

Dwelling in the Word

Prayerfully read Matt 5:1-48 and ask: 1) What words, phrases, or images stood out to you? 2) What does this say about what God desires to accomplish in you? 3) How could you respond to what God says in this passage?

Beginning the Conversation

1. In our Sunday service, we read the Scripture passage for this week in the First Nations Version. As you listen (or read) the passage in that version, does anything stand out differently to you?
2. Have you ever been in a physical space, such as a room, where it was completely dark and then a small amount of light started to be visible? How did the light shining in the darkness make you feel?

Digging Deeper

1. What is your overall impression as you read this part of the Sermon on the Mount? Do you feel comforted or confronted? Or something other?
2. What is your impression of those whom Jesus proclaims as “blessed” in 5:3-12? How do the values expressed in Jesus’ list compare to what we value in our society today?
3. In what ways do you feel Jesus’ interpretation of Scripture “fulfills” (5:17) the Torah and the Prophets? How does this change the way we ought to read and understand the Old Testament today as Christ followers?
4. What do you understand Jesus to mean when he says, “your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law” (5:20)? What does “righteousness” mean in the gospel of Matthew? How does Jesus’ approach to the Torah differ from the Pharisees?
5. Of the six topics that Jesus addresses (Murder, 5:21-26; Adultery, 5:27-30; Divorce, 5:31-32; Oaths, 5:33-37; Retribution, 5:38-42, and Love of Neighbour, 5:43-47), are there some that you personally find more challenging?
6. What do you think about how Jesus “builds a fence” around the prohibitions of murder and adultery (5:21-30) as an extension of the Torah? Can you think of other examples where this would be helpful?
7. Explain in your own words Jesus teaching on oaths (5:33-37). What does it mean for your “yes to be yes and your no, no”?
8. How does Jesus’ teaching on retribution (5:38-42) work towards stopping the escalation of violence?
9. The culmination of Jesus’ teaching is his extension of the command to “love our neighbour” to include even our enemies (5:43-47). How does this shift our understanding of love to embrace rather than exclude others? What is the motivation Jesus provides for enemy-love? (see 5:45-48).

Living it Out

1. There is a theme of reconciling relationships that is seen throughout this chapter. Is there a relationship in your life that needs healing and reconciliation? What steps could you take this week towards beginning, or continuing, that process?
2. In his commentary on Matthew, as NT Wright looks at 5:13-16, he asks us this question to consider: “Where does the world need salt and light right now, and how can we, through following Jesus, provide it?”

The Greater Righteousness of the Kingdom (5:1-48)



Discourse 1
Announcing the
Kingdom (3-7)

September 28, 2025
Pastor Tyler Williams
Greenfield Community Church

Announcing the Kingdom

The "Sermon on the Mount" (5:1-7:29).

- First of five major blocks of teaching in Matthew.
- Its setting makes an explicit connection with Moses and Mt. Sinai.
- Primarily directed at the disciples/apprentices.
- Focuses on what it means to be a disciple/apprentice of Jesus by illustrating "the way" of Jesus.

The Sermon on the Mount

Outline of the Sermon on the Mount (5:1-7:29)

- Setting: Jesus Teaching on the Mountainside (5:1-2)
- The Values of the Kingdom – The Beatitudes (5:3-12)
- The Greater Righteousness of the Kingdom (5:12-48)
- The Practices of the Kingdom (6:1-34)
- The Way of the Kingdom (7:1-29)

Jesus Fulfils the Torah

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them **but to fulfill them**" (5:17).

- "Fulfill," "make full" (*pleroo πληρωω*) – bring to its fullest expression, its full intent and purpose; its original goal.
- Jesus doesn't annul the Torah, but affirms and extends it, provides his authoritative interpretation of it (see 7:28-29).

A Greater Righteousness

"For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven" (5:20).

- "Your righteousness" = your covenant behaviour, the way you live your life; practical righteousness, covenant faithfulness.
- Our righteousness/right living has to surpass that of the Pharisees — but in what way?

Interpreting Torah

Every Rabbi followed a way (*halakah*) of how they interpreted the Torah for righteous living.

- "Binding & loosing" the commandments (5:19; 16:19; 18:18).
- Practice of putting a "Fence around Torah."
- Interprets "with authority" (7:28-29).



An Impossible Ethic?

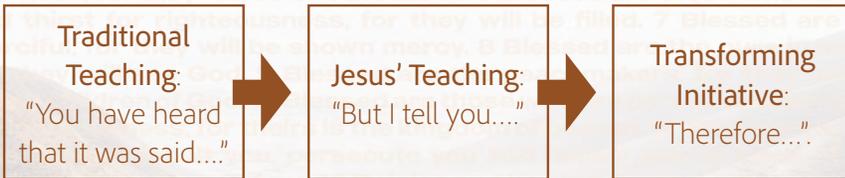
An ethic for citizens of the already-not-yet Kingdom of heaven.

- Jesus focuses on the original intent of the Torah, as an internal desire, not an external obligation.
- We will find some success, but our failures serve as reminders that the kingdom remains incomplete in our own lives.
- Jesus' ethic presupposes God's grace and mercy.

An Impossible Ethic?

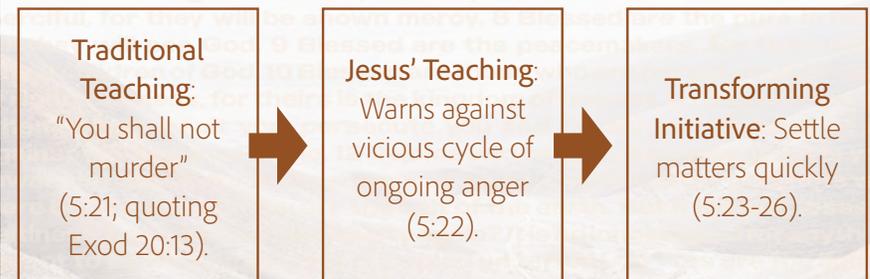
The Sermon on the Mount is *not* about "human effort to make ourselves perfect and live up to what seem like impossibly high ideals.... It is about God's grace. It is about living in the presence of God. It is the invitation of Jesus to participate in the new things God is doing all the time. We are... invited to respond to the call of Jesus to follow him as he shows us how to act in the way that fits with what God is doing in our midst" (Stassen, *Living the Sermon on the Mount*, 15-16).

Six Illustrations

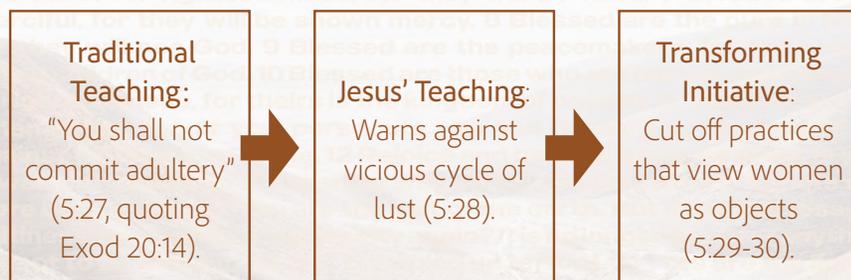


1. Murder (5:21-26)
2. Adultery (5:27-30)
3. Divorce (5:31-32)
4. Oaths (5:33-37)
5. Retribution - "eye for an eye" (5:38-42)
6. Love of Neighbour (5:43-47)

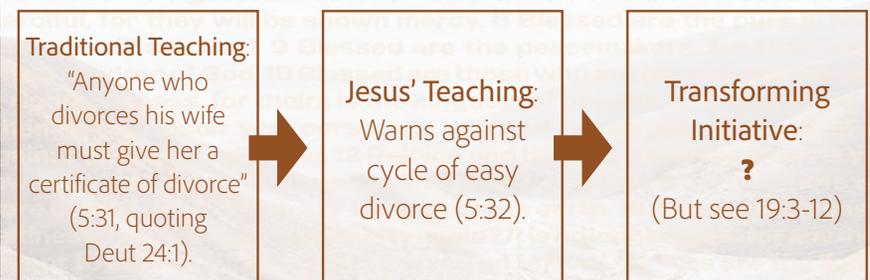
1. Murder (5:21-26)



2. Adultery (5:27-30)



3. Divorce (5:31-32)



4. Oaths (5:33-37)

Traditional Teaching:

"Do not break your oath..." (5:33, quoting Num 30:2).



Jesus' Teaching:

Warns against vicious cycle of false oaths (5:34-36; see 23:16-22).



Transforming Initiative:

Let your word be your oath (5:37).

5. Retribution (5:38-42)

Traditional Teaching:

"Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth" (5:38, quoting Exod 21:24).



Jesus' Teaching:

Warns against the cycle of retaliation and violence (5:39a).



Transforming Initiative:

Engage in practices that deliver you from the vicious cycle (5:39b-42).

6. Love of Neighbour (5:43-47)

Traditional Teaching:

"Love your neighbour *and hate your enemy*" (5:43, quoting Lev 19:18).



Jesus' Teaching:

Warns against cycle of limited love (5:46-47).



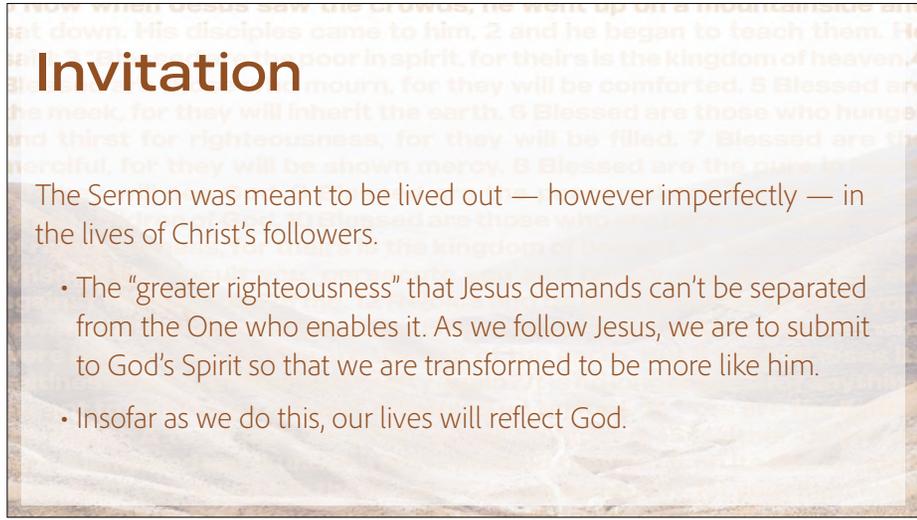
Transforming Initiative:

Love and pray for your enemies! (5:44-45).

Our Ultimate Standard

Culminates in the call to love and pray for even our enemies, for this reflects the Father's Love.

- "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (5:48).
- None of us will reach perfection in this life; we will always be poor reflections of our heavenly father's love.



Invitation

The Sermon was meant to be lived out — however imperfectly — in the lives of Christ's followers.

- The “greater righteousness” that Jesus demands can't be separated from the One who enables it. As we follow Jesus, we are to submit to God's Spirit so that we are transformed to be more like him.
- Insofar as we do this, our lives will reflect God.