

Get Real - The Sermon On The Mount, Part 1

- **Matthew 5:1-2 (MSG)** When Jesus saw his ministry drawing huge crowds, he climbed a hillside. Those who were apprenticed to him, the committed, climbed with him. Arriving at a quiet place, he sat down and taught his climbing companions. This is what he said:
- Jesus drew huge crowds because of his two-fold ministry to them: DOING and TEACHING.
- **Acts 1:1 (MSG)** Dear Theophilus, in the first volume of this book I wrote on everything that Jesus began to do and teach.
- **DOING** refers to His miracle-working power, while **TEACHING** refers to His doctrine. Jesus did not work miracles just for miracles' sake, but He used them to teach doctrine (i.e. healed blind man and taught "I am the light of the world," fed 5000 and taught "I am the bread of life"). He also did not teach just for teaching's sake, but "he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." (Matthew 7:29)
- But in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is teaching His disciples, not preaching to sinners (not one miracle is recorded in Matthew 5-7). In fact, **The Message** introduces this passage to show us that Jesus always expects more from His disciples than He does from the crowd. As He "climbs higher" with His disciples, instead of Jesus telling us what HE wants to do for US (salvation), He now tells us what He wants US to do for HIM (discipleship).
- The Sermon on the Mount is all about becoming a "climbing companion" of Jesus, moving ever higher and deeper in our Christian life. It is not just about knowing doctrine, but about applying doctrine. It is about GETTING REAL with God, with ourselves, and with others.

GET REAL IN HOW YOU LIVE

- Jesus begins His sermon with a REPORT CARD on our Christian life, covering the subjects that are crucial to the curriculum of discipleship! The word "blessed" means more than "happy" because happiness is an emotion often dependent on outward circumstances. "Blessed" here refers to divinely bestowed well-being, which the Bible calls "joy" ... and Jesus teaches that we attain it by doing exactly the opposite of what the world does to attain happiness!
- So, let's begin by grading ourselves on the disciple's report card ...
 - A doing AWESOME in this area
 - B need to do BETTER in this area
 - C have trouble being CONSISTENT in this area
 - D having extreme DIFFICULTY in this area
 - F experiencing complete FAILURE in this area

Matthew 5:3-12 (KJV)

- *Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
I trust God in my difficult circumstances instead of trying to keep up the appearance before others that I am self-sufficient.
- *Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.*
I am quick to ask for forgiveness from God and others when I am wrong or when there is conflict in one of my relationships.
- *Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.*
I am gentle and balanced in my interactions with others, not trying to control my relationships through pretending to be strong or weak. (meekness is not weakness, but power under control)
- *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*
I have a vibrant daily relationship with God that is just as real when I am alone as it appears to be when I am with other Christians.
- *Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.*
I am quick to grant forgiveness and a second chance to those who have sinned against God, against me or against my loved ones.
- *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*
I have no secret sins or hidden motives in my heart; I am exactly the same in my inner world as I appear to others on the outside.
- *Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.*
I always speak positively about others and about my church; I always try to defuse an explosive situation rather than adding fire to it. (instead of saying "yes and ..." I try to calm things with "yes but ...")
- *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
I don't get defensive when someone accuses me falsely or when they deliberately hurt me; I don't have to tell my side of the story.
- *Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.*
I never lose my smile or positive attitude when things go wrong; I never lessen my worship or my church involvement when I'm upset.

- Did you pass the Discipleship Course? Could your grade be better?
- Why is it so important for us to continually climb higher in our life with God? Because we become a more powerful influence on others as He becomes a more powerful influence on us!

Matthew 5:13-16 (KJV)

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.

In what ways does SALT have influence?

It adds flavor, it creates thirst, it is a preservative

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 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. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

In what ways does LIGHT have influence?

It lets us see clearly, it penetrates darkness, it acts as a beacon

GET REAL IN WHAT YOU BELIEVE

- It is a very common misconception today that because we are under “grace” God’s “law” is no longer relevant to us. Jesus goes to great lengths in His teaching to emphasize that God’s law is still important and that it must be obeyed; however, He stresses that we must have the right kind of obedience. It must be more than mere outward compliance; it must come from the heart.
- **Matthew 5:17-20 (KJV)** Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 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. 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. 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.
- A “jot” refers to the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet and a “tittle” refers to a tiny mark used to distinguish letters.
- **Matthew 5:19 (MSG)** Trivialize even the smallest item in God’s Law and you will only have trivialized yourself. But take it seriously, show the way for others, and you will find honor in the kingdom.

- The Pharisees had a tendency to soften the law’s demands by focusing only on external obedience (they actually added to God’s commands to “explain” them), but Jesus demands obedience to both the LETTER of the law (outward) and the SPIRIT of the law (inward).
- So, in the rest of the chapter, Jesus gives 6 examples illustrating the problem of surface-only obedience. (***For each of Jesus’ examples, think of modern applications where we have similar problems.***)

SPEECH

- **Matthew 5:21 quotes the 6th commandment (Exodus 20:13) but with a Pharisaic addition (“judgment”)**

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:*

Exodus 20:13 *Thou shalt not kill.*

Matthew 5:21-26 (MSG) *You’re familiar with the command to the ancients, ‘Do not murder.’ I’m telling you that anyone who is so much as angry with a brother or sister is guilty of murder. Carelessly call a brother ‘idiot!’ and you just might find yourself hauled into court. Thoughtlessly yell ‘stupid!’ at a sister and you are on the brink of hellfire. **The simple moral fact is that words kill.** This is how I want you to conduct yourself in these matters. If you enter your place of worship and, about to make an offering, you suddenly remember a grudge a friend has against you, abandon your offering, leave immediately, go to this friend and **make things right. Then and only then, come back and work things out with God.** Or say you’re out on the street and an old enemy accosts you. Don’t lose a minute. Make the first move; make things right with him. After all, if you leave the first move to him, knowing his track record, you’re likely to end up in court, maybe even jail. If that happens, you won’t get out without a stiff fine.*

PURITY

- **Matthew 5:27 quotes the 7th commandment (Exodus 20:14)**

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

Exodus 20:14 *Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

Matthew 5:27-30 (MSG) *You know the next commandment pretty well, too: ‘Don’t go to bed with another’s spouse.’ But don’t think you’ve preserved your virtue simply by staying out of bed. **Your heart can be corrupted by lust even quicker than your body.** Those leering looks you think nobody notices—they also corrupt. Let’s not pretend this is easier than it really is. If you want to live a morally pure life, here’s what you have to do: You have to blind your right eye the moment you catch it in a lustful leer. You have to choose to live one-eyed or else be dumped on a moral trash pile. And you have to chop off your right hand the moment you notice it raised threateningly. Better a bloody stump than your entire being discarded for good in the dump.*

SELFISHNESS

- **Matthew 5:31 quotes Deuteronomy 24:1 incompletely, with the most important clause (“uncleanness”) missing**

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

Deuteronomy 24:1 *When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.*

Matthew 5:31-32 (MSG) *Remember the Scripture that says, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him do it legally, giving her divorce papers and her legal rights?'*

Too many of you are using that as a cover for selfishness and whim, pretending to be righteous just because you are 'legal.' Please, no more pretending. If you divorce your wife, you're responsible for making her an adulteress (unless she has already made herself that by sexual promiscuity). And if you marry such a divorced adulteress, you're automatically an adulterer yourself. You can't use legal cover to mask a moral failure.

HYPOCRISY

- **Matthew 5:33 quotes Leviticus 19:12 for the wrong purpose (not to “categorize” oaths, but to prevent blasphemy)**

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:*

Leviticus 19:12 *And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the Lord.*

Matthew 5:33-37 (MSG) *And don't say anything you don't mean. This counsel is embedded deep in our traditions. **You only make things worse when you lay down a smoke screen of pious talk**, saying, 'I'll pray for you,' and never doing it, or saying, 'God be with you,' and not meaning it. You don't make your words true by embellishing them with religious lace. In making your speech sound more religious, it becomes less true. Just say 'yes' and 'no.' When you manipulate words to get your own way, you go wrong.*

SERVANTHOOD

- **Matthew 5:38 quotes Exodus 21:24 for the wrong purpose (not to exact revenge, but to limit penalties)**

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

Exodus 21:24 *Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,*

Matthew 5:38-42 (MSG) *Here's another old saying that deserves a second look: 'Eye for eye, tooth for tooth.' Is that going to get us anywhere? Here's what I propose: 'Don't hit back at all.' If someone strikes you, stand there and take it. If someone drags you into court and sues for the shirt off your back, giftwrap your best coat and make a present of it. And **if someone takes unfair advantage of you, use the occasion to practice the servant life.** No more tit-for-tat stuff. Live generously.*

REACTION

- **Matthew 5:43 quotes Leviticus 19:18 but with a Pharisaic addition (“hate”)**

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

Leviticus 19:18 *Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord.*

Matthew 5:43-47 (MSG) *You're familiar with the old written law, 'Love your friend,' and its unwritten companion, 'Hate your enemy.' I'm challenging that. I'm telling you to love your enemies. Let them bring out the best in you, not the worst. **When someone gives you a hard time, respond with the energies of prayer**, for then you are working out of your true selves, your God-created selves. This is what God does. He gives his best—the sun to warm and the rain to nourish—to everyone, regardless: the good and bad, the nice and nasty. If all you do is love the lovable, do you expect a bonus? Anybody can do that. If you simply say hello to those who greet you, do you expect a medal? Any run-of-the-mill sinner does that.*

- Jesus concludes this segment of His teaching with another appeal to GET REAL and GROW UP. Mature people treat others with the same kind of grace that God has shown them, and don't try to cover up or deny their own shortcomings.
- **Matthew 5:48 (MSG)** *In a word, what I'm saying is, Grow up. You're kingdom subjects. Now live like it. Live out your God-created identity. Live generously and graciously toward others, the way God lives toward you.*