

Matthew 5:21 - 6:24

Day 1

Sermon on the Mount: Relationships. Read Matthew 5:21-30

Anger

1. What had the people been taught about murder? 5:21 (See Exodus 20:13; 21:12)

- What deeper level did Jesus address? 5:22 What do the words “*But I say to you*” say about Jesus’ claim to authority? (Mark the phrases “*You have heard*” and “*But I say*” in 5:21-44.)

FYI: *Raca*. The word *raca* is an Aramaic expression of contempt, something like our English “stupid idiot!” Such an insult to a fellow believer in the Jewish economy might warrant being charged, before the council of the Sanhedrin, with slander. ***Thou fool*.** This is even a greater insult. The Greek is the word from which we get our English word “moron,” but it also conveys an implication of rebellion. For a believer to call a brother a “rebellious moron” would be so out of character [of] a true believer.”
- Henry Morris

***You fool*:** NT:3474 *moros*; dull or stupid, (morally) blockhead. “Here the word means morally worthless, a scoundrel, a more serious reproach than ‘*Raca/idiot/good for nothing*,’ the latter scorns a man’s mind and calls him stupid; *moros* scorns his heart and character”
- Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

2. What do hateful or condemning words (5:22) to or about another person say about one’s own heart? 1 John 2:9 (How does that differ from judging someone’s **conduct**?)

FYI: “The expression “*fire of hell*”...comes from...*gehinnom* (Valley of Hinnom, a ravine south of Jerusalem once associated with the pagan god Moloch and his disgusting rites)...When King Josiah abolished these practices, he defiled the valley by making it a dumping ground for filth and the corpses of criminals (2 Kings 23:10). Late traditions suggest that in the first century it may still have been used as a rubbish pit, complete with smoldering fires.”
- Expositor’s Bible Commentary

3. What directions did Jesus give for dealing with anger or hurt? 5:23,24

- What does this say about God’s heart for our relationships with people? Mark 12:33 (Contrast Matt. 23:23)

4. What other example for dealing with anger and insult did Jesus give? 5:25a Why is it best to seek reconciliation with someone quickly? 5:25b-26 (Cf. 1 Corinthians 6:5-7)

5. Read through the following verses about anger and underline what is meaningful to you.

- Proverbs 15:1 A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger. NIV
- Proverbs 17:27-28 A truly wise person uses few words; a person with understanding is even-tempered. 28 Even fools are thought wise when they keep silent; with their mouths shut, they seem intelligent. NLT
- Proverbs 19:11 11 Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense. ESV
- Proverbs 20:3 It is to a man's honor to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel. NIV
- Proverbs 21:23 He who guards his mouth and his tongue, Guards his soul from troubles. NAS
- James 1:19-20 ...Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, 20 for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. NIV
- James 4:1 What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? ESV
- Colossians 3:8 But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. NIV

Avoiding Lust

6. How did Jesus expand the meaning of adultery? 5:27,28

7. From the figures of speech in 5:29,30, what point was Jesus making about preventive measures/sacrifices in dealing with temptation? (See Proverbs 4:24-27)

FYI: "Jesus *is not* saying that the act of adultery and adultery in the heart are the same thing... Jesus' point is...to say they are both sin, and both prohibited by the command against adultery." - David Guzik

Right eye/right hand: "Jesus is not telling us to mutilate our bodies. Instead He is telling us not to use our senses of sight, smell, taste, touch and hearing to stimulate forbidden lust." - Africa Bible Commentary (1121)

Applying the Word: *How have angry and abusive words that were directed towards you impacted your life? What have encouraging and exhorting words meant to you?*

Day 2

Sermon on the Mount: Integrity/Love. Read Matthew 5:31-48

Devotion/Commitment in marriage

8. What reason did Jesus give for allowing divorce? 5:31,32 (What was Jesus saying about the intent of the law? What kind of protection/security was Jesus giving women and children?)
- What reasons for divorce had been allowed in Moses' day? Deuteronomy 24:1 (Cf. Why had Moses given this allowance in the first place? Matthew 19:8)

FYI: "In Jesus' day, many people interpreted the Mosaic permission for divorce ([Deut. 24:1](#)) as granting virtually any reason as grounds for divorce. Some rabbis taught this even extended to allowing a man to divorce his wife if she burnt his breakfast."
- David Guzik

"The [Pharisees] made the law's demands *less* demanding and the law's permission *more* permissive. What Jesus did was to reverse both tendencies."
- John Stott (76,79,82)

Honesty

9. If you make an oath based on anything, whose power and authority are you ultimately acknowledging? 5:34-36 (See Colossians 1:16-17)
- What should be the intent of all that we say or promise? 5:37

FYI: "**Do not swear at all.** This does not forbid solemn, official oaths (2 Cor.1:23), but only oaths made in common speech. Such oath-taking suggests that a person's words cannot be trusted." - The Nelson Study Bible (1585)

"Pharisees taught that only those vows using 'the divine name made the vow binding. One need not be so particular, they said about keeping vows in which the divine name had not been used.'
- John Stott (100)

Non-retaliation

10. How did Jesus contrast the *judicial* guidelines given to Moses for retributions (See Ex. 21:24) with how we should handle *personal* responses to mistreatment or harassment? 5:38-41

FYI: "The scribes and Pharisees evidently extended this principle of just retribution from the law courts (where it belongs) to the realm of personal relationships (where it does not belong). They tried to use it to justify personal revenge, although the law explicitly forbade this. (Leviticus 19:18) Thus...this principle was being utilized as an excuse for the very thing it was instituted to abolish, namely personal revenge.' (Wenham)" - John Stott (104,105)

"Under military law, any Roman soldier might command a Jew to carry his soldier's pack for one mile - but only one mile. Jesus here says, 'go beyond the one mile required by law and give another mile out of a free choice of love.' This is how we transform an attempt to manipulate us into a free act of love." - David Guzik

11. From the 4 examples of life situations that Jesus gave (5:39b-42), what was He saying about the lengths to which we should go for another?

- What would these responses communicate to the other person? How would this turn the situation upside down? (See Romans 12:21)

Love

12. What had been taught by the teachers? 5:43 (See Leviticus 19:18)

- How did Jesus take the command to love higher? 5:44 (Cf. Luke 6:27,28)

Digging Deeper

What loving instructions had been given about enemies in the Old Testament? Exodus 23:4,5; Proverbs 25:21

FYI: "Hate multiplies hate...in a descending spiral of violence' and is 'just as injurious to the person who hates' as to his victim. But above all 'love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a 'friend' for it has 'creative' and 'redemptive' power. (Martin Luther King Jr.)"

- John Stott (114)

13. What reasons are given for going beyond the normal response? (*Try putting these in your own words.*)

- 5:45 (See John 13:34,35)
- 5:46
- 5:47

FYI: "(Plummer) 'To return evil for good is devilish; to return good for good is human; to return good for evil is divine.'"

- John Stott (122)

14. What amazing standard did Jesus give? 5:48 (See Ephesians 5:1-2)

15. What is the only way we can be *perfect* (complete)?

- Colossians 2:9-10 9 For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body. 10 So you also are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority. NLT
- Hebrews 10:14 For by one *offering* He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. NAS

16. Why can't we achieve this by ourselves? Romans 7:18

- How is this life produced for those who are "in Christ?" Romans 8:1-4

Applying the Word: *When have you responded in a loving or sacrificial way to someone who didn't deserve it? How did that make you feel? What was the result?*
or

Although the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount can feel defeating, what would this world be like if everyone would do these things? What does that say about the character and hope of heaven?

Day 3

Sermon on the Mount: Giving and Prayer. Read Matthew 6:1-13

Giving

17. What motives for doing charitable deeds did Jesus warn against? 6:1,2 What reward does that bring?

18. Although we can't really be ignorant of our actions or giving, what attitude should we have about them? 6:3 (How might this show respect for or protect the recipient?)

- What reward should we be seeking? 6:4 (What do you feel keeps us from wanting to give "in secret?")

Prayer

19. How did Jesus define a "hypocritical" way of praying? 6:5 Why would that be hypocritical?

20. Although Jesus certainly didn't prohibit public prayer, what did He encourage? 6:6 Consider: How does this help with distractions, inhibitions, honesty, intimacy, etc.?

21. What other warning did Jesus give about prayer and why? 6:7,8

22. In response to wrong ideas about prayer, Jesus gave a model to follow. What does it convey about God's attributes, His relationship with us, or His desires and concern for us?

<i>Our Father</i>	God desires a close, loving, personal relationship with us. We belong to Him. We have the privilege, wonder and confidence of approaching Him as our caring Father. ("Abba" Romans 8:15)
<i>Who is in heaven</i>	
<i>Hallowed be (treat as Holy) Your name</i>	
<i>Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.</i>	
<i>Give us this day our daily bread</i>	
<i>And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.</i>	
<i>And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.</i>	
<i>[For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]</i>	

FYI: Hallowed be (treat as holy) **thy Name:** "The **name** of the Lord denotes not merely a title, but includes all that by which He makes Himself known and all that He shows Himself to be.' (Charles Erdman) God's names testify of His character. If you hallow His name, then you acknowledge and respect Who He is and behave accordingly."
- Kay Arthur (14)

"Daily bread" was a symbol for 'everything necessary for the preservation of this life, like food, a healthy body, good weather, house, home, wife, children, good government and peace' (Luther) ...Jesus wanted His followers to be conscious of a day-to-day dependence."
- John Stott (149)

23. What would you conclude from this prayer about the connection between understanding who God is with the requests we make? (What kind of dependence on God does it express? How appropriate is it to ask for our material, spiritual and moral/emotional needs?)

Digging Deeper

Read how King Solomon began his prayer at the dedication of the temple and what it enabled him to ask for. I Kings 8:23-28ff

Applying the Word: *"God is our Father in the heavens. We need to remember that He loves His children with most tender affection, that He sees His children even in the secret place, that He knows His children and all their needs before they ask Him, and that He acts on behalf of His children by His heavenly and kingly power."*
- John Stott (152)

This week, before you pray, take a moment to reflect on the holiness and power of your heavenly Father and the indescribable love He has for you.

Day 4

Sermon on the Mount. Forgiveness, Priorities. Read Matthew 6:14-24

Forgiveness

24. What relationship did Jesus put between God's forgiveness of us and our forgiveness of others? 6:14,15

- Why would forgiveness of others be a natural outcome of our own forgiveness and salvation? Ephesians 4:32- 5:2

Digging Deeper

What state were we in when God forgave us?
Colossians 2:13

Why did He forgive us?
Ephesians 2:4,5,8

Fasting

25. What actions did Jesus contrast in fasting? 6:16-18 What trap can we fall into when we give (v. 2), pray (v.5) or fast?

- What is the right motive? 6:18
- How did God explain the right motives in Isaiah 58:6-8?

FYI: "The Mosaic law prescribed an annual day of fasting, the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:29-31)...The Pharisees observed two fasts weekly as a public exhibition of their professed piety."
- Irving Jensen (29)

Treasures/Possessions

26. What problem is there with storing up (amassing) earthly treasures? 6:19

- What is the benefit of heavenly treasures? 6:20

Digging Deeper

What do the following indicate about saving or having insurance, etc.? 2 Corinthians 12:14; 1 Timothy 5:8

27. What is a natural outcome of what we treasure? 6:21

Digging Deeper

What did Paul say about riches? 1 Timothy 6:6-10

Light/Darkness

28. What does Jesus' illustration using a physical eye indicate about the importance of what we focus on or allow into our lives? 6:22,23 (See 2 Corinthians 4:4-6)

- How can people be fooled? 6:23b (Cf. Luke 11:35; See Isaiah 5:20,21)

29. What is the true light? John 1:9; 12:46

Master: God/Mammon (wealth)

30. List the contrasts that are made in 6:24.

- Why is it impossible to give earthly things and heavenly things equal priority or allegiance? Compare this verse with 6:21. (See also James 4:4)

IT'S GREEK TO ME **Mammon** *mamonas* NT:3126, a common Aramaic word for "riches," akin to a Hebrew word signifying "to be firm, steadfast", hence, "that which is to be trusted" - Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

"To share God with any other loyalties is to have opted for idolatry."

- John Stott (159)

Applying the Word: *"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, to gain that which he cannot lose." - James Elliot*

What heavenly treasures (things that last forever) are you devoted to/setting your sight on/making a priority?

"But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Matt 6:20-21 NIV