



~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

"come just as you are"

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing

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Worship Music

[Whom Shall I Fear-](#)
[Chris Tomlin](#)

[Lord I Need You-](#)
[Chris Tomlin](#)

[I Will Rise-](#)
[Chris Tomlin](#)

Prayer

Lord, how can I ever adequately say thank You for all that You did for me at the Cross? I was so undeserving, but You came and gave Your life for me, taking away my sin and removing the punishment that should have passed to me. I thank You from the depths of my heart for doing what no one else could do for me. Had it not been for You, I would be eternally lost, so I just want to say thank You for laying down Your life that I might be free. In Jesus' name. Amen.....

Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

Matthew 24:36 (AMP)

36 But of that [exact] day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

["The Cross"](#)

Billy Graham

[" The Cure "](#)

Pastor Chuck Smith

Chapel Flock.....text a prayer..... request telephone number.....

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If you have a prayer request...please e-mail it to us so we can pray for you...or a person.....

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Matthew 5:1-48 (AMP)

1 SEEING THE crowds, He went up on the mountain; and when He was seated, His disciples came to Him. 2 Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: 3 Blessed (happy, to be envied, and spiritually prosperous—with life-joy and satisfaction in God's favor and salvation, regardless of their outward conditions) are the poor in spirit (the humble, who rate themselves insignificant), for theirs is the kingdom of heaven! 4 Blessed and enviably happy [with a happiness produced by the experience of God's favor and especially conditioned by the revelation of His matchless grace] are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted! 5 Blessed (happy, blithesome, joyous, spiritually prosperous—with life-joy and satisfaction in God's favor and salvation, regardless of their outward conditions) are the meek (the mild, patient, long-suffering), for they shall inherit the earth! 6 Blessed and fortunate and happy and spiritually prosperous (in that state in which the born-again child of God enjoys His favor and salvation) are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (uprightness and right standing with God), for they shall be completely satisfied! 7 Blessed (happy, to be envied, and spiritually prosperous—with life-joy and satisfaction in God's favor and salvation, regardless of their outward conditions) are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy! 8 Blessed (happy, enviably fortunate, and spiritually prosperous—possessing the happiness produced by the experience of God's favor and especially conditioned by the revelation of His grace, regardless of their outward conditions) are the pure in heart, for they shall see God! 9 Blessed (enjoying enviable happiness, spiritually prosperous—with life-joy and satisfaction in God's favor and salvation, regardless of their outward conditions) are the makers and maintainers of peace, for they shall be called the sons of God! 10 Blessed and happy and enviably fortunate and spiritually prosperous (in the state in which the born-again child of God enjoys and finds satisfaction in God's favor and salvation, regardless of his outward conditions) are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake (for being and doing right), for theirs is the kingdom of heaven! 11 Blessed (happy, to be envied, and spiritually prosperous—with life-joy and satisfaction in God's favor and salvation, regardless of your outward conditions) are you when people revile you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil things against you falsely on My account. 12 Be glad and supremely joyful, for your reward in heaven is great (strong and intense), for in this same way people persecuted the prophets who were before you. 13 You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste (its strength, its quality), how can its saltiness be restored? It is not good for anything any longer but to be thrown out and trodden underfoot by men. 14 You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a peck measure, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men that they may see your moral excellence and your praiseworthy, noble, and good deeds and recognize and honor and praise and glorify your Father Who is in heaven. 17 Do not think that I have come to do away with or undo the Law or the Prophets; I have come not to do away with or undo but to complete and fulfill them. 18 For truly I tell you, until the sky and earth pass away and perish, not one smallest letter nor one little hook [identifying certain Hebrew letters] will pass from the Law until all things [it foreshadows] are accomplished. 19 Whoever then breaks or does away with or relaxes one of the least [important] of these commandments and teaches men so shall be called least [important] in the kingdom of heaven, but he who practices them and teaches others to do so shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness (your uprightness and your right standing with God) is more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 21 You have heard that it was said to the men of old, You shall not kill, and whoever kills shall be liable to and unable to escape the punishment imposed by the court. 22 But I say to you that everyone who continues to be angry with his brother or harbors malice (enmity of heart) against him shall be liable to and unable to escape the punishment imposed by the court; and whoever speaks contemptuously and insultingly to his brother shall be liable to and unable to escape the punishment imposed by the Sanhedrin, and whoever says, You cursed fool! [You empty-headed idiot!] shall be liable to and unable to escape the hell (Gehenna) of fire. 23 So if when you are offering your gift at the altar you there remember that your brother has any [grievance] against you, 24 Leave your gift at the altar and go. First make peace with your brother, and then come back and present your gift. 25 Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way traveling with him, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. 26 Truly I say to you, you will not be released until you have paid the last fraction of a penny. 27 You have heard that it was said, You shall not commit adultery. 28 But I say to you that everyone who so much as looks at a woman with evil desire for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye serves as a trap to ensnare you or is an occasion for you to stumble and sin, pluck it out and throw it away. It is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be cast into hell (Gehenna). 30 And if your right hand serves as a trap to ensnare you or is an occasion for you to stumble and sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better that you lose one of your members than that your entire body should be cast into hell (Gehenna). 31 It has also been said, Whoever divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce. 32 But I tell you, Whoever dismisses and repudiates and divorces his wife, except on the grounds of unfaithfulness (sexual immorality), causes her to commit adultery, and whoever marries a woman who has been divorced commits adultery. 33 Again, you have heard that it was said to the men of old, You shall not swear falsely, but you shall perform your oaths to the Lord [as a religious duty]. 34 But I tell you, Do not bind yourselves by an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is the throne of God; 35 Or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. 36 And do not swear by your head, for you are not able to make a single hair white or black. 37 Let your Yes be simply Yes, and your No be simply No; anything more than that comes 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 say to you, Do not resist the evil man [who injures you]; but if anyone strikes you on the right jaw or cheek, turn to him the other one too. 40 And if anyone wants to sue you and take your undershirt (tunic), let him have your coat also. 41 And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two [miles]. 42 Give to him who keeps on begging from you, and do not turn away from him who would borrow [at interest] from you. 43 You have heard that it was said, You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy; 44 But I tell you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 To show that you are the children of your Father Who is in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the wicked and on the good, and makes the rain fall upon the upright and the wrongdoers [alike]. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward can you have? Do not even the tax collectors do that? 47 And if you greet only your brethren, what more than others are you doing? Do not even the Gentiles (the heathen) do that? 48 You, therefore, must be perfect [growing into complete maturity of godliness in mind and character, having reached the proper height of virtue and integrity], as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Tonight we have the Sermon on the Mount, what a fantastic portion of scripture. Matthew five,

And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he has sat down, his disciples came unto him: and he opened his mouth, and he taught them, saying, (Mat 5:1-2).

The first thing to notice is that this Sermon on the Mount is not for everybody. The Sermon on the Mount was not for the multitudes. Jesus is not here talking to the multitudes, he is talking to his disciples and unless a person is a disciple of Jesus Christ, they're going to have an extremely difficult time with the Sermon on the Mount because it really doesn't have application to them. It has application only to his disciples. So seeing the multitudes, he left the multitudes. He went up into a mountain and when his disciples had come unto him he opened his mouth and he taught them.

Jesus was sitting down; this is a posture of a teacher. In those days the teachers would sit, the students would stand. Somehow things have become all twisted. When they would stand it would be to herald or to proclaim as a herald, a truth. Now Jesus, when he was on the temple mount in John chapter five, stood and cried saying, "If any man thirst". He's heralding a glorious truth to all people, the proclaiming of the truth, the preaching of the truth that they would stand but in teaching they would sit.

Now Jesus, in the beginning of this message, is describing the people that he is addressing the message to, for he is describing the child of God. Later on he says, "that you might be the children of your Father"(Matthew 5:45), and he talks about "your Father". But here is the description, and it is in the form of what are known as beatitudes or the pronounced blessings. Now the word "blessed" literally means "oh, how happy" and because that is the literal meaning of the word "blessed", it seems paradoxical immediately to say, "Oh how happy are the poor in spirit".

Somehow we don't think of the poor in spirit as being very happy people, and yet Jesus, in beginning his description of the child of God declares

Oh how happy are the poor in spirit (Mat 5:3):

Notice, and there have been some moderns who have sought to translate this or interpret this because it isn't a translation but an interpretation; blessed in spirit are the poor, but that is not necessarily a truth. I know many poor people who have a very bitter spirit and poverty does not make for a blessed or a happy spirit necessarily.

Blessed are the poor in spirit [Jesus said] (Mat 5:3):

First of all, he's not talking about physical poverty, poor in spirit. This is in opposition to being proud, and this is always the inevitable consequence of a man coming into a personal, real confrontation with God. If you have come into a true confirmation of God in your own life, the result immediately always is that of poverty of spirit. You see a person who is proud and haughty, he is a man who has not had a true encounter with God.

In Isaiah chapter six, upon the death of the popular king Uzziah, when the throne of Israel has been emptied of this great popular monarch, Isaiah writes, "And in the year that king Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting on the throne, high and lifted up, and his train did fill the temple...Then said I, woe is me! For I am undone; and I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell amongst a people of unclean lips:" (Isaiah 6:1,5). That's always the result of a man seeing God in truth. "Woe is me! I am undone".

Daniel, when he saw the Lord said, "My beauty was turned into corruption" (Daniel 10:8). When Peter had his confrontation he said, "Depart from me; for Lo, I am a sinful man" (Luke 5:8). The man who truly sees God sees himself in truth.

Jesus said we do err because we so often are comparing ourselves with others around us. And when I look at you, I don't look near so bad. When I look at your flaws and your faults I'd be, well, I'm not too bad. Look at them. But when I look at the Lord, that purity, that holiness, that righteousness, I say, Oh, God help me. Woe is me, I'm undone. That is what poverty of spirit is. It's a true evaluation of myself, not in the light of man but in the light of God, where I see the real truth about me and it brings me to that, oh God help me. I need help. The same thing that Paul said, "Oh wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death? (Romans 7:24).

So that's always the beginning, the beginning consciousness of a man who has a true relationship with God. But Jesus said, really happy is that man. Why? Because he has had a true encounter with God, and as the result, the kingdom of heaven belongs to him. He's no longer living in just this temporal material realm, but he is now transferred into the kingdom and as a child of God and as a citizen of the eternal kingdom.

Blessed are they that mourn (Mat 5:4):

Now that really is even more paradoxical, isn't it? Happy are they that mourn. But having come to a real awareness of myself in the light of God, coming to that poverty of spirit, my heart is broken over my own condition. I mourn over my failures, over what I see of myself and in myself. But the promise of the Lord is

They shall be comforted (Mat 5:4). As the Lord begins to minister to me, the power of his Holy Spirit and his strength, and I begin now to experience those victories of Jesus Christ in my life and that makes me indeed happy. But that doesn't come until I've come to the end of myself, and that place of just mourning in the fact that I have no strength, no ability, no power. I feel that helplessness. I cry out from helplessness and then I begin to experience the glorious power of God, doing in my life what I could not possibly do for myself. And that leads me then to a true evaluation of myself.

Blessed are the meek (Mat 5:5):

Now that is seeing myself in truth, no longer am I puffed up, no longer am I deceiving myself about myself, and that's an easy thing for people to do. The word meek can probably best be defined by putting a hyphen in the middle of it: me-ek. It is again looking at myself in the light of the Lord and realizing that I am nothing.

Now it is interesting that these are not characteristics that are really admired by the world. The world admires the aggressor. You see, if this were being written by man, the "blesseds" would be given to, completely different kind of attributes with a man. But because Jesus is describing the child of God, he's describing those characteristics that are admirable by heaven.

The meek: they shall inherit the earth (Mat 5:5).

This earth is not the earth that God created. This earth has been spoiled by rebellion against God, but God is going to restore this earth to His original divine intention. Wars are going to cease. Man is going to dwell together in righteousness, in true justice, in peace. And God's kingdom will come to earth and those who are the children of God will inherit the earth. Jesus said, "And I will say to them in that day, come, ye blessed of the Father, inherit the kingdom that was prepared for you from the foundations of the earth" (Matthew 25:34). Revelation tells us concerning the body of Christ, "And they shall live and reign with him a thousand years on the earth" (Revelation 20:4,6).

Blessed are the meek: they shall inherit the earth (Mat 5:5)

What a glorious place this earth could be if it weren't for the pollutions that man has brought; if it weren't for the wars, the hatred, the greed but we will see the earth as God intended it. We will inherit the earth as God intended it. Now, these are more or less what we might call negative characteristics.

Now we get into more or less, well, the fourth of the beatitudes is the benchmark; it's the sort of the center, the top of the shed. Seeing myself in the light of God, recognizing the truth of my own weakness, having a true evaluation of myself; I begin to hunger and thirst after righteousness.

As Paul the apostle expresses, "I saw the ideal," Romans chapter seven. "I consent to the law that it is good, but how to perform it I can't discover. For the good that I would do I'm not doing and that which that I would not allow, that is the thing I am doing. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:16,7:18-19,7:24) And in there is that cry, oh God, help. I hunger, I thirst after the ideal but I haven't been able to attain it. Who will help me to find the ideal?

And Jesus said,

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after the ideal: For they shall be filled (Mat 5:6).

If you're hungering and thirsting after righteousness, surely God will answer that hunger and thirst of your heart and you will be filled with the righteousness of God.

Now we come into more positive kind of characteristics.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy (Mat 5:7).

Now Jesus actually declares that our having been forgiven so much should be the incentive for our forgiving. Having obtained the mercy of God, then we indeed should be merciful, but here he puts it the other way. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy". Well, we have obtained mercy and that's really what makes us merciful.

Blessed are the pure in heart: For they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: For they shall be called the children of God (Mat 5:8-9).

Now this basically ends the description of that child of God. Now in the next beatitude he more or less declares what will be the response and the reaction toward that kind of person from the world. Now reading these characteristics you'd say, oh that guy ought to be, you know, just well-accepted anywhere he goes. Well he would be in any church, but when he gets out in the world it's another story.

Jesus said, "Don't be surprised that men hate you, they hated me. Don't be surprised they didn't receive you, they didn't receive me" (John 15:18). Now each of these characteristics were surely manifested in the life of Jesus Christ and the world crucified him and he said this will be the response of the world towards that kind of person.

So he said,

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake (Mat 5:10):

If you are this kind of a righteous person, you'll be persecuted for being that kind of person. People will take advantage of you, people will run all over you and people will resent you, because you will make them uncomfortable when you are around them because you are doing the right thing and they're wanting to do the wrong thing. Thus they will begin to project against you their feelings of guilt.

Now, notice Jesus didn't say, blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely because you are doing something weird. And unfortunately, there are some people who take the name of Christian and then in the name of Christianity do weird things, and because of the weird things they are doing, they come into a certain amount of persecution.

When I was going to Bible college in Los Angeles, I was working downtown at the Title Insurance and Trust Company. I had to ride the streetcar back to my apartment in the evening. Now we had one gal in a class at Bible school who was a real problem to me, she was extremely loud and weird. You know, the kind that wore the long skirt with the dark cotton hose and the hair pulled back straight and no make-up, and she had sung at one time in opera and had a voice for opera. She was loud. I mean, there was nothing moderate about her. When she left, she left louder than anybody else, when she talked she talked louder than anybody else and she was just purely obnoxious as far as I was concerned.

Every once in awhile, she evidently worked downtown L.A. someplace too and she got on the streetcar after I did, but she'd get on the streetcar and she'd look back and spot me. And in that loud, operatic voice she would say, "Praise the Lord, brother". Here's this weird-looking gal and everybody turns to look who she's exhorting, and I would turn and look too, you know, and just sort of to the people around me saying hmm-hmm. Sort of sad isn't it? So I went up to her because of the embarrassment she was causing me. And I told her that I didn't appreciate her loud exhortations on the streetcar and in the classroom, also because she was very loud in the classroom. And I showed her the scripture "Let the women keep silent in the church"(1 Corinthians 14:34). And she walked away saying, thank you, Lord, for the persecution, you know.

Well the Lord doesn't say that you're blessed when you're persecuted for being an oddball but "for righteousness and for his namesake". And so check out in that persecution that's coming your way, make sure that it is for the sake of Jesus Christ that the persecution is coming not just because of some weird characteristic.

And Jesus said,

Rejoice (Mat 5:12),

Now that's a difficult thing to do when you are being reviled and persecuted for the sake of Jesus Christ, it's awfully hard to rejoice. In fact, our natural tendency is to mope, well Lord, all right. If that's the way you're going to let people treat me, I'm just going to keep quiet, you know, and just sort of sulk because we don't like to be reviled. We don't like to be persecuted but Jesus said "rejoice". Can you?

Peter and John in the book of Acts when they were going into the temple, and through the faith of Jesus Christ brought healing to the lame man, and as the result were arrested and brought to trial. Those men that were trying them, beat them and warned them not to speak anymore in the name of Jesus Christ. And it said, "they went their way rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer persecution for Jesus Christ"(Acts 5:41). Classic example of this text being fulfilled in the life of the disciples.

Rejoice and be exceeding glad (Mat 5:12):

Why? Well, first of all,

great is your reward in heaven (Mat 5:12):

And secondly, you're in good company.

for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you (Mat 5:12).

As Stephen, when he was standing before the counsel said, "Which of the prophets have you not slain?"(Acts 7:52) You talk about your fathers being so great, our fathers this, our fathers that; but your fathers killed those prophets that God sent unto them. In fact, which of the prophets did they not kill? And you are even worse than your fathers because you killed the one that the prophets were all telling was going to come.

Now Stephen points out that the prophets of God were not really accepted. So rejoice, be exceeding glad, you're in good company. They had persecuted all of those true prophets of God. False prophets; oh, they were lifted up, they were heralded. Oh, they had it comfortable and nice, but the true prophets of God ran into real problems because people just don't want to hear God's truth. They would rather be lulled into a false sense of security, oh, everything's fine; God wants you to all be prosperous, God wants you to all drive Mercedes. Well who wouldn't like that doctrine? That sounds great. Hurray, hurray. Go out and order my Mercedes. But the true prophets of God do not sit in such a popular seat.

Now Jesus, next of all declares the influence of the child of God in the earth by declaring,

Ye are the salt of the earth (Mat 5:13):

Now salt in those days was used basically as a preservative because, they lacked vacuum-sealed packing and because they lacked refrigeration. Whenever they butchered their meat, that portion that they did not roast immediately would have to be salted well, and the salt killed the surface bacteria on the meat and had a preserving affect. It kept the meat from rotting or putrefying.

And Jesus is saying to his disciples, ye are the preserving influence in a world in which you live. You're the preserving influence. You are

the salt of the earth, that preserving influence. And surely true Christianity, wherever it has gone has been a preserving influence in that society. Wherever there is a strong Christian emphasis and a strong Christian voice, that society is being preserved and maintained. But whenever the Christian voice begins to wane, that society begins to deteriorate and ultimately be destroyed.

And take a look at history and notice the preserving influence of Christianity, as long as it remained strong and a dynamic influence within the community, the community was strong and powerful. Look at the United States, we were formed on Christian principles. Tremendously heavy Christian influence in the forming of this nation and thus written into our very Constitution those safeguards to protect that religious freedom, freedom of worship and assembly in all because the Christian influence was strong and we weren't afraid to say, "One nation under God". But through the years, the Christian voice has been weakened in its influence upon our society. And we can see those rotting forces that are beginning to erode away the very foundations of our democracy, as we see children being exploited for sexual purposes, as we see child pornography being produced and purchased. Now, there's an interesting thing; pornography, and about many of these other horrible things that are happening and you should know it.

A man in our church who is the head of the Los Angeles police department in the division of child exploitation told me personally that whenever they make a raid on any of these child pornography places, where they're taking the pictures or where they're publishing the material; he said whenever they make a raid they always find an abundance of satanic literature and the aspects of satanic worship there. And he said it is also true in the homicides in those vicious homicides he said, we so often discover satanic literature and evidence of satanic worship. He said, "Chuck, it is a spiritual battle that we are in".

It's just not men who have given themselves over to perverted thinking but it is satanic in its origin. And "We wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers"(Ephesians 6:12). If we don't become aware of that, we're not going to be properly equipped for the battle. We're going to be making the mistake of trying to fight the spiritual battle with carnal weapons, writing our congressman and things of this nature.

What we need to do is get on our knees before God and begin to pray and seek God's power and seek a spiritual revival, that will turn this nation right-side up once again, because it is a tremendous spiritual battle that we are in and the forces that we are fighting are actually demonic in nature. And the weapons of our warfare cannot be carnal, but they are spiritual and they are mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds of the enemy; but that's prayer and we need to be doing it more and more and more.

You are the salt of the earth; you're the preserving influence. But if the salt has lost its savor, if it's no longer doing its job then it's good for nothing. If the church is not being a purifying influence within the community, then it's good for nothing. Those churches that seek to exist as social centers are good for nothing. The church needs to be a dynamic spiritual influence within the community and seeking to bring a spiritual godly influence within the community.

The salt has lost its savour is good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under the foot of man (Mat 5:13)

When the salt became unusable, old unusable, they would, threw it out on the pathways so that the rain would dissolve it and the sodium chloride would kill the vegetation. And so they used it to kill the vegetation, to keep the pathways clear from weeds and grass, and thus the salt was "trodden under the foot of man". And Jesus is saying, look, the church is to be the salt of the earth. If it is not the salt of the earth, it's good for nothing and it will be trampled under the foot of fallen man. And so when Jesus said, "Ye are the salt of the earth" is not just a challenge, it is an ultimatum to the church. You either be what God intends you to be or you're not going to be, you'll be "trodden under the foot of man".

Then he said,

Ye are the light of the world (Mat 5:14).

Now here are those disciples, Peter and John and James, and they were fishermen. They didn't have much of an elaborate background. And Jesus is sitting there in the Galilee, which is far away from metropolitan Rome. And all of the powers of Rome and the Grecian culture centered around Athens and there on the hillside above the Sea of Galilee, to this sort of motley little crew Jesus says to them, Hey, you are the light of the world. Marvelous. I love it. Oh, the influence that the church should be having in this dark world today. You're the only light; you're the only hope.

Paul, when he is describing his commission before Agrippa and talking about his conversion on the road to Damascus, declares that the Lord called him to deliver, really, the Gentiles from the power of darkness and to bring them into the kingdom of light. And so that is constantly the mission of the church; to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive the forgiveness of their sins and the inheritance among them that are set apart. And so the mission of the church to turn them from darkness to light; "You are the light of the world."

Probably referring to Saphet up on the hills above the Galilee there, Jesus said,

A city set on a hill cannot be hid. And neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on the candlestick that it might give light unto all that are in the house (Mat 5:14-15). Little fella had just accepted the Lord and was heading off for a summer camp that did not have a religious base. And he went in to talk to his pastor about it and they prayed together that his life might really be strong for Jesus, while he was there in the camp with all of these other kids. And so after he'd come back from his camping experience the pastor said, Well, how did it go Johnny? He said it went great. He said, ah, that's good. He said, yup, nobody found out. But the Lord said you don't light a candle to put it under a bushel, but on the candlestick that it might give light to all that are in the house. The one purpose of light is to give light. Therefore, the one purpose that God has for you is that you might give light to the dark world.

Now, there is a way to which you are to let your light shine. There are many ways by which you can let your light shine, but the way you are to let your light shine,

Let your light so shine before men, that when they see your good works, they will glorify your Father which is in heaven (Mat 5:16).

Now it is possible for a person to so let their light shine that when people see their good works, they glorify them. Oh isn't he wonderful. Oh did you see that? Oh isn't that marvelous? Did you hear what he did? And there is a way by which we can do our good works before men to draw attention to ourself and to bring honor to ourself. And there is something very perverse in our flesh that wants to bring to attention and honor to ourselves. It's much easier to be a hero before a lot of people than it is to be all by yourself, where but nobody else knows it, you see. It's very easy to do good and magnanimous deeds when everybody is watching. Oh, did you see what he did? My, isn't that marvelous? But when there's no one watching and no one knows that you did it, that's just a different story.

When we lived in Huntington Beach years ago, we lived right across from the Edison plant where the guys would come who did all of the repair work for Edison and so forth. And of course there were often foggy mornings where you turned your lights on, not to see, but just to let other people see you. And whenever you're driving in those conditions, it's very easy to forget that your lights are on and just to walk away and leave your lights on. And so on those foggy mornings I would go over to the Edison plant and I would go around and turn off the lights of all of these cars because, you know, I figured man, if they come back this evening then they're gonna have dead batteries and everything else. So I would go around and turn off the lights in all of these cars.

But I always thought how sad it is that they don't know how nice a fellow I am. You know when they get back they're gonna fire up their cars and drive off and they'll never know that if it weren't for my kindness and my goodness, they would've had dead batteries when they got out here. I was almost tempted to write little cards and say, Did you know you left your lights on this morning and you would've had a dead battery tonight but I came over and turned them off for you. I live right across the street. Somehow we want recognition from man for our good deeds. But Jesus said, "Let your light so shine that when men see your good works they will glorify your father in heaven".

Now, as we move through the gospels and we study the ministry of Jesus Christ, so often we are going to be reading where the multitudes came to Him and he touched them and he healed them and it said, "they went away glorifying God". You see, he did it in such a way that God was glorified as the people saw the good works that he did. So the Christian life is a fine balance. You're the light of the world but you are to let your light so shine before man, that when they see your good works they won't be praising and glorifying you but they will be praising and glorifying your Father which is in heaven.

Now Jesus moves into the next section of the Sermon on the Mount as he talks to them concerning the Christian's relationship to the law. And he declares,

Do not think that I have come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil (Mat 5:17).

Now, the law required death for disobedience. Jesus came to fulfill the law by dying for our disobedience. He came to fulfill the prophets where Isaiah said, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we've turned every one of us to our way; and God laid on him the iniquities of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). He came to fulfill the law and the prophets. I haven't come to destroy it; I've come to fulfill it. And that is why Paul the apostle wrote, "Christ is the end of the law to those that believe" (Romans 10:4); because he has brought us into a new relationship with God that involves our faith in Jesus Christ as the basis for our righteous standing before God for he fulfilled the law. He did not come to bring an end to it but to fulfill it, and he fulfilled the requirements of the law for us, dying in our place.

For verily I say unto you, Until heaven and earth shall pass, not one jot or one tittle shall in any wise pass from the law, until it is all fulfilled (Mat 5:19).

Now the jot and the tittles were the little punctuation marks and so forth that were placed there, just in the Hebrew letters, those small, little marks that give the a, the vowel pronunciation. "Not one jot or tittle will in any wise pass until it is all fulfilled."

Whosoever [he said,] therefore shall break one of the least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Mat 5:19).

Now, one day Jesus was asked the question, "What is the greatest commandment?" And Jesus answered correctly, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength and with all their mind". And Jesus added, "And the second is just like it; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself". And he said, "in these two are all the law and the prophets"(Matthew 22:36-40). This is a summary, a very short summary of all of the law and the prophets; love God with all your heart, love your neighbor as yourself.

Paul the apostle said, "For love is the fulfilling of the law and he who loves has fulfilled the law"(Romans 13:8). Now the law was given in negative: thou shalt not, thou shalt not, thou shalt not. Jesus turned it around to the positive: "thou shalt love the Lord thy God, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" and therein is the fulfillment.

[And] if a man would teach others to break the commandments, he will be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but he who teaches those to keep the commandments shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Mat 5:19).

But then Jesus said something that must have absolutely blown their minds, for he then said,

For I say unto you, That unless your righteousness shall exceed that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you will in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven (Mat 5:20).

Now that must have been a tremendous shock to his disciples, because as far as they were concerned, no one was more righteous than the scribes and the Pharisees because that's all these men live for. And these men were constantly displaying how righteous they were by the types of robes that they wore, by the types of borders around their garments and all. And just by their action, they had special little actions in their prayers and all that really indicated a tremendous depth of righteousness.

I mean, these are the guys that Jesus said, "you strain at a gnat"(Matthew 23:24). Why would they strain at a gnat? Because the law said, you're not to eat anything with blood. And so you'd see a Pharisee out on the corner putting his finger down his throat and gagging and straining and pushing and trying to throw up. You'd say, what's wrong? Oh I was running along and this gnat flew in my mouth. He strained to get rid of the gnat, because of course he didn't want to eat any meat that wasn't first of all thoroughly bled and kosher. And now Jesus is saying you gotta be more righteous than those guys if you're going to enter the kingdom of heaven. But these guys were practicing righteous constantly, this righteous standard of the law. But then Jesus goes on to illustrate what he meant by that, for he tells them Now you have heard that it was said by them of old time (Mat 5:21),

You see, the disciples could not read Hebrew. They only knew what the law said by the teaching of the scribes and Pharisees. The common people did not know the Hebrew language. When they came back from Babylon, they spoke Caldean. Aramaic was the common language of the time of Christ, and Greek, but Hebrew was only for the scholars. Therefore, they really couldn't read the scriptures in their own languages, in their own language. So they had to depend upon the scribes and Pharisees teaching them and thus "Ye have heard that it hath been said" (Mat 5:21), you have heard that it had been said, it has been said.

And Jesus gives here five of the teachings of the scribes and Pharisees concerning the law, as they were interpreting it and as they were teaching it to the people. And Jesus shows how, first of all, how they were teaching it and then he declares what was intended when God gave it. And the basic difference between the way they were teaching it and the way God intended it to be was that they were teaching it as purely a physical thing to be fulfilled in a physical way. And Jesus is declaring that God intended it to be a spiritual thing, governing the spiritual attitudes of man and that God is more interested in your attitude than he is the actions.

Now there are many people today who are trying to be so careful in their actions but their attitudes stink. And God is interested in the attitude from which actions spring. And thus, what a person does can be thoroughly disallowed by the attitude in which he's doing it. A person can be doing all kinds of magnanimous works for God in the church, just busying himself and doing so many marvelous things around the church, but his attitude can be bad. And God totally disregards the things that the man is doing because of the attitude in which he is doing it. God is far more interested in the attitude in your heart than the actions of your outward life.

And they have been interpreting the law to govern the actions of man, where God intended the law to be speaking to the attitudes of man. Thus, in the way that they were interpreting the law, they were able to fulfill it. But in the way that the law was originally intended, because it was intended to govern the spirit of man, the law was actually intended to make the whole world guilty before God and to show man's guilt. But rather than their reading the law and feeling guilty before God, seeking the mercy and the grace of God, they were so interpreting the law as having fulfilled the law, and thus being very pompous and very righteous and very critical of everybody else. And they were interpreting the law so that they were having this tremendous attitude of self-righteousness and pride looking down then upon everybody else.

And it was manifested, as Jesus said, when the Pharisee went into the temple and said, "Oh Father, I thank you I'm not like other men, for I fast and I pray" and you know, he's telling God all of his good things. And Jesus said there was a sinner that went into the temple and he wouldn't even lift his eyes toward heaven but with head bowed he just smote on his chest and said, "Oh God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:11-13). And Jesus said he went away justified and forgiven. Where the first guy, you know, his prayers meant nothing to God. Now, that's because they were interpreting the law in a wrong way, only to govern the outward actions of man and not to deal with the spirit of all.

And as you see Jesus making the contrast, he first of all teaches it as they were teachers or shows us how they were teaching it, but then he shows the original intent of the law. And thus, as we see the original intent of the law, we are all made guilty before God. First of all, [You've been heard] You have heard that it was said by those in the old times that Thou shalt not kill (Mat 5:21); Actually, literally, thou shalt not murder. And whosoever shall murder shall be in danger of the judgment (Mat 5:21):

Now doesn't the law say that? Yes it does; thou shalt not murder. That is the law. Then why did Jesus have any controversy with that? You know what God intended when he said that? You know what constitutes the violation that thou shalt not murder? Not just taking a club and beating the guy over the head until he's senseless, not just putting a chokehold on him until he can't breath anymore, not running your sword through his heart; but Jesus said, I say unto you (Mat 5:22), This is what they've been teaching you, but this is what I say, this is what the law was intended to say. That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment (Mat 5:22):

You see, it is this ungoverned and unreasonable anger that leads to murder. Now you may have an ungovernable, unreasonable anger but you may have been able to control it but you go around constantly seething, constantly angry, boiling inside. Jesus said, hey, you violated that law already in your heart, in your spirit. But because you've never taken a forty-five and blown a guy's brains out, you go, well man, I've never murdered. You know I feel pretty righteous you know. And yet all of this horrible anger can be boiling inside of you.

Whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca (Mat 5:22),

That is, you vain fellow.

shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if when you are bringing your gift to the altar, and you suddenly remember that your brother has ought against you; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift (Mat 5:22-24).

Now, in geometry I learned that the shortest distance between two points was a straight line. And that may be true in geometry but not necessarily true in your getting to God. Quite often in our approach of God, bringing to the altar our gift, the most direct approach to God is not a straight line but it is by an offended brother. Go first, be reconciled to your brother and then come and offer your gift.

Now he said,

Agree with your adversary [readily] quickly, while you are in the way with him; lest at any time your adversary deliver you to the judge, and the judge deliver to the officer, and you will be cast into prison. Verily I say unto you, You will not come out until you have paid the uttermost farthing (Mat 5:25-26).

Of course he's referring there to the debtors' prison and all. So, get along with people, love people.

Now you've that it was said by them of old times, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart (Mat 5:27-28).

Now the first part, a lot of you can just, you know, square back with self-righteous and say, well, I've never committed adultery. But when Jesus interprets it as God intended it, "But I say unto you, whosoever looks about a woman to lust after her, commits adultery in his heart", then suddenly the chest is sucked in and we think, wow. That desire constitutes guilt in the eyes of the Lord.

And you see the difference where the way Jesus was interpreting it; it made us all guilty before God. The way they were interpreting it, it made them very pompous and self-righteous. But the way Jesus was interpreting it; it makes us all guilty. And that's exactly what the law was intended to do, to make the whole world guilty before God, so that we would not seek to come before God in our own righteousness but that we would seek that righteousness that God has provided for us, that we might have that standing before God in the righteousness before God, in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. So the law was a schoolmaster to drive us to Jesus Christ.

Now Jesus said,

If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of your members should perish, [that your whole] rather than that your whole body should be cast into hell. And if your right hand offends you, cut it off, cast it from you: for it is profitable for thee that one of your members should perish, and not that your whole body should be cast into hell (Mat 5:29-30).

Now, let me say that interpreting the Sermon on the Mount or the words of Jesus Christ, that we must take care in interpreting, because if our interpretation of a passage makes the passage ridiculous then we have the wrong interpretation. And in noticing this, "if your right eye offends thee, pluck it out and cast" he's not speaking literally of just plucking out your eye and throwing it away because through that eye you looked at a gal and you go "ooh eee" you know, that'll be nice. Because even if you plucked out your right eye and cast it from you, you still got your left eye. If you're a thief, pickpocket, use your right hand, it offends you, cut it off. If that were literal, you'd develop the skill in the left hand.

So he's not talking literally of plucking out your eye or cutting off your hand but he is just trying to show to you, because to every one of us, the thought of plucking out our right eye is a very repugnant, repulsive, oh you know, I shudder at that. Eeew, that gives me the chills thinking of plucking out my right eye or taking and running my hand through a band saw. Eeew, you know that gives me the chills thinking my hand lying there on the table with a saw, picking it up and stuffing it in my pocket, you know. And it's repugnant to me, the thought is repugnant.

But Jesus, by this, deliberately speaking of things that are so repugnant to us, is just seeking to show the importance of entering the kingdom of heaven. And in reality, the most important thing for any of us, more important than a whole body, more important than having all the members of my body intact is that I enter into the kingdom of heaven. And I need to have that kind of primary emphasis in my life, the kingdom of heaven is the greatest goal, the greatest desire, and thus should bring into my life the greatest sacrifices. And I should not be concerned with what sacrifice I may make in a temporal way because I am seeking the eternal kingdom of heaven.

Now the third illustration he said,

It hath been said, That whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, except it to be the cause of fornication, causes her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced commits adultery (Mat 5:31-32).

Now the issue of Jesus and divorce is a very interesting issue and it is one that is very relevant for today because of the high incidence of divorce. And under the law it said if a man be married to a wife and he finds an uncleanness in her, let him give her a writing of divorcement. In those days, the woman really did not have many rights. If her husband wanted to divorce her, he could divorce her but she could not divorce him. There was no provision for a wife getting a divorce from her husband, but the husband could get a divorce. And they began, as they do today, to interpret the law.

You know how that our laws have been so interpreted now by the courts that they become more liberal all the time. So that if the officer, when he arrests you does not have a probable cause to search you, but without the probable cause he searches you and finds

in your possession a forty-five and ballistics tests prove that it was the gun that was used to murder that man just down the street, and you have the man's watch and wallet in your pocket and all; but the officer didn't inform you of your rights or he didn't have probable cause of searching you, you can get off free because we so interpret the law.

In fact, I saw the other day when they let a guy off free because he wore jail clothes when he was on trial and it gave a presupposition of guilty, though he was guilty and they had all the proof to prove that he was guilty. Because they did not let him wear a business suit when he stood before the jury but he was in jail attire, they set him free. The liberalizing of the law through interpretation.

Now, this law of divorce had been extremely liberalized through interpretation. What did the law constitute that he finds an uncleanness in her? And there was one school of rabbi's under Hallel who interpreted that very strictly as being he found that she wasn't a virgin when he married her. But the other school of rabbi's had begun to liberalize that law to the extent that if you found an uncleanness and your wife can constitute that she just didn't fix your eggs the way you like them in the morning, and that would be an uncleanness in her. I don't like the way she cooks. Here, you're through, woman. Writing of divorcement. And they just write out the divorcement and hand it to her and she had no alternative. I mean, he did that, she was gone, she had no recourse, she was out.

That's why this custom of dowry became popular. For dowry was actually alimony in advance. It was paid to the girl's father and he would keep it for her in case her husband ever put her out, then she's got her alimony already set. He paid it before they got married. Dowry is really alimony in advance. Not such a bad deal when divorce is so easy and so liberalized.

So this is the background, a very easy divorce. Just give her writing of bill of divorcement. Any excuse, any uncleanness and that can mean anything; didn't like the way she combed her hair, didn't like the way she looked in the morning when she first woke up, and so they had so liberalized the divorce law. And so Jesus is going back more towards the original. But we'll get more into this when we get to the seventeenth chapter or the nineteenth chapter when we look at the law of Jesus and divorce, because Jesus does then begin to amplify it there a bit. And we'll not cover it tonight fully but we'll wait till chapter nineteen.

Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by those of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shall perform unto the Lord thine oaths: But I say unto you, Don't swear at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: Nor by the earth; for it is God's footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because you cannot make one hair white or black (Mat 5:33-36). That was before Clairol. But let your yes be a yes; let your no be a no: and whatever is more than this is deceitful (Mat 5:37). Now Jesus is talking about that deceitfulness of being able to say no, though it sounds like yes or saying yes when you really don't mean yes. Basically, Jesus is saying you should be a person of your word. You should not have to take an oath. You should not have to swear to the truth that you are declaring. "I swear on the Bible. I'm telling you the truth, man". Well, you only have to do that if you are basically an untruthful person and nobody trusts you.

But you should be a person of your word. And when you say yes, you should mean yes and when you say no, you should mean no. Let your yes be yes and your no be no and don't get into these long deceitful kind of well, I would be very happy to do it and I'll tell you what. I'll pray about it brother. But you're really saying no, I really don't want to. I have no intention of doing it but I don't want to tell you no because it may offend you. But Jesus said be a person of your word; if you say yes, mean yes; if you say no, mean no. Anything that is more than this is just deceitful to cover up the truth.

Now you've heard that it had been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth (Mat 5:38): But let me explain the way they were teaching this law. First of all, this law was not given to the common people. This came under the law when God was instructing the judges concerning their judgment in the cases that were brought before them, and there should be equity meted out from the judges. And he uses the eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth to show that when you judge, make the judgment equitable. Make the judgment fitting the crime. Let the judgment be fitting the crime that was committed. Let it be an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. So he's just talking about equitable judgment, but it is addressed to the judges, not to individuals. In that portion of the law he is instructing judges, how they are to judge when they are sitting in the judgment seat. But they had begun to interpret it in a personal way and they had liberalized it so it was, you know, now to you, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But not only were they teaching an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth as the possible judgment, but they were saying that it is an obligation. Now, even today in many of those families, you have these futile things going on; an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth thing, and these feuds go on for generations. You know, they killed a member of our clan, we're going to kill a member of their clan. They beat up a member of our clan, we're going to beat up, and we're duty-bound, we're honor-bound. And they looked at it as something of which you were duty-bound and honor-bound to do, and it was a violation of honor if you didn't take the eye for and eye or a tooth for a tooth. They were really, you know, go at it, go get it; you're honor-bound to do it. But Jesus said, ah, not so. First of all, it doesn't have a personal vindictive within it but it is something that the judges were to meet out equitable judgment.

But Jesus said, I say unto you, don't resist those that are evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also (Mat 5:39). Now, there are those who take this resist not evil as a case against police departments but that is a ridiculous, foolish interpretation, and thus, it is not the correct interpretation because Jesus didn't say anything that was ridiculous and foolish. Again, he's talking to us and just saying we aren't to be seeking vengeance for ourselves.

Whosoever smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have the cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him two (Mat 5:39-41). In those days, the Roman soldiers could compel you to carry their backpacks a mile. Under Roman law you could be walking down the road and a Roman soldier come to you and he had his backpack on and all he would say, Carry this thing for a mile, and you had to do it

under Roman law; you had to carry the thing for a mile. And of course, the Jews hated that yoke of Roman control and government. They were talking rebellion. And boy, it used to really gull them to have to carry that load for that Roman soldier for a mile.

Jesus said, "Look, if they compel you to go a mile, go two". Think of what opportunity you'd have to witness to him in the second mile. He'd wonder, hey you're different man. What's going on here?

Give to him that ask, and he that would borrow from thee don't turn away. Now you have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless those that curse you, do good to those that hate you, pray for those which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, he sends rain on the just and the unjust. (Mat 5:42-45)

God treats all men alike whether good or bad, gives rain to the good and bad people, causes his sun to shine on good and bad people; God isn't partial in these things. So be like your Father which is in heaven. Bless those that curse you, pray for those that despitefully use you, love your enemies. "Now I say," Jesus said; this they say, this is what I say.

Now, as I pointed out in the beginning, the way they were interpreting the law, the people could feel self-righteous because they were keeping the law. But the way Jesus interpreted the law they were all guilty. Now, as you look at the way Jesus is interpreting the law, do you feel righteous or guilty? And thus you see the true intent of the law was to govern over the attitudes of man. And when your attitude was wrong before God, you were guilty before God and you should then be seeking God's forgiveness and God's help. But it's all in the way that they were interpreting the law and the way the law was intended, intended to govern the attitudes of man. Now Jesus concludes: If you only love those that love you, so what? [It's no big deal.] don't even the rank sinners do the same? (Mat 5:46) You know, it's no big deal if you just go around loving all those that love you, Oh I love you people so much; big deal. You love me? So, it's only natural that I love you. But Jesus said, If you only salute your brothers, [you only greet your brothers] what do you more than others? (Mat 5:47)

If you're only friendly and kind and helpful for those that you know, those that are your brothers, then what are you doing more than anybody else? If you are only loving those that love you, what are you doing more than anybody else?

Now, the inference here is that as a Christian you should be doing more than anybody else and if you're not doing more than anybody else then how can you really boast to being a Christian? The whole question is what are you doing more than the person who is not a Christian? You should be doing more. And if you only love those that love you, you're not doing any more than anybody else. If you're only greeting those that greet you or only greeting your brothers, you're not doing any more than anybody else. If you're friendly to those that you know and all, you're not doing any more than anybody else.

Then comes the capper, and if you haven't felt like a sinner yet; Jesus said,

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect (Mat 5:48).

So, strike one. I didn't make it. I've come far from making it, therefore, I need help. And thank God he has provided that help that I needed through forgiveness through Jesus Christ through his shed blood for me.

We'll wait until the next session to go on with six and seven because we'll never make it. There's so much to be said, and if the Lord comes before we get there, I'll wave at you across the room as we are sitting at the feet of the Master learning more and more of God's love. For God, through the endless ages to come shall be revealing unto us the exceeding richness of his love and grace towards us in Christ Jesus our Lord.

What a glorious day that will be when we all stand before him complete in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless, that's "be ye perfect"; that's just the way He's going to present you before the Father. Isn't that neat? Not because I am perfect, but because I am perfect in Him. The Bible says the fullness of the godhead bodily dwells in Christ and you are perfect in him. It's the same Greek word that is used here; "be ye therefore perfect", same Greek word.

You are complete or you are perfect in Him. To present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding love. That's just how he's going to present you when you stand before God, complete in Jesus Christ. Only the grace of God can do that for us. You see, the law of God condemns us all to death. But Jesus said, "I came to fulfill the law" thus He died for us. You see, the whole section here now as Jesus is speaking about the law. I didn't come to destroy it, I came to fulfill the law and the prophets, and that he did in his death for us who are guilty because the law is spiritual and I am carnal. And thus, the law condemned me. Paul said when the law came, sin was revealed and I died. It destroyed me. It condemned me to death because I was guilty.

So if you are reading the law in such a way, as you feel very smug and self-righteous say, well, I'm not like other men. I've never done those horrible things, look again. What is in the attitude of your heart, that's what God is looking upon. For man may look on the outward appearance but God is looking upon your heart, and that's what God is interested in tonight, a heart that is broken before him. A heart that grieves over its own sin and iniquity, a heart that hungers and thirsts after God, for they will then be filled with that mercy of God and they will become pure, the pure desire of their hearts for God and for the things of God. Praise the Lord.

Father, we just thank you for the guide to life, the lamp unto our feet, a light unto our path, that we might walk in thy path of righteousness for thy namesake. Thank you Father again, for this privilege of being here tonight and sharing in thy Word. And now Lord, may thy Holy Spirit be with us as we go, watching over, keeping.

And Father, we know not what the day is going to bring forth but in the midst of the turmoil that is now engulfing the Middle East, midst of the bombs and the artillery and rockets, we pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Oh God, we pray more that thy kingdom will come and thy will shall be done here on the earth even as it is in heaven, where men will no longer be killing and destroying men through hatred, greed and war. If where we might all sit down beneath our own vine and fig tree and live in peace in thy kingdom in the world that you desire for us. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

May the Lord be with you, give you a beautiful week. May you be filled with the power of his Holy Spirit and may you indeed walk in love, that kind of love that comes from God that overcomes every obstacle and barrier that is built up against it. May you truly love those that hate you and do good unto those that spitefully use you and thus truly demonstrate the traits and the qualities of the children of the kingdom, in Jesus' name.



Matthew 6:1-34 (AMP)

1 TAKE CARE not to do your good deeds publicly or before men, in order to be seen by them; otherwise you will have no reward [reserved for and awaiting you] with and from your Father Who is in heaven. 2 Thus, whenever you give to the poor, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites in the synagogues and in the streets like to do, that they may be recognized and honored and praised by men. Truly I tell you, they have their reward in full already. 3 But when you give to charity, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 So that your deeds of charity may be in secret; and your Father Who sees in secret will reward you openly. 5 Also when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward in full already. 6 But when you pray, go into your [most] private room, and, closing the door, pray to your Father, Who is in secret; and your Father, Who sees in secret, will reward you in the open. 7 And when you pray, do not heap up phrases (multiply words, repeating the same ones over and over) as the Gentiles do, for they think they will be heard for their much speaking. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him. 9 Pray, therefore, like this: Our Father Who is in heaven, hallowed (kept holy) be Your name. 10 Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven (left, remitted, and let go of the debts, and have given up resentment against) our debtors. 13 And lead (bring) us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. 14 For if you forgive people their trespasses [their reckless and willful sins, leaving them, letting them go, and giving up resentment], your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive others their trespasses [their reckless and willful sins, leaving them, letting them go, and giving up resentment], neither will your Father forgive you your trespasses. 16 And whenever you are fasting, do not look gloomy and sour and dreary like the hypocrites, for they put on a dismal countenance, that their fasting may be apparent to and seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full already. 17 But when you fast, perfume your head and wash your face, 18 So that your fasting may not be noticed by men but by your Father, Who sees in secret; and your Father, Who sees in secret, will reward you in the open. 19 Do not gather and heap up and store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust and worm consume and destroy, and where thieves break through and steal. 20 But gather and heap up and store for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust nor worm consume and destroy, and where thieves do not break through and steal; 21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. 22 The eye is the lamp of the body. So if your eye is sound, your entire body will be full of light. 23 But if your eye is unsound, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the very light in you [your conscience] is darkened, how dense is that darkness! 24 No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will stand by and be devoted to the one and despise and be against the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (deceitful riches, money, possessions, or whatever is trusted in). 25 Therefore I tell you, stop being perpetually uneasy (anxious and worried) about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink; or about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life greater [in quality] than food, and the body [far above and more excellent] than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father keeps feeding them. Are you not worth much more than they? 27 And who of you by worrying and being anxious can add one unit of measure (cubit) to his stature or to the span of his life? 28 And why should you be anxious about clothes? Consider the lilies of the field and learn thoroughly how they grow; they neither toil nor spin. 29 Yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his magnificence (excellence, dignity, and grace) was not arrayed like one of these. 30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and green and tomorrow is tossed into the furnace, will He not much more surely clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 Therefore do not worry and be anxious, saying, What are we going to have to eat? or, What are we going to have to drink? or, What are we going to have to wear? 32 For the Gentiles (heathen) wish for and crave and diligently seek all these things, and your heavenly Father knows well that you need them all. 33 But seek (aim at and strive after) first of all His kingdom and His righteousness (His way of doing and being right), and then all these things taken together will be given you besides. 34 So do not worry or be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will have worries and anxieties of its own. Sufficient for each day is its own trouble.

Tonight let's take a look at Matthew, chapter six. We are in the section of the book of Matthew that is commonly called the Sermon on the Mount because it was delivered to the disciples of Jesus on the mountainside there above the Sea of Galilee. "Seeing the multitudes, he went into a mountain: and he was set, his disciples came unto him: and he opened his mouth and he taught them, saying," (Mat 5:1-2).

So the first thing we note is that this Sermon on the Mount is not for general world consumption. It is not a system of laws and all that the world should inaugurate or can inaugurate. The Sermon on the Mount is to the disciples of Jesus Christ, and it is only those who have been described in the first part of the sermon that can really put these things into practice and that only through the power of the Holy Spirit. And so there is, first of all, a description of the person of which Jesus is speaking and that description comes in the form of the Beatitudes as Jesus describes the person to whom the sermon is applicable: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, Blessed are they that mourn, Blessed are the meek, Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, Blessed are the merciful, Blessed are the pure in heart, Blessed are the peacemakers"(Mat 5:3-9). These are the children of God. These are the disciples of Jesus Christ. These are the characteristics of the disciples of Jesus Christ.

And then Jesus tells them what the reaction of the world will be towards them. And that is of persecution, not understanding them, reviling them, saying of all manner of evil against them falsely. But their response to the world's reviling is to be rejoicing and to be exceeding glad. And then he tells them the effect that they are to have upon the earth; ye are the salt or the preserving influence in a corrupting society. You are the light in the darkness. You are the light of the world. You are the salt of the earth. And then Jesus gets into an area that surely was mind-boggling to each of the disciples as he begins to talk to them concerning the law and it's relationship to the believer. And he declares to them that he did not come to destroy the law but to fulfill the law. But then that mind-boggling statement when Jesus said to his disciples, "Except your righteousness exceed that of the scribes and the Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven." (Mat 5:20) The scribes and the Pharisees spent their entire life trying to keep every little part of the law. And so to have Jesus make this kind of a statement, immediately the first reaction I could be would just be that of giving up. Well that's it. I've had it. There's no sense trying to go any further. There's no way I can be more righteous than the scribes and Pharisees.

And then Jesus went on to explain what he meant, for he began to give them five illustrations of the law as it was being taught and practiced by the scribes and the Pharisees. And he contrasted that with the law as it was intended when it was first given by God. And the basic difference between the way the law was being practiced and taught by the Pharisees, and the way the law was intended by God in each case was that the Pharisees were teaching and practicing the law in a strict outward observance. They were keeping the law from an outward aspect but the way God intended was spiritual and not understand the law to be spiritual and governing my spirit, my attitude. They developed a whole wrong reaction to the law. As they looked at the law and their outward fulfillment of the requirements of the law, they felt very self-satisfied, very self-righteous and very proud and judgmental against all other men. Jesus aptly described the attitude of the Pharisee when he said the Pharisee went into the temple to pray and he said, "Oh God, I thank you that I'm not like other men. I'm not an extortioner or I'm a blasphemer but I pay my tithes and I do this and I do that"(Luke 18:11). And he is perfectly describing the attitude that the Pharisee had as far as the law was concerned; the very smug, self-righteous attitude. But the law was not given by God to make men smug and self-righteous. The law was given by God to reveal to man the exceeding sinfulness of sin and to make the whole world guilty before God.

So their interpreting of the law was totally wrong and it was creating a completely wrong reaction on their part to the law. Rather than to make them feel guilty sinners before God and cry out "Oh God have mercy on me a sinner," because of the way they interpreted it they were able to fulfill the law. But the law being spiritual, though they may have fulfilled the outer or outward aspects, yet the spiritual aspects they had totally disobeyed. So in the contrast that Jesus was giving, the way that the law was being taught; "You heard that it hath been said Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever kills is in danger of judgement: But I say unto you, whosoever hates his brother"(Mat 5:22). You see, it's the hatred from which murder comes. And you can be guilty of the law, "thou shalt not murder" if you have hatred in your heart against your brother. If you consider your brother a worthless fellow you've destroyed him in your own mind. He's worth nothing, you know, but your mind violated the law "thou shalt not murder". "Thou shalt not commit adultery". Well, Jesus said look that isn't just the physical act. If you're looking at a woman and you desire her, then you've committed adultery already in your heart. The law was intended to make us guilty before God.

And as Paul the apostle said you know there was a time when he thought that, as far as the law was concerned he was perfect, he wrote to the Philippians and he said, "Concerning the righteousness which is the law" (Philippians 3:6). Man I had it, I had it made. But writing to the Romans he said, "I did not know that to desire or to covet was wrong except the law said, Thou shalt not covet" (Romans 7:7). So when I came to the realization that the law was governing the desires, hey, sin revived and I died. In other words, it killed me. It condemned me to death. I was guilty. Now he thought he wasn't guilty for so long but when he realized that the law was spiritual and I am carnal, hey I have failed.

And that's basically what Jesus is showing, is that the law is spiritual. And thus man cannot and has not fulfilled the law of God, and thus your righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees if you're gonna enter the kingdom of heaven. But how can your righteousness exceed the scribes and the Pharisees? Well, theirs was a righteousness of works and if you are trying to achieve a righteousness by works, there's no way you're going to exceed them. They've outworked you a long time ago. But God has established another basis for righteousness and that is the righteousness that God imparts or God accounts to a man by that man's faith in the finished work of God. By a man's faith in Jesus Christ, God accounts his faith for righteousness.

And Paul said, "I gladly threw over that righteousness that I once had which was of the law. Those things which were gained to me under the law I counted loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ for whom I suffered the loss of all things and do count them but refuse that I may know him and to be found in him; not having my own righteousness which is of the law but the righteousness which is through faith"(Philippians 3:8-9). So this new relationship with God: righteous by the faith and by believing in Jesus Christ and God having imparted to me then that, or God accounting to me righteousness; thereby, my righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees because God has imparted to me the righteousness of Jesus Christ, exceeding that of the scribes and Pharisees. And therein is my only hope of entering into the kingdom of heaven: my faith in God's finished work through Jesus Christ in achieving for me that righteous standing before God. Now, we get into chapter six and here Jesus, first of all, enunciates a principle, and as is the method of great teachers, there is statement of the principle and then the illustration and amplification of that principle. The principle is this:

Take heed to yourself, be careful that you do not your righteous deeds (Mat 6:1)

The alms being the righteous acts.

before men, to be seen of men(Mat 6:1):

Now he's talking here about the motives for which you do things, for which you do your righteous things. Make sure that the motive by which you are prompted to do these things does not come from your desire to be recognized and noted by men. Take heed that you do not your righteous act to be seen of men.

The Bible tells us that we are all going to stand before the judgement seat of Christ and our works are going to be judged of what sort they are. Our works will be judged actually by the motives behind the work; what motivated me to do it. And if my motivations in doing my righteous deeds are wrong, than those deeds are worthless and they will be burned and consumed as wood, hay and stubble. For all of our works will be tried by fire. Many of our works that we have done for the Lord will just be consumed. They'll go up in smoke. Now, those things which I've done out of a pure heart and pure motive before God, those that remain the testing of fire, I'll receive a reward for them. But all of our works are to be judged of what sort or what motivation is behind the works.

Now Paul the apostle speaks of that which motivated him, he said, "For the love of Christ constrains me" (2 Corinthians 5:14). And really love is the greatest motivator for Christian service and the only valid motivator for Christian service.

I can be doing a lot of wonderful things but if I don't do it in love, they become worthless. You see, I can even sell everything that I have, distribute all of the profit to the poor, but I can do it in such a way that I call the newspaper and say, "Hey send a reporter out here. I got my house for sale and I'm going to give everything to the poor". And then once I sold my house, I put up a big sign, you know, "Chuck's relief program", and I invite all the poor in and all the photographers and everything else and I start giving out, you know, all of my goods and I feed the poor and I stand there smiling for the photographers. Channel seven and channel five come out you know, and they take their pictures and I get my face in. This is wonderful. Look what this man has done. Oh how glorious, he sold everything and gave to the poor. But you see my motive was to get my smiling face before the public and have everybody say, "Oh, isn't that marvelous". That's my reward, everybody is saying "Oh isn't that marvelous" and I better listen carefully and tune in on that "Oh isn't that grand?" because that's all the reward I'm gonna get.

And when I come up before God and stand before God and give him that Pepsident smile, you know, that I gave to the TV cameras, you know. Pin it on me Lord, I'm ready now to receive. And he looks at the account and he says, "Well, I don't see anything here, Chuck". I say, "Wait a minute Lord. What do you mean you don't see anything? Didn't you watch channel seven? Didn't you hear those people raving about how marvelous I was?" "Oh yes I remember. That was your reward".

And that's basically what Jesus is saying here. Now be careful what your motive is. Don't do things in such a way as to draw attention to yourself. That is, to draw the praise of people and the applause of the crowd. For if that is what's behind it and you're doing it in such a way as to attract attention to your good works, then the attention that you've attracted is all the reward you're gonna get. So take heed that you don't do your righteous act to be seen of men, before men to be seen of them.

Now, there is a balance here because earlier Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world" (Mat 5:14) and you can't hide a light. Therefore what you do is going to be seen; it's going to be noticed. You can't hide the light. You're the light of the world, but "let your light so shine before men that when they see your good works they glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Mat 5:16). Now that's not always easy to do, but we are to seek to do those good works in such a way that when people see what we are doing, they won't be glorifying us but they'll be glorifying God. And that has to be of course, the motive behind it all to bring glory to God because I love God. I want to serve God. I'm doing it for him, that is the motive that God will honor. But if my motive is to receive glory and praise and credit for man, then the glory, praise and credit that I receive is my reward.

Now, there are those who say that we should not be interested in rewards, that we should be good just for goodness sake and that's, well that's again a very magnanimous thing to say. And people usually say that in order that they might appear to be very magnanimous, and thus they have their reward when they have said it, because people say, "Oh, isn't that marvelous? What pure heart he has. Oh, what a pure motive" you know. "He doesn't want any reward, he just wants to be good because he's good. Oh that's sweet" you know. That's sickly and it's unscriptural.

Jesus speaks many times here about rewards and how that we should be concerned for rewards, those rewards that come from our heavenly Father. So there is a place of reward in the Christian experience. Now, salvation is not a reward. Salvation is a gift of God through his grace towards us in Christ Jesus. And salvation is something that God gives to me through my faith in Jesus Christ, and it's nothing to do with my works or my effort or anything else. It only has to do with my simply believing on Jesus Christ and God gives to me that glorious gift of eternal life. God doesn't reward me with eternal life; that is a gift of God. I don't earn eternal life, I can't work for eternal life; it's a gift of God and not of works lest any man should boast.

But, as a child of God, there are responsibilities that God places upon me. There are opportunities that God gives me of serving him. And I will stand before God and I will be rewarded according to my faithfulness in the fulfilling of those obligations and responsibilities that God has placed before me while I am here. And so it is proper for me to desire that reward from God and to seek after that reward from God.

Now, Jesus said if you do your righteousness before men to be seen of men, basically you have your reward in the fact that men see what you're doing and acknowledge it and they praise you for it. And then Jesus gives three illustrations to this basic principle as he deals with the three basic righteous things that men do. And that is the giving of their alms, their prayer and the mortifying of their flesh. And there is a right way and there is a wrong way to do each of these things. There's a right way to give to God; there's a wrong way to give to God. You give the wrong way and you've received your reward. You give the right way and God will reward you. And so it all depends on where and from what source you want your rewards. You want your reward from God or you want your reward from man?

Now there are a lot of people who are satisfied and desire the reward of man. In a few days, the fourth of July, we're going to see tremendous pyrotechnic displays and these skyrockets are, they're getting more exotic every year. And as you watch these bursts of colors in the air, you hear the boom and you see all of these colors bursting out and these little things squirreling away and everybody says, "Oh". You're sitting there in the Anaheim stadium, perhaps, and this thing goes off and everybody "Ah" you know. Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful. Big flash, big burst, everybody's awing over it, but oh, it burns out so rapidly. You know it's just for a moment, boom; it's gone.

So the glory of the world, it's like a skyrocket. You know, you come on the world scene and we've watched it, you've lived long enough to see those who came on the world scene and everybody say "Ah, oh" and a big flash, but oh what a quick burnout. Now they're gone. They're being replaced by the new flashing stars. And the glory of the world is so shallow; it passes so rapidly.

But you know, up there in the sky, there are trillion displays of fire and glory. Those stars, oh, I tell ya; if you could just look at them closely enough you'd see fantastic, spectacular displays of glory and beauty and they just keep going on and on and on. And long after the skyrockets have expended their glory and fallen in ashes to the ground, the stars are still there.

Daniel said, "And they who are wise will lead many to righteousness and they shall shine as the stars forever and ever"(Daniel 12:3). And, it all depends on which sky you want to shine. You can do your works before man in such a way that everybody says, "Ah, oh" you know, big flash, everybody's all excited and, and everybody's going around saying "Oh, did you know what he did? Oh, isn't that wonderful? Oh, he's so glorious" you know. You're soon ashes, everybody's forgotten and they're looking for the next flash. Or you can do it in such a way that forever in God's kingdom shining in that glory of his splendor and his beauty.

So, when you give, don't sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have the glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward (Mat 6:2).

Now, I don't know if Jesus is exaggerating here or not. I have never really heard of anybody hiring a band to go before them when they are carrying their gift to church, you know, ready to drop your money in the offering and have the guy stand up and give a trumpet fanfare, you know, and so you come forward and place your gift in.

However, however, I have seen services where the evangelist will say; "Now God has revealed to me ye, that there are fifteen people here tonight that are going to give a thousand dollars to my ministry. Bless God. Hallelujah. I want you fifteen that God is speaking to your heart now to give that thousand dollars. I want you to stand to your feet" you know. And they harangue and they harass and they go until, "Praise God, look there's a brother over there. Oh, praise God brother, hallelujah". And the guy's standing there holding up his check, you know, and the evangelist runs back and gets it because I'll personally receive, you know. I'll personally take it out of your hand, you know. Greedy soul.

Now, as far as God is concerned, you will receive no reward from God for that thousand-dollar offering that you just gave. You already have your reward because, in a sense, you've sounded a trumpet. You've made a big public display out of your giving and everybody knows how generous you were. You stood to your feet; you received the applause of the people. Just drink it in because that's all the reward you're gonna get. Now to me, it is indeed sad and tragic that there are many people who actually encourage people to give with that kind of motivation because even in their receiving the peoples funds, using that as the motivator behind it, they have robbed those people from the reward that God would give them for the gifts that they have made. And I hold the evangelists responsible. They should know better. Sheep are often dumb and they don't know any better, but those people who are receiving money that way should know better and they are responsible. The Lord said you shouldn't be giving with a fanfare in a way to be seen of men. Not to make a parade, not to make a big do over what you have given to God.

But when you give your alms, really, just don't even let your right hand know what your left hand is doing (Mat 6:3):

Just give. Don't make a big deal over it That your alms may be in secret: and your Father which sees in secret shall reward thee openly (Mat 6:4).

So in our giving is to be simple, with simplicity. Our giving to God, Paul tells us in the Corinthian epistle, is never to be out of constraint or pressure. We should never feel pressured to give to God. God doesn't want people to give to him motivated by pressure. Oh here's the finance committee coming to the door and they're going to get our annual pledge. Oh no. What are we gonna just say this time, you know. And of course I'm under the pressure.

Here are these important people; there's the banker there and there's the attorney and here's my doctor, you know and they're sitting there and I'm on the hot seat because I've gotta make my pledge to the church for the year. And these guys are all gonna know what I'm gonna pledge. And I don't want to look like a skinny skinflint. And so, what am I gonna do, you know. So I feel the pressure and I say, "Well, this year I think we're gonna try and give a thousand dollars to the church". And I here my banker sort of ahem, hum, hmm, a thousand dollars. Well, you know we're really wanting to add a few programs to the church this year so we really need -- well, maybe I can give twelve hundred, you know. So then comes the first month and I owe a hundred bucks and oh no, I can't afford this hundred dollars. Oh, but I got to do it. I promised I'd do it, you know. And every month I find myself gritting and struggling over trying to make my pledge, and I'm griping about it and I'm upset about it. Hey, God doesn't appreciate anything given to him that you gripe about. You'd be much better off not to give than to give and gripe. Let them think that you're tight, let them think that you're not benevolent, let them think what they want, but don't give to God out of pressure.

Paul said, "Therefore, as everyone is purposed in his own heart so let him set it aside and let him give hilariously because God loves a hilarious giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7). Whatever you can give to God hilariously, give. What you can't give to God hilariously, keep. God doesn't want it and God doesn't need it. And thus, the giving to God should always be a personal matter between the Lord and our family and it is something that we do because we love the Lord and we're motivated by our love for him, but we're not looking for credit from man or not looking to receive from man great accolades because of our generosity and giving to God.

Now, the question of the tithe envelopes then. This is a necessity that is laid upon us by the U.S. Government The Internal Revenue Services, just one of the other evils that come from the IRS. A, I don't believe that we should pay more taxes than what are due. I think we should pay what are due but I don't think we should pay anymore than our due. And thus, for the purposes of the IRS we make out checks or we fill out an envelope that we might keep a record in case the IRS questions concerning your giving. But those files are strictly confidential. They are something that is between you and the Lord. And those are things that we only send you, your receipt at the end of the year and it is something that only you and the Lord know. I don't even know. I don't bother to go through those files. I'm not concerned. It's something between you and God and it's a personal thing. And we want to keep the giving just as personal as possible.

And so your giving, let it be with simplicity, let it be out of a cheerful heart and let it be motivated by your love for the Lord and not your desire to be seen by men.

Then when you pray (Mat 6:5),

There's a wrong and a right way to pray.

Now don't be as the hypocrites: for they love to pray standing in the synagogue and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of man. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward (Mat 6:5).

Now prayer was a very important thing in the life of the Jew. Twice a day he had to say the Shema, which comprised of three sections of the Old Testament scriptures beginning with Deuteronomy six there, "The Lord our God is one Lord and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy might, with all thy strength". And he had to say that, the first thing in the morning and he had to say it the last thing at night. He was to say it before nine o'clock in the morning and he was to say it before nine o'clock in the evening but twice a day he would say the Shema.

Then there was the second form of prayers, the Sheminoph. The Sheminoph was actually eighteen separate prayers, later on they added the nineteenth but they kept the word shiminoph, eighteen. And there were eighteen prayers that they would memorize as a child and they had to say three times a day; nine o'clock in the morning, twelve at noon and three o'clock in the afternoon.

Now because they had to say these same prayers every day, morning, afternoon and evening, it became a custom, as anything that you know we do by custom. It became something that, to many of them, was totally meaningless. I mean, it's a duty. I've gotta do it so you race through these eighteen prayers saying them just as rapidly as you can. You know, it's a duty. I gotta perform, you know, it's nine o'clock and okay, here we go, you know, and you race through the eighteen prayers. And then it's twelve o'clock; time to do it again and you race through the same eighteen prayers.

Now, with that as a background, you see, there were those who would time themselves so that when nine o'clock in the morning came they would be in a very conspicuous place on the street corner. Nine o'clock, oops, you know, and prayer shawl comes on, swoop, swoop, wrap themselves up and, and so they go through the eighteen prayers. And everybody says, oh ain't that wonderful? He stops right in the middle of his busy day right there in the street corner going through his eighteen prayers. Oh, he must be spiritual.

And it is possible that as you're going through your eighteen prayers you're thinking, oh, I know they're all watching me and they know how spiritual I am. They know that I'm a holy man. Isn't this glorious, you know, that everybody knows how righteous I am. Hmm, Lord I thank you, you know.

Now anything that we do repeat over and over again, the same words can easily become meaningless. You know, we set the little group patterns in our brain and all we have to do is tune in to that particular channel and set the, push the button and you can just say it without even thinking. "Now I lay me down to sleep. I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take" you know. I mean it; you push the button and it goes. It's like pulling the string on little dollies. I mean it's just something that's programmed in, you know. "God is great, God is good, we thank you Father for our food" you know. And you can mouth these words without even--you can be thinking about something else entirely as you're saying these words. I don't have to be thinking about what I say because I can just say these words by rote. And thus they become empty repetition of words. So first of all when I pray, I'm not to seek to get in some conspicuous place so everybody will see that I am a man of prayer.

I heard the reputation of a minister. Everybody said oh, he's such a man of prayer. And I was anxious to meet this fellow because I'd heard his reputation of being a man of prayer. And so it happened that I was at a summer camp speaking and he was also at that same summer camp. And I found out how he got his reputation as a man of prayer. Every morning at six o'clock down in the chapel, you could hear this fellow praying; all over camp you can hear him praying. And from six to seven you could hear him praying down there in the chapel, crying out to the Lord.

And I often wondered does God want us to have a reputation of a man of prayer? Is it not better to

go into the closet, and shut the door, and pray to the Father who sees in secret; and the Father who sees in secret then will be the one who rewards us (Mat 6:6).

I would not be surprised, but what the reward that that man gets from his prayer life is not the fact that he has a tremendous reputation of being a man of prayer. And he loves that reputation and he's doing everything to keep that reputation alive by praying in such a way that everybody is noticing the fact that he is praying.

Now we've got to be careful about motivation. Even in prayer, what I pray for is tested by motivation. James said, "You have not because you ask not" and then he added, "And you ask and receive not because you ask amiss that you might consume it on your own lusts" (James 4:3). In other words, it's possible for me to even have the wrong motivation for praying what I'm praying for. Motivation is such an important thing. That's why the Bible said, "Let every man examine himself, for if we will judge ourselves we will not be judged of God" (1 Corinthians 11:28, 31). And it's good to examine, "Why did I do that?"

Now I do not always know. It's possible for me to deceive myself. And David, realizing the possibility of deceiving himself concerning his own personal motivations said Lord, "You have searched me. You know me. You know my down sittings, my uprisings. You understand my thoughts in their origins" he said, "such knowledge is too great for me. I cannot attain it. I really don't know myself Lord". And so he concludes that Psalm by saying, "Search me O God and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts and see if there be some wicked way in me" (Psalm 139:23).

O God you search me, God you show me, God you reveal what is in my heart because I can be deceiving myself. But I'm not deceiving God, for he searches the hearts, the reins. He knows what are the motives behind everything I do. And God knows I don't want to waste my time. If I'm gonna do it, I want to be doing it out of the right motivation and I want to receive the rewards from the Lord for doing it.

And so in our prayers, be careful that we do not seek to pray drawing attention to ourselves or praying to impress people that they might be seen of men. The idea behind it is they're trying to impress people. Be careful that you don't pray to impress people. Prayer is not intended to impress people; it's intended to impress God. "Go into your closet, shut the door. Your Father which sees in secret will reward you openly".

The second negative is Don't use the vain repetitions (Mat 6:7), As they were doing in those days thinking that you'll be heard for your much speaking (Mat 6:7).

It isn't the length of prayer nor is it the time or the amount of time spent in prayer that makes prayer valid. Those prayers that are recorded in the Bible are all, have been very short. So many times we think that prayer doesn't really become effective until we've been on our knees for an hour; not so. There's no sense in just filling up the time with meaningless little stereotype phrases when I'm talking to God. When you come in to God sit down, declare your business to God, declare your heart; open it to him, lay it out before him and be brief, be concise.

Because the Lord knows what you have need of, before you ever ask him (Mat 6:8).

Prayer's not information time where I'm now gonna inform you God of everything that's gone wrong in my life today. God knows everything that's gone wrong. I don't have to rehearse it for him nor do I have to go over a long list of my needs. God knows what I have need of before I ever ask him. And so don't use vain repetitions just to fill up time. The heathen think that they're gonna be heard for their much speaking, but it isn't the much speaking.

Now Jesus then gave to us a model prayer. It is tragic that many people have taken this model prayer and use it in vain repetition. And so they say this model prayer over and over again and they are encouraged many times to do so, as far as their penance is concerned, you know, so many hail Mary's and so many Our Father's, which are nothing but vain repetition. The very thing that Jesus spoke against: thinking that you'll be heard for your much speaking. No, you won't.

And just to repeat the Lord's prayer out of memory really has no value. There's tremendous value if you'll take it very slowly, phrase by phrase and really think upon it and meditate upon it. But basically, he's giving to us a model prayer. And as he gives to us the model prayer - first of all, prayer always is dependent upon relationship, and thus it is significant that the prayer opens expressing relationship,

Our Father (Mat 6:9) And if he is not your Father then you have no right to call on Him.

The blind man said to the Pharisees when they were challenging him on how he was healed. He said "Well this man came and he laid his hands on me and I can see". Well what did he do? "Well, I told ya." And they said, "Well, as far as the man..." they said, "Give this glory to God. As far as this man we don't know anything about him"(John 9:15, 24). I said ain't that a marvelous thing? Here's someone you don't know anything about and he's opening the eyes of the blind. He's doing the work of the Messiah. And they got angry at the man. The man says, hey, we know that God doesn't hear, you know, the prayers of sinners. He must be doing something right if God's answering his prayers.

Now, notice that that isn't necessarily Biblical truth. This is the statement of a blind man to the Pharisees because in reality God does hear the prayer of sinners. One prayer at least, "God be merciful to me a sinner". Thank God he hears that prayer. And yet, David said "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord does not hear me when I pray". That's divine truth. "God's hand is not short that he cannot save, neither is his ear heavy that he cannot hear but your sin has separated between you and your God" that's divine truth. Sin separates a man from God. However, there is relationship involved in prayer. And that relationship is a child coming to the Father. And I'm a child of God through my faith in Jesus Christ. And so I can say, "Father".

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name (Mat 6:9).

The word "hallowed" could also be translated reverend. You know the Jews had a very high respect for the name of God. In fact, they had such a high respect for the name of God that they came to the place where they felt that their lips were unworthy to utter the name of God. Ultimately they came to the place where they thought that their minds were unworthy to even think of the name of God, to think it in their minds. So as the scribes, in copying the scriptures, would come to the name of God instead of writing the vowels they only wrote the consonance: YHVH. Try and pronounce that. Without the vowels you don't know how it is pronounced. And so to the present date we do not know how to pronounce the name of God.

But before the scribes would even write the YHVH in their manuscript, they would go in, take a bath, put on fresh clothes, take a new pen, dip it in fresh ink and then write those consonants YHVH. And imagine in a passage where you have the name of the Lord listed five or six times. Yet it became a little tradition among them that when they were copying they would always go and take this ritual bath and put on fresh clothes and then write those consonance YHVH. Now, whether or not the name was pronounced Jehovah or Yahweh, we're really not sure. Most scholars think that it was Yahweh. But the pronunciation of God's name has been lost as the result of this tradition among the Jews. But, oh, how highly did they esteem his name.

In the psalms it's the psalmist declared, "Holy and reverend is thy name"(Psalms 111:9). Here, basically, the same thing is being said in the Lord's prayer. Hallowed or reverend it be thy name. Now, where in the world men ever got the tradition of tacking reverend on the name of a man, I do not know. But I really do not consider myself as reverend Chuck Smith. I don't think there's anything reverend about the name Chuck. But it's unfortunate, you know, they start out and they say reverend Chuck Smith, and then you know they're trying to puff you up a little more and they say, "The reverend Chuck Smith". And then they try to puff you up a little more and they say, "The most reverend Chuck Smith" you know and "the most right reverend Chuck Smith". And you know they start adding all these titles to man. Oh how tragic, how sad. I really don't care for a title.

The name of the Lord is reverend; it's hallowed, but surely not the name of any man. Now a lot of people take the title in ignorance and I don't accept that. A lot of people in writing to me write "Dear reverend Smith" or "reverend Smith" or whatever and I just laugh and I know that they don't know me because I don't consider myself reverend at all. I do reverence God and I reverence his name but there's nothing reverend about my name. And so I don't make a big deal over it but I mean it's just something that you know, it's one of those things that people started and they carry on. It's the exalting of man and I don't believe in the exalting of man. I believe, you know, that no flesh should glory in his sight. Let's exalt the Lord. Hold his name reverend and hallowed but let's not be exalting man. For he that exalts himself, the Lord will abase.

So, recognition is next. First of all, relationship; "Our Father". Recognition. "Which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name". Holy and reverend is thy name. I'm talking now to God who has created the universe. He said to Jeremiah, "Behold I am the Lord. Is there anything too hard for me?"(Jeremiah 32:27) I need to remember that when I pray because so often when I pray, I carry my own limitations in. This thing is too tough for me, it's too much for me; I can't handle it. And I'm prone many times to carry that sense of defeat or overwhelmed by the problem into my prayer life with God as though it's overwhelmed me. Surely it's gonna overwhelm God.

And so recognition of the one that I'm talking to is so important in prayer. We are told in Hebrews, "For he that cometh unto God must believe that he is"(Hebrews 11:6). That he is what? That he is the eternal God who sees as Jesus said, who knows as Jesus said, who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all I ask of God. Now, "Hallowed it be thy name" is actually a petition. It's praying that God's name be revered and held in high esteem or hallowed by men. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven (Mat 6:10).

Two more petitions, but the first three petitions all relate to God. They do not relate to me. In prayer, my primary thrust in prayer should be that desire to get God's will accomplished. It is wrong to think of prayer as an agency by which I can get my wishes fulfilled. God never intended prayer to be a means by which my wishes can be granted. God intended prayer as a means whereby I might work in cooperation with him in getting his will done on this rebellious planet earth. And true prayer begins with God. The purpose and the plan of God and prayer is never intended as changing the purposes of God.

I believe that every right thing that I have ever prayed for and received, God had already purposed and planned to give it to me before I ever prayed. You say then why pray? Because God has made me a free moral agent. God has given me the capacity of choice and God honors my choice and will not violate my free will. God will only do for me what I am willing for Him to do for me and what I allow Him to do for me. Therefore, prayer is opening the door to God to do the things for me that he was planning and wanting to do all the while but would not do against my will.

Jesus said to his disciples in John the fifteenth chapter "Now you have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should be my disciples and that you should bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever you ask the Father in my name, he may [not shall] he may give it to you." (John 15:16) God wants to give it to you, God wants to do for you but He will not cross or violate your free will which he gave to you. But prayer opens the door then for God to do for you what he's been wanting to do the whole time but will not violate or cross your will to do it.

So prayer begins with God, the purposes of God. And the real thrust of prayer is not my will be done --and this is the fallacy of these teachers today who have become so popular on television and in the full gospel circle. And that's the tragedy of the full gospel circles is the lack of theological depth. The people are so shallow they are chasing after every new wind of doctrine. It's like cunning of men who are going around with some new concept and everybody begins to traipse after them. And now it's the old, you know, thing that prayer is you know, your grabbing the scepter and ruling the world. You demand that God do it, you know, and you insist and you press and you pray and you believe and God's gotta do whatever you ask him to do. Not so.

God is no little genie that has to fulfill your wishes. He is the sovereign Lord of the universe and in control of the universe. And let me say that I thank God for all of my unanswered prayers. I would've had this world in a big mess had God answered all my prayers because I was praying about things about which I really did not fully understand because I could only see partially. And I was sure that I had full knowledge but only had partial knowledge. And I was praying according to my partial knowledge and when I got full knowledge I said, "Whoa, thank God he didn't answer that one. Boy what a mess I'd have been in" you know. Let God be sovereign, let God be God. Honor him as God and realize that the real thrust of prayer is not to fulfill my wishes but is to get his will done; "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven."

Yes I do have needs and yes it is proper and right that I petition God for my own needs. And so, we have these petitions that deal with our own needs. Give us this day our daily bread (Mat 6:11). Those provisions that are so essential for life and the maintenance of life. Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors (Mat 6:12). And forgiveness is such an important thing. Notice, the first one deals with the present. It's my present needs, give us this day. The second one deals with the past, the forgiveness. That's one of the things that I've done wrong up to this moment. Forgive us our debts, that deals with past; and then Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one (Mat 6:13): That's in the future. God, take over the reigns and guide my life through the future. So in these petitions they deal with the past, the present the future. They deal with my provisions, with my forgiveness, with my guidance and with my deliverance, these personal petitions. And those are the basic issues that I need to come to God for concerning my own personal life; the provisions, the forgiveness and the guidance and deliverance. But then prayer goes back to God.

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen (Mat 6:13).

Now, prayer actually takes three forms. Prayer is worship. Prayer is just that awareness and awe of the greatness and the glory of God. And this is an important part of prayer, just that worshipping the Lord for what he is. Not asking him for anything but just that worshipping God as I am aware and conscience of his greatness and of his glory and his power. It's that sense that you feel when you look up into a desert sky. Oh God is so great. Oh he's so vast. And just that awareness and consciousness and awe of that greatness of God. It's that sense that you get when you look at a beautiful flower and oh, He's so beautiful in his creative designs. It's that awe you get when you see a child born. Oh, he's so wise in his design of the life forms. Worship. But prayer is also a petition. In a narrow sense, the asking of God for my own needs. But in its third form, prayer is intercession. Where I am seeking then and petitioning God for the needs of the lost world around me.

And all three of these are brought forth in this model prayer for Jesus, "My kingdom come, My will be done on earth as it is in heaven" intercession for the kingdom. "Give us this day our daily bread" a petition for my own need. "Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever" that awe, the wonder and the glory and the greatness of God; the worship. Notice prayer begins with worship, ends with worship. Now we usually give petition first and then we move into intercession, but in the model prayer we have intercession first and then it moves into petition. I don't think the order is important but I think that all three forms should be followed when we pray. I think that we should spend time worshipping God. I think that we should spend time in intercessory prayer, and I think that we should spend time in the petitioning of God for our own individual needs.

Now it is interesting that in these various petitions that we make, that the petitions for forgiveness is predicated upon our forgiveness. "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" (Mat 6:12). And immediately there comes the question, is this then works? And does my forgiving another depend upon or does God forgiving me depend upon my forgiving another? And if so, then is forgiveness dependent upon works? And so you have a knotty theological problem. What does Jesus say?

For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses (Mat 6:14-15).

Now, do you want me to change that? You want me to be responsible for changing the words of Jesus? You say, "But I don't understand". Wait a minute, he didn't call you to understand, he just called you to believe. And so I believe that it's very vital that we understand the importance of forgiveness and that we are to forgive not as a matter of mathematics as Peter thought. "Lord, how often shall I forgive my brother the same offense? Seven times?" and I'm sure that Peter thought he was growing in grace when he suggested seven times, that he can actually conceive of forgiving a guy the same thing for seven times. And Jesus said, "No Peter. Seventy times seven"(Mat 18:21-22). Four hundred and ninety, aye, aye, aye Lord.

Now, forgiveness is not a matter of mathematics. Jesus figured he'd lose count before he got to four hundred and ninety and realize that forgiveness is just a matter of the spirit of the child of God. Having been forgiven so much, it is incumbent upon me to forgive. And Jesus gave an interesting illustration one time in which he uses, as he so often did, the ludicrous to illustrate his point.

There was a certain man who owed his master sixteen million dollars. And the master called him in and said, "Well you're time is up on this loan, pay me what you owe me" and this fella said, "Oh, I just don't have it to pay. I can't do it right now. Give me a little more time". The master said, "Oh forget it, just cancel the debt" and he crossed out his sixteen million-dollar debt. This servant went out and got a fellow servant that owed him twenty-five bucks and he took him by the throat and said, "All right, you pay me what you owe me". The guy said, "Oh my wife's been sick and I've had to pay the doctor bills. I don't have the money right now but just give me a little time and I'll pay ya". "Oh no, you've had all the time you're gonna get". And he calls you know, the sheriff and he gets thrown in the debtors prison. Now the Lord of that servant heard what he did and he called him in and he said, "Um, how much did you owe me?" and he said, "sixteen million dollars". He said, "Did I not forgive your debt?" "Yup." "How is it then that I hear that you've had a fellow servant thrown into the debtors prison for a twenty-five dollar debt?" And he called the sheriff and he said, "Throw him in until he's paid the uttermost farthing" every last half penny. (Mat 18:23-34)

And then again Jesus emphasized the fact that you have been forgiven so much by God, who are you to hold a debt against your brother? So having been forgiven we forget, and if we forgive then we are forgiven. If we don't forgive, Jesus said, we are not forgiven. I have no intention of modifying the statement of Jesus Christ. I just intend to follow it and to be forgiving and to forgive. God help me, that's against my nature. My own nature wants to get even. My own nature wants everything that's coming. My own nature just doesn't want to forgive.

Someone has taken a key and scratched a whole side of my car and I don't want to forgive that person, whoever they are. Someone took, stole two suits out of my car and they were dirty. I didn't even take them to the cleaners yet. And what they can do with a suit my size, I don't know but anyhow they ripped them off. I had them in the car ready to take them to the cleaners and I don't know who did it. Yet, you see, my own nature just doesn't want to forgive it. I'd like to get a hold of that person that scratched that side with a key. And yet thank God he's put in my heart that spirit of, oh well, it's all gonna burn, you know.

And there is a certain price that you've got to pay for people knowing you. And the more people know you, the more people hate you. You know percentage wise, there's a percentage of people are gonna hate you. And so the more exposure you have to people, the more enemies you're gonna create. And so I suppose someone saw the license "Calvary" and realized my car and said, "Awe you know, we'll fix him". Poor person, you know, that they would have that kind of hatred and bitterness that they would do malicious kinds of damage like that but, I've got to forgive. I can't, I can't let that bother me. I can't just let that, you know, boil inside because you know what it'll do? If I am just thinking of this and musing on this and just getting angrier on this and "boy uh oh" you know and this.

I have certain little glands that start producing chemicals that'll start eating me up inside, start destroying me inwardly. It's important, Jesus knew that it was important that we forgive, that we not be bitter, that we not hold these feelings of bitterness or animosity or anger within because Jesus knew the chemical system inside. And he knows the chemicals, the destructive chemicals that are created by my glands when I have these thoughts of bitterness or anger or revenge or whatever.

And so it's for your own good that you forgive that you're not holding in your mind some evil intent against someone who did you wrong way back when. It's tragic that many people have just destroyed themselves physically over unforgiving spirits, over bitterness that they have held. So forgive.

Now the third righteous action was that of fasting. And again, a right way and a wrong way.

Don't be as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head, wash your face; that you appear not unto men to fast, but unto your Father which is in secret: and your Father, which sees in secret, shall reward you openly (Mat 6:16-18).

So again, don't draw attention to yourself or don't be doing it in such a way that you are receiving from man that awe and wonder because you are so spiritual because you fast. It used to be in the earlier days of my ministry that I fasted quite often. Obviously I don't fast much anymore.

But in those early days of the ministry, many times I'd be fasting and I'd go on my pastoral calls and some sweet lady would offer me a piece of homemade cake, you know. And I was fasting you know, for the last couple of days and what are ya gonna do? Well, thank you but I'm fasting. No, I'd just break the fast and eat the cake. Because I figure, hey, if you go ahead and just say, oh no I can't eat that I'm fasting, then you have your reward anyhow. And I wasn't really looking for the reward of man. I was wanting, you know, to receive the reward from God. And so offered something to eat, if I could get out of it I would, but you know, when they bake a cake you can't really get out of it. They want their reward, oh this cake is delicious, you know.

Now Jesus moves into a different realm in this sermon as he talks to us concerning our treasures. And basically negatively,

Don't lay up for yourself treasures upon earth, where moth and rust corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal (Mat 6:19):

A few years ago there was a great, um, move by many people to buy gold and silver. And they created, through their buying, a demand, an artificial price. Because of inflation, they began to purchase the gold and silver as a hedge against inflation. And all of these men who are writing these McKeeber letters and all were encouraging the people to buy the gold and silver as a hedge against inflation. And they were glad to take the worthless dollars that these people had and to sell them gold and silver in exchange for their worthless dollars, or their dollars that would soon be worthless. And they were so magnanimous.

I was always a little suspicious of why they would take my worthless dollars and give me gold instead. If gold was going to be so valuable and the dollars weren't going to be any good, why would they then be so nice to me as to take my worthless dollars for their good gold? Yet they were, however, I didn't buy any. Because in James it said, "Go to now ye rich, weep and howl" talking about the last days "for the misery that has come upon you. Because you've laid up your gold and silver for the last days" (James 5:1,3). But now your gold and silver is corrupted; it's not worth anything.

Boy, if O'Hunt had only read that. How he wept and howled when the silver market broke and he lost billions of dollars on the future that he had purchased in silver. If he had only read James instead of McKeeber, he could have spared himself a lot of misery. And now silver's five dollars an ounce again and gold is down around three hundred dollars. And so you watch all of your value dissipating.

Gold that was eight hundred dollars an ounce, now three hundred dollars an ounce. Oh, oh, how I feel sorry for those who bought gold at eight hundred bucks an ounce. Hang on to it, gold will come back. No.

The Lord says hey, don't lay up for yourselves treasures on earth. The value of gold is apt to depreciate, silver is apt to depreciate; moth and rust can corrupt it, thieves can break through and steal.

But lay up for yourself treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal (Mat 6:20):

Now, he has a reason behind this. Why should you be laying up treasures in heaven instead of here upon the earth? The whole reason is this,

Wherever your treasure is, there your heart will be also (Mat 6:21).

And if you've laid up your treasures upon earth then your heart is going to be in the material things of this world. If you laid up your treasures in heaven then your heart's gonna be in the things in heaven, the spiritual things. Now one is temporal, the other is eternal. And if you lay up your treasures on earth they, at best are temporal; you lay up your treasures in heaven, they are eternal.

Jesus gave a very interesting parable that is very difficult for people to understand and, um, we'll be getting to it when we get to Luke. It's about the fellow who was going to get fired from his job. And so he was the accountant for his boss and so he called the creditors in and he said, "How much do you owe my boss? A hundred barrels of oil. Here, let me change your ticket" and he wrote fifty barrels. "How much do you owe my boss?" you know "Ten measures of flour." "Here, let me change it." He made it five measures of flour. And he brought all of the debtors in and he halved their debts because he knew that in two weeks he's gonna be out of a job.

So, when he was out of a job he would be able to go around and say, "Hey, you remember that bill where I cut it in half? You know, I'm sort of needing a little bit". And these people would be obligated to him because of what he had done. Now Jesus said, "The lord of that servant commended the servant, not for his dishonesty but for his wisdom saying that "the children of this generation are wiser than the children of light"(Luke 16:1-8).

You see he was using his present position to establish his future. Jesus is telling you pretty much the same thing. Use the present to establish the future. Take opportunities of the present because you cannot add anything to your spiritual account once you die. I mean, the treasures that you lay up in heaven, that which you are doing now, once you die then you can't say "Oh Lord but I want to leave it all to you." Everything I have belongs to the Lord, but he lets me use it, you know. And I use it all and he doesn't get anything left.

No, the Lord says, "lay up" take advantage now. "Lay up for your treasures in, yourself treasures in heaven." And the reason is, "where your treasure is there your heart will be also".

The light of the body is the eye: if your eye is single [single purposed], the whole body is full of light. But if your eye is evil, your whole body will be full of darkness. Now if the light is in you and is dark [oh man,] then how great is your darkness! And no man can serve two masters: either he'll hate the one, and love the other; else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (Mat 6:22-24).

So this all has to do with laying up treasures. If mammon is your, where your heart is, if that is the thing that has mastered your life, if you are mastered by your possessions, you cannot then be a servant of God also. You cannot serve God and mammon. You cannot be mastered by two masters. You begin to neglect the one along the line; you'll hold the one and hate the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. Man have tried to do it but you can't do it.

Now, the Lord then talks to us about worrying.

Don't worry, take no thought (Mat 6:25)

The idea is take no anxious thought or don't be worried.

about your life, what you're going to eat, what you're going to drink; or don't worry about your body, what you are going to put on. For your life is more than meat, and your body is more than clothes (Mat 6:25)

First of all,

Behold the fowls of the air: because they do not sow, nor do they reap, nor do they gather into barns; and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much better than they? (Mat 6:26)

So he is telling us, "Don't worry. Look at the birds. They don't sow, they don't reap nor do they gather in the barns". Now the Lord isn't actually advocating then that we're not to plant and we're not to harvest, we're not to work, that is not at all what he is saying. Nor are we to be totally passive as far as the needs; our needs being fulfilled or supplied. You don't see a little bird standing on top of a telephone pole with its mouth open waiting for the worm to fly in. He is active. He does go down and he pecks on the ground and he finds the worm and he eats it. He isn't totally passive and the Lord isn't teaching us a total passivity here. You know, you can just cruise, lay back, do nothing, God will take care of you. That's not scriptural.

gonna do?" you know. And don't be worried about these things because your Father knows that you have need of these things and your Father sees that the birds are taken care of .

Now, if your Father sees that the birds are taken care of he'll surely see that you're taken care of because he's your Father. And you're more important to him than birds. And so if your Father makes sure the birds are fed, you can be sure your Father will see that you are fed. So don't worry about that.

Now, which of you by worrying can add one cubit [which is about eighteen inches] to his height? (Mat 6:27)

Oh, I'm so worried about being a shorty. Oh, you know, I wish I were tall, oh. And which of you by just worrying about it and sitting there wishing can add eighteen inches to your height? Can't do it. Worry doesn't you know, worry -- the Lord's just saying hey, worry really doesn't have any value. Just there's no value in worry. Why worry?

And why do you take thought [or why are you worried] about your clothes? (Mat 6:28)

Oh, is my wife here?

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin (Mat 6:28):

Now you get the idea of the spindle and the ladies, of course, had to make their own thread. They made their own cloth. Jesus said, "Look at the lilies of the field, they don't toil, they don't sit at the spindle".

Yet, even Solomon in all of his glory was not arrayed like one of these (Mat 6:29).

I mean, Solomon with all of his wealth and all of his glory wasn't dressed as beautifully as that lily out there in the field.

Now, if God so clothes the grass of the field, which exists today, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe ye, O ye of little faith? (Mat 6:30)

Now, you see Jesus is now bringing in the contrast of worrying to faith. If you really have faith you will not worry. If you worry it is an indication that you're lacking faith. Faith and worry are mutually exclusive. "O ye of little faith".

God clothes that beautiful grass of the field which today exists and tomorrow will be cast in the oven, burned. How much more will he take care of and see that you are clothed? And incidentally, I made a joke about my wife but I thank God those are the things that Kay has come to a place with Christ a long time ago. And I thank God for her and for the spiritual example that she is to me and to the ladies in the church, as one who is not overly concerned at all with dress or with anything else. We live very simple lives and I thank God that He has given me such a partner who sees as I see, the simple life that the Lord would have us to live in Christ Jesus. And I, I kid her. I use her just to get a laugh but that's probably not right, but God forgive me. I'm sorry. Otherwise she'll say to me "Hmm, you say that I do this, then I'm gonna go ahead and do it," you know.

Therefore take no anxious thought [or don't be worried], saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, What shall we wear? (For after all of these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things (Mat 6:31-32).

Your Father knows you need these things. Don't worry about them, your Father knows you need them. And thus, that is not to be our primary concern. We're not to be seeking those things as the paramount issues in life. But what are we to be seeking?

But seek ye first (Mat 6:33)

Now the Gentiles seek those things. Oh, the fashion of this world. The word "Gentiles" is also translated "heathen"; the heathen are all seeking. I mean, look at the eateries today, the gourmets, all of the emphasis of the magazines upon food, upon clothes. It's amazing the interest that the heathen world has in these things.

But you, seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness (Mat 6:33);

Priority, oh how important. Put first things first and God will take care of the rest. If you will seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness;

all these other things will be added (Mat 6:33)

God will take care of those. You don't have to worry about those. All you have to do is seek God first and foremost in your life. The kingdom of God, his righteousness, and God will take care of everything else.

Now, if you look at our lives and if you look at the time that we spend and are concerned in purchasing the clothes, in purchasing the food, in getting the money to purchase clothes and the food and these things; you'll find that so much of our time is absorbed because we are exposed constantly to the pressures of Madison Avenue to be conscience of the style, the width of our lapel, or the width of our ties or whatever, because you know, this is what's in style, this is what is vogue. And so we get rid of clothes before they are really worn out because they're no longer in style.

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And we have become the victims of this whole commercial system. And we've become lazy in our food preparation and so we pay a dollar and twenty-five cents to get a loaf of bread when if you want to do just a little bit of work you can by raw wheat for six and a half cents a pound and you can grind it and you can make a healthy loaf of bread for nineteen cents. But oh, you know, that takes a little extra effort.

But don't worry about these things basically, and that's what the Lord's saying. Don't let this be the paramount issue. Don't let these things be the primary things of your life. Let the primary thing be the kingdom of God and his righteousness and God'll take care of all these other things. You don't have to worry about them. The Lord knows that you need these things. Again, remember Jesus said, "When you pray don't think that you have to pray a long time" God knows what you need before you ever ask him and the Lord knows that you need these things.

Therefore don't worry about tomorrow (Mat 6:34):

And isn't that interesting that most of our worry is about tomorrow. Our worry is always more about tomorrow than it is about today. I'm in today and here I am and I ate and you know I've got clothes and I, I don't worry so much about today but what am I gonna do tomorrow? What am I gonna do when that bill comes due next week? And it's usually about the future that our worry is generated.

But the Lord said,

Don't worry about tomorrow: for tomorrow will take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof (Mat 6:34).

I'm reminded of the exhortation from James in his epistle when he said, "Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves"(James 1:22).

Now as we finish the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says much the same thing as he likens those who hear his words and do them. They're liken to a wise man who when he built his house, first of all, dug deep and laid his foundation on the rock. Contrasted with the foolish man who hears the words but doesn't do them. And he's like the man who just builds his house upon the sand.

And so may the Lord help us as we look at this great manifesto that was laid out for us by Jesus Christ, that we won't be just hearers of the word say, oh my isn't that marvelous? Oh yes, that's so true. Oh yes, I really shouldn't be worried about these things. Oh yes, I should lay up treasures in heaven. Oh yes, you know, and I agree to it and I say, oh yes, yes, yes. But I don't do it. I'm foolish. I'm building on the sand. I'm building a superstructure that's gonna collapse in the storm. It's important that I be a doer of the Word and not hearer only.

So may God help each of us as we go out this week that, rather than admiring the Sermon on the Mount that we might, in reality, live the Sermon on the Mount. That these principles might become realities in our own lives and that we might abide by these words of Jesus Christ. That we might indeed be the children of the Father and thus the recipients of all of those blessings and joys and goodness that the Father bestows upon his children.

(Through The Bible c 2000 Series; Chuck Smith; Bible commentaries,1979-1986)

The Lord bless you and watch, guard, and keep you;

The Lord make His face to shine upon and enlighten you and be gracious to you;

The Lord lift up His {approving} countenance upon you and give you peace. Amen.

Numbers 6:24-26

(Amplified Bible; Joyce Meyers; 2006; Faith Words; Scripture; Commentaries; pages 1399-1402)

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