



THE JOURNEY THROUGH THE
SERMON *on THE* **MOUNT**
SESSION 5: LIVING UNDER THE
AUTHORITY OF A KING



LifeGroups
Do Life Together

New Hope Church

THE JOURNEY THROUGH SERMON ON THE MOUNT.
SESSION FIVE: EVERYLIVING UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF A KING
MATTHEW 5:38-42

FOLLOW ALONG

The Sermon on the Mount isn't a _____ — it is a
_____ of a heart transformed by Jesus.

_____ isn't ours to _____ it belongs to God
_____.

The Law only _____ your _____ it cannot
_____ your _____.

INTRODUCTION:

Why are movies about revenge so popular?

Why did the ancient law require a person to pluck a persons eye out?

How did Jesus say we should respond to people who are evil to us?

In the video Pastor Mike said, "the Sermon on the Mount wasn't a prescription— it was a description of a heart transformed by Jesus." What does this mean?

What can you do this week to forgive someone who has hurt, or wronged you?

Going Deeper

What were the factors that attracted you to Christ before you became a believer in Him?

Can you recall instances of simple acts performed by someone that surprisingly pointed to the divine nature of Christ?

In the ongoing Sermon on the Mount, Jesus has so far demonstrated to the audience (comprised of both believers and non-believers) that despite the difficulties of living a godly life in a world corrupted by sin, they can still find comfort and peace in the knowledge of their secure future hope (5:1-12). He then applied God's laws to the hearts of His listeners, serving as a guide for believers and a clear revelation of their own depravity for non-believers (5:13-37). Jesus stresses to his audience that God requires not just a valiant effort, but complete obedience and imitation of His nature. This prompts believers to seek grace and transformation from Christ, while non-believers are called to either seek mercy or reject the gospel message.

Understanding

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATT. 5:38-44.

What is the core message of Jesus in verses 38-44? What were Jesus' directives to those who heard Him speak?

How do these directives contrast with the previous commands mentioned in the Sermon on the Mount?

What can we understand about ourselves when we closely evaluate our lives in relation to this standard?

What is your emotional reaction to the commands of Jesus in verses 38-44?

Before this section Jesus warned His audience about anger, lust, divorce, and oaths. All of those commands seem somewhat reasonable, or at the very least it seems like we have control over those situations. We decide if we will become angry or if we will allow ourselves to think lustful thoughts. The commands in our current passage, however, are different. We are asked to give up control and place ourselves at the mercy of those who hate us and desire to hurt us. We are asked to abandon a perspective of self-preservation and respond to whatever curse comes our way, not with passivity, but with blessing!

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What is your reaction to the commands of Jesus in this section? How are you challenged? How does this drive you to Jesus?

How does living in the way that God commands change our relationships with one another?

How might living in this way give opportunity to share with others the reason that you live differently than the world?

PRAYER

Begin the prayer time by recognizing the goodness and glory of God. Adore Him because He is worthy and thank Him for the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ. Pray also for a heart that is humble before Him. Confess your inability without His intervention to save yourself or sanctify yourself. Pray for the ability to love your enemies and pray for your persecutors just as Christ did.

COMMENTARY

MATTHEW 5:38-48

5:38-42. As many people do today, the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day must have taken the "eye for an eye" passages (Exod. 21:24; Lev. 24:19-20; Deut. 19:21) as justification for hurting others at least as badly as they had been hurt. The law was not given to exact revenge, but to legislate justice. Breaking the law has consequences, but personal vengeance has no place. These passages have often been wrongly taken as a minimum guideline for retaliation. What Jesus clarifies is that they were always intended as a maximum or a ceiling for retaliation, and that mercy was always an acceptable intention underlying these laws.

For the kingdom servant, legalistically "letting the punishment fit the crime" and insisting upon a "pound of flesh" falls short. We must actually consider blessing the repentant criminal. Mercy (withholding deserved punishment) and grace (giving undeserved gifts) are legitimate norms of conduct.

The one mile (5:41) refers to the practice of the Roman soldiers requiring civilians to carry their burden for one mile. By Roman law, the soldier could require no more than one mile of a single porter, but Jesus' kingdom servants (in representing the gracious spirit of their king) are to go beyond what is required of them.

5:43-48. The first part of Jesus' quote in 5:43, Love your neighbor, is one of the central commands of the Bible (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:34-40). But the mistaken thinking came with the second portion, and hate your enemy. Here again, the human inclination is retaliation or revenge. To human thinking, this might seem like a logical corollary flowing out of the first statement. But the reality is that "hate your enemy" is far removed from God's intended meaning in "love your neighbor." In the parallel passage in Luke (10:25-37), Jesus explained through the parable of the good Samaritan that every human in our sphere of influence is our neighbor. Therefore, by definition, Christians are to love everyone and hate no one.

Jesus used a different approach to make the same point. He emphasized two principles to urge his followers to love all people. First, he urged them to follow the example of their Father in heaven. The Father gives gifts (sun and rain) to good and evil alike, and so we, as believers, ought to love and pray for our enemies (Luke 23:34; Rom. 5:8). By this we will show ourselves sons of your Father in heaven. He teaches us to love everyone because God does.

The ultimate expression of this pattern is the command to imitate the Father in 5:48, Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Jesus used teleios, a Greek word that means "having reached its end, mature, complete, perfect." The goal for the kingdom servant is to behave like his Father, and so to reach the mature level of supernatural transformation.

Second, Jesus urges us to show ourselves distinct from the rest of the world, the citizens of the earth. This is actually the flip side of the first argument, to be like the Father. If we show partiality and if we love only those who love us, we are like unbelievers. If, on the other hand, we show love impartially, guided by grace and mercy, then we show ourselves distinct, and we shine before the world (5:14-16), bringing glory to the Father.

All six examples are striking in their implications, but this one in particular stands out as a pinnacle exemplifying mercy and grace, the supernatural qualities of God's kingdom servants.



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