

Leader Resources for Small Groups | March 1, 2020

4 Gospels — Matthew: The Gospel of Teaching

Focus Passage: Matthew 5:1–12, 17–20

Additional Context: Matthew 5–7

Corollary Scripture: Matthew 10, 13, 18, 24, 25

Other Passages Referenced: 1 Timothy 1:15

Sermon Recap: As we move from the Old Testament to the New, we do not find a new story so much as a continuation of the same story—God’s story of creation, rebellion, redemption, and new creation. Matthew is the Gospel of Teaching—Matthew is deeply rooted in the Jewish history, and he includes five long teaching sections within his gospel. This is a clear picture of the five books of Torah because Matthew desires his readers to see that one greater than Moses has arrived—Christ Himself! In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus compared His teaching on several topics to the popular Jewish understandings on those same topics to show that God’s expectations for righteousness exceed even the highest standard set by the most religiously observant Jew of His time. Jesus made clear that He did not come to abolish the lower or lower God’s standard for righteousness. Instead, He came to fulfill God’s requirements for sinless perfection. When we see how high God’s target for holiness is (Matt 5:48), we begin to see we are not even close to reaching it and we need a Savior. Jesus’ beatitudes call us to confession of sin, repentance, and surrender. More than a path to a better life, the beatitudes are a path that leads to Jesus, Himself. Knowing that we could never reach high enough to hit God’s target for righteousness, Jesus descended to us, hitting the target on our behalf and taking the penalty of our sin upon Himself. The Gospel means that we are more sinful and flawed than we ever dared admit ... but we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we could ever imagine.

Interpretive Helps

The life that Jesus calls us to in the Sermon on the Mount:

- Compassion (5:13)
- Gentleness (5:21-26)
- Sexual Integrity (5:27-30)
- Verbal Integrity (5:33-37)
- Forgiveness and Reconciliation (5:38-48)
- Generosity (6:1-4) (6:19-24)
- Peace (6:25-34)
- Prayer (6:5-18)
- Humility (7:1-6)

Comments to Leaders

1. Please remind your group members of Saturday’s Marriage and Family Conference at the Chapel. Info and registration for the March 7 event can be found here: <http://wcchapel.org/event/2020-03-07-830-am-marriage-and-family-conference/> It runs from 8:30–12:30. Cost is \$20 per individual and \$30 per couple.

Group Gathering

Connect: *Making Honest Connections with One Another (Pick one)*

1. Please share briefly one of the following:
 - a. What God has been saying to you through His word, the sermon, or other people?
 - b. A joy or answer to prayer you received?

- c. Which of the beatitudes could you

Grow: *Listening to and Learning from God's Word*

Read Matthew 5:1–12

1. Which of the beatitudes most encourages you and which most challenges you?
2. The sermon mentioned how the Gospel of Matthew presented Jesus as a lawgiver greater than Moses. Can you note some ways Matthew did that from our passage and from the sermon?

Read Matthew 5:21–48

3. List the 6 places in these verses where Jesus said, “You have heard it was said ...” or “it was said ...”
 - a. Where had the people “heard it was said”?
4. The sermon addressed how Jesus raised the bar (or the yellow ball) in terms of the level of righteousness required to be part of the Kingdom of Heaven. What was different about Jesus’ teaching that pointed to higher expectations related to those 6 topics, ending the section with “You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” Matt 5:48?

Serve: *Serving King Jesus and Others, By Living Out and Letting Others Know God's Word*

1. What do you hear in the culture, or perhaps in the church, that differs from what Jesus taught on the six topics addressed in Matt 5:21–48 — anger, lust, divorce, oaths, retaliation, love for enemies?
2. Do you know someone who believes in God and heaven and yet thinks they will go there because they are basically a good person? Would you pray about discussing what you’ve learned from the Sermon on the Mount with them—possibly the illustration of the yellow ball along with how Jesus raised the bar of God’s expectations to, “You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” Matt 5:48?

What we hope members glean from the passage:

1. No set answer.
2. Jesus as Lawgiver greater than Moses
 - o Jesus went up on a mountain to teach (Matt 5:1–2) as Moses received the Law on Mt. Sinai
 - o Matthew’s gospel records five major sections of Jesus’ teaching, paralleling Moses’ five books of the Torah—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.
3. “You have heard it was said ...”
 - o Matt 5:21 – Anger ... “Do you murder”
 - o Matt 5:27 – Lust ... “Do not commit adultery”
 - o Matt 5:31 – Divorce ... Deuteronomy 24:1–4
 - o Matt 5:33 – Oaths ... Leviticus 19:12 & Numbers 32:2

- Matt 5:38 – Retaliation ... Exodus 22:24 & Deut 29:21
 - Matt 5:43 – Love your enemies ... No verse in the OT says to “hate your enemies” but the idea was prevalent in the culture.
4. Jesus focuses on the heart and attitude underlying the behaviors discussed.

Further Resources

- Bible Project – <https://www.rightnowmedia.org/Content/Series/181310?episode=41>
- Illustrations and quotes from the sermon can be found on the “Sermon Slides” link at the bottom of www.wcchapel.org