

Unit II. Proclamation and Reception of the King, 4:12 – ch 15

Lesson 4: Chapter 4:12-25 and Chapter 5 “The Beatitudes”

Servant’s preparation:

http://www.suscopts.org/pdf/presentations/biblestudy/NT/Matthew/Matthew_05.pdf

Brief introduction:

At the beginning of each lesson in the bible study of St. Matthew, please mention this book overview.

- ✓ Who is St. Matthew? He was one of the twelve disciples; he was a tax-collector before Jesus called him to follow Him.
- ✓ Who did he write his gospel to? The Jews, it is designed to prove that Jesus is the Messianic king of Old Testament (OT) prophecy.
- ✓ What is its theme? Jesus is the King of the Heavenly kingdom, Israel’s long-awaited Messiah.

Remember:

Last lesson, we studied how Jesus was tempted by Satan and in every case, Jesus turned Satan back by quoting Scripture. Let us follow His example.

Memory verse:

5:13 “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned?”

Lesson opener:

Clashing Values

Do a demonstration with water and vegetable oil to demonstrate how the two do not mix, just like the world’s values can never mix with the Lord’s values. You will need a clear glass, some water, food coloring and some vegetable oil. Put the water and food coloring (any color) into the glass and stir. Next pour some vegetable oil into the glass. Stir it up. At first, it will appear that the two can mix, just like the world may try to convince us that we can live by its standards as well as God’s standards. But after a few minutes, the oil and water will separate. They can never mix.

After the demonstration, explain how this shows that we can never be a Christian and do what the world tells us to do. Jesus said that we are to be “in” the world but never “of” the world. No man can have two masters; you will either serve Jesus or the world. Today we will see how the things that Jesus taught us in His Sermon on the Mount clash with what the world tries to tell us.

Lesson Goal:

God is calling us to be different like the salt and the light through spiritually growing in our daily behavior among people.

Lesson body:

The lesson includes many verses; it is better to explain the events and only read 5:1-16 along with the meditations provided.

Jesus starts His ministry in Galilea (4:13-25)

The Lord Jesus departed to Galilee. He left Nazareth and came to live in Capernaum, by the sea, in the suburbs of Zebulon and Nephtali to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah.

The Jews in the Galilee region were rather few, and most of the inhabitants were Phoenicians, Greeks and Arabs. This is why it was called the 'Galilee' of Nations, or Gentiles. The condition of this region reached its very worst level. Then the Lord Jesus came, to shine on those sitting in darkness, (Isaiah 9:1,2).

The Calling of the Disciples: At the sea of Galilee, the Lord called the two brothers Simon Peter and Andrew and also the other two brothers James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They were fishermen, and as St. Paul says (1 Cor. 1:27) "He chose the ignorant of the world to put to shame the wise ones".

St. Jerome says, "The first ones to be called to follow the Savior were illiterate fishermen. He sent them to preach so that no one relates the change of the believers to eloquence and knowledge, but rather to the work of God".

When the Lord Jesus called His disciples to work in His kingdom, He wished to make clear that His message was not for an earthly kingdom, and neither was it to get rid of the Roman political burden as the Jews thought, but rather to liberate the heart of the power of sin so that He reigns over it.

Chapter 5 (Read 5:1-12) THE BEATITUDES:



The Sermon or the Mount composes the three chapters 5,6,7 of the gospel of our teacher St Matthew. It presents a live constitution for a perfect complete life. St Augustine says, "In it there are all the excellent principles necessary for a perfect Christian life."

Enormous crowds were following Jesus, some to hear Him teach and others to be healed by Him. Seeing the opportunity to teach His disciples while the multitude could listen, Jesus made His way up on a hillside where everyone could hear. This is such an awesome picture of the relationship that Jesus offers.

Each of the nine beatitudes pronounces a blessing upon those who have certain characteristics. The word blessed means more than happy. Happiness comes from earthly things; blessedness comes from God. It is not bestowed randomly; a reason follows each beatitude.

1. Blessed are the poor in spirit:

What is this 'poor in spirit other than the life of humility, through which man realizes that without God he is nothing, at all'. Pride is the source of all downfalls, whereas humility or the poverty of the spirit is the entrance to the heavenly kingdom. The world tells us this lie that pleasing ourselves is the most important thing. This kind of a prideful attitude goes completely against what Jesus teaches. Pride will destroy our relationship with God because it makes us the center of everything, instead of God.

2. Blessed are they who mourn:

Here, He does not mean those who generally grieve, but those who grieve over sin, since the other kind of grief is absolutely forbidden. "No one can contradict that the tears poured out for God, are useful and rewarding, we shall know its use when we depart from this world. A person, who is on the road of continuous grief and mooning for the sake of God's love, is never in the loss of joy everyday". St. John El Dergy.

3. Blessed are the Meek: the humble soul is aware of God's abilities working in it, it comprehends the power of the spirit, and therefore it lives in inward humility, reflected by outer action.

We see from the life and character of Jesus that He was a man who was totally submissive to His heavenly Father. The meek and gentle are those who quietly submit themselves to God, to His word and His will (Psalm 37:5-11). Some might think that a meek person is a weak person. But the opposite is true. You would never think of Jesus as a "weak" person.

The world tries to tell us that we should take everything into our own hands, because we are in control. We need to have power over others to make them do what we want. This will make us feel proud and important, but Jesus says that it is a blessing to be meek. Jesus said the meek shall inherit the earth. If we want to get ahead in life, we need to be humble and meek. This will elevate us more in life than trying to make ourselves out to be important.

4. Blessed are those who thirst and hunger for righteousness: What is righteousness? It is having right actions, right attitudes, and right relationships, all based on our right standing with God. We cannot be righteous in our own strength, but when we come to Jesus, He makes us righteous through His perfect blood shed on the cross. When we thirst and hunger for more of Jesus in our lives, we will be truly blessed and thoroughly filled. The world tells us to do whatever we want to do. It tells us that there really are not any rules except for the ones we "feel" like following and that right and wrong are based on what we think, not on God's standard--the Bible.

5. Blessed are those who are merciful: Jesus wants us to be merciful to others. We can show mercy to others by loving and encouraging them instead of judging them.

6. Blessed are the pure in heart: He who copies the Lord, and has mercy filled with love, then God will work in his heart.
7. Blessed are the peacemakers: Peacemaking is God's way. We should carefully and prayerfully attempt to be peacemakers. Then we will be called "sons of God."
8. Blessed *are* those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake:
9. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you: We notice in the previous blessings, the lord addressed everyone in general. But at this point, He addresses those present. This is because the believer accepts the tribulations whether he is shepherded or is a shepherd as personal gifts presented to us from God. In the same way the Lord concluded His blessings, by the possibility of scorn and persecution He likewise promised the heavenly reward for those who bear this 'for righteousness' sake, or as He says,' for My sake.

You are the salt of the earth! You are the light of the world [Read 5:13-16]

Sodium chloride is composed of two elements: chlorine and sodium, both of which are poisonous and deadly. But put together they form salt that is indispensable in our daily food. Moreover, the Christian is also formed of two elements: the spirit and the body. If divided apart by sin, they lose their peace and become dead.

Salt melts easy but God therefore does not leave us to melt in the earth, but He rather uplifts us and considers us light to shine to the world. He reflects His light on us, and thus the believer becomes shinier than the visual sun. No one could hide it.

Christ Fulfills the Law: [5:17-24]

The Pharisees thought they kept the law by being zealous in teaching it. They did not realize they were breaking it by their wicked life. Education without work is considered breaking the law, and teaching will be of no avail.

After the Lord had confirmed that He did not break the old law, but that He rather fulfilled it, He changed this general speech to the application of the old law commandments. He clarified how to attain perfection, beginning with the commandment of not to kill.

“He who teaches us not to be angry does not break the special commandment of not to commit murder .He rather completes it, because when we are not angry, we are purified inwardly in our heart, and outwardly also by not killing”. St. Augustine.

Agree with your adversary quickly [5:25-26]

The Lord commands a bad-tempered person to be quick in reconciling his adversary, as long as he is on the road. Otherwise, the adversary will hand him over to the judge. The judge will hand him over to the officer, who will put him in jail. He will not leave there till he pays the last penny .Who is this adversary other than” **the divine commandment of God.**” This is included as part of the animosity with the bad-tempered man. The “commandment of love “stands as a true adversary to him. It condemns him in the Lord’s Day before the Great Judge [the lord Jesus]. Jesus hands him over to the

angels, [like officers] to be thrown into “the outer darkness “. He does not leave there because he is unable to fulfill the divine justice.

Go the Second Mile and Love your enemy: [5:38-48]

The Lord has given us examples for facing evil with goodness. The first of which is that if someone slaps us on the right cheek, we turn to him the other one as well.

The fathers made it clear that the Lord, when speaking of the commandment, has not meant it to be understood literally. This is because man is not slapped on the right cheek, but rather on the left one, unless he who slaps is left-handed. The right cheek signifies spiritual honor or spiritual glory. If someone ill-treats us to break down our spiritual honor, then in love we offer the left cheek also, that is to say, and the materialistic temporary glories as well.

If someone has taken your tunic and has become your enemy and wishes to take you to court, causing you a lot of trouble. To buy your peace of mind, leave your cloak as well. In this way you save your time, your heart, your thoughts .You will moreover win your enemy to your side by means of love and kindness. St. Augustine says” I wish we could scorn all those things we consider ours, and because of which our brothers reject us. I wish we could give them these things”.

The Second Mile: (Matt 5:41,42) *’And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.’*

This commandment is so important that Christianity is called the religion of the second miles, in which the believer offers others more than what they ask for, in love. This is done to win himself and others by his love. To go the other miles is a sign of spiritual strength and openness of heart in love, Man does not do what is asked of him grungily but rather offers more than what is required of him.

The lord Jesus asked the believers to rise with His Holy Spirit on the ladder of love, and to love even the enemies, and to be kind to those who hate them, and to pray for those who persecute them. In this way they will carry that heavenly Father’s model and His image.

Takeaways and lesson delivery ideas:

From “you are the salt and light” section:

Salt is pointless if it doesn’t prevent decay. Christ says this useless salt is tossed out. The question is put to us. Are we really preventing decay around us? Are our words and actions influencing people? Salt prevents the natural course of things. Is our presence a complete game changer in the world like salty salt is?

There are many ways we can do this. Where there is strife, teach others how to cause peace. Where there is gossip, teach compassion. Point them to where true satisfaction and joy is found. But do not stop there. We are not simply bringing morality where there is immorality. This will not permanently prevent decay. Christ prevents decay. Seek opportunities to engage in spiritual conversations. Seek opportunities to tell others about how much serving Christ has affected your life.

This second illustration tells us we are light and are exposed to the world. Christ says people don't light lamps only to cover them up. People light lamps and put them on a stand so everyone can see. How?

1. Interact with real people not online: sometimes we don't realize how false our connections with people are. We spend time figuring out what 500 people did today through social media, but we may not have a real connection with them at all.
2. Do not hide your faith: We may have plenty of connections with people in the world. Yet our faith is kept quiet because of timidness. We may be the only lights people in our everyday lives ever meet. We are their only hope. We must all be exposed lights.

