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MATTHEW

On Earth As It Is in Heaven

Matthew 05:13-48

- I. The Beatitudes Review
 - a. Reviewing my notes on this passage from 8/11/19 – this is what I wrote – There is an overwhelming sense of pessimism amongst Christians today
 - i. Pessimism - a tendency to see the worst aspect of things or believe that the worst will happen; a lack of hope or confidence in the future.
 - ii. Understandable when there is a steady flow of news and Facebook posts that highlight the depravity of this world
 1. Add to that the personal impact that sin has on families – pain caused by addiction, infidelity, abuse
 2. It's easy to see why so many are discouraged and even outraged – and sadly hopeless
 3. That is why so many are looking forward to the day that the Lord puts an end to all this madness
 4. If we, being sinners, feel this way – how does God feel?
 - b. God saw a world ravaged by sin, a world where the weak were oppressed and the sick were forgotten, a world where 10s of millions of men and women were bought and sold like property, and paganism ran rampant and He began making travel plans – This is where He wanted to go
 - i. He came from perfection, from glory – a place where lying and cheating and manipulation and hatred had no place – and He willfully chose to enter a world drenched in those very things
 - ii. Why? Because where I see discouragement and pessimism, He sees hope
- II. The Character of the Kingdom
 - a. Jesus begins His ministry – (what did He do when He got here)
 - i. ***Mat 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”***
 - ii. ***Mat 4:23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.***
 1. Not good advice but the good news of the coming Kingdom
 2. A new Kingdom was coming – a Kingdom in which Jesus is the King (that is what got Herod all worked up, that is who the wiseman came to see)
 - b. A new kingdom was nothing new – In the history of the earth many kingdoms have come and gone
 - i. In fact, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, “All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.”
 - ii. These kingdoms had their unique core values – virtues – all of which championed some form of justice

1. Ancient Egypt – “Ma’at” – (truth/order)
 2. Persian Empire – Justice and tolerance
 3. Babylonian Empire – laws that protected the weak and vulnerable
 4. Roman Empire – Law/Civic virtue
- iii. It is one thing to proclaim noble core values, it is another thing to live them out
1. No kingdom says, “Our core value is mass exploitation and conquest,” - but behind those ideals were slavery, conquest, heavy taxation, and harsh punishments.
 2. For example – In Rome the ideal was a well-ordered world where law binds everyone and public service is noble. Reality – their laws often protected the powerful; non-citizens and slaves had few rights; rebellions were crushed with mass executions.
- iv. Jesus was different kind of King and He was introducing a different kind of Kingdom
1. See this with his humble birth – baptism by John the Baptist with the voice of God confirming His ministry
 2. Matthew 4:23–25 context: preaching the good news of the Kingdom, healing every disease.
 3. Result - massive crowds drawn to His teaching and healing
 4. The Kingdom is both proclaimed and demonstrated
- c. From the *crowds* to the *disciples*: Jesus goes up the mountain
- i. Begins saying a lot of things that are simply not true in this world
 1. The poor in spirit don’t “win” here
 2. Mourners often mourn alone
 3. People often die longing for justice to be done and never see it in their lifetime
 4. The meek don’t inherit the earth here
 5. Those who are persecuted aren’t celebrated here – they are deemed the losers
 - ii. Remember - this isn’t a message on right behavior; this is an announcement! This the gospel of the Kingdom
 1. Gospel doesn’t mean good advice, it is good news!
 2. It’s a proclamation – this is what is coming
 - iii. When? After we die? When we are in heaven? When Christ returns?
 1. That’s all Christianity is to some people – waiting for our souls to go to heaven – but that isn’t what Jesus taught – the last beatitudes hint at a conflict between kingdoms
 2. Persecution “for righteousness’ sake” & “Blessed are you when others revile you...” hints at a clash of two kingdoms
 3. Jesus said pray like this ***“Mat 6:10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.”***
 - a. Sets up our role in the world

Mat 5:13 “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. 14 “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

III. On Earth As it is In Heaven

- a. We are image bearers: “You are the salt... You are the light...”
 - i. Identity first, then action: “*You are...*” not “Try to be.”
 1. Genesis: Humans created in God’s image to reflect His rule.
 - a. Salt: preserves, flavors, slows decay.
 - b. Light: reveals reality, guides, exposes, gives hope.
 2. Exodus/Israel: A “kingdom of priests and a holy nation” to display God to the nations.
 - a. ***Isa 42:6 “I, the Lord, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles”***
 - b. Three times in Isaiah, God refers to the nation of Israel as a light to the Gentiles
 - c. We would say they failed, Jesus would say, “God’s not done yet”
 - ii. “*Let your light shine...*” – action flows out of identity
 1. Don’t “cover it up” - Fear of rejection or persecution, desire for comfort and acceptance, or simply compromise
 - a. Hide our faith, keep silent, live like everyone else – that is hiding our light
- b. When we know who we are, we know what we must do
 - i. “*Let your light shine...*” – action flows out of identity
 1. Don’t “cover it up” - Fear of rejection or persecution, desire for comfort and acceptance, or simply compromise
 - a. Hide our faith, keep silent, live like everyone else – that is hiding our light
- c. Instead – be who you are – reveal that your citizenship is in Heaven – you are part of a different Kingdom
 - i. “So that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”
 1. People see what we do, but they end up glorifying Who He is
 - ii. This isn’t waiting for our souls to go to heaven – this actively participating in God’s plan
 1. What does it mean to let our light shine, to be the salt of the earth?

Mat 5:17 “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. 18 For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. 19 Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

IV. Part of the Plan

- a. “I did not come to abolish... but to fulfill”
 - i. Jesus is not overthrowing the Old Testament; He is completing it.
 - ii. He is the culmination of God’s plan—all the Law and Prophets point to Him
 1. ***Matthew 4:4: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”***
 2. The Law isn’t a set of rules, hoops to jump through; it is God’s Word, God’s heart, God’s plan revealed
- b. ***unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven***
 - i. True righteousness: right relationship with God, right relationship with others
 - ii. This is the fulfillment of the Ten Commandments in the two greatest commands

1. Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, strength.
2. Love your neighbor as yourself.
- iii. Jesus says our righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, not in quantity of rules, but in the condition of the heart
- c. Jesus continues His sermon on the mount, that is what He is drawing His disciples attention to – the condition of the heart
 - i. Good works that flow from a right relationship with God and others – not contractual, but relational

Mat 5:21 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.’ 22 But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire. 23 Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. 25 Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. 26 Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny. 27 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ 28 But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

V. Murder of the Heart, Adultery of the Mind

- a. Seed to Harvest
 - i. “Raca”: an insult of contempt, “empty-headed,” dismissive
 - ii. “You fool”: goes deeper, an attack on a person’s worth and moral character before God
 1. Dehumanizing and despising someone made in God’s image.
 - iii. Be reconciled to your brother before you worship God
 - iv. Agree with your adversary quickly – admit when you are wrong, don’t let conflict lead to bitterness, don’t let your heart grow hard and indifferent to another
 1. If murder is the fruit – these are the seeds – bitterness, hatred, contempt, apathy – whatever exists within us that robs another of their intrinsic value before God – they are all part of the same plant
- b. The same with lust and adultery
 - i. Lust is the seed, adultery is the fruit – they are part of the same plant
 - ii. Entertaining desires for that which God has not provided – not trusting His provision or His timing
 1. Playing god of our own lives
- c. Jesus teaches us to do the work on the heart level – start with the seeds
 - i. Cut off what does not belong – cast it from us – throw it on the alter
 - ii. Paul expounds on this in Romans when he writes - present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God
 1. This is not legalism; it’s surrender to a King whose Kingdom is different

Mat 5:31 “Furthermore it has been said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ **32** But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery. **33** “Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.’ **34** But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne; **35** nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. **36** Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. **37** But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one. **38** “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ **39** But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. **40** If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. **41** And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. **42** Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.

VI. Jesus vs. Oral Tradition: A Different Way of Living

- a. “You have heard that it was said...” vs. “But I say to you”
 - i. Man’s attempt at righteousness vs true Kingdom righteousness
 - ii. Divorce
 1. The culture permitted easy divorce; Jesus protects the covenant of marriage – the sacred reality of the story it communicates to the world
 - iii. Let your “Yes” be yes and your “No” be no
 1. No need for elaborate oaths when your character is truthful
 2. Image bearers reflect God, who is faithful and true
 - iv. Give more than is asked: retaliation and generosity
 1. Turn the other cheek, go the extra mile, give your cloak also
 - a. These are uncomfortable – we ask “what if?” – God’s Kingdom is uncomfortable to this worlds sensibilities
 2. What is truly important to us? What are we actually fighting for, our rights, or God’s glory?
- b. What does this have to do with image-bearing and the coming Kingdom?
 - i. The world acts in predictable, self-protective ways
 - ii. Citizens of the Kingdom of God respond in ways that reveal the heart of the Father.

43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ **44** But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, **45** that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. **46** For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? **47** And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? **48** Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

- c. Love your enemies
 - i. By blessing those who curse you, doing good to those who hate you, and praying for those who use you and make your life uniquely difficult – these are actions, not born out of legalism but out of allegiance
 - ii. Result - you will reflect your Father in heaven