-37)

33 Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, '*You shall not make false vows, but shall fulfill your vows to the Lord*.'³⁴ But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is *the city of the great King*.³⁶ Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 But let your statement be, 'Yes, yes' {or} 'No, no'; and anything beyond these is of evil.

- Kingdom people should not need to make an oath. Their word should be good enough without a contract of blessing and cursing attached.

4. with respect to how we treat evil doers (5:38-42)

38 You have heard that it was said, '*An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth*.'³⁹ But I say to you, do not resist him who is evil; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if anyone wants to sue you, and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. 41 And whoever shall force you to go one mile, go with him two. 42 Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.

- Don't seek revenge or even justice but seek to bless those who would mistreat you. This is a sure sign that your hope is beyond this life.
- This text (taken literally) has been the basis of Christian pacifism. The context is injustice to oneself. It does not suggest that we should stand by and watch others be abused without helping.

5. with respect to how we treat our enemies (5:43-48)

43 "You have heard that it was said, '*You shall love your neighbor*, and hate your enemy.'⁴⁴ But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you 45 in order that you may be sons of your Father who is

in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on {the} evil and {the} good, and sends rain on {the} righteous and {the} unrighteous. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax-gatherers do the same? 47 And if you greet your brothers only, what do you do more {than others}? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

- Even our enemies are to be blessed. "Perfect" vs.48 is rendered "fully grown" in Paul's writing.

Insights and Lessons from this chapter

- The beatitudes give us an idea of what a penitent life looks like. The goal of the sermon on the mount is to bring each of us to this end.
- The law, rightly understood is not to leave us feeling good about ourselves but rather longing for the salvation of God in Christ.
- A question that we must answer is this – Are we living a broken life?