**The Inside Out**, **Kingdom of God: The Sermon on the Mount Matt. 5-7**

***Upside Down***

**Matthew 5:17-20**

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**17**“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. **18**For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. **19**Therefore **whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called *least in the kingdom of heaven***, but **whoever does them and teaches them will be called *great in the kingdom of heaven***. **20**For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

**Vs. 17-18:**

* This portion of the sermon on the mount introduces us to six examples that involve the law throughout Matthew 5:21-48.

**The Six Topics:** Anger – Lust – Divorce – Oaths – Retaliation – Loving Ones Enemies

* Each of these subjects Jesus will tackle by focusing on not only restating the OT law in regards to these subjects, but with the focus of how one can truly fulfill these commands, for Jesus came to “fulfill the law” (5:17).
* Jesus’ teaching about fulfilling the law shows that he seeks setting a standard that looks at the law from ***an internal, not an external, perspective***.

**Anger** - The issue is not murder but *anger*.

**Lust** – The issue is not adultery but *lust*.

**Divorce** – The issue is not divorce but *unfaithfulness to a vow* and its effect on another.

**Oaths** – The issue is not an oath but *integrity*.

**Retaliation** – The issue is not retaliation but *nonretaliation* and a willingness to go an extra step.

**Loving Ones Enemies** – The issue is not hate, even towards enemies, but *love*.

**The Main Focus:**

* The issue is not a set of rules, but rather a response from within. A response that is not self- produced but is a reflection of a faith that trusts and follows in God’s way.

**A Quote From Alfred Plummer:**

* It is not obvious at first sight what Christ means by “fulfilling (πληρῶσαι) the Law.” He does not mean taking the written Law as it stands, and literally obeying it. That is what he condemns, not as wrong, but as wholly inadequate. He means rather, starting with it as it stands, and bringing it on to completeness; working out the spirit of it; getting at the comprehensive principles which underlie the narrowness of the letter. These Messiah sets forth as the essence of the revelation made by God through the Law and Prophets.

**The Goal: It is not about what can I get away with!**

* The goal seems to be a **greater conformity to God’s standard** by asking *not what is the least that can be done* or *the most that can be permitted* but what is best from the standpoint of the inner person and his or her attitude.

**Law and the Prophets:**

* Jesus’ mention of the law ***and the prophets*** is also significant. Jesus has more than the Pentateuch in mind (the first five books of the Bible). A look at his ministry shows how important a lens the prophets were for his understanding of what God’s will entailed for his people. So, it is God’s revelation as a whole that is addressed.
* Furthermore, Jesus emphasizes the law in his teaching because Jesus believed the law will achieve its goal of **creating a people set apart to God (Deut. 14:2; 1 Pet. 2:9; last week’s sermon - ‘Salt’ and ‘Light’)** and trusting in him.

**Vs. 19-20:**

**Huge Sermon Point:**

* Greatness in the Kingdom of Heaven is defined by those who teach others this standard.
* Those who relax or diminish the importance of following **the law of God** ***at an inner level*** will be the least in the kingdom of God.

**Philosophy of Ministry:**

* These realities are why I proclaim and focus on **transformation over information** routinely! Jesus’ primary focus was not the bear minimum or surface level obedience, but **true inner *heart change***, **whole *attitude change***, **and even *new godly desires forming*.**

**Vs. 20:**

* It is this *inner heart change*, whole *attitude change*, and even *godly desires forming*, that will cause for one’s righteousness to exceed that of “the scribes and Pharisees.” It is one not asking “*what is the least that can be done or the most that can be permitted*,” but genuinely wanting to **obey Jesus’ teaching out of love for God** rather than external motivations (impressing others, societal expectations, keeping one’s communal status…).

**Circling Back to V. 19**: Obeying God’s Commands and Teaching Others to Do So

* Let read the Great Commission (Matt. 28:16-20). V. 20 tells us to “make disciples of all nations” and to teach “them to observe all that I have commanded you.”

**Important Sermon Point**: Let’s talk Discipleship!

* **A disciple in the New Testament is simply a Christian**. **Acts 11:26**: “And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.” Everybody that was converted to Jesus was a disciple. Everybody that was converted to Jesus was a Christian. *Disciple* was, in fact, not a favorite term for *Christian* as time went by, it seems**. Paul never uses the noun or the verb “disciple.”** In fact, neither the noun *disciple* or the verb *make disciples* occurs anywhere in the New Testament outside the Gospels and Acts.
* So, I **think what is important is not the terminology, but the reality**! People need to become Christians and people need to **be taught how to think** and **feel** and **act as a Christian**. That is, a disciple, a follower of Jesus, one who embraces him as Lord and Savior and Treasure.

**Our Working Definition**: Discipleship is being taught how to **think**, **feel**, and **act** as a Christian.

**Just a Few Passages that Apply to Discipleship:**

* [**Titus 2:4**](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus%202.4) — **Older women** are to **train younger women**.
* [**2 Timothy 2:2**](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%202.2) — **Paul trained Timothy** to train others to train others.
* [**Ephesians 6:4**](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%206.4) — **Fathers** are to train their children.
* [**Matthew 28:20**](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%2028.20) — **Missionaries** are to **teach the nations** everything Jesus commanded.
* [**Hebrews 3:13**](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb%203.13) — All Christians are to **exhort each other every day** to avoid sin and to stir each other up to love and good works (see also [Hebrews 10:24–25](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb%2010.24%E2%80%9325)).
* [1 **Peter 4:10**](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet%204.10) — All Christians are to **use their gifts** to serve others.
* [**Acts 18:24–26**](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2018.24%E2%80%9326) — Priscilla and Aquila, on the spur of the moment it seems, explained the way of God more accurately to Apollos.
* Ect… - Many more passages apply.

**Bottom Line:**

* **Luke 6:40** — Fully **trained individuals** (in regards to discipleship) will be **like his or her teacher**.
* *Every Christian* should be helping **unbelievers become believers** by showing them Christ; that is, making a disciple.
* E*very Christian* should be **helping other believers grow to more and more maturity**. That is making a disciple.
* E*very Christian* should **be seeking to get help** for themselves from others **to keep on growing**.

**Final Major Point:**

* *Every church* should think through how all of these kinds of biblical disciple-making find expression in their corporate life. 🡪 Discipleship will be a huge focus