CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 5 — The Sermon on the Mount: The Way of the Kingdom

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapter 4 ended with large crowds following Jesus.

They came from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.

Many had seen His miracles.

Many had been healed.

Now Jesus sits down to teach.

Matthew Chapters 5, 6, and 7 record what is called **the Sermon on the Mount.**

It is the longest single teaching of Jesus in the Gospels.

It is often called the greatest sermon ever preached.

Matthew Chapter 5 is the first part of that sermon.

It begins with the **Beatitudes**, eight blessings that turn the world's values upside down.

The world says, **“Blessed are the strong.”**

Jesus says, **“Blessed are the poor in spirit.”**

The world says, **“Blessed are the happy.”**

Jesus says, **“Blessed are those who mourn.”**

Then Jesus tells His followers who they are:

“You are the salt of the earth.”

“You are the light of the world.”

Then He explains His relationship to the Old Testament law.

He did not come to destroy it.

He came to fulfill it.

Then Jesus gives six teachings that begin:

“You have heard it said... But I tell you.”

He speaks about anger, lust, divorce, oaths, revenge, and love for enemies.

In each one, Jesus goes beneath outward actions to the heart.

Murder begins with anger.

Adultery begins with lust.

Love must reach even our enemies.

The chapter ends with a staggering command:

“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Matthew 5 therefore shows us two great truths:

What the citizens of God's kingdom are like.

And:

How far God's standard of righteousness really reaches.

The central truth of Matthew 5 is:

Jesus reveals the character of His kingdom, calling His followers to a righteousness of the heart that reflects the holiness and love of their Father in heaven.

I. JESUS GOES UP ON THE MOUNTAIN

Matthew 5:1 — He Sat Down

“When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on a mountain and sat down. His disciples came to Him,”

Jesus saw the crowds.

Then He went up on a mountain.

This reminds us of Moses.

Moses went up Mount Sinai to receive God's law.

Now Jesus goes up a mountain to explain the true meaning of God's law.

But there is a difference.

Moses went up to receive God's Word.

Jesus goes up to give it.

Jesus **sat down.**

In those days, teachers sat when they taught with authority.

His **disciples** came to Him.

The sermon was spoken mainly to His followers, though the crowds were also listening.

Cross References

Exodus 19:3

> Moses went up the mountain to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, “This is what you must say to the family of Jacob and tell the people of Israel.”

Exodus 24:12

> The LORD said to Moses, “Come up to Me on the mountain and stay there. I will give you the stone tablets with the law and the commands I have written to teach the people.”

Luke 6:20

> Jesus looked at His followers and said, “Blessed are you who are poor, because the kingdom of God belongs to you.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is the greater Moses.

He does not simply deliver God's law; He speaks with God's own authority.

Key Truth

The Sermon on the Mount is not a list of rules for earning salvation.

It is a description of life in God's kingdom for those who follow Jesus.

II. JESUS BEGINS TO TEACH

Matthew 5:2 — “He Began to Teach Them”

“and He began to teach them, saying:”

This short verse is important.

Matthew says Jesus **began to teach.**

Literally, the text says **“He opened His mouth.”**

This was a way of saying something serious and important was about to be spoken.

Jesus was not giving casual advice.

He was teaching the way of God's kingdom.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 5:1

> Moses called all Israel together and said, “Listen, Israel, to the rules and laws I am telling you today. Learn them and be careful to obey them.”

Psalms 78:1

> My people, listen to my teaching. Pay attention to what I say.

Isaiah 2:3

> Many people will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD. He will teach us His ways so that we can walk in His paths.”

Spiritual Principle

When Jesus speaks, His people should listen carefully.

His words are not suggestions; they are the words of the King.

III. THE POOR IN SPIRIT

Matthew 5:3 — The Kingdom Belongs to Them

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to them.”

The word **blessed** means more than happy.

It means to be truly well off in God's eyes.

It describes a person who has God's approval and favor.

The first blessing is for **the poor in spirit.**

This does not mean people with weak faith or low energy.

It means people who know they are spiritually bankrupt.

They know they have nothing to offer God.

They come to Him with empty hands.

This is where the kingdom begins.

No one enters God's kingdom by being spiritually rich.

We enter by admitting we are spiritually poor.

Cross References

Isaiah 66:2

> This is the kind of person I care about: someone who is humble, sorry for sin, and who trembles at My word.

Luke 6:20

> Jesus looked at His followers and said, “Blessed are you who are poor, because the kingdom of God belongs to you.”

Psalms 34:18

> The LORD is close to those whose hearts are broken. He saves those whose spirits have been crushed.

Spiritual Principle

The door to the kingdom is humility.

God fills only those who know they are empty.

Key Truth

Pride says, **“I deserve God's blessing.”**

Poverty of spirit says, **“I need God's mercy.”**

IV. THOSE WHO MOURN

Matthew 5:4 — They Will Be Comforted

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.”

This seems like a contradiction.

How can someone who mourns be blessed?

Jesus is speaking first about mourning over sin.

The person who is poor in spirit sees his sin.

Then he grieves over it.

This also includes grieving over the brokenness of the world and the suffering sin has caused.

Those who mourn this way have a promise:

They will be comforted.

God Himself is the Comforter.

Cross References

Isaiah 61:2

> He has sent Me to announce the year of the LORD's favor and the day our God will punish His enemies, and to comfort all who are sad.

Luke 6:21

> Blessed are you who are crying now, because you will laugh.

Psalms 126:5

> Those who plant seeds with tears will gather the harvest with shouts of joy.

Spiritual Principle

Godly sorrow leads to God's comfort.

The tears of repentance become the doorway to joy.

Application

Mourning in the way Jesus describes includes:

- Grieving over our own sin.
- Grieving over the sin of the world.
- Grieving over the suffering sin causes.
- Bringing our sorrow honestly to God.
- Trusting Him to comfort us.

V. THE MEEK

Matthew 5:5 — They Will Inherit the Earth

“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.”

Meekness is often misunderstood.

It does not mean weakness.

It means strength under control.

The word was used for a powerful horse that had been trained to obey.

A meek person does not demand his own way.

He does not fight for his own rights.

He trusts God to defend him.

Moses was called the most humble man on earth.

Yet he stood before Pharaoh and led a nation.

Jesus Himself said, **“I am gentle and humble in heart.”**

The world says the aggressive will take the earth.

Jesus says the meek will **inherit** it.

They will receive it as a gift from God.

Cross References

Psalms 37:11

> But humble people will receive the land and will enjoy great peace.

Numbers 12:3

> Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the earth.

Isaiah 29:19

> Humble people will be filled with joy in the LORD, and poor people will celebrate because of the Holy One of Israel.

Spiritual Principle

Meekness is not weakness; it is strength surrendered to God.

Key Truth

The meek do not grab; they receive.

VI. HUNGER AND THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Matthew 5:6 — They Will Be Filled

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”

Hunger and thirst are strong desires.

They are not mild interests.

They are needs that must be met.

In Bible times, people often knew real hunger and real thirst.

Jesus says His followers have a deep desire for **righteousness.**

They want to be right with God.

They want to live rightly before God.

They want to see what is right done in the world.

And God promises:

They will be filled.

Cross References

Isaiah 55:1

> Come, everyone who is thirsty, come to the water! You who have no money, come, buy food and eat!

Psalms 42:1

> As a deer longs for streams of water, so I long for You, God.

Luke 6:21

> Blessed are you who are hungry now, because you will be filled.

Spiritual Principle

God satisfies those who truly long for Him.

Application

Ask yourself honestly:

- What do I hunger for most?
- What do I spend my energy chasing?
- Do I long to be more like Christ?
- Do I want God more than comfort?

VII. THE MERCIFUL

Matthew 5:7 — They Will Be Shown Mercy

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.”

Mercy is compassion in action.

It is kindness shown to those who do not deserve it.

It includes forgiving those who wrong us and helping those who are suffering.

Those who have received God's mercy will show mercy to others.

A person who refuses to show mercy shows that he has not understood the mercy of God.

Cross References

Psalms 18:25

> To those who are faithful, You show that You are faithful. To those who are innocent, You show that You are innocent.

Proverbs 11:17

> A kind person helps himself, but a cruel person brings trouble on himself.

James 2:13

> Anyone who does not show mercy will be judged without mercy. But mercy wins over judgment.

Spiritual Principle

Mercy received becomes mercy given.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The way we treat others shows how well we understand the way God has treated us.

VIII. THE PURE IN HEART

Matthew 5:8 — They Will See God

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”

In the Bible, the **heart** is the center of a person.

It includes the mind, the will, and the emotions.

To be **pure in heart** means to have a heart that is clean and undivided.

It means having single-minded devotion to God.

It means being the same on the inside as you appear on the outside.

The Pharisees focused on outward cleanness.

Jesus focuses on the heart.

The promise is the greatest of all:

They will see God.

Cross References

Psalms 24:4

> The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not worship idols or make false promises.

Psalms 51:10

> Create a pure heart in me, God, and make my spirit faithful again.

1 John 3:2

> Dear friends, we are now children of God. What we will be has not yet been shown. But we know that when Christ appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him as He really is.

Spiritual Principle

God looks at the heart, not only at outward actions.

Key Truth

A pure heart is not something we make ourselves.

It is something we ask God to create in us.

IX. THE PEACEMAKERS

Matthew 5:9 — Called Children of God

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”

Jesus does not say, **“Blessed are the peace-lovers.”**

He says, **“Blessed are the peacemakers.”**

Peacemakers do more than avoid conflict.

They work to bring peace.

They help people be reconciled to God.

They help people be reconciled to each other.

God is the great Peacemaker.

He made peace with sinners through Jesus Christ.

When we make peace, we act like our Father.

That is why peacemakers are called **children of God.**

Cross References

Psalms 34:14

> Turn away from evil and do good. Look for peace and work hard to get it.

Isaiah 52:7

> How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the messenger who brings good news, who announces peace.

Romans 12:18

> Do everything you can to live in peace with everyone.

Spiritual Principle

Children of God resemble their Father.

The God of peace makes His children peacemakers.

X. PERSECUTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Matthew 5:10 — The Kingdom Belongs to Them

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for doing what is right, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to them.”

This blessing may be the most surprising.

Jesus says that people who live this way will be **persecuted.**

A humble, merciful, pure, peace-making person will often be opposed by a proud and sinful world.

But notice why they are persecuted:

For doing what is right.

Not for being foolish.

Not for being unkind.

Not for causing trouble.

Notice also that this blessing ends the same way as the first:

“The kingdom of heaven belongs to them.”

The Beatitudes begin and end with the kingdom.

Cross References

1 Peter 3:14

> But even if you suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Don't be afraid of what they fear, and don't be troubled.

2 Timothy 3:12

> Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

Psalms 34:19

> A person who does what is right may have many troubles, but the LORD will save him from all of them.

Spiritual Principle

Faithfulness to God will bring opposition from the world.

Spiritual Warning

We must make sure that if we suffer, it is for righteousness and not for our own wrongdoing.

XI. INSULTED BECAUSE OF JESUS

Matthew 5:11 — “Because of Me”

“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.”

Jesus now speaks directly to His disciples.

“Blessed are you.”

He describes three kinds of mistreatment.

Insults.

Persecution.

False accusations.

And He gives the reason:

“Because of Me.”

Jesus expected His followers to be identified with Him.

When people reject Jesus, they will often reject those who follow Him.

Cross References

1 Peter 4:14

> If people insult you because you follow Christ, you are blessed, because the glorious Spirit of God is resting on you.

Luke 6:22

> Blessed are you when people hate you, push you away, insult you, and say you are evil because you follow the Son of Man.

Isaiah 51:7

> Listen to Me, you who know what is right, you who have My teaching in your hearts. Don't be afraid of people's insults, and don't be upset when they make fun of you.

Spiritual Principle

To share in Christ's name is to share in Christ's rejection.

Key Truth

The world's insults cannot cancel God's blessing.

XII. REJOICE AND BE GLAD

Matthew 5:12 — Great Reward in Heaven

“Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great. In the same way, they persecuted the prophets before you.”

Jesus does not tell His followers to merely survive persecution.

He tells them to **rejoice.**

Why?

First, because their reward in heaven is great.

Second, because they are in good company.

The prophets were treated the same way.

Being persecuted for God places a believer in the same line as Elijah, Jeremiah, and all the faithful servants of God.

Cross References

Luke 6:23

> Be happy on that day and jump for joy, because you have a great reward in heaven. Their ancestors treated the prophets the same way.

James 5:10

> Brothers and sisters, follow the example of the prophets who spoke for the Lord. They suffered many hard things, but they were patient.

2 Chronicles 36:16

> But they made fun of God's messengers, hated His words, and laughed at His prophets. Finally, the LORD became so angry with His people that nothing could stop it.

Spiritual Principle

Present suffering is small compared to future reward.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Heaven's reward turns earth's insults into reasons for joy.

XIII. THE SALT OF THE EARTH

Matthew 5:13 — If Salt Loses Its Flavor

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its flavor, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.”

Jesus does not say, **“Try to become salt.”**

He says, **“You are the salt of the earth.”**

In Bible times, salt was very valuable.

It had several important uses.

Salt preserves.

Before refrigerators, salt kept meat from rotting.

Christians help hold back the moral decay of the world.

Salt gives flavor.

Christians bring goodness and the taste of God's kingdom into the world.

Salt creates thirst.

A Christian's life should make others thirsty for God.

But Jesus gives a warning.

Salt in those days was often mixed with other minerals.

If the true salt washed out, what was left looked like salt but was useless.

A Christian who loses his distinct difference from the world loses his usefulness.

Cross References

Mark 9:50

> Salt is good. But if it loses its salty taste, how can you make it salty again? Have salt among yourselves and live in peace with each other.

Luke 14:35

> It is not good for the soil or even for the manure pile. People just throw it away.

Leviticus 2:13

> Put salt on all your grain offerings. Do not leave out the salt of the covenant with your God.

Spiritual Principle

Christians are meant to make a difference by being different.

Spiritual Warning

A believer who becomes just like the world loses his influence on the world.

XIV. THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Matthew 5:14 — A City on a Hill

“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden.”

Again, Jesus says **“You are.”**

Jesus called Himself **the light of the world.**

Now He gives that same title to His followers.

Jesus is the true source of light.

His followers reflect His light, like the moon reflects the sun.

Then Jesus uses a picture.

A city built on a hill.

At night, the lights of a city on a hill can be seen for miles.

It cannot be hidden.

In the same way, a true Christian life will be seen.

Cross References

Isaiah 42:6

> “I, the LORD, have called You to do what is right. I will hold Your hand and protect You. I will make You a covenant for the people and a light for the nations.”

John 8:12

> Jesus spoke to the people again and said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness but will have the light that gives life.”

Isaiah 2:2

> In the last days, the mountain where the LORD's temple stands will be raised above all other mountains, and people from all nations will come to it.

Spiritual Principle

Light is meant to be seen.

A faith that is never visible is not the faith Jesus describes.

Key Truth

We do not create the light.

We carry the light of Christ.

XV. A LAMP ON A STAND

Matthew 5:15 — Light for Everyone in the House

“People do not light a lamp and put it under a basket. Instead, they put it on a stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.”

Houses in Jesus' day were small, often with one main room.

A single oil lamp could light the whole house.

No one would light a lamp and then cover it with a basket.

That would make no sense.

The purpose of a lamp is to give light.

In the same way, God did not put His light in His people so they would hide it.

Cross References

Mark 4:21

> Jesus said to them, “Do you bring a lamp into the house to hide it under a bowl or under a bed? No, you put it on a stand.”

Luke 8:16

> No one lights a lamp and then covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, he puts it on a stand so that people who come in can see the light.

Luke 11:33

> No one lights a lamp and hides it or puts it under a basket. Instead, he puts it on a stand so that those who come in can see.

Spiritual Principle

God's light in us is meant to bless others.

Application

We hide our light when we:

- Are ashamed to be known as Christians.
- Stay silent when we should speak.
- Live inconsistent lives.
- Blend in with the world to avoid trouble.
- Keep our faith only at church.

XVI. LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

Matthew 5:16 — Glory to the Father

“In the same way, let your light shine before others, so they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”

Jesus explains how our light shines.

Through good works.

Our good works are not done to earn salvation.

They are the result of salvation.

And notice the goal:

So they may give glory to your Father in heaven.

The purpose of good works is not to make people praise us.

It is to make people praise God.

Cross References

Isaiah 60:1

> Get up and shine, because your light has come, and the glory of the LORD is shining on you.

1 Peter 2:12

> Live such good lives among people who don't know God that, even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your good works and give glory to God on the day He comes.

Philippians 2:15

> Then you will be innocent and pure, children of God without fault, living among crooked and evil people. You will shine among them like stars in the sky.

Spiritual Principle

Good works point people to God, not to ourselves.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Shine in such a way that people see the Light, not the lamp.

XVII. CHRIST FULFILLS THE LAW

Matthew 5:17 — Not to Abolish but to Fulfill

“Do not think I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.”

Some people may have thought Jesus was throwing out the Old Testament.

Jesus corrects that idea.

The Law and the Prophets was a way of saying the whole Old Testament.

Jesus did not come to destroy it.

He came to **fulfill** it.

How did Jesus fulfill the Law?

He fulfilled its prophecies — He is the One the Old Testament promised.

He fulfilled its commands — He obeyed the law perfectly.

He fulfilled its sacrifices — He became the final sacrifice for sin.

He fulfilled its meaning — He revealed what the law was truly about.

Cross References

Romans 10:4

> Christ is the goal the law was pointing to, so that everyone who believes can be made right with God.

Isaiah 42:21

> Because He is righteous, the LORD was pleased to make His teaching great and glorious.

Luke 24:44

> Jesus said to them, “Everything written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms had to come true.”

Spiritual Principle

The whole Bible points to Jesus.

The Old Testament prepares for Him, and the New Testament reveals Him.

Key Truth

Jesus is not against God's law.

He is the fulfillment of God's law.

XVIII. NOT THE SMALLEST LETTER

Matthew 5:18 — God's Word Will Not Fail

“Truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not even the smallest letter or stroke of a pen will disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.”

Jesus begins with **“Truly I tell you.”**

This phrase signals a solemn and important statement.

The smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet is the letter **yod**, which looks like a small comma.

A stroke of a pen refers to tiny marks that tell one Hebrew letter from another.

Jesus is saying that every detail of God's Word matters.

Nothing God has said will fail.

Everything will be accomplished.

Cross References

Luke 16:17

> It would be easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for the smallest part of a letter in the law to be dropped.

Psalms 119:89

> LORD, Your word lasts forever. It stands firm in heaven.

Isaiah 40:8

> The grass dries up and the flowers fall, but the word of our God lasts forever.

Spiritual Principle

God's Word is completely trustworthy, down to the smallest detail.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

If Jesus trusted every letter of Scripture, His followers can trust it too.

XIX. LEAST AND GREAT IN THE KINGDOM

Matthew 5:19 — Practicing and Teaching

“Anyone who breaks even the least of these commands and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever practices and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

Jesus warns against treating any of God's commands as unimportant.

Some people divided the commands into big ones and small ones.

They thought the small ones did not matter much.

Jesus says that attitude makes a person **least** in the kingdom.

Greatness in the kingdom comes from doing two things together.

Practicing God's Word.

Teaching God's Word.

Notice the order.

Practice comes first.

We must live it before we teach it.

Cross References

James 2:10

> Whoever keeps the whole law but fails to obey even one command is guilty of breaking all of it.

Deuteronomy 4:2

> Do not add anything to what I command you, and do not take anything away from it. Obey the commands of the LORD your God that I give you.

Psalms 119:6

> Then I will not be ashamed when I think about all Your commands.

Spiritual Principle

Obedience to God is not selective.

Spiritual Warning

Teachers carry a special responsibility, because their example shapes others.

XX. A GREATER RIGHTEOUSNESS

Matthew 5:20 — Greater Than the Pharisees

“For I tell you, unless your righteousness is greater than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

This statement would have shocked the crowd.

The scribes and Pharisees were seen as the most religious people in Israel.

They tithed even their spices.

They fasted twice a week.

They prayed in public.

How could anyone's righteousness be greater than theirs?

Their righteousness was mostly outward.

It focused on actions people could see.

Jesus requires a righteousness of the heart.

And the only way to have that righteousness is to receive it from God through faith in Christ.

Then God changes the heart so that a person begins to live righteously from the inside out.

Cross References

Romans 3:20

> No one will be made right with God by obeying the law. The law only shows us our sin.

Philippians 3:9

> I want to be found in Him, not having my own righteousness that comes from obeying the law, but the righteousness that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness that comes from God and is based on faith.

Isaiah 64:6

> All of us have become like something unclean. Even all our good works are like filthy rags.

Spiritual Principle

No one can enter God's kingdom on their own goodness.

Key Truth

The righteousness God requires is the righteousness God gives in Christ.

XXI. YOU HAVE HEARD IT SAID — MURDER

Matthew 5:21 — Do Not Murder

“You have heard that it was said long ago, ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’”

Now Jesus begins six teachings that follow a pattern:

“You have heard it said... But I tell you.”

Jesus is not correcting the Old Testament.

He is correcting the way people had come to understand it.

Many people thought that as long as they had not killed anyone, they had kept this command.

The sixth commandment says, **“Do not murder.”**

Human life is sacred because people are made in the image of God.

Cross References

Exodus 20:13

> Do not murder.

Genesis 9:6

> Whoever takes a human life will have his own life taken by another person, because God made people in His own image.

Deuteronomy 5:17

> Do not murder.

Spiritual Principle

Every human life has value because every person bears God's image.

XXII. ANGER AND CONTEMPT

Matthew 5:22 — “But I Tell You”

“But I tell you, anyone who is angry with his brother without cause will be subject to judgment. Whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca’ (a term of contempt), will be answerable to the council. Whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.”

“But I tell you.”

Jesus speaks with His own authority.

He goes beneath the act of murder to its root.

Anger.

Not every kind of anger is sinful.

Jesus Himself was angry at sin.

But anger **without cause**, anger that holds a grudge, and anger that wants to hurt others is sin.

Jesus mentions two kinds of insults.

“Raca” was an Aramaic word of contempt meaning something like **“empty-headed”** or **“worthless.”**

“You fool!” was an insult that attacked a person's character.

Anger, contempt, and insults are the seeds of murder.

They kill a person's dignity with words.

Cross References

1 John 3:15

> Everyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer. And you know that no murderer has eternal life living in him.

Leviticus 19:17

> Do not hate your brother in your heart. Correct your neighbor openly so that you will not be guilty because of him.

Proverbs 14:29

> A patient person has great understanding, but a person with a quick temper shows how foolish he is.

Spiritual Principle

Sin begins in the heart long before it shows up in our actions.

Spiritual Warning

Words can wound like weapons.

God takes our words seriously.

XXIII. AT THE ALTAR

Matthew 5:23 — Remembering a Broken Relationship

“So if you are offering your gift at the altar and remember your brother has something against you,”

Jesus now gives a practical example.

A man is at the temple.

He is about to offer a sacrifice to God.

Then he remembers that someone has something against him.

Notice that Jesus does not say, **“If you have something against your brother.”**

He says, **“If your brother has something against you.”**

It is not only about forgiving others.

It is also about making things right when we have wronged others.

Cross References

Leviticus 1:3

> If the offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he must offer a male animal that has nothing wrong with it. He must bring it to the entrance of the meeting tent so that the LORD will accept it.

Mark 11:25

> When you are praying, if you are angry with someone, forgive him. Then your Father in heaven will also forgive your sins.

Proverbs 21:3

> Doing what is right and fair pleases the LORD more than offering sacrifices.

Spiritual Principle

Our relationship with God cannot be separated from our relationships with others.

XXIV. FIRST BE RECONCILED

Matthew 5:24 — Then Offer Your Gift

“leave your gift there before the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother, then come and offer your gift.”

Jesus says something surprising.

Leave the gift.

Go make it right.

Then come back.

Worship matters.

But God does not want worship from someone who refuses to make peace.

Reconciliation comes before ritual.

Cross References

1 Samuel 15:22

> Obeying is better than offering sacrifices. Listening to the LORD is better than offering the fat of rams.

Hosea 6:6

> I want your faithful love more than your sacrifices. I want you to know Me more than I want your burnt offerings.

Ephesians 4:26

> When you are angry, do not sin. Do not stay angry all day.

Spiritual Principle

God values a right heart more than religious activity.

Application

If someone has something against you:

- Do not wait for them to come to you.
- Go to them.
- Admit your part honestly.
- Ask for forgiveness.
- Seek peace.
- Then return to worship with a clear conscience.

XXV. SETTLE MATTERS QUICKLY

Matthew 5:25 — On the Way to Court

“Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you will be thrown into prison.”

Jesus gives a second example.

Two people are on their way to court.

Jesus says to settle the matter **quickly** while there is still time.

Once the judge decides, it will be too late.

This is practical wisdom for everyday life.

But it also has a deeper meaning.

Every person is on the way to stand before God, the final Judge.

Now is the time to be made right with Him.

Cross References

Luke 12:58

> When you are going to court with your opponent, try hard to settle with him on the way. If you don't, he may drag you to the judge, the judge may hand you over to the officer, and the officer may throw you into prison.

Proverbs 25:8

> Don't be in a hurry to go to court. What will you do later if your neighbor proves you wrong?

Proverbs 6:5

> Free yourself like a deer running from a hunter, like a bird escaping from a trap.

Spiritual Principle

Delay makes conflict worse.

Spiritual Warning

There is a day when the time to settle with God will be over.

XXVI. THE LAST PENNY

Matthew 5:26 — Paying the Full Debt

“Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.”

In those days, a person who could not pay a debt could be put in prison.

He would stay there until the debt was fully paid.

The last penny refers to the smallest coin.

Every bit of the debt had to be paid.

This is a serious warning.

Unresolved conflict has a cost.

And before God, unforgiven sin is a debt no one can pay.

That is why we need Jesus, who paid our debt in full.

Cross References

Luke 12:59

> I tell you, you will not get out of there until you have paid every last cent.

Proverbs 22:7

> Rich people rule over poor people, and the person who borrows becomes a servant to the one who lends.

2 Kings 4:1

> A woman whose husband had been one of the prophets cried out to Elisha, “My husband is dead. Now the man he owed money to is coming to take my two sons as his slaves.”

Spiritual Principle

Sin creates a debt we cannot pay.

Key Truth

Jesus paid the last penny of our debt on the cross.

XXVII. YOU HAVE HEARD IT SAID — ADULTERY

Matthew 5:27 — Do Not Commit Adultery

“You have heard it said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’”

Jesus turns to the seventh commandment.

God created marriage.

He designed sexual intimacy to be shared only between a husband and wife.

Adultery breaks that covenant.

In the Old Testament, adultery was so serious that it carried the death penalty.

Cross References

Exodus 20:14

> Do not commit adultery.

Deuteronomy 5:18

> Do not commit adultery.

Leviticus 20:10

> If a man commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, both the man and the woman must be put to death.

Spiritual Principle

God takes marriage and faithfulness very seriously.

XXVIII. LUST IN THE HEART

Matthew 5:28 — Adultery in the Heart

“But I tell you, anyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

Again, Jesus goes to the root.

Adultery does not begin with the act.

It begins with the look.

It begins with lust in the heart.

Jesus is not talking about noticing that someone is attractive.

He is talking about looking with the purpose of desiring what God has forbidden.

David's sin with Bathsheba began when he saw her from the roof and kept looking.

Cross References

Job 31:1

> I made a promise with my eyes not to look with lust at a young woman.

Proverbs 6:25

> Don't let your heart desire her beauty, and don't let her capture you with her eyes.

2 Samuel 11:2

> One evening David got up from his bed and walked on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. She was very beautiful.

Spiritual Principle

What we allow our eyes to dwell on, our hearts will begin to desire.

Application

Guarding against lust includes:

- Making a covenant with your eyes like Job.
- Being careful what you watch and read.
- Avoiding situations that lead to temptation.
- Being accountable to other believers.
- Filling your mind with God's Word.
- Quickly confessing sinful thoughts to God.

XXIX. IF YOUR EYE CAUSES YOU TO SIN

Matthew 5:29 — Tear It Out

“If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.”

Jesus uses strong language.

He is not commanding people to literally harm their bodies.

A blind man can still have lust in his heart.

Jesus is using an exaggerated picture to show how seriously we must deal with sin.

The **right eye** was considered the most valuable.

Jesus is saying:

Remove whatever leads you into sin, even if it is precious to you.

Sin is so dangerous that it is worth any sacrifice to avoid it.

Cross References

Mark 9:47

> If your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell.

Numbers 15:39

> You will look at these tassels and remember all the LORD's commands and obey them. Then you will not follow the desires of your hearts and eyes that lead you to be unfaithful.

Proverbs 4:25

> Keep your eyes looking straight ahead, and keep your focus on what is in front of you.

Spiritual Principle

We must take radical action against sin.

Key Truth

Hell is real, and sin is serious enough to lead there.

XXX. IF YOUR HAND CAUSES YOU TO SIN

Matthew 5:30 — Cut It Off

“If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be cast into hell.”

The eye represents what we look at.

The hand represents what we do.

Jesus repeats the same strong warning.

Whatever leads us into sin must be removed.

This may mean ending a relationship.

It may mean giving up a habit.

It may mean leaving a place or a job.

It may mean getting rid of something we own.

Cross References

Mark 9:43

> If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better to enter life with one hand than to have two hands and go to hell, where the fire never goes out.

Job 31:7

> If I have turned away from the right path, if my heart has followed what my eyes wanted, or if my hands have been made dirty by sin.

Colossians 3:5

> So put to death whatever belongs to your sinful nature: sexual sin, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed, which is the same as worshiping idols.

Spiritual Principle

Nothing is worth keeping if it costs us our soul.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Do not manage sin; get rid of it.

XXXI. YOU HAVE HEARD IT SAID — DIVORCE

Matthew 5:31 — A Certificate of Divorce

“It has been said, ‘Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.’”

In Jesus' day, divorce had become very easy.

Some teachers said a man could divorce his wife for almost any reason.

They pointed to Deuteronomy 24.

But that passage did not command divorce.

It regulated divorce to protect the woman.

The certificate gave her legal proof that she was free and could remarry.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 24:1

> Suppose a man marries a woman, but later he finds something shameful about her and is not pleased with her. He may write her divorce papers, give them to her, and send her away from his house.

Deuteronomy 24:3

> Then suppose her second husband also turns against her, writes her divorce papers, gives them to her, and sends her away from his house.

Mark 10:4

> They said, “Moses allowed a man to write divorce papers and send his wife away.”

Spiritual Principle

God's permission because of human sin is not the same as God's approval.

XXXII. MARRIAGE IS SACRED

Matthew 5:32 — Except for Sexual Immorality

“But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, causes her to commit adultery. And anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.”

Jesus raises the standard.

Marriage is not to be ended easily.

Jesus gives one exception here:

Sexual immorality.

Unfaithfulness breaks the marriage covenant.

But even then, divorce is permitted, not commanded.

Forgiveness and restoration are always better when possible.

Jesus was protecting marriage.

He was also protecting women, who were often treated unfairly and left without support.

This is a sensitive subject.

Many people have experienced the pain of divorce.

God's grace is available to all who have been hurt by it or who have failed in it.

Cross References

Mark 10:11

> Jesus answered, “Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman is guilty of adultery against her.”

Malachi 2:16

> “I hate divorce,” says the LORD, the God of Israel.

1 Corinthians 7:10

> To those who are married I give this command, and it is not just from me but from the Lord: A wife should not leave her husband.

Spiritual Principle

Marriage is a covenant before God and should be protected.

Key Truth

God's standard for marriage is high, but His grace for the broken is deep.

XXXIII. YOU HAVE HEARD IT SAID — OATHS

Matthew 5:33 — Keep Your Vows

“You have also heard it said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oaths, but keep your vows to the Lord.’”

An **oath** was a solemn promise, often made by calling on God as a witness.

The Old Testament taught that oaths made to the Lord must be kept.

But in Jesus' time, people had found ways around this.

They said some oaths were binding and others were not.

It depended on what they swore by.

They used oaths to look honest while keeping a way out.

Cross References

Numbers 30:2

> When a man makes a promise to the LORD or swears an oath to do something, he must not break his word. He must do everything he said he would do.

Leviticus 19:12

> Do not make a false promise using My name. If you do, you will dishonor the name of your God.

Deuteronomy 23:21

> When you make a promise to the LORD your God, do not be slow to keep it. The LORD your God will surely expect it from you.

Spiritual Principle

God expects His people to keep their word.

XXXIV. DO NOT SWEAR AT ALL

Matthew 5:34 — Heaven Is God's Throne

“But I tell you, do not swear at all—neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne;”

Jesus cuts through all the games.

Do not swear at all.

People thought swearing by heaven instead of by God's name made the oath less serious.

But Jesus says heaven is **God's throne.**

You cannot swear by heaven without involving God.

Jesus is not mainly forbidding a person from taking an oath in a court of law.

He is forbidding the use of oaths to manipulate or deceive.

Cross References

Isaiah 66:1

> This is what the LORD says: “Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool.”

James 5:12

> Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear by heaven, by earth, or by anything else. Let your “yes” mean yes and your “no” mean no, so that you will not be judged.

Psalms 11:4

> The LORD is in His holy temple. The LORD sits on His throne in heaven.

Spiritual Principle

Everything belongs to God, so every promise is made before God.

XXXV. THE EARTH AND JERUSALEM

Matthew 5:35 — The City of the Great King

“nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.”

Jesus continues.

The earth is God's **footstool.**

Jerusalem is **the city of the great King.**

There is no place you can point to that does not belong to God.

Every oath, no matter what it is made by, involves God.

Cross References

Isaiah 66:1

> This is what the LORD says: “Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool.”

Psalms 48:2

> Mount Zion is high and beautiful. It brings joy to the whole earth. It is the city of the great King.

Psalms 99:5

> Praise the LORD our God, and worship at His footstool. He is holy.

Key Truth

There is no corner of creation where God is not King.

XXXVI. NOT BY YOUR OWN HEAD

Matthew 5:36 — One Hair White or Black

“And do not swear by your own head, because you cannot make even one hair white or black.”

Some people swore by their own heads.

They thought this was an oath that did not involve God.

But Jesus points out that we do not even control our own hair.

We cannot make one hair white or black.

Our lives are in God's hands, not ours.

Cross References

James 5:12

> Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear by heaven, by earth, or by anything else. Let your “yes” mean yes and your “no” mean no, so that you will not be judged.

1 Samuel 14:45

> As surely as the LORD lives, not one hair from his head will fall to the ground.

Luke 21:18

But not one hair on your head will be lost.

Spiritual Principle

We are not in control of our own lives; God is.

XXXVII. LET YOUR YES BE YES

Matthew 5:37 — Simple Honesty

“Simply let your ‘Yes’ mean yes and your ‘No’ mean no. Anything more than this comes from evil.”

Jesus gives a simple standard.

Say what you mean.

Mean what you say.

A follower of Jesus should be so honest that he does not need to swear an oath to be believed.

The need for oaths exists because people lie.

When we feel the need to add, **“I swear,”** it suggests our normal words cannot be trusted.

Cross References

James 5:12

> Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear by heaven, by earth, or by anything else. Let your “yes” mean yes and your “no” mean no, so that you will not be judged.

2 Corinthians 1:18

> As surely as God is faithful, what we tell you is not both “yes” and “no.”

Ecclesiastes 5:5

> It is better not to make a promise than to make one and not keep it.

Spiritual Principle

A Christian's word should be as good as an oath.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Integrity means you do not need to swear, because you never lie.

XXXVIII. YOU HAVE HEARD IT SAID — AN EYE FOR AN EYE

Matthew 5:38 — Limited Justice

“You have heard it said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’”

This law appears three times in the Old Testament.

It was given to judges and courts.

Its purpose was to make sure punishment was fair.

It limited revenge.

The punishment could not be greater than the crime.

But people had turned this court rule into a personal right to get even.

Cross References

Exodus 21:24

> Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

Leviticus 24:20

> Broken bone for broken bone, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. Whatever injury a person causes another, the same must be done to him.

Deuteronomy 19:21

> Do not feel sorry for him. Take a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, and a foot for a foot.

Spiritual Principle

God's law was designed to bring justice, not to give permission for revenge.

XXXIX. TURN THE OTHER CHEEK

Matthew 5:39 — Do Not Resist an Evil Person

“But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other also.”

Jesus teaches a different way.

Do not take revenge.

A slap on the **right cheek** by a right-handed person would be a backhanded slap.

In that culture, it was an insult more than an injury.

Jesus is saying:

Do not insult back.

Do not strike back.

Do not get even.

This does not mean Christians can never protect the weak or that governments should not punish crime.

It means that in personal insults, we do not seek revenge.

Jesus Himself lived this out when He was struck and spit on before His crucifixion.

Cross References

Lamentations 3:30

> Let him turn his cheek to the one who hits him and accept the insults.

Isaiah 50:6

> I let them beat My back. I let them pull out My beard. I did not hide My face when they insulted Me and spit on Me.

Luke 6:29

> If someone slaps you on one cheek, let him slap the other cheek too.

Spiritual Principle

Love refuses to take revenge.

Key Truth

Turning the other cheek is not weakness.

It takes great strength to refuse to strike back.

XL. GIVE YOUR COAT AS WELL

Matthew 5:40 — When Someone Sues You

“If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, give them your coat as well.”

In those days, a person's **shirt** was the inner garment.

The **coat** was the outer garment.

Poor people often had only one coat.

They used it as a blanket at night.

The law said a coat taken as a pledge had to be returned before sunset.

Jesus says to be willing to give even what the law would let you keep.

Do not fight for your rights at the cost of your witness.

Cross References

Luke 6:29

> If someone takes your coat, do not stop him from taking your shirt too.

Exodus 22:26

> If you take your neighbor's coat as a promise that he will pay you back, give it back to him before the sun goes down.

1 Corinthians 6:7

> The fact that you have lawsuits against each other means you have already failed. Why not just accept being wronged? Why not just let yourselves be cheated?

Spiritual Principle

Generosity is more important than winning.

XLI. GO THE SECOND MILE

Matthew 5:41 — Forced to Go One Mile

“If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles.”

Roman soldiers had the legal right to force a civilian to carry their equipment for one mile.

Jewish people hated this.

It reminded them that they were under foreign rule.

Simon of Cyrene was forced in this way to carry Jesus' cross.

Jesus says:

When forced to go one mile, go two.

Do more than what is required.

Turn forced service into willing service.

This is where the phrase **“going the extra mile”** comes from.

Cross References

Mark 15:21

> A man named Simon from Cyrene was passing by on his way in from the country. The soldiers forced him to carry Jesus' cross.

Lamentations 3:27

> It is good for a person to carry a heavy load while he is young.

1 Peter 2:23

> When people insulted Him, He did not insult them back. When He suffered, He did not threaten. He trusted Himself to God, who judges fairly.

Spiritual Principle

Love does more than it has to.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The first mile is duty; the second mile is love.

XLII. GIVE TO THE ONE WHO ASKS

Matthew 5:42 — Do Not Turn Away

“Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.”

Jesus calls His followers to a generous spirit.

God has been generous to us.

We should be generous to others.

This does not mean we must give everything to anyone for any reason.

Wisdom is still needed.

Giving money to someone who will use it to harm themselves is not love.

But our basic attitude should be open-handed, not tight-fisted.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 15:8

> Be generous and lend him whatever he needs.

Luke 6:30

> Give to everyone who asks you, and if someone takes what belongs to you, do not ask for it back.

Proverbs 21:26

> Some people are always wanting more, but a righteous person gives without holding back.

Spiritual Principle

God's generosity to us should make us generous to others.

Application

A generous heart:

- Notices people in need.
- Gives cheerfully.
- Lends without demanding.
- Shares what God has given.
- Gives with wisdom and love.

XLIII. YOU HAVE HEARD IT SAID — HATE YOUR ENEMY

Matthew 5:43 — Love Your Neighbor

“You have heard it said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’”

The command **“Love your neighbor”** comes from Leviticus 19:18.

But the words **“hate your enemy”** are not found in the Old Testament.

People had added them.

They had decided that **“neighbor”** meant only fellow Israelites or people they liked.

So they believed they were free to hate everyone else.

Some passages, like Psalm 139, express hatred for God's enemies.

But those passages were about rejecting evil, not about personal revenge.

Cross References

Leviticus 19:18

> Do not try to get even or hold a grudge against anyone among your people. Love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.

Psalms 139:22

> I hate them completely. They are my enemies.

Deuteronomy 23:6

> As long as you live, do not try to make peace with them or help them do well.

Spiritual Principle

People often add to God's Word to excuse their own sin.

XLIV. LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

Matthew 5:44 — Pray for Those Who Persecute You

“But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”

This may be the hardest command Jesus ever gave.

Love your enemies.

The word for love here is **agape.**

It is not a feeling of liking someone.

It is a choice to seek their good.

Pray for those who persecute you.

It is very hard to keep hating someone you are honestly praying for.

Jesus did exactly this on the cross.

He prayed, **“Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing.”**

Cross References

Luke 6:27

> But I tell you who are listening: Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you.

Exodus 23:4

> If you see your enemy's ox or donkey wandering away, take it back to him.

Proverbs 25:21

> If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat. If he is thirsty, give him water to drink.

Spiritual Principle

Love for enemies is the clearest proof of God's love in us.

Key Truth

Anyone can love a friend.

Only God's grace can make us love an enemy.

XLV. CHILDREN OF YOUR FATHER

Matthew 5:45 — Sun and Rain on All

“By doing this, you will be children of your Father in heaven. He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”

Jesus gives the reason for loving our enemies.

It makes us like our Father.

God is kind even to those who reject Him.

He gives sunshine to the wicked.

He gives rain to the unrighteous.

Bible teachers call this **common grace**, God's goodness to all people.

When we love our enemies, we show the family resemblance.

Cross References

Luke 6:35

> But love your enemies. Do good to them and lend to them without expecting anything back. Then you will have a great reward, and you will be children of the Most High, because He is kind even to ungrateful and evil people.

Job 25:3

> Can anyone count His armies? Is there anyone His light does not shine on?

Psalms 145:9

> The LORD is good to everyone. He shows mercy to everything He has made.

Spiritual Principle

God's children show His character to the world.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When we love like the Father, people see the Father in us.

XLVI. EVEN TAX COLLECTORS DO THAT

Matthew 5:46 — What Reward?

“If you love only those who love you, what reward will you get? Even tax collectors do that.”

Tax collectors were among the most hated people in Israel.

They worked for Rome.

They often cheated their own people.

They were considered traitors.

Yet even they loved their own friends and families.

Jesus says loving those who love us is nothing special.

Everyone does that.

Jesus expects more from His followers.

Cross References

Luke 6:32

> If you love only those who love you, why should you get credit for that? Even sinners love those who love them.

Luke 6:34

> If you lend only to people you expect to pay you back, why should you get credit for that? Even sinners lend to sinners and expect to get the same amount back.

Luke 5:27

> After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the tax booth. Jesus said to him, “Follow Me.”

Spiritual Principle

Christian love must go beyond ordinary human love.

Key Truth

Jesus called a tax collector to follow Him.

His love reaches the very people others despise.

XLVII. MORE THAN OTHERS

Matthew 5:47 — Greeting Only Your Brothers

“If you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Even unbelievers do that.”

In that culture, a greeting was a sign of respect and goodwill.

People often greeted only those in their own group.

Jesus asks a searching question:

“What are you doing more than others?”

Christians are called to do more.

To be kind to strangers.

To welcome outsiders.

To show warmth to people who are different from us.

Cross References

Luke 6:33

> If you do good only to those who do good to you, why should you get credit for that? Even sinners do that.

3 John 1:5

> Dear friend, you are being faithful in all you do for the brothers and sisters, even though they are strangers to you.

Romans 12:13

> Share with God's people who are in need. Welcome strangers into your home.

Spiritual Principle

Kingdom love crosses the lines that people draw.

Application

Ask yourself:

- Who do I avoid?
- Who do I ignore?
- Who do I treat coldly?
- Who is different from me that I could welcome?
- Where can I show kindness that is unexpected?

XLVIII. BE PERFECT AS YOUR FATHER IS PERFECT

Matthew 5:48 — The Highest Standard

“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

This verse sums up the whole chapter.

The standard is not the Pharisees.

The standard is not other people.

The standard is God Himself.

The word **perfect** means **complete**, **mature**, or **whole.**

In this context, Jesus is especially speaking about love.

God's love is complete.

It reaches everyone, even His enemies.

Our love should be complete too.

No one reaches this standard perfectly in this life.

That is why we need the forgiveness of Christ.

But it is still the direction of our lives.

God is making His children more and more like Himself.

Cross References

Leviticus 19:2

> Speak to all the people of Israel and tell them: Be holy, because I, the LORD your God, am holy.

Leviticus 11:44

> I am the LORD your God. Make yourselves holy and be holy, because I am holy.

Luke 6:36

> Show mercy, just as your Father shows mercy.

Spiritual Principle

God's standard is His own character.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The impossible standard of God drives us to the cross for forgiveness and to the Spirit for power.

XLIX. SEVEN GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 5

1. Blessed Are the Humble

True happiness and reward come from God's kingdom, not earthly power or wealth.

Principle:

God's blessing rests on those who know they need Him.

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2. Christ's Followers Are Salt and Light

We preserve truth and shine God's love in a dark world.

Principle:

Believers make a difference in the world by being different from the world.

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3. Jesus Fulfills the Law

He raises the standard, focusing on the heart, not just outward actions.

Principle:

God cares not only about what we do, but about why we do it.

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4. Anger and Lust Are Deadly Roots

Sin begins in the heart long before it reaches actions.

Principle:

Deal with sin at the root, before it bears fruit.

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5. Radical Faithfulness

It is better to sacrifice what leads to sin than to lose your soul.

Principle:

Nothing is too precious to give up if it is leading you away from God.

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6. True Love Goes Further

Forgive, give, and love even enemies, reflecting the character of God.

Principle:

Kingdom love does not ask, “What do they deserve?” but, “What would my Father do?”

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7. The Call to Perfection

We are to aim for maturity and holiness, reflecting our Father's nature.

Principle:

God's children are called to grow up to look like their Father.

L. THE BEATITUDES AS A STAIRWAY

Many Bible teachers have noticed that the Beatitudes build on one another.

Poor in Spirit

We see our need.

Mourning

We grieve over our sin.

Meekness

We surrender to God.

Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness

We long for what only God can give.

Mercy

We show others the mercy we have received.

Purity of Heart

We are made clean and single-minded toward God.

Peacemaking

We bring God's peace to others.

Persecution

The world opposes the life God has created in us.

Key Truth

The Beatitudes are not eight different kinds of people; they are eight marks of every true follower of Jesus.

LI. THE SIX “BUT I TELL YOU” TEACHINGS

Jesus gave six teachings that go beyond outward rules to the heart.

Murder

Outward: Do not kill.

Heart: Do not hold anger or contempt.

Adultery

Outward: Do not commit adultery.

Heart: Do not look with lust.

Divorce

Outward: Give a certificate of divorce.

Heart: Honor the lifelong covenant of marriage.

Oaths

Outward: Keep your vows.

Heart: Be honest in every word.

Revenge

Outward: An eye for an eye.

Heart: Do not take revenge; go the second mile.

Love

Outward: Love your neighbor.

Heart: Love even your enemies.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The law tells us what not to do; Jesus shows us who we must become.

LII. WHAT MATTHEW 5 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 5 presents Jesus as:

The Greater Moses

He goes up the mountain and teaches God's law.

The Authoritative Teacher

He says, **“But I tell you.”**

The Fulfillment of Scripture

He came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets.

The Light of the World

His followers reflect His light.

The One Worth Suffering For

Blessed are those persecuted **“because of Me.”**

The Perfect Example

He lived out every word of this sermon.

Key Truth

Jesus did not only preach the Sermon on the Mount; He lived it perfectly, and He died for those who have failed to live it.

LIII. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What does the word “blessed” mean in the Beatitudes?

It means more than happy.

It describes a person who has God's favor and approval.

It is a deep well-being that comes from God, not from circumstances.

Question 2

What does it mean to be “poor in spirit”?

It means knowing that you are spiritually bankrupt before God.

It is admitting that you have nothing to offer Him and that you need His mercy.

This is the first step into the kingdom.

Question 3

Is meekness the same as weakness?

No.

Meekness is strength under control.

Moses was called the most humble man on earth, yet he led a nation.

A meek person trusts God instead of fighting for his own way.

Question 4

What does it mean that Christians are salt and light?

Like salt, Christians help preserve the world from moral decay and bring goodness into it.

Like light, Christians show the way to God through their good works.

Both must remain distinct from the world to be useful.

Question 5

How did Jesus fulfill the Law?

He fulfilled its prophecies.

He obeyed its commands perfectly.

He became the final sacrifice it pointed to.

He revealed its true meaning.

Question 6

How can anyone's righteousness be greater than that of the Pharisees?

The Pharisees had an outward righteousness.

God requires a righteousness of the heart.

That righteousness comes as a gift through faith in Christ, and God then changes the heart to live it out.

Question 7

What does Jesus teach about anger?

Jesus teaches that sinful anger is the root of murder.

Anger without cause, contempt, and insults are serious in God's eyes.

We should make peace quickly and not let anger take root.

Question 8

What does Jesus mean about tearing out an eye or cutting off a hand?

He is not commanding people to literally harm their bodies.

He is using strong language to show how seriously we must deal with sin.

We must remove whatever leads us into sin.

Question 9

Why did Jesus say not to swear oaths?

People were using oaths to look honest while finding ways to get out of their promises.

Jesus taught that every word is spoken before God.

A Christian should be so honest that a simple yes or no is enough.

Question 10

What does “turn the other cheek” mean?

It means not taking personal revenge when insulted or wronged.

It does not mean that justice is unimportant.

It means we trust God with justice and respond to evil with love.

Question 11

Why should we love our enemies?

Because God shows kindness even to those who reject Him.

When we love our enemies, we show that we are children of our Father.

Jesus Himself prayed for those who crucified Him.

Question 12

What does Jesus mean by “Be perfect”?

The word means complete, mature, or whole.

God's love is complete, reaching even His enemies.

Our love should be complete too.

No one reaches this perfectly in this life, which is why we need Christ's forgiveness and the Spirit's power.

Question 13

What should Matthew 5 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 5 should cause believers to live:

- Humble before God.
- Sorrowful over sin.
- Hungry for righteousness.
- Merciful to others.
- Pure in heart.
- Working for peace.
- Shining as salt and light.
- Dealing with sin at the root.
- Honest in every word.
- Loving even enemies.

LIV. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 5 asks several important questions.

Do I See My Spiritual Need?

Or do I think I am good enough on my own?

Do I Grieve Over My Sin?

Or have I become comfortable with it?

What Do I Hunger For Most?

Is righteousness at the top of my list?

Am I Salt and Light Where I Live?

Can people see the difference Christ makes in me?

Is There Anyone I Need to Be Reconciled With?

Is there someone who has something against me?

Am I Guarding My Eyes and My Heart?

What am I allowing my eyes to dwell on?

Is There Something I Need to Remove from My Life?

What is my “right eye” or “right hand”?

Can People Trust My Word?

Does my “yes” mean yes?

How Do I Respond When I Am Wronged?

Do I seek revenge or show grace?

Who Is My Enemy, and Am I Praying for Them?

LV. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Jesus Goes Deeper Than the Rules”

The religious leaders of Jesus' day were experts at rules.

They knew what not to do.

They avoided murder.

They avoided adultery.

They kept their oaths when it suited them.

But Jesus went deeper.

He went past the hand to the heart.

Past the act to the attitude.

Past the outward action to the inward desire.

He showed that a person can keep the rules and still be far from God.

This creates a powerful principle.

God is not satisfied with behavior that looks good.

He wants a heart that is good.

And only He can create that kind of heart.

Principle:

Rules can change our behavior, but only Christ can change our heart.

LVI. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 5 begins on a mountain.

Crowds gather.

Disciples come close.

Jesus sits down and begins to speak.

And His words turn the world upside down.

The world blesses the proud.

Jesus blesses the humble.

The world blesses those who laugh.

Jesus blesses those who mourn.

The world blesses the powerful.

Jesus blesses the meek.

The world says to get even.

Jesus says to turn the other cheek.

The world says to love your friends and hate your enemies.

Jesus says to love your enemies and pray for those who hurt you.

Then He gives a standard no one can reach on their own:

“Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Matthew 5 therefore reminds us:

We cannot live the Sermon on the Mount by our own strength.

It shows us how far we fall short.

It drives us to Jesus for forgiveness.

And then it shows us the life Jesus will build in us by His Spirit.

The kingdom does not begin with the strong.

It begins with:

The poor in spirit.

The broken.

The hungry.

And those who know they need a Savior.

The same call still stands:

Be humble.

Be merciful.

Be pure.

Be peacemakers.

Be salt.

Be light.

Love your enemies.

And until He returns:

Keep shining.

Keep loving.

Keep growing.

Keep looking like your Father.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the words of Jesus on the mountain.

Thank You that Your kingdom belongs to the poor in spirit.

Show us our need for You every day.

Keep us from the pride that thinks we are good enough on our own.

Give us hearts that mourn over our sin.

Comfort us with Your mercy and forgiveness.

Make us meek, strong in You, but surrendered to Your will.

Give us a deep hunger and thirst for righteousness, and fill us.

Teach us to show mercy, because You have shown us mercy.

Create pure hearts in us.

Make us peacemakers who reflect Your character.

When we are insulted or mistreated for following Jesus, help us rejoice.

Make us salt that has not lost its flavor.

Make us light that is not hidden.

Let our good works point others to You.

Lord, You see our hearts.

Forgive us for anger we have held onto.

Forgive us for words that have wounded others.

Show us anyone we need to make things right with, and give us courage to go.

Guard our eyes and our minds from lust.

Give us strength to remove whatever leads us into sin.

Protect our marriages and our homes.

Make us people of honest words, whose yes means yes and whose no means no.

When we are wronged, keep us from revenge.

Teach us to go the second mile.

Make us generous to those in need.

Help us love our enemies and pray for those who hurt us.

Make us more like You every day.

Thank You that Jesus lived this perfectly when we could not.

Thank You that He died for every way we have failed.

Fill us with Your Spirit so that we can live the life Your kingdom describes.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“In the same way, let your light shine before others, so they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.” — Matthew 5:16

Central Truth

Jesus reveals the character of His kingdom, calling His followers to a righteousness of the heart that shines as salt and light and reflects the holiness and love of their Father in heaven.

Matthew 5 in One Sentence

On the mountain, Jesus blesses the humble, calls His followers salt and light, fulfills the Law, and goes beyond outward rules to the heart, teaching His people to love even their enemies and to be complete as their heavenly Father is complete.