

Complicated Questions

Matthew 5-7



Lesson 1 - Matthew 5:1-7

John Stott says, *“The Sermon on the Mount is probably the best-known part of the teaching of Jesus, though arguably it is the least understood, and certainly it is the least obeyed”* (Stott, *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount*, 15). Jesus takes a seat on a mountain to teach his disciples or “learners” as intended in the Greek. The Sea of Galilee is in the background. The Lord’s disciples are sitting in front of Him anxious to learn and the curious crowd is anticipating a great miracle. Jesus takes this opportunity to teach some important truths about how to be a true disciple in this present world. This is not a sermon to merely expose our unrighteousness; it’s a sermon to give us answers and practical application to our everyday lives. Jesus begins this with what is commonly called the Beatitudes from the Latin word “beatus” meaning more than just temporary circumstantial happiness. It is a consistent state of joy centered on our relationship to God. The short statements that are made as short introductions capture the very essence of the entire Sermon on the Mount. D.A. Carson writes, *“The more I read these three chapters-Matthew 5,6, and 7- the more I am both drawn to them and shamed by them...Jesus says, ‘Be perfect...as your heavenly Father is perfect’ (5:48)”* (Carson, *Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount*, 11).

Discussion:

Why were people there to listen to Jesus? Why do/should we come and listen to Jesus?

Explanation:

- Who are the poor in spirit? Those who recognize they are in need of God’s help.
- What does it mean to mourn? It means to have a longing for God’s forgiveness and healing.
- Does meek mean weak? No, it means power under control. It’s like when a father playfully wrestles with his child though he has the power to hurt, he chooses not to and is “gentle” instead.
- Who are those that hunger and thirst for God’s righteousness? People that pursue God not man.
- Should we expect everyone to live this same way? No, we should be prepared for persecution and be ready to respond with love and humility.

Application: (<http://praysmill.com/ministries/sermons/complicated-questions/>)

Let this time be fun for the family! Start with songs such as, but not limited to, “Blessed be the Name” “My All in All” “Jesus Loves Me.” After your song time ends, as the head of your home, lead your family in scripture reading and Bible study. You can go through the questions from the Scripture that was preached last Sunday. Spend time asking your family questions and let them ask you questions as well. If you can’t answer, simply say “I don’t know” then research the answer for next week. End your worship time with prayer by allowing each of your family members to pray so you can hear their heart. You should end the prayer time as the final one to pray, and after you finish, you can sing a simple song in closing such as “Sanctuary.”

Great link for family worship if you have kids: <http://therizers.com/>

Memory Verse:

Matt 5:3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (ESV)

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Lesson 2 - Matthew 5:8-12

John Stott says, “*The Sermon on the Mount is probably the best-known part of the teaching of Jesus, though arguably it is the least understood, and certainly it is the least obeyed*” (Stott, *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount*, 15). Jesus takes a seat on a mountain to teach his disciples or “learners” as intended in the Greek. The Sea of Galilee is in the background. The Lord’s disciples are sitting in front of Him anxious to learn and the curious crowd is anticipating a great miracle. Jesus takes this opportunity to teach some important truths about how to be a true disciple in this present world. This is not a sermon to merely expose our unrighteousness; it’s a sermon to give us answers and practical application to our everyday lives. Jesus begins this with what is commonly called the Beatitudes from the Latin word “*beatus*” meaning more than just temporary circumstantial happiness. It is a consistent state of joy centered on our relationship to God. The short statements that are made as short introductions capture the very essence of the entire Sermon on the Mount. D.A. Carson writes, “*The more I read these three chapters-Matthew 5,6, and 7- the more I am both drawn to them and shamed by them...Jesus says, ‘Be perfect...as your heavenly Father is perfect’ (5:48)*” (Carson, *Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount*, 11).

Discussion:

Jesus begins this sermon with the Beatitudes so that he could begin to turn the focus of the people to true inward purity instead of outward rule based cleansing. Talk about the importance of having a pure heart rather than following rules out of religious duty.

Explanation:

- **Did God always want the focus on the inward?** Yes, as you can see in the 10th commandment Thou shall not covet; His desire was for a pure and content heart. Ex 20:17 “*You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.*”
- **Is a peacemaker someone who gossips and gets in everyone’s business (Proverbs 18:8)?** No, a peacemaker is someone who is committed to keeping God’s people focused on the task of glorifying Him. They accomplish this by not entangling themselves with foolish disputes and continually reminding others of the big picture.
- **Is persecution still alive today? If so, how does it affect us?** Yes, persecution is very alive today. We may not see the persecution that Christians in other countries face, but we will face it (You can take this time to explain how Christians overseas are persecuted and how we face persecution here - visit www.Persecution.com). How do we respond? We should respond in love and rejoice in the Lord as He is bringing glory to himself through us.

Application: (<http://praysmill.com/ministries/sermons/complicated-questions/>)

Use this as an opportunity to walk your family through the importance of having pure motives and being sincere in our service to God. Engage your family in a frank discussion about what’s really in our hearts when we worship. Are we focused on God and His goodness? When we worship is our mind on things it shouldn’t be and how can we better focus on God?

Memory Verse:

Matt 5:3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (ESV)

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Lesson 3 - Matthew 5:13-16

After Jesus begins with the “Beatitudes” he uses two metaphors “salt” and “light” to illustrate the impact that the disciples will have on the world around them. This also applies to us and how we will impact the world around us. Salt was used as a preservative, flavoring food and also was used as a form of payment. Today there are over 14,000 other uses for this valuable mineral. It is used in the manufacture of soap, glass, chlorine, and paper; it is used to preserve hay, purify water, soften water, build roads, refine metals, and melt snow as well as many other processes. Here is an interesting fact. If all the oceans of the world dried up, they would leave enough salt to cover the continental United States with a layer of salt 1.5 miles deep! So what does that mean for us? Well, Jesus knew how useful and versatile both salt and light are. As he was preaching this message to the disciples and the crowd, He was also intending for us to consider how useful or how “flavorless” we are to His Kingdom today. The point of these metaphors was to remind us that our “good works” (vs16) are for the purpose of bringing glory to God.

Discussion:

How are we being used as salt and light in our world now? What are some ways that you can lose your flavor or hide your light?

Explanation:

- **What does He mean when He says we are the Salt of the Earth?** He means we are here for the purpose of influencing the world for God
- **What is he telling us when He says that we should be like a lamp on a stand?** He means we should not be ashamed of the Gospel and let the light He shines through us be the reason the world sees His glory.
- **Do we need to help God shine His light in us?** No, he will do that Himself we should just be an available vessel.

Application: (<http://praysmill.com/ministries/sermons/complicated-questions/>)

So often we just don't engage the world the way we should with the love of God. We need to let His love be the driving force behind all that we do.

Great links for family worship if you have kids!!

<http://therizers.com/>

<http://www.seedsfamilyworship.net/>

Memory Verse:

Matt 5:14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden” (ESV).

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Lesson 4 - Matthew 5:17-20

Holy Scripture is of great importance to our personal, professional, and religious lives. But why is the Bible the authoritative rule of humanity? We must find the answer to that question based on the very words of Jesus in His sermon from Matthew 5:17-20. Evangelist David Miller once remarked in his sermon, *The Excellency of Christ*, “**Jesus has the convictions of a prophet, the credentials of a priest, and the crown of a potentate.**” In this text, Jesus claims that He came to fulfill the law of God. Therefore, not only is the Old Testament important for learning history, it’s also important for learning redemption. Jesus fulfilled all of the book of Leviticus and the OT sacrificial system. It is also essential to see that not one part of Scripture, not even the smallest part, will ever pass away! Scripture is important and we must submit to it for God’s glory.

Discussion:

How is the Bible important in the life of our family? Does it regulate how we treat one another? How does it regulate our decision making? Is the Bible our source of authority or do we have another final source?

Explanation:

- **What does Jesus mean when He claims to be the fulfillment of the law and prophets?** He means He literally fulfills every picture, office, type, and prophecy provided in the OT Scriptures.
- **What does Jesus mean when He says that the law of God will not pass away?** He means that the law of God (which can be attributed to all of Scripture) is eternal rather than temporal. This is essential since no other document will stand the test of time like God’s Word.
- **What does Jesus mean when He claims that our righteousness must be better than the scribes and Pharisees?** He is pointing out that their righteousness is external and fleshly. Although they were the most righteous people of his day in the power of human flesh, something greater was necessary. A greater righteousness is necessary in order to be forgiven of sins. That righteousness comes only through Jesus Christ and is received by faith alone - not the works of our flesh (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Application: (<http://praysmill.com/ministries/sermons/complicated-questions/>)

Consider the truth of the importance of Scripture! How else would we know that we are sinners and that salvation was available through Jesus Christ? We need Scripture to see ourselves, our God, and grace that comes in Jesus alone. We also need Scripture to live the Christian life. How else will we make decisions that honor God? Furthermore, each time we read in the book of Leviticus, rather than considering that literature worthless to us, we should see a picture of Jesus in the bloody sacrifices of their day! Praise God for sending Christ as the perfect lamb of God (John 1:29)

Memory Verse:

Matt 5:17 “Do not think that I am come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.” (ESV).

<http://therizers.com/>

<http://www.seedsfamilyworship.net/>

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Lesson 5 - Matthew 5:21-26

Who is most righteous - the angry man or the murderer? The fact is, we often condemn the murderer while practicing a life of unbridled anger. Jesus made it clear in Scripture that we are to be angry without sin. Therefore, we must seek to understand the importance of this truth based on Jesus' words in His great sermon from the mountain side.

Discussion:

How are we to live the Christian life without being caught in sinful anger? The fact is, we can't do it. We need Jesus Christ to empower us to this new life of submission and love.

Explanation:

- **What does Jesus mean when He makes the statement, "You have heard it said,...but I say to you..." in his sermon?** He isn't changing the meaning of God's Law. He is merely correcting false teaching of His day that had perverted the truth.
- **What does Jesus mean when He points out the danger of anger in verse 22?** He sought to place unbridled sinful anger on the same level as murder.
- **What does Jesus mean when He instructs people to leave their offering and go to the one who has anger against him?** He is literally pointing out the danger of unresolved anger. We must make things right with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Even if it's a person who isn't a brother or sister in Christ - we should attempt reconciliation. If the person refuses, we have obeyed Christ.

Application: (<http://praysmill.com/ministries/sermons/complicated-questions/>)

The fact remains, anger is a dangerous sin. Many people have fulfilled their anger resulting in divorce, child abuse, murder, and a host of other perverse sins. We must control our bodies and decisions in a way that honors Christ. This isn't something we can do on our own, we need to rely upon the power of Christ!

Memory Verse:

Matt 5:22 "But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire." (ESV).

Good Worship Links:

<http://therizers.com>

<http://www.seedsfamilyworship.net/>

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Lesson 6 - Matthew 5:27-30

The Word of God is clear - adultery is a sin. However, how often do we condemn those who have committed adultery while condoning our own sinful lust? Jesus makes it clear that adultery and lust are on the same level. Therefore, we must guard ourselves against unbridled lust that is adultery in the heart. You should also consider the article written by Pastor Josh: *An Article Every Man Should Read!* The article can be found in the blog section on the PraysMill.com website.

Discussion:

How is lust the same as adultery? Isn't adultery a physical act? The Pharisees of Jesus' day were trying to major on the external letter of the Law rather than focusing on the purity of the internal heart. Jesus had told the Pharisees at one point that they were like white washed tombs (clean on the outside but like dead man's bones on the inside). Jesus corrected the false teaching of His day by pointing out the fact that even lust in the heart for a person is considered adultery in the eyes of God.

Explanation:

- **What does Jesus mean when He says that a person who looks with lustful intent has committed adultery?** Recognizing beauty and lust in the heart for sexual motives isn't the same. Jesus points out that the sinful act of lust results in adultery in the heart.
- **What does Jesus mean when He says that we should pluck out our right eye and cut off our right hand rather than going to Hell?** Jesus isn't speaking literally here about the act of cutting off body parts - although He is speaking literally about Hell. In Jesus' culture, the right eye and the right hand symbolized the best. Therefore, we should be willing to separate ourselves from the best thing we have rather than be guilty of sinful lust. That means computers, jobs, and perhaps phones that could open doors of lustful sin.
- **What does Jesus mean when He speaks of Hell?** Jesus isn't claiming that a person could lose their salvation! Rather, He is pointing out the fact that habitual sinful living is proof that a person isn't born again. Furthermore, He is pointing out the reality of a place of eternal judgment. Hell is often relegated to the level of a childhood fantasy book rather than a real place of eternal torment under the wrath of God. We must remember that Hell is just as real as Heaven.

Application: (<http://praysmill.com/ministries/sermons/complicated-questions/>)

Consider the following stats: "Every second 28,258 internet users are viewing pornography. In that same second 372 internet users are typing adult search terms into search engines...The pornography industry has larger revenues than Microsoft, Google, Amazon, eBay, Yahoo, Apple and Netflix combined. 2006 Worldwide Pornography Revenues ballooned to \$97.06 billion" (<http://internet-filter-review.toptenreviews.com/internet-pornography-statistics.html>).

Memory Verse:

Matt 5:27-28 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.." (ESV).

<http://www.seedsfamilyworship.net/>