

A Study of the Book of Matthew: Chapter 5 v. 13-26

- **Jesus begins this next section of the Sermon on the Mount by stating that Christians are “the salt of the Earth.” (v. 13-16)**
 - What are the two things that salt is primarily used for?
 - Much like salt has a purpose to make something taste better or to preserve things, as Christians we also have a many purposes. What are some things we are called to do?
 - Passages like Matthew 28:19-20, 1 John 3:23, and Galatians 5:13-15 lay out some of the tasks that we are called to do. How effective are we as Christians if we DON’T do these things?
 - Much like tasteless salt, how effective is a candle that is hidden under a bucket?
 - In verse 14, Jesus states a city on a hill cannot be hidden. Why would we want to make sure we are visible to people?
 - The answer is in verse 15. We are to be visible and let our light shine so people can see our good deeds. For who’s glory is this to be for?
 - God knows our hearts and the purpose behind our deeds. Our job as believers is to bring glory to him, not to do deeds for acknowledgement of ourselves.

- **Jesus goes on to state that He has not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it (v. 17-20).**
 - This passage can be a bit tricky to understand, but a point to understand here lies in verse 18. How did the law of the Old Testament become fulfilled?
 - By Jesus coming to Earth and dying for our sins, He fulfilled the Old Law. What was the purpose of the Law? Read Galatians 3:21-29.
 - The Jewish people had to follow the Old Testament law for “olam” (translated as “forever” or “all time” in our bibles), that actually means a period of time only known by God. (Some passages that use “olam” include Ecclesiastes 1:3-4, Leviticus 3:17, and Numbers 10:8 among others).
 - Jesus is not using this passage to belittle the Old Testament law though.
 - What is promised to people who belittle or break the commandments? What about those that upkeep and teach the commandments?
 - Verse 19 does not mean we will have hierarchies or a “Social Ladder” in Heaven, but instead must be looked at in a different light.
 - How effective or worthwhile are we going to be as Christians if we choose to be “flexible” with the commandments that God has given us? Does trying to be loose with God’s word bring him glory?
 - If we want to lead others to God and be effective, we need to follow His commands and teach them to others.
 - This brings the Sermon to Jesus’s central focus; if people can’t be even as righteous as the Pharisees, then they won’t enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

- Why would this be such a profound statement? What kind of people were the scribes and Pharisees supposed to be?
 - Though they were the “religious elite”, the scribes and Pharisees still were not righteous enough. Why?
- **Jesus goes on to tackle one of the areas that the Scribes and Pharisees had misinterpreted the law for their own gain; that murder begins in the heart (v. 21-26).**
 - What is the difference between the letter of the law, and the spirit of the law?
 - The scribes and Pharisees constantly prided themselves on following the “letter of the law” of the Old Testament to a T, but they often missed or ignored the spirit of the law.
 - Jesus tackles this by discussing the 6th commandment here (thou shall not murder). Is actually murdering someone the only way to break this commandment?
 - Jesus is focusing on the heart we are to have toward other believers and each other here.
 - What does the term righteous anger mean?
 - Verse 22 tackles the difference between a righteous and unrighteous anger. What judgement is Jesus referring to hear that someone angry without a cause will face? Read 1 John 3:15
 - If we are unforgiving or wrongfully angry with our brothers and sisters in Christ, we not only risk judgement from other believers but also from God. This goes not only with our actions and hearts, but even with our words as well.
 - How are we to respond if we find ourselves at odds with a brother or sister in Christ?
 - Why would Christ instruct them to be right with their brothers before offering a sacrifice on the altar? Read 1 Corinthians 13:1.
 - Our worship to God means nothing if we don’t have love in our hearts. And if we don’t share love for our brothers and sisters in Christ, then we can’t love God.
 - Not only are we called to make amends with our brethren, but we are called to do so quickly (v. 25-26).
 - Failure to make amends not only keeps us in discord with each other and God, but also gives Satan opportunity to work against us. Read Ephesians 4:26-27.
- **What can we learn?**
 - As Christians, we are called to stand out and be different from the world around us. If we aren’t standing out and purposefully living our lives for God, we are no longer effective.
 - We don’t get to pick and choose what laws or commandments to follow, but instead must leave that authority to God. Putting our own twists on God’s scripture does nothing but drive us away from Him and lead others astray.
 - Our actions aren’t the only thing that can condemn, but we must also control our words and our hearts. God knows our intentions, and we must strive daily to love each other and Him.