

DAY SEVEN 7

HEART TEACHINGS: GOD'S PERSPECTIVE ON A BLESSED LIFE

Matthew 5:1-48

These have been called the "be-attitudes." Christ is teaching what it means to care about what God thinks, and how to experience God through a life of dedication. He makes it clear that we must come to God in humility and belief. If we are hungry for God's truth in our lives, we are told we will be satisfied.

Imagine if you could see life 100% from a spiritual perspective. This is what it would look like!

Jesus teaches that those who choose to follow God are like salt and light in a world that is rotting in darkness. The Gospel is the only hope for a man's soul.

The Scribes and Pharisees were influential leaders among the Jews. Jesus immediately began to confront their self-righteousness and hypocrisy.

When Jesus saw the huge crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. He began to teach them, saying,

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when men throw insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me.

Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

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 bushel basket, but on the lamp stand; 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 negates one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, 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."

The requirements of God's Law were fulfilled by Christ. The Law reveals sin, sin brings death, and Christ conquered death through His submission to the will of His Father. Christ does what is necessary to fulfill the requirements of God's Law: the spilling of blood to pay for sin.



*Read Exodus 20
and Deuteronomy 10*

Here are a series of clarifying declarations of what the Law given to Moses was always supposed to mean to the heart-follower of the Living God. Christ's standards were much purer than those which the Jews were interpreting and applying from the Law.

Contrasts

"You have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not commit murder' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.

"If you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering. Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, in order that your opponent may not deliver you to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. Truly I say to you, you shall not come out of there, until you have paid the last cent.

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery'; but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to go into hell.

"And it was said, 'Whoever sends his wife away, let him give her a certificate of divorce'; but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the cause of moral impurity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

"Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not make false vows, but shall fulfill your vows to the Lord.' But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your statement be, 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no; and anything beyond this is evil.

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, do not resist him who is evil; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also.

"And if anyone wants to sue you, and take your shirt, let him have your coat as well. And whoever shall force you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes

Jesus continues to clarify matters of the heart, because it is the heart that condemns or spares a man.

While we are obsessed with what is fair, the Living God is focused on what is just. By giving vengeance and justice into the hand of God, we are free to devote ourselves to doing the will of God in the world.

Prayer is talking with God. Prayer is to be between ourselves and God, and this "Lord's Prayer" is given to teach us "to pray" and not so much how to pray. Each element reveals reliance upon God and a heartfelt relationship with God in our daily lives. What a pity when prayer becomes meaningless repetition.

God's holiness flowing through us is much different than becoming good by religious effort. To be holy we must be mature in our thinking, understanding that God's goodness must be placed within us as we yield our will to His will.

If we live to be noticed by men we will miss God. Fasting is a way of subjecting our bodies and focusing more of our attention on God.

His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

"For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax-gatherers do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Therefore, you are to be holy, as your heavenly Father is holy."

DAY EIGHT 8

Matthew 6:1-34

"Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.

"When you give financial gifts, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their full reward. But when you give money back to God, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing that your giving may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

"And when you pray, you are not to be as the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners, in order to be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

"And when you are praying, do not use meaningless, repetitive words, as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need, even before you ask Him.

"Pray, then, in this manner: 'Our Father, You are in heaven, and Your Name is holy. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us all we need to sustain us this day.

And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven those who are indebted to us.

And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.'

"For if you forgive men for their sins against you and others, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

"And whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance in order to be noticed fasting by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But you, when you fast, anoint your head, and wash your face so that you may not be identified as one fasting, but to be seen by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Anxiety is one of the number one killers of a spiritual life, and Jesus wants us to give our anxieties to Him.

Often we are just as obsessed with judging others as we are anxious about life. We are told that by placing God as the focus of our lives, other things will be taken care of. Our goal then becomes trusting God and not trusting ourselves.

“Do not accumulate for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

“The lamp of the body is the eye; if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is dark, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

“No one can serve two masters; for he will either hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and earthly possessions.

“For this reason I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, as to what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; nor for your body, as to what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body than clothing? Look at the birds of the air. They do not sow, neither do they reap or gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they are?

“And which of you by being anxious can add a single day to his life's span? And why are you anxious about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that even King Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself like one of these.

“But if God so arrays the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more do so for you, O men of little faith? Do not be anxious then, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘With what shall we clothe ourselves?’ After all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; but your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

DAY NINE **9**

Matthew 7:1-29

“Do not judge or you will be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.

“And why do you look at the speck that is in your

*Apparently God's way
is not the most often
chosen path.*

*False prophets are
people who have impure
motives for following God.
Though their words often
sound correct, they are
rotten to the core.*

*Eternal life is a
God-reality. God gives the
gift of perpetual life to those
who believe in His Son!*

*Building upon these
"teaching words" are like
building on rock. To reject
them is to build our life
upon quicksand.*

*Christ's teaching
apparently stood head
and shoulders above that
of the religious leaders
because of it's authority.*



brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and ignore the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

"Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

"Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened.

"What man is there among you, when his son asks him for a loaf of bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, he won't give him a snake, will he? If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!

"Therefore, however you want people to treat you, so treat them, for this is the heart of the Law and the Prophets.

"Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. But the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few there are who find it.

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor figs from thistles, are they? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit; but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So, then, you will know them by the fruit of their lives.

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven.

"Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been built upon the rock. And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act upon them, will be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and pummeled that house; and it fell, and great was its fall."

When Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one who had authority, and not like their teachers.