



Part 20: The Master's Words



Opening Quotes -

“The time is fulfilled; the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel.” Mk 1:15

“Why does this man speak thus? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” Mk 2:12

“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.” Mk 2:17

“The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath; so the Son of man is lord even of the Sabbath.” Mk 2:27

“I have come not to abolish the Law and the Prophets but to fulfill them.” Mk 5:17

“You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” Mt 5:48

“Pray then like this: Our Father...” Mt 6:9

“You cannot serve God and mammon.” Mt 6:24

“Do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day.” Mt 6:34

“Ask and it will be given; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you... If you, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask!” Mt 5:48

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.” Mt 7:21

Word ALIVE



The Sermon on the Mount



Background Notes -

PURPOSE: To present Jesus as the rabbi, the Teacher, whose words were as powerful as his radical actions in treating the Law and its teachers. While some of his teachings displayed his meek and humble side with teachings that could offend no one, he also spoke words which challenged his listeners to categorize him either as a blasphemous fraud or a man of God sent with an authority surpassing any of the prophets of old.

AUTHOR: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John the Evangelists.

DATE: This part covers the beginning of Jesus' ministry, around the time he was 30.

STYLE: Mark shows us the personal side of Jesus, showing how he told his followers to keep their miracle healings a secret. The sayings and doings of Jesus from the different gospels are reliable, but clearly forged into a chronological framework for the reader's sake. Luke's is the best structured of the four.

the BIG PICTURE		→ : LAW, History, Writings, Prophets		→ : key covenants in our Father's plan	
12 Periods ▼	Plot ▼	Other books related to period ▼		stories in each period ▼	
BC	🌐 THE BEGINNINGS	GN 1-11	Ps 8, 104	Creation, Adam & Eve, Cain & Abel, Noah's ark, Tower of Babel	
1850	👤 THE PATRIARCHS	GN 12-50		Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Israel), Joseph, Melchizedek	
1250	⚠️ EXODUS FROM EGYPT	EX		Moses, the burning bush, the plagues, passover, exodus	
1200	♣️ JOURNEY TO CANAAN	NM, Jos	LV, DT	Sinai desert, 10 commandments, Levites, Law, Joshua	
1100	👤 THE JUDGE CYCLE	Jg	Ruth	12 tribes, Gideon, Samson, Ruth, Samuel	
1030	👤 KINGS & PROPHETS	1 & 2 S	1 Ch, Ps, Prov	Saul, David, Solomon, Jerusalem, the Temple	
1000	👤 THE DIVIDED KINGDOM	1 Kg	2 Ch, Prov,	Israel (N), Judah (S), Elijah & Elisha, Isaiah, Assyrian exile	
721 587	👤 BABYLONIAN EXILE	2 Kg	2 Ch, Tob, Hos, Am, Hab, Is, Jer, Lam, Jl, Mic, Zp, Jon, Nah, Ob, Ez, Dan, Bar	Babylonians, "major" prophets, Isaiah (to Israel), Jeremiah (to Jerusalem), Ezekiel (to the Exiles)	
538	👤 THE RESTORATION	Ezr, Neh	Est, Judith, Hag, Zech, Mal, Job, Ecc, Songs	Cyrus, 2 nd temple, 2 nd Law, "minor" prophets, new writings	
163 63	👤 THE REPURIFICATION	1 Mac	Dn, 2Mac, Sirach, Wisdom	Greeks, Maccabean revolt, Hasmonean Dynasty, Romans, Jewish sects (Pharisees, Saducees, Zealots, Essenes)	
AD	👤 JESUS CHRIST	LK	MT, MK, JN	Incarnation, Good News, New Law, Cross & Resurrection	
33 70	👤 APOSTOLIC CHURCH	Acts	Rm, 1&2Co, Ga, Ep, Phil, Col, 1&2Th, 1&2 Tm, Ti, Phm, Hb, Ja, 1P, 2P, 1,2&3J, Jd, Rv	Pentecost, council, journeys, epistles, Body/Bride of Christ	



The Story of Part 20: The Master's Words



And so this Jewish carpenter took up his cousin's message: Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand! At one point the crowds grew too large, and he had to get in a boat slightly offshore in the Lake of Galilee to preach to his listeners on the shore. One day he told Peter to take the boat into the deep for some fish. Despite having caught nothing all night, Peter obliged. After catching so many fish that the boat nearly sank, Jesus told Peter, "Come with me. I will make you fishers of men."

Jesus taught in the synagogues and in the streets, curing people of demons he met along the way. But when he performed a miracle cure, he would tell them to follow through with the Mosaic ritual of cleaning, and to tell no one of the miracle! Of course his fame only spread with every miracle. But he would still often break away from the crowds to spend time alone in prayer in isolated places. "Let's go somewhere else so I can preach," he would tell his apostles. "This is why I came out." He did not fit the earthly picture of the Messiah, a king like David, a military hero to overthrow their oppressors (currently the Romans).

Jesus then did something that shocked the crowds. As people pressed in upon him for a healing, some men lowered a paralytic on a stretcher through a hole in the roof. "What faith!" Jesus remarked. "Your sins are forgiven!" Did he just say what they thought he said? Only God can forgive sins! Jesus knew their thoughts. "Which is easier," he asked, "To say to this man 'Your sins are forgiven,' or 'Get up and walk'?" He told the paralytic to get up and go home. The man did just that. People were shocked by the miracle – and the message.

Jesus would call himself "Son of man," which the prophet Ezekiel had used to describe a weak man, and Daniel had used to describe the Messiah who would judge and be given authority over all. Jesus would become both. This duplicitous rabbi continued his politically and religiously incorrect behavior by hanging out with "tax collectors and sinners". He came not for the (self-) righteous but for sinners. When asked by the Pharisees and teachers of the Law why he and his apostles did not follow the ritual fasting and washing of the Law, he told them that no one puts new wine in old wineskins because they would burst, alluding to the fact that their hearts were not ready to receive the new Law. But when asked why he dared to cure a man on the Sabbath, his gentle words became strong: the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath! How could anyone refuse to do good on the Lord's Day? It was an absurd contradiction, a result of the Pharisees' focus on the letter of the Law at the expense of the spirit of the Law. At this, the Pharisees plotted with the Herodians (normally their enemies!) against this troublesome rabbi.

Back home in Nazareth, Jesus was reading from the Torah in the synagogue as was the custom. After reading a passage from Isaiah, he closed the scroll and

announced that the prophecy was being fulfilled as he spoke. The crowd's marvel turned into outrage when he then quoted scriptures that showed God healing Gentiles and saying that a prophet is never accepted in his own home. After nearly being thrown over a hill, he completed his choice of his twelve apostles and went off to another hill, where he gave what we know as the famous Sermon on the Mount.

No religion can find offense at the teachings which came from Jesus that afternoon, as he turned the world's view of things upside down (or rather, right side up!). The poor, the oppressed, the outcast, and the forgotten – these were blessed by God! But woe to the rich, the satisfied, and the popular! Fulfillment awaited the meek, those who mourned, those who hungered for justice, the merciful, the peacemakers, the pure in heart, and particularly those who would be persecuted for his name's sake.

Were these teachings, this "new Law," an erasing of the old? "You have heard it said...", he would say, "No murder, no adultery, get a certificate if divorced, don't lie when you swear, retaliate fairly, and hate only your enemies", and then follow it with "But *I* say", followed by his radical teachings against holding even a grudge, even looking lustfully, divorcing at all, swearing at all, and *loving*, not hating enemies! Once again, who dare this rabbi say these things, as if the Law was his to comment on? Was he doing away with it? On the contrary, he insisted. He was perfecting it. For instance, even the heathens loved their friends. But his followers had to love their enemies! This was to "Be *perfect* as your Father in heaven is perfect."

He followed this with the perfect prayer, addressing God as our Father, with praising and petitioning, asking for mercy, as mercy had to be shown to others. He also warned that no man can serve two masters, like God and money. Don't worry about tomorrow, he said. Focus on today. Common sense teachings. Yet, there was something about *him*. "If you who are evil know how to give what is good to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give you? Seek and you shall find," he promised. But the way to life, he warned, was not for the half-hearted. He took the age-old golden rule – "don't do unto others what you wouldn't want them to do unto you" – stripped it of its comfort and said "*Do* unto others what you would have them do to you!" God expected the wholehearted pursuit of good, not merely the half-hearted avoidance of evil. Following Jesus implied a radical change, but to do so was a guarantee of building on solid rock. "Not everyone who says to me 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom," he warned, "but he who does the will of my Father."

Who was this "Son of man" who dared to call God not simply "father", but *Abba* ("Daddy")? 



Defending the Faith: Heaven and Hell

“Heaven is a childish, escapist dream of life after death, and hell is an evil, twisted concept that only scares people into submissive fear. How could a loving God punish a temporal sin with eternal punishment?”

Heaven is not the dream of comfort-lovers who childishly imagine cherubs, harps, and fluffy clouds (non-biblical images, by the way). Heaven is the death of egotism, not its gratification; it is adoration and self-forgetful worship of God, not a peaceful pleasure of the self. It is for the childlike, not for the childish.

As for being “escapist,” is it escapist for an unborn baby to struggle for life after birth? Something is escapist only if it is not real, and nothing has proven heaven false. Given its reality, it would be escapist to *ignore* it.

The same applies to Hell, which could not be an evil teaching if it was real. It would be evil, in fact, *not* to teach it. And if all it does is frighten the faithful into submission, this is due to bad teaching, not bad doctrine. The happiest saints in history have been those with a healthy fear of hell, for as daunting as the thought is, it is also reassuring to know its existence so that you might avoid it. *Belief* in hell does not produce fear and despair; hell itself produces these things. It is unhealthy to despair, but it is healthy to fear something *real*. The fear of the Lord is even called the beginning of wisdom (Prov 1:7). Meanwhile, those who would deny hell misplace their fear on physical health, material wealth, popularity, and other things which can be good but are not *eternally* important.

As for the idea that hell is a punishment that doesn't fit the crime, God does not repay temporal sins with eternal punishment. If a person dies with *unrepented* mortal sin, even hell would not change the will of the sinner. Since all things work together for good for those who love God (Rom 8:28), He will always have provided ample opportunity for a person to repent. In the parable of Lazarus and the rich man (Lk 16:19), the

soul of the rich man in hell suffers the consequences of rebelling against God's ways. But notice that he wants only to avoid further suffering without mention of repenting. He begs for an ease to his suffering, but not for forgiveness of his sins. And because this parable came from Christ, no professing Christian can deny heaven or hell without denying his teachings.

As far as hell's existence being contrary to the love of God, the only way God could remove hell would be to remove the possibility of refusing his love. This would amount to removing our freedom, the ultimate proof of love. Once we die, it is not time to choose what side we are on, but to discover what side we have always chosen. Perhaps the fire of God's love burning in the hearts of those who love Him will be the same fire of hell to the soul who rejects him. The ironic tragedy of hell is that God does not stop loving a soul even when it is in hell, but the soul cannot stand it. But God cannot stop loving any more than water can stop being wet. The parallel irony in life is that when one renounces worldly pride and comfort, he finds an inexhaustibly deeper comfort in being a son of God, with a consolation that suffers gladly, knowing that the Savior died and atoned for his sins.

C.S. Lewis ends his masterpiece *Mere Christianity* this way: “Submit to death, death of your ambitions and favorite wishes and of your whole body with every fiber of your being, and you will find eternal life. Look for yourself, and you will find in the end only hatred, loneliness, despair, rage, ruin and decay. But look for Christ and you will find Him, and with Him, everything else thrown in.”



Expressing the Faith: The Lord's Prayer

The perfect prayer addresses God as Father, submits to His will, asks for what we need from food to forgiveness, acknowledges the need to forgive, and asks for protection and deliverance from evil.

Our Father who art in heaven

Hallowed be Thy name.

Thy kingdom come

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread

And forgive us our trespasses

As we forgive those who trespass against us

And lead us not into temptation

But deliver us from evil.

*(for the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and forever.)*

Amen.



Next time: “The Master's Works”

