

UPPER ROOM SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY

Living the Life of the Beloved/Belonging: Matthew 5-7

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Spring-Summer, 2018

Lesson 6 – (April 29, 2018) Matthew 5:17-26

From Our Last Session:

- a. Consider it a compliment when someone says, “Lighten up!”
- b. Explaining why you are doing good deeds is a great opportunity to give credit to Jesus.
- c. Talking about how Jesus helped you through failures...is also a great opportunity to witness!

Matthew 5:17-20

“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.

- a. **“the Law or the Prophets”** – the Jews used this expression in four (4) different ways:
 - a. The Ten Commandments
 - b. The 1st five books of the Old Testament (Pentateuch)
 - c. The whole of Scripture
 - d. The Oral or Scribal Law
 - i. Scribal law was derived from the Ten Commandment
 - ii. Rationale: If something was not explicitly forbidden or commanded by the Commandments, then it could implicitly present.
 - iii. Scribes assumed the authority establish multiple rules and regulations which defined their take on Judaism.
 - iv. Example: 3rd Commandment: Keep the Sabbath Day holy by not working. (You could bear no burdens).
 1. Scribes determined that carrying a “burden” was work. A burden was defined as: “food equal in weight to a dried fig, enough wine for mixing in a goblet, milk enough for one swallow...”
 - v. Until the middle of the 3rd Century A.D., these regulations were orally taught (not written down).
 - vi. The *Mishnah* was the written form together with an assortment of commentaries known as the *Talmuds*.
 - vii. Strict, orthodox Jews, at the time of Jesus, believed that true religions consisted of keeping every single one of these regulations – as a matter of life and death.

- e. **Matthew 22:36-40.** *“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”³⁷ Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”*
 - i. Where love, respect, and reverence for God and your neighbor – as a response to His loving you – was what God intended in giving the Law...the scribes and Pharisees turned it into a legalistic way of life.
 - ii. Legalism does not motivate love; it results in prideful self-righteousness.
 - 1. “Look how good I am (in following all the rules) compared to you.”
 - 2. “I hope that everything I’ve done counts for something.”
- f. **The Beloved Life Principle #16:** Loving God, others, and yourself begins with God’s loving you so much, He was willing to forgive you from **sin** and deliver you from death – through His Son.
- g. Your love for God, for others, and for yourself is always a response to what God initiated in the first place.
- b. **“not come to abolish, but to fulfill”** – Jesus came to bring out the real meaning of God’s Law – not legalistic obligations – but how to love God and other people.
 - a. **The Beloved Life Principle #17:** It is tempting to think, “I can do what I want. The Law doesn’t apply to **me**.” Through faith in Christ, God’s Law is still important. It teaches how to love God.

¹⁸ **For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. ¹⁹ Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.**

- b. **“not the smallest letter, not the least stroke”** – Jesus’ high regard for the Word of God extends even to the “smallest” and “the least” of the assurances you are loved.
- c. **“who sets aside...and teaches others...practices and teaches”** – Jesus cautions you, that what you believe about God’s Word...is what you will ultimately use to influence (“teach”) others.
- d. **“teaching others”** – teaching holds a special place in God’s kingdom.
 - i. **James 3:1.** *Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.*

ii. **James 3:13-17.** *Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. ¹⁵ Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. ¹⁶ For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. ¹⁷ But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.*

²⁰ **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.**

a. **“unless your righteousness surpasses”** – people commonly assumed that, if anyone could be a part of the kingdom of heaven, it would certainly be the scribes, the Pharisees, and the teachers of the law. They prided themselves on obeying every “jot and tittle” (“smallest letter and least stroke”) of the Law thinking that if they achieved perfection, they would hasten the coming of the kingdom. Sadly, they missed the point of “the Law and the Prophets” and they rejected Jesus as the fulfillment of love.

b. **The Beloved Life Principle #17:** When achievement and perfection become your sole motives for virtuous living, several things suffer:

a. **Gratitude** is minimized.

b. You compare yourself to **others** in a prideful way.

c. You increase the internal fear of “Have I **done** enough?”

d. You have no comfort when the world says, “Your **best** isn’t **good** enough.”

e. Self-righteousness is a false god. It promises fulfillment, but it can’t deliver. Legalism flows out of self-righteousness. It brings no joy; only guilt, shame, and fear.