

107. Sermon on the Mount, The Law (Matthew 5:17-48)

Prayer: Lord, You are holy and perfect more than anything in this world. In Your law, You show us Your will (want) for our lives. But we can't obey Your law perfectly. Thank You for Your forgiveness. Help us understand Your true desire, that You want us to love You and love each other. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

Matthew 5:17-18 Jesus said, "Don't think I came to destroy the Law or Prophets. I came to fully do what the Law and Prophets say. I tell you the truth – not the smallest letter will disappear from the Law until heaven and earth are gone and everything is finished."

- Did Jesus honor the Law and Prophets (the Bible)? How did He show that He honored God's word?
- How long will God's Law be here on earth?

Matthew 5:19-20 "If someone ignores one little commandment, and if they teach others to ignore that commandment, that person will be little importance in the kingdom of heaven. If someone follows the commandments and teaches them, that person will be great in the kingdom of heaven. I tell you, if you are not more righteous than the Jewish law teachers and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven."

- Jesus said if you do two things very well, then you will be great in the kingdom of heaven. What are those two things?
- The Jewish law teachers and Pharisees had a reputation for following the law very carefully. Were they good enough to go to heaven?

- Jesus said if we want to enter heaven, we must be more righteous than the law teachers and Pharisees. Can we obey the law that much better and enter heaven?

Jesus recently explained the law is very strict, and God wants perfect obedience. Now Jesus will give some examples. He will explain God's law, how God means His law, and how strict the law is.

Matthew 5:21-22 God told the people long ago, "Never murder," and "If you murder, you must go to court." But I tell you, if you are angry against your brother, you are guilty in court. If you tell your brother, "Raca," you are guilty in the high Jewish court. If you say, "You fool," you deserve hell.

- What do people think it means, "Never murder?" What does God say it means?
- If you break God's law, how bad is the punishment?

Matthew 5:23-24 Suppose you go to the altar for your sacrifice. When you arrive, you remember your brother has hard feelings against you. Leave your offering there. First, go and make peace with your brother. Then come and give your offering.

- Who is your "brother?" What does that word mean?
- Does God want us to continue divided against each other? When we come to church, what should our attitude be towards each other?
- If we have a problem with someone, who should try to solve the problem and make peace? Us or them?

Matthew 5:27-28 God told people, "Never do adultery." But I tell you, if someone looks at a woman and lusts, he already did adultery in his heart.

- What do people think it means, “Never do adultery?” What does God say it means?

Matthew 5:29-30 If your right eye causes you to sin, tear out your eye. Throw it away. If one part of your body dies, that is better than your whole body thrown into hell. If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. If one part of your body dies, that is better than your whole body thrown into hell.

- Suppose you have a big temptation to sin, for example, looking at women and lusting. What does Jesus say you should do?
- How serious is Jesus about any sin? Is sin just something bad, or is it awful, deadly, the worst thing we could do to ourselves?

Matthew 5:31-32. You heard this said before, “If someone sends away his wife, he should give her a divorce certificate.” But I tell you, if someone divorces his wife, he causes her to do adultery (unless she was already unfaithful). If someone marries a divorced woman, he does adultery.

- What does Jesus call divorce?

Matthew 5:33-37. God told people long ago, “Don’t make false promises. But keep any promise you make to the Lord.” But I tell you, don’t swear at all. Don’t swear by heaven because that is God’s throne. Don’t swear by earth; that is His footstool. Don’t swear by Jerusalem, because that is the city of the great king. Don’t swear by your head. You can’t make one hair become white or black. Simply say “yes” or “no.” If you say more than that, it is from the evil one.

- God’s law applies to the language we use. If someone doesn’t believe something we say, how can we best say it is true?

Matthew 5:38-42 God told people, “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.” But I tell you, don’t resist an evil person. If someone slaps your right cheek, turn and offer your left cheek. If someone sues you to take your shirt, also give him your coat. If someone forces you to walk one mile with him, then walk two miles. If someone asks, give. If someone wants to borrow from you, don’t turn him down.

- “An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth” meant revenge, it meant get even. What does Jesus say we should do?
- Does He really mean this, that we should give up everything? Become wimps?

Matthew 5:43-45 You have heard people say, “Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.” But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for people who persecute you. Then you will be sons of your Father in heaven. He makes His sun rise for both evil and good people, and He sends rain on righteous and wicked people. If you love people who love you, why should you get a reward? Even tax collectors do that. If you only welcome your brothers, are you better than other people? Non-Jews do the same thing.

- This really emphasizes Jesus’ point. What should be our attitude and actions toward everyone, not only our friends?

Matthew 5:48 Therefore, be perfect, the same as your heavenly Father is perfect.

- Can we do that?
- If we can’t be perfect, why do you think Jesus told us all this strict law?