



NEW TESTAMENT • LESSON 13

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT – THE BEATITUDES

Because of Christ, we can be salt and light to the world.



MONDAY

THE STORY: MATTHEW 5:1-12

With the opening of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus described a meek, humble and merciful people who thirst for righteousness. These people are peacemakers; they are gracious even in the midst of persecution and suffering. This passage describes the character of genuine Christians. In Leviticus 18:3, shortly after delivering Israel from the Egyptians, God instructed Moses to tell the people to be different from the people of Canaan. Instead of walking in the statutes of the pagans, Israel was to follow God's rules and God's ways. Of course, for the most part, Israel drifted from faithfulness and obedience. Jesus spoke of another people in this passage who would be faithful to God's rules and God's ways. Though genuine Christians often fail, they progress toward becoming more and more like Christ. As Christians, we long to live righteous lives because of the new birth, and because of the Holy Spirit's power, we do. The Beatitudes are a banner under which we rally, and in this passage, Christ is holding the standard high. He fulfilled the law for us. Now we look to follow Him by living obedient lives.

TALK ABOUT IT:

How many of us would qualify as Christians if we had to live the Sermon on the Mount perfectly? (None of us would qualify.)

Since we all fail, why do we keep trying? (We are encouraged to grow in holiness because Jesus already lived a perfect life, and extends that life and its power to all those who place their hope and trust in Him. We grow in holiness not to qualify to become Christians, but because we already are Christians. Our motivation is not out of fear but out of love!)

Where do you most often fail to live according to the Sermon on the Mount? (Parents, help your children reflect on their lives. It is in seeing our sinfulness that our need for a Savior becomes evident.)

PRAY:

Thank Jesus for His perfect life and express your desire to live for Him.



TUESDAY

THE STORY: MATTHEW 5:13-16

The influence of a believer. The people of God are to stand out among the nations. We are to be salt, bringing the savor of life to the world. And we are to be light, bringing truth in the midst of darkness. Jesus is the light of the world; His Word is truth. In 1 Samuel 8:19-20 the people complained to Samuel that they wanted a king so they could be like the other nations. This people, who were called to be different from those in the land of Canaan, longed to be like the pagans around them.

As Christians we are to take up once again the charge to be a people set apart for God. No one will notice us if we live sinful lives like the rest of the world. If we live holy, joyful, humble, and merciful lives for Christ, and if we speak of Christ, we will be different from the people around us. We will be like a light shining in the darkness or flavorful salt on bland food.

TALK ABOUT IT:

Why are we called the salt of the earth? (We have the message of the gospel that gives life. Just as bland food's flavor is brought to life with salt, so does the message we carry bring the savor of life to those who receive it.)

If we are truly believers, how should we live, according to this passage? (We should be salt and light to the people of the world. If we are really Christians we will be like a light to the world by being like Jesus and by sharing the message, the gospel, of God.)

PRAY:

Ask God to so transform your heart that you are compelled to tell everyone what God has done in your life.



**WEDNESDAY
WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?**

THE STORY: MATTHEW 5:17-20

Jesus set a high standard of Christian attitudes and conduct that seems almost impossible to achieve.

Jesus went on to say in Matthew 5:17 that He came to fulfill the law and prophets. Jesus would be the one to fulfill the righteous life He described in the Beatitudes. We need not strive to follow the Sermon on the Mount to earn our way into God's favor. We strive to follow the Sermon on the Mount because we have already been forgiven and made righteous. Now, free of the condemnation of the law, we can follow the way of the law by following Jesus. If we should fall into sin, we need not be condemned. Instead, we confess our sin, and by the blood of Jesus our sins are covered.

Trying to live a perfectly righteous life apart from Christ is not possible. That is why the Pharisees failed. Though they kept a part of the law, they did not keep it all. To fail at just one point is complete. Jesus gives us His righteousness - a perfect righteousness superior to the failed attempts we make on our own.

TALK ABOUT IT:

Can we live a life that matches the blessed man in Matthew 5:3-10? (Yes and no. We cannot live a life that perfectly matches the blessed man. By faith in Jesus we get credit for the life of Jesus, who lived these verses perfectly. Now we obey to follow Him and be like Him.)

How is this passage encouraging for a person who trusts in Jesus? (This passage promises heaven to the person who lives accordingly. Those who trust in Jesus receive the reward and blessing of heaven because through Jesus' life the requirements to achieve these blessings are met.)

PRAY:

Ask God to help you live according to God's direction without feeling condemnation for times of failure.



THURSDAY

THE STORY: MATTHEW 5:21-26

The Ten Commandments list God's laws and the standard of obedience for believers. Lest a person think he can fulfill the law on his own, Jesus went to the heart of the law in the Sermon on the Mount. He explained that men break the command against murder not only when they kill but also when they become angry. The law requires perfect obedience. Apart from Christ we have no hope to accomplish this. Jesus, however, fulfilled the law and lived a perfectly obedient life. He did not murder and was never sinfully angry. We obey because Jesus gave us a righteous standing, not so we can earn a righteous standing. If we had to be perfect, and then made one mistake, there would be little reason or hope to go

on living for God. Jesus lived a perfect life in our place. Even when we fail and become angry at a Christian brother, we can reconcile and get help from God's Spirit to be more righteous next time.

TALK ABOUT IT:

How many of us are guilty of murdering someone in our hearts by being angry? (All of us are guilty of sinful anger.)

What hope do we have if the rules are so strict? (We have no hope to keep God's rules ourselves. Our only hope is in Jesus, who kept all of God's law in our place and gives us His perfect obedience when we believe and trust in him.)

How can we bring honor to God when we are in conflict with another? (We bring honor, worship and glory to God when we reconcile with a Christian brother or sister. True forgiveness is only possible because of what Jesus did on the cross.)

PRAY:

Ask God to help you quickly reconcile any conflicts.



**FRIDAY
ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS**

THE STORY: ISAIAH 55:1-13

Jesus addressed the thirsty and hungry, telling them that the answer for their need was found in Him. Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, tells us that those who hunger and thirst after righteousness will be satisfied. In John 6:35 Jesus reveals that He is the bread of life that nourishes our lives. Isaiah foretells a day when all who are thirsty and hungry will be filled by one who will make an everlasting covenant with them. Jesus is the one who fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy.

TALK ABOUT IT

What is the "richest of fare," or the rich food Isaiah is speaking of? (Isaiah is not

describing any normal food. The Word of God is the food that fills us. The Bible tells us in Deuteronomy 8:3 and Matthew 4:4 that “man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.”)

How should knowing this affect the way we think about reading and studying the Bible? (Just as we would not want to go hungry or thirsty for food and drink, we should not want to go hungry and thirsty for God’s Word. Just as we would die apart from food and water, so do our hearts need, and should desire, the nourishment of God’s Word.)

PRAY

Pray God would help you love His Word and read it every day.