

SERMON ON THE MOUNT RULES FOR THE ROAD

- 1 Be concise.** Please share your thoughts and answers, but be considerate so that others will have time to share their answers also. Be charitable and kind. Be willing to share with the group, but do not try to dominate the conversation. Use the time after the class to find help with any personal issues or problems you may be confronting in your life.

“Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.”

(James 1:19–20)

- 2 Be thoughtful with your answer.** Consider your words. Do not simply regurgitate what you have always heard. We have the tendency to speak in “Christianese” — words that only people who grew up on the pews would understand. Think about how your words will be heard by others. Will they understand what you are saying? Is what you are about to say going to be useful for the building up of the faith of others? Or will your words be confusing, cause hurt, or worse, damage someone’s faith? Speak without harshness or anger, but with kindness and humility.

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”

(Ephesians 4:29)

- 3 Rely on the scriptures for truth.** It is easy to rely upon conventional, worldly wisdom as truth. Bible study is about seeking God’s answers for our lives, not dispensing the advice of the world. We must consider that our natural answers may be the wrong answers if they are not founded on God’s word.

“For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.”

(1 Corinthians 1:25)

This is a booklet to aid you in your personal study of this book. Read through the text first, discovering God's precious truths for yourself. Write down the main point of each section of text in the space provided. Use the margins on each side of the text and the backside of the page to make notations of the truths you discover and passages you do not understand. When you believe you have seen all there is in text, read and answer the questions in the booklet pertaining to that section of text. The questions are not an exhaustive list of things to look for in the text. The questions are to help you consider the points that the author was trying to convey to his audience. Be prepared to share your findings in class.

Jesus' most famous sermon is found in Matthew 5-7 called the Sermon on the Mount. It is easy to begin a study of the Sermon on the Mount by opening to chapter 5 and beginning the study there. However, to appropriately understand this sermon, we must plunge ourselves into Matthew's world and read his gospel as his original readers would have understood it. We must further remember that these chapter numbers in our Bibles can be arbitrary. No doubt this is the case regarding the Sermon on the Mount because Matthew 5:1 begins, "Seeing the crowds..." What crowds is Matthew talking about? Clearly we are connected to the events in Matthew 4, yet that connection is often lost because of the chapter break.

Israel's History

Before we can grasp what Matthew is doing in his gospel, we need to refresh our memory concerning Israel's history. The book of Genesis ends with Jacob, one of the patriarchs, bringing his sons and their families to Egypt because Joseph, his son, has become prime minister over Egypt and has land to give them so that can survive famine that is affecting the land. However, the book of Exodus opens that after about 200 years a new pharaoh arises who does not know about Joseph and his family. Because the Hebrews are growing in population, the pharaoh enslaves the Hebrews, putting them to hard labor. Not only this, in order to cap the population growth, the pharaoh orders that all the baby boys two years old and under were to be killed. Under this circumstance Moses is born, leaves the land, and returns to be the deliverer of the people as designated by God. Moses performs miracles, sets the Hebrews free, crosses the Red Sea, and brings the great crowd to Mount Sinai. At Mount Sinai Moses goes up on the mountain, receives the law, and delivers it to the people.

Now look at Matthew's gospel. Jesus is born and Herod begins to kill all the boys two years old and under. Jesus must leave the land but returns to the land as the deliverer of the people as designated by God. Matthew records that Jesus came performing miracles, healing those who were oppressed (Matthew 4:24). Jesus passes through the waters of baptism and goes into the wilderness (Matthew 3). Rather than failing in the wilderness as Israel did, Jesus succeeds in the temptations of Satan. Now listen to the words of Matthew. After passing through the waters, performing miracles, and coming in the wilderness with great crowds following, Jesus went up on the mountain (Matthew 5:1). What has Matthew just set up for us? What happened when Moses went up on the mountain, he received the law and delivered it to the people. Jesus, after performing the same works as Moses, Israel's great deliverer, goes up on the mountain and taught them. Matthew is showing Jesus to be the prophet that Moses spoke of when Moses said:

15 "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen— 16 just as you desired of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.' 17 And the Lord said to me, 'They are right in what they have spoken. 18

I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. 19 And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him. (Deuteronomy 18:15–19 ESV)

By Jesus going up on the mountain, he is not simply going up the mountain so the people can hear him. He is going up the mountain because he is about to deliver the law as Moses delivered the law. To miss this context of the Sermon on the Mount will cause one to miss everything about the message Jesus is delivering. Jesus is going to deliver the laws of the kingdom. To say this another way, Jesus is going to describe in this sermon those who belong to the kingdom of heaven. This is the gospel of the kingdom and an explanation of the nature of his kingdom.

We see this kingdom concept validated by the context Matthew gives to this sermon. In Matthew 4:17 we are told that Jesus began to preach and he was saying, "Repent, the kingdom of heaven is at hand." In Matthew 4:23 we read that Jesus is "proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom." We should expect the Sermon on the Mount to be the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom and as such the necessity of the people to repent. We must expect these two aspects in the sermon Jesus preaches: the gospel of the kingdom and the need for repentance. This is the context and foundation Matthew gives for this sermon.

Accomplishing the Mission

As we take a bird's eye view of the Sermon on the Mount we can see how Jesus accomplishes the goals of proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom (good news) while at the same time proclaiming the necessity of repentance. To move the people to repentance they need to see that they have fallen woefully short of God's righteous demands. A large section of Matthew 5 is spent by Jesus saying, "You have heard that it was said...but I say to you." The people thought they were keeping the Law of Moses because they had lessened the regulations. Jesus is revealing what the Law of Moses truly taught so the people would realize that they were not doing what the Law required. We see these kinds of strong declarations about God's law:

If you are angry with your brother you have sinned (Matthew 5:22). If you lust in your heart you have sinned (5:28). If you do not do what you said you would do you have sinned (5:37). If you do not turn the other cheek you are not in God's kingdom (5:39). You must love your enemies or you have sinned (5:44). You must pray for those who persecute you (5:44). Then the hammer blow of the law falls in Matthew 5:48, "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."

The people had softened the regulations of the kingdom so that they thought they were in the kingdom and were God's people. Jesus preaches the need for repentance by revealing that Moses taught these principles which shows you that you have fallen woefully short. No one was to listen to this sermon and walking away saying, "Check! Yeah, I've done it all!" The message was to hit the hearts of the people to bring about repentance. This happens immediately in the Sermon on the Mount. The Beatitudes, as they are called which are from Matthew 5:2-12 are meant to jar you from your complacency and lead you to question whether you have entered the kingdom of heaven. If the things that Jesus describes do not describe your life, then you are not a citizen of the kingdom of heaven. Is this not the purpose and nature of repentance? When Jesus tells us to repent it tells us that we are not fit for the kingdom the way we are. There are some things wrong with us and that we are going the wrong direction. Hence, the truncated definition of repentance has been that our lives turn around in direction, a 180 degree turn. So we need to get hit in the face when we read the Sermon on the Mount, see our shortcomings, and feel the need for repentance.

The Blessed Life

But we cannot ignore the other part of what Jesus was preaching. Matthew says that Jesus was proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom of heaven. The gospel is the good news. The good news cannot be that we have all fallen short of the righteous demands of God's law. That is not good news at all. This is one of the reasons we try to lessen God's regulations. We want to feel like we are doing the law, accomplishing what God has asked us to do. But we will only feel that way by lowering God's standards. We are inadequate for the kingdom. We are inadequate for his righteous demands. The apostle Paul had to write a number of letters found in the New Testament to help people remain grounded and realize they cannot stand before God on their own acts of righteousness.

Yet, notice how the Sermon on the Mount begins. The first word from Jesus' mouth is the word, "blessed." Nine times Jesus begins his sentence with the word "blessed." What does this word mean? It is frustrating to see some translations try to simplify the word "blessed" to simply mean "happy." But this is really not the picture at all, which should be evident from verse 10. You are not going to be happy when you are persecuted. "Blessed" is the word we need to keep here because it causes us to dig into the rich meaning of this word. When we read about someone being blessed in the Old Testament we are seeing that God's favor is upon them. God created Adam and Eve and blessed them (Genesis 1:22,28). God's favor was on them both. God blessed Abraham according to the scriptures. God blessed Isaac according to the scriptures. God also blessed Jacob in Genesis. What did this mean? It meant that these people were the privileged recipients of God's favor. To be blessed is to be in the best state of all. You have divine favor and delight. You have received the applause of heaven. You are enjoying the favor of God.

The Sermon on the Mount opens with descriptions of the people who have the favor of God. In the first 11 verses we read about who have God's favor and the blessing that God gives that person. You will notice that the condition of being blessed is in the present (5:3,10) and also in the future (5:4-9). The favor of God, while its focus and fulfillment is in the future, begins now in Christ. This is the good news of the kingdom. Sinful people can receive God's favor. Sinful people can be blessed by God and enjoy the benefits of the kingdom of heaven. To put all of this together, a blessed person is someone who, because of God's love and grace, enjoys presently and is promised in the future God's favor regardless of one's personal status or earthly condition.

So the new Moses has arrived who will be the long awaited deliverer of the world. Jesus is chosen by God as the Savior, performs miracles, passes through the water, goes into the wilderness, and then goes up the mountain and declares the covenant of the kingdom of heaven. When you read the words of this sermon, be moved by the fact that God's favor and grace is available to those who will repent and follow Jesus. In Exodus 34:29 Moses came down from the mountain and his face shown because he had been talking to God. Moses comes down and leads his people to the promised land. In Matthew 8:1 we read that Jesus came down from the mountain and John records, "We have seen his glory, glory of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). Jesus is "the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature" (Hebrews 1:1-3) who leads his people to the kingdom of heaven. So listen with hope, awe, and amazement as we hear that we can have God's favor and enter the kingdom of heaven.

SERMON ON THE MOUNT

5

ESV

5:1 Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.
2 And he opened his mouth and taught 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 meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
6 “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
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.
10 “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
11 “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

CSB

5:1 When he saw the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. 2 Then he began to teach them, saying:
3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.
4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
5 Blessed are the humble, for they will inherit the earth.
6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.
10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.
11 “You are blessed when they insult you and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of me. 12 Be glad and rejoice, because your reward is great in heaven. For that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

1 What is Jesus describing as he opens this sermon?

Historical note:

The kingdom of heaven is an expression that is only found in Matthew’s gospel and used extensively throughout Matthew’s gospel. The kingdom of heaven pulls together the entire hope of Israel’s story for the Messianic Age: a king (Messiah), the land, the holy people, and the redemptive power that will create holiness and peace. It is a phrase that represents the fullness of God’s blessings. The kingdom looms large in Daniel’s prophecy. Only in Daniel does the kingdom of God intersect with the Son of Man. This is important and interesting because the kingdom was Jesus’ primary theme in his teachings and “Son of Man” was his most common self-designation. The kingdom of heaven cannot be oversimplified to say these are the people who go to heaven. The language of this sentence argues against this interpretation. Jesus did not say that “theirs **will be** the kingdom of heaven.” Rather, “theirs **is** the kingdom of heaven.” These are the ones who have the kingdom of heaven now. Jesus speaks in the present tense. Saying the kingdom of heaven is merely heaven misses the bigger picture. The kingdom of heaven represents that there is a king, Jesus, who rules over all nations and peoples, destroying the enemies and judging the wicked. Those who are in this kingdom enjoy the benefits as citizens of the kingdom of heaven, receiving the designation as children of God in relationship with the Father because they have been redeemed.

- 2** What does it mean to be poor in spirit (5:3)? What does that look like in our lives? What is the result of this attitude?

- 3** Read Luke 15:18-19 and Luke 18:8-14 to help see what being “poor in spirit” looks like.

- 4** Read Revelation 3:17. What does the opposite of being “poor in spirit” look like?

- 5** What does it mean to mourn (5:4)? What are we to be mourning about? Consider James 4:8-9, 1 Corinthians 5:1-2, and Psalm 119:136 in your answer.

- 6** Read Isaiah 61:1-3. How is Jesus the fulfillment of prophecy as this sermon begins?

- 7** What is the result having this life of mourning before the Lord?

- 8** What does it mean to be meek (5:5)? What does this look like in our lives?

- 9** Read Isaiah 42:2-3. How is Jesus a picture of meekness?

- 10** What is the result of living a meek life before the Lord? What does this mean? Consider Psalm 37:10-11,22,29,34, Daniel 2:35, Zechariah 9:9-10, Isaiah 61:4, Micah 4:11-13, and Habakkuk 3:6-12.

- 11** What does it mean to hunger and thirst for righteousness (5:6)? What does this look like in our lives?
- 12** Read Psalm 42:1-2 and Psalm 63:1. How does David describe his desire for the Lord?
- 13** What is the result of hungering and thirsting for righteousness? Is that something every person is looking forward? How is it not attained?
- 14** Read Isaiah 55:1-3. What is God pleading for people to do?
- 15** Read John 6:35. What does Jesus call people to do?
- 16** What does it mean to be merciful (5:7)? Is mercy simply a feeling? What does that look like in our lives?
- 17** What makes being merciful difficult? How can we address these difficulties?
- 18** What is the result of being merciful? What will happen if we are not merciful?
- 19** What does it mean to be pure in heart (5:8)? What does this look like in our lives? How does James describe it in James 4:4,7-8?

20 What is the result of being pure in heart? Is this a desire we have? Is the desire strong enough to transform our hearts toward purity?

21 What does it mean to be a peacemaker (5:9)? What does this look like in our lives?

22 Read Romans 12:18, Romans 14:19, 2 Corinthians 13:11, and Ephesians 4:1-3. What does God think about our need to be peacemakers?

23 According to James 4:1, what causes not to be peacemakers?

24 What is the result of being a peacemaker? What does this mean?

25 What does it mean to be persecuted for righteousness' sake (5:10-12)? Is this a surprising blessing?

26 Read 2 Timothy 3:12-13 and 1 Peter 4:14-16. What should be our expectation as followers of Jesus?

27 What are we called to do when we are persecuted for righteousness' sake (5:12)? Why? Is this important to you?

TRANSFORMATION:

How does this relationship change your relationship with God? What did you learn about him? What will you do differently in your life?

ESV

5:13 “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet.

14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

CSB

5:13 You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt should lose its taste, how can it be made salty? It’s no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet.

14 “You are the light of the world. A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, but rather on a lampstand, and it gives light for all who are in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

Main point: _____
 Make additional notes at left and below:

Historical note:

Much has been done with this text as people try to explain what it means that we are the salt of the earth. If you pick up any number of books you will find two things that most of them will tell you. Salt was used in a number of different ways in ancient times. Therefore scholars are vexed as to what attribute of salt to consider that Jesus is emphasizing. One of the primary points that is made is that salt was used as a preservative. They did not have refrigerators back then. So salt was an important ingredient in the life of those in ancient times so that they could preserve their meats. Further, salt was added to sacrifices to indicate the strength of the covenant. Salt was used in ancient times to flavor and enhance the foods they ate.

- 1 Carefully read Jesus’ words in verse 13. What aspect of salt is Jesus highlighting?

- 2 What does it look like for each of us to be the salt of the earth?

- 3 Read Colossians 4:6. How else are we the salt of the earth? Where are places we can do this?

- 4 If we lose this saltiness, what are we good for, according to Jesus? How do we lose our saltiness?

- 5 What does it mean to be the light of the world (5:14-16)?

- 6 Read Philippians 2:14-16. What does being light look like?

- 7 Read 1 Peter 2:9-12. What does being light look like?

- 8 Read Ephesians 5:6-16. What does being light look like?

- 9 Why are we to be light, according to Jesus (5:16)? What is our purpose?

TRANSFORMATION:

How does this relationship change your relationship with God? What did you learn about him? What will you do differently in your life?

5:17 “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.”

5:17 “Don’t think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. 18 For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or one stroke of a letter will pass away from the law until all things are accomplished. 19 Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commands and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever does and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven.

Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 What has Jesus come to do regarding the scriptures (cf. Luke 24:44)?
- 2 Does the Old Testament have value to New Testament Christianity? Explain.
- 3 What does Jesus promise will happen with the Hebrew scriptures (5:18; cf. Romans 3:31; 10:4)?
- 4 How does Jesus show that he did not come for the destruction of the Law and the Prophets (5:19)? Who belongs to the kingdom of heaven?
- 5 Explain verse 20. How did the people perceive about the scribes and Pharisees’ righteousness? Look ahead to 5:21-48. What is Jesus going to show about the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees?
- 6 Think about the encounters Jesus has with the scribes and Pharisees. What were the scribes and Pharisees doing to the Law?
- 7 Can we do the same thing? How? Explain.

TRANSFORMATION:

How does this relationship change your relationship with God? What did you learn about him? What will you do differently in your life?

5:21 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ 22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire. 23 So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. 25 Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. 26 Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

5:21 “You have heard that it was said to our ancestors, Do not murder, and whoever murders will be subject to judgment. 22 But I tell you, everyone who is angry with his brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Whoever insults his brother or sister, will be subject to the court. Whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be subject to hellfire. 23 So if you are offering your gift on the altar, and there you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled with your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. 25 Reach a settlement quickly with your adversary while you’re on the way with him to the court, or your adversary will hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you will be thrown into prison. 26 Truly I tell you, you will never get out of there until you have paid the last penny.

Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 Based on what Jesus says in verse 22, what were the scribes and Pharisees likely teaching about what one could and could not do toward those who were your enemies or insulted you? How were they using the Law?
- 2 Read Leviticus 19:17-18. What did the Law teach?
- 3 Read James 1:19-20 and 1 John 3:15. What do we learn about anger?
- 4 Based on Matthew 5:22, what are we not to say or do toward one another?
- 5 What must we do if one of the relationships we have is in conflict (5:23-24)?
- 6 Explain verse 25. What are we to do and not to do?
- 7 Why do we allow anger toward a person to remain in our heart rather than reconcile?

TRANSFORMATION:

How does this relationship change your relationship with God? What did you learn about him? What will you do differently in your life?

5:27 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ 28 But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

5:27 “You have heard that it was said, Do not commit adultery. 28 But I tell you, everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of the parts of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of the parts of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 Based on what Jesus says in verse 28, what were the scribes and Pharisees likely teaching about what one could and could not do regarding sexual immorality? How were they using the Law?
- 2 Read Exodus 20:17. What did the Law teach? Consider the word “covet” in Hebrews means “to lust, desire, or delight in” (KM and HALOT).
- 3 Where does Jesus say we need to take up the spiritual battle against adultery (5:28; cf. Matthew 15:19-20)?
- 4 What is the remedy to these kinds of temptations (5:29-30)? Explain. Read Colossians 3:5-6 and 2 Timothy 2:22 also as you answer.
- 5 Why do we need to fight for purity (5:29-30)? What is the result of this sin?

TRANSFORMATION:

How does this relationship change your relationship with God? What did you learn about him? What will you do differently in your life?

ESV

5:31 “It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ 32 But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

CSB

5:31 “It was also said, Whoever divorces his wife must give her a written notice of divorce. 32 But I tell you, everyone who divorces his wife, except in a case of sexual immorality, causes her to commit adultery. And whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 Based on what Jesus says in verse 32, what were the scribes and Pharisees likely teaching about what one could and could not do regarding divorce? How were they using the Law?
- 2 Read Deuteronomy 24:1-4. What did the Law teach? Was this passage a license for any kind of divorce?

Historical Note: Josephus, who lived in the first century AD, records that divorce was permitted “for any causes whatsoever” (Ant. 4.8.23). The apocryphal book Ecclesiasticus, which is not inspired but was written around 150 BC, stated, “If she will not do as you tell her, get rid of her” (25:26). The Mishnah (which was the authoritative collection of the oral traditions of Jewish law) which was composed around 200 AD stated all kinds of ridiculous grounds for divorce including if she was barren, if she had a physical defect, if she had poor posture or thinning hair, if she ate something he forbid her to eat, if she burned his meal, or if he simply found someone that he thought was prettier.

- 3 What is God’s marriage law (5:32)?
- 4 What is the consequence for divorce (5:32)?
- 5 What is the result of marrying a divorced person (5:32)?

TRANSFORMATION:

How does this relationship change your relationship with God? What did you learn about him? What will you do differently in your life?

5:33 “Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.’ 34 But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil.

5:33 “Again, you have heard that it was said to our ancestors, You must not break your oath, but you must keep your oaths to the Lord. 34 But I tell you, don’t take an oath at all: either by heaven, because it is God’s throne; 35 or by the earth, because it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, because it is the city of the great King. 36 Do not swear by your head, because you cannot make a single hair white or black. 37 But let your ‘yes’ mean ‘yes,’ and your ‘no’ mean ‘no.’ Anything more than this is from the evil one.

Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 Based on what Jesus says in verse 34, what were the scribes and Pharisees likely teaching about what one could and could not do regarding divorce? How were they using the Law?

- 2 Read Leviticus 19:12, Numbers 30:2, and Deuteronomy 10:20. What did the Law teach?

Historical Note: When we read the Jewish teachings it becomes even clearer what was happening. Notice the writing from the Mishnah, which is the collection of historical rabbinical teachings.

m. Sebu. 4.13: If a man said, “I adjure you” or “I command you” or “I bind you,” they are liable; but if he said “By heaven and earth,” they are exempt.

m. Ned. 1.3: If he says, “May it be by Jerusalem,” he has said naught.

m. Sanh. 3.2: If a man take an oath before his fellow, and his fellow said to him, “Vow to me by the life of your head,” R. Meir says he may retract.

Rabbi Maimonides: If any swear by heaven, by earth, by the sun, etc although the mind of the swearer be under these words to swear by Him who created them, yet this is not an oath. Or if any swear by some of the prophets, or by some of the books of the Scripture, although the sense of the swearer be to swear by Him that sent that prophet or that gave that book, nevertheless this is not an oath. Later Jewish commentary argued that a vow made “by” Jerusalem was non-binding but a vow made “toward” Jerusalem was binding (*t. Ned.* 1.2.3). By contrast, Josephus says of the Essenes who were rigorous about avoiding oaths: “Any word of theirs has more force than an oath, swearing they avoid, regarding it as worse than perjury, for they say that one who is not believed without an appeal to God stands condemned already” (*Jewish War* 2.135).

- 3 Read Matthew 23:16-22 to see that this was a problem in the first century that Jesus is addressing.

- 4 Did the Law allow and encourage the taking of vows (cf. Numbers 6:1-21; Leviticus 27)?

5 Based on what you have learned above, is Jesus teaching that all vows are wrong? When is taking a vow wrong?

6 What should it tell us if our “yes” or “no” is not believed by other people?

7 Read Hebrews 6:13-18. What does God say about his word? Why does this give us hope?

TRANSFORMATION:

How does this relationship change your relationship with God? What did you learn about him? What will you do differently in your life?

ESV

5:38 “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 the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. 41 And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. 42 Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

CSB

5:38 “You have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. 39 But I tell you, don’t resist an evildoer. On the contrary, if anyone slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. 40 As for the one who wants to sue you and take away your shirt, let him have your coat as well. 41 And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two. 42 Give to the one who asks you, and don’t turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 Based on what Jesus says in verse 39, what were the scribes and Pharisees likely teaching about what one could and could not do regarding divorce? How were they using the Law?

- 2 Read Leviticus 19:18 and Deuteronomy 19:18-21. What did the Law teach?

- 3 What was the intention of the “eye for an eye” principle, based on reading Deuteronomy 19:18-21?

- 4 How are to handle personal offenses (5:39)?

- 5 If we are being sued, what is to be the response (5:40)? What is the principle being taught by Jesus?

- 6 How are we to handle obligations (5:41)?

- 7 How are we to handle those in need (5:42)?

TRANSFORMATION:

How does this relationship change your relationship with God? What did you learn about him? What will you do differently in your life?

5:43 “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 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

5:43 “You have heard that it was said, Love your neighbor and hate your enemy. 44 But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be children of your Father 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 will you have? Don't even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what are you doing out of the ordinary? Don't even the Gentiles do the same? 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 Based on what Jesus says in verse 44, what were the scribes and Pharisees likely teaching about what one could and could not do regarding divorce? How were they using the Law?
- 2 Read Leviticus 19:18. Did the Law teach to hate your enemies? What did it teach?
- 3 Why must we love our enemies, based on verse 45? What does God do for the unjust and the evil?
- 4 Why must we love our enemies, based on verses 46-47? What does the world do?
- 5 What are we called to be (5:48)? What is the goal? What do we need to reach this goal?

TRANSFORMATION:

How does this relationship change your relationship with God? What did you learn about him? What will you do differently in your life?

SERMON ON THE MOUNT

6

ESV

6:1 “Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

2 “Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 3 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

CSB

6:1 “Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. Otherwise, you have no reward with your Father in heaven. 2 So whenever you give to the poor, don’t sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be applauded by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. 3 But when you give to the poor, don’t let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 What does it mean to “practice your righteousness” (6:1)? What does this look like?
- 2 What are we not to do when practicing our righteousness? How do we keep from this sin?
- 3 If we practice our righteousness to be seen by others, what do we already have (6:2)? What does this mean?
- 4 How should we practice our righteousness (6:3-4)?
- 5 What will be the result of practicing our righteousness properly (6:4)? How can we make sure that we do practice our righteousness properly?

TRANSFORMATION:

How does this relationship change your relationship with God? What did you learn about him? What will you do differently in your life?

6:5 “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 6 But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

7 “And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

9 Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

10 Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread,

12 and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

6:5 “Whenever you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. 6

But when you pray, go into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret.

7 And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

8 When you pray, don’t babble like the Gentiles, since they imagine they’ll be heard for their many words.

9 Don’t be like them, because your Father knows the things you need before you ask him.

10 “Therefore, you should pray like this: Our Father in heaven, your name be honored as holy.

11 Your kingdom come. Your will be done

12 on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread.

13 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

14 And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

15 “For if you forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive you as well. 16 But if you don’t forgive others, your Father will not forgive your offenses.

Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 How are we not to pray (6:5-6)? Instead, how ought we to pray?

- 2 How else are we not to pray (6:7-8)? What are we to know to keep us from doing this?

- 3 What do we learn about how to pray in verse 9?

4 What do we learn about how to pray in verse 10?

5 What do we learn about how to pray in verse 11?

6 What do we learn about how to pray in verse 12?

7 What do we learn about how to pray in verse 13?

8 Why must we forgive others (6:14-15)? What will happen if we do not forgive others? Please make sure to define what forgiveness is and what it looks like. How does one forgive?

TRANSFORMATION:

How does this relationship change your relationship with God? What did you learn about him? What will you do differently in your life?

ESV

6:16 “And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 17 But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18 that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

19 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

22 “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, 23 but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

CSB

6:16 “Whenever you fast, don’t be gloomy like the hypocrites. For they make their faces unattractive so that their fasting is obvious to people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. 17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18 so that your fasting isn’t obvious to others but to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

19 “Don’t store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves don’t break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

22 “The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. So if the light within you is darkness, how deep is that darkness!

Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 How are we not to fast (6:16-18)? What should we do when we fast? What will be the result?

- 2 How do we lay up treasures on earth (6:19)? How do we lay up treasures in heaven (6:20)? What does this look like?

- 3 Explain verse 21. Then ask yourself what you treasure in this life. What is the warning?

- 4 What do we look at and focus our eyes on in this life (6:22-23)? What does this tell us?

TRANSFORMATION:

How does this relationship change your relationship with God? What did you learn about him? What will you do differently in your life?

6:24 “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

25 “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? 28 And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. 34 “Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

6:24 “No one can serve two masters, since either he will hate one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

25 “Therefore I tell you: Don’t worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Isn’t life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 Consider the birds of the sky: They don’t sow or reap or gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren’t you worth more than they? 27 Can any of you add one moment to his life-span by worrying? 28 And why do you worry about clothes? Observe how the wildflowers of the field grow: They don’t labor or spin thread. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was adorned like one of these. 30 If that’s how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow, won’t he do much more for you—you of little faith? 31 So don’t worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ 32 For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you. 34 Therefore don’t worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 Do we believe verse 24? How do we show that we are still trying to serve two masters?

- 2 What are the reasons for why followers of Jesus should not be anxious (6:25-30)?

3 Why should we not seek after the things of the world (6:31-32)?

4 What does it look like to seek the kingdom first (6:33)? How do we do this? What life changes need to be made?

5 What is our final help for anxiety (6:33-34)?

TRANSFORMATION:

How does this relationship change your relationship with God? What did you learn about him? What will you do differently in your life?

SERMON ON THE MOUNT

7

ESV

7:1 “Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. 3 Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye. 6 “Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you. 7 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? 11 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him! 12 “So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

CSB

7:1 “Do not judge, so that you won’t be judged. 2 For you will be judged by the same standard with which you judge others, and you will be measured by the same measure you use. 3 Why do you look at the splinter in your brother’s eye but don’t notice the beam of wood in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the splinter out of your eye,’ and look, there’s a beam of wood in your own eye? 5 Hypocrite! First take the beam of wood out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to take the splinter out of your brother’s eye. 6 Don’t give what is holy to dogs or toss your pearls before pigs, or they will trample them under their feet, turn, and tear you to pieces. 7 “Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. 9 Who among you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? 11 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him. 12 Therefore, whatever you want others to do for you, do also the same for them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 Explain verse 1. How do we understand and apply verse 1 when verse 5 is telling us we need to make judgments to remove specks from the eyes of others?
- 2 Why must we be careful about judgments (7:2)?

- 3 What warning is God giving in verses 3-4? How can we avoid this error?

- 4 How does verse 6 fit the context of what Jesus is teaching in the first five verses? What is the point?

- 5 Why should we be encouraged to pray and ask of our God (7:7-11)? Explain how verse 11 drives home this point.

- 6 What is the principle we should use for how to live life and make decisions (7:12)? What will this look like? Is this a new teaching?

TRANSFORMATION:

How does this relationship change your relationship with God? What did you learn about him? What will you do differently in your life?

7:13 “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. 14 For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

15 “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? 17 So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. 18 A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

7:13 “Enter through the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the road broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who go through it. 14 How narrow is the gate and difficult the road that leads to life, and few find it.

15 “Be on your guard against false prophets who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravaging wolves. 16 You’ll recognize them by their fruit. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a bad tree produces bad fruit. 18 A good tree can’t produce bad fruit; neither can a bad tree produce good fruit. 19 Every tree that doesn’t produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 So you’ll recognize them by their fruit.

Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 What is the narrow gate (7:13-14)? What does this mean? How do we enter it?
- 2 What do we learn about the way that leads to destruction (7:13-14)? What are its characteristics?
- 3 How can we know who are true teachers of God’s message (7:15-16)?
- 4 What do we learn about what our lives should look like if we truly belong to the Lord (7:15-20)?
- 5 How does one act like a ravenous wolf (7:15)?

TRANSFORMATION:

How does this relationship change your relationship with God? What did you learn about him? What will you do differently in your life?

7:21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ 23 And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

24 “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. 26 And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

28 And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, 29 for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

7:21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, didn’t we prophesy in your name, drive out demons in your name, and do many miracles in your name?’ 23 Then I will announce to them, ‘I never knew you. Depart from me, you lawbreakers!’

24 “Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain fell, the rivers rose, and the winds blew and pounded that house. Yet it didn’t collapse, because its foundation was on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and doesn’t act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 The rain fell, the rivers rose, the winds blew and pounded that house, and it collapsed. It collapsed with a great crash.”

28 When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, 29 because he was teaching them like one who had authority, and not like their scribes.

Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 What important message do we learn in 7:21-23? Is saying the right words enough? Is doing good works in the name of the Lord enough? Who will enter the kingdom of heaven, according to Jesus?

- 2 How do verses 24-27 illustrate the point made in verses 21-23?

- 3 Why are the crowds amazed at Jesus?

TRANSFORMATION:

How does this relationship change your relationship with God? What did you learn about him? What will you do differently in your life?

SERMON ON THE MOUNT



THE BLESSED LIFE

SELF-STUDY WORKBOOK

by: Brent Kercheville

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