KINGDOM *of* HEAVEN

A SERIES IN THE BOOK OF MATTHEW

Matthew 5:17-20

(Sermon from Sunday 7 May 2023, Richard van Lieshout)

1. Information

a) Read the passage, perhaps twice using two different versions

b) Fill in any info that didn't make it into the sermon.

- I dealt with this passage in some detail on pages 42-44 in the CG guide.
- This is the most complicated part of the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus connects his life & words to the Old Testament scriptures.
- This is truly a 'watershed' passage for Christians today, ultimately helping us see:
    - What Jesus thinks about the Bible
    - How he sees his place alongside Moses (and the other biblical authors)

- What we see is that Jesus is clearly the authoritative teacher, interpreter and giver of the 'law'.

- Note that I will not go into the issue of 'law vs grace' as explained at the bottom of page 44.

Sermon Outline

- The approach I took in the sermon was to unpack v17&18, explaining some of the words and concepts, and then highlight the implications by drawing on v19&20.

- My manuscript points went as follows:

i. Jesus & The Bible (v17)
A) What does 'law or prophets' refer to
B) What does 'abolish mean'
C) What does 'fulfill' mean?

ii. Jesus as authoritative teacher, interpreter and giver of law (v18)
A) Continuity
B) Discontinuity

iii. Implications
A) On 'Authority' (**v19**)
B) On 'Behaviour modification' (v20)

- I went into a lot of detail on most of these technical aspects, so I think the **main job of CG's** this week is not covering new 'information', **but perhaps ensuring the group understands the passage** (in particular, that the understand the continuity/discontinuity tension - this is the whole ballgame!)

2. **Activation**

- There are two approaches you could take with your group this week.
    - 'Activate' the passage through some **general questions**
    - 'Activate' the implications directly from the **sermon**
- If there's time you could do both (in that order)!

i. Activating the passage through general questions

- Since this passage is such a 'watershed' passage for Christians, it may be helpful for the group to process some general questions about the passage, that should have been answered in the sermon.
- **I have combined questions from resources by Daniel Akin and John Stott[1]:**
    - *How do you see Jesus in relation to the Old Testament?*
    - *In what ways does Jesus fulfill the Old Testament?*
    - *What might be a problem in calling the Hebrew Bible 'Old Testament'?*
    - *Why is Jesus's authority so important for trusting the Bible and it's place in a Christian's life?*
    - *Given the enthusiasm and devotion of the scribes and Pharisees for keeping every detail of the law, how can a Christian's righteousness exceed theirs?*
    - *How does our obedience affect the way we are 'salt and light' in the world?*

ii. Activating the Sermon implications

- The two main implications I drew related to the subject of '**authority**' and '**behaviour modification**'.
- **On these subjects you could ask the following questions:**
    - *What are some issues the church faces today? How are these issues essentially related to how we view the Bible?*
    - *How seriously should Christians view the scriptures when confronting these issues? (V19)*
    - *Where does the world derive its sense of authority from? Where should Christians draw it from?*
    - *How would you answer a Christian that says that Christianity is not about behaviour modification?*
    - *What has to change in order for our behaviour to change?*

[1] Akin, Daniel L 'Exalting Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount' (2019) & Stott, John 'Reading the Sermon on the mount' (2016)

3. **Implementation**

- The ‘transformation equation’ can similarly be described as:
    i. What? (Information)
    ii. So what? (Activation)
    iii. **Now what? (Implementation)**

- What resolutions can your group make together for the coming week? **In particular, you might want to think about how your group can commit to growing in appreciation for the Old Testament!**