

THE KINGDOM-DRIVEN LIFE #11

The Book of Matthew

Law Written on the Heart

You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty again? It is good for nothing anymore, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do men light a lamp, and put it under the peck-measure, but on the lampstand; and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.
Matthew 5:13-20 NASB

I. Jesus, the Kingdom and the New Covenant

A. The Call to “Exceeding” Righteousness

1. Jesus shocks his listeners when He calls for a righteousness exceeding that of the Pharisees.

The scribes and Pharisees were enemies to Christ and his doctrine, and were great oppressors; and yet it must be owned, that there was something commendable in them. They were much in fasting and prayer, and giving of alms; they were punctual in observing the ceremonial appointments, and made it their business to teach others; they had such an interest in the people that they ought, if but two men went to heaven, one would be a Pharisee; and yet our Lord Jesus here tells his disciples, that the religion he came to establish, did not only exclude the badness, but excel the goodness, of the scribes and Pharisees. We must do more than they, and better than they, or we shall come short of heaven.

Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible

2. Imagine the most “righteous” people you know...that won’t be enough to get you to heaven!
3. Everything we will see in Matthew 5 is designed to reveal our spiritual poverty, our absolute moral bankruptcy in fulfilling Jesus’ requirements aside from the empowerment of God in our hearts!!!
4. Even the Old Testament prophets saw how far short the nation fell in being God’s witnesses to the nations.
5. The Sermon on the Mount is nothing short of the inauguration of New Testament Living, which we call “Kingdom-Driven Living”.

B. A New Day Foretold of Old

“Behold, the days (will) come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with (My people)...Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers... After those days”, says the Lord, “I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.”
Excerpted from Jeremiah 31:31-33 KJV

1. Israel’s “failure” was breaking the laws God gave them.
2. This was because they saw God’s law as “external” to them, “outside” of them, a thing to be observed as they were able.*

***And here is the problem of ALL “religion”! Anything that stops short of what Jesus brings, a radical “heart transplant” with the “software” of God’s laws “uploaded” cannot equip us to live rightly before Him.**

3. Deliverance from the problem would require a brand new administration of God’s law.

a. To this the Old Testament prophets ascribe:

I am bringing you back, but not because you deserve it. I am doing it to protect my holy name, on which you brought shame while you were scattered among the nations. (at that time)...”I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. Your filth will be washed away, and you will no longer worship idols. And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations.

Excerpted from Ezekiel 36:22-27 New Living Translation

b. To this the New Testament confirms fulfillment:

“But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel on that day,” says the Lord. “I will put my laws in their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.”
Hebrews 8:10

C. Moses and Jesus: Two Versions of the Law

1. Moses “nationalized” Israel by bringing the Law of God down from the mountain on tablets of stone.
2. The Old Testament lifestyle of God’s people was primarily “law-driven”:
 - It focused on *behavior*
 - Its primary sphere was *external* and concerned the *flesh*
 - It was given by Moses, written on tablets of stone

3. Now comes Christ, the Messiah-King, who ascends up into a new “mount”, “nationalizes” His Kingdom in the Sermon on the Mount, teaching principles we call the “Kingdom-Driven” life!

- Focusing not only on behavior, but now expanded to include motive, attitude and intent
- The primary sphere is *internal* and concerns the *inner self*
- It was given by Jesus, a “greater than Moses”, Who writes God’s law on our *hearts*

4. Only when we grasp this can we understand Jesus’ astounding words to His disciples:

...unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.
Matthew 5:20

II. The Formula for Kingdom Driven Living

A. “But I Say unto You...”

1. In the rest of Matthew 5 (vv. 21-48) we find six examples of this principle, all using the same formula:

“**You have heard it said...**” followed by a quotation of OT Law

“**But I say unto you...**” followed by the “Kingdom-version” of God’s Law, the “law written on the heart”!

2. Jesus assumes the authority of God whereby He explains the “exceeding righteousness” He just mentioned.

3. The Pharisees, scribes and rabbis all taught the Law of God...but none would dare add to it, expand it, or claim that its Old Testament fulfillment is accomplished within their very person!

I am not come to destroy (the Law)...but to fulfill it.
Matthew 5:17

B. Six Samples of Kingdom Driven Living

You Have Heard It Said

thou shalt not kill

thou shalt not commit adultery

But / Say Unto You

...anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment...anyone who calls his brother an “idiot” is in danger of hellfire...

anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has committed adultery with her already

	in his heart
anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce	anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery
“Do not break your oaths	Do not swear at all. Simply let your ‘yes’ be ‘yes’, and your ‘no’ ‘no’
Eye for eye...tooth for tooth	Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also, and if someone sues you to take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go two, and do not turn away from someone who wants to borrow from you.
Love your neighbor and hate your enemy	Love your enemies. Pray for those who persecute you. If you love only those who love you, what reward will you get? Even the tax collectors do that. And if you greet only your brothers, don’t even pagans do that?

Concluding Words

Therefore, be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.
Matthew 5:48

III. Three Conclusions from Matthew 5

A. The “Christian” life on view today bears little resemblance to the “kingdom-driven” life in the Sermon.

1. God’s complaint against Israel was that because of them (their lifestyles) His name was blasphemed among the heathen. (2 Samuel 12:14; Lamentations 2:15-16; Ezekiel 36:20-23; cf. Romans 2:24)

Because of you Jews, the Gentiles speak evil of God.
Rom 2:24

2. The New Testament warns the church against the same errors! (Romans 2:24, 1 Cor. 10:32; 1 Timothy 5:14; 6:1; Titus 2:5,8,10; 1 Peter 2:12; 3:16)

To young women:

That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

Titus 2:4-5 KJV

I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give no occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

1 Timothy 5:14 KJV

To young men:

Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.

In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing purity, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

Titus 2:6-8 KJV

To all who work for others:

Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.

1 Timothy 6:1 KJV

B. The marginalization of the church is clearly the result of our lack of “saltiness,” how similar our lives are with everyone else’s.

You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless.

Matthew 5:13

C. We don’t need to try something new; we need to commit ourselves to the Kingdom-Driven life Jesus empowers us to live as a result of repentance and a regenerated heart!

D. The end result of all this should be:

- A complete conviction of our selfish lives after the flesh
- A full confession before God of our inability to live this life in our own righteousness, will-power or spiritual abilities
- Recognition that only the law “written on our hearts” will do!
- A humility that positions us for the new life offered to all who *repent* and embrace the Kingdom