

When The Kingdom Comes

“Doing Good vs. Becoming Good”

The Sermon on the Mount #4

Matthew 5:21-48

INTRODUCTION

God is interested in more than the “good things” you can do for him. He is primarily concerned with the “good” that you will allow Him to make of you. As much as our human nature would like to earn God’s approval by what we do, these passages reveal that, in our own power, even our best is not enough because God is looking for a “heart change”. Let’s look at the difference between the control of our actions, and the change of our hearts.

Ice Breaker (Optional – 8 MIN): What is the most noticeable difference you’ve experienced between a real and an artificial or imitation product? (Think vine-picked tomato versus store bought or viewing an original Van Gogh versus a poster, plastic versus a real rose)

STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

Q1. Read Matthew 5:20, Matthew 5:48, Matthew 19:26, Matthew 23:27-28

Upon what do you think the Pharisees based their righteousness? Compare how they appeared to those around them with the way God saw them.

Q2. Read Matthew 5:21-22, 1 Samuel 16:7, Ephesians 4:2

It may be hard for us to understand how God views us from the inside out – heart first, then actions. If we harbor anger towards our brother, it may be traced to a sin in our hearts that we fail to see. What sins can you think of that might result in anger towards another?

Q3. Read Matthew 5:27-28, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5, 2 Corinthians 10:5, Philippians 4:8

God’s solution to adultery doesn’t focus on the outward expression of lust, but on preventing the very thought from taking root by aligning ourselves with God’s word. Describe how we can take every thought captive and apply Philippians 4:8 both before and at the point of temptation.

Q4. Read Matthew 5:31-32, Matthew 19:8-10, Ephesians 5:21 - 33

Few of us remain untouched by the pain of divorce, either directly or indirectly. Compare what “the world” says about the permanence of marriage with what these verses say about the gravity of entering into marriage?

Q5. Read, Matthew 5:33-34, 37, Psalm 51:6, Matthew 15:18, Ezekiel 36:26

God desires “gut level honesty”. Based on these passages, what do our dishonest tendencies reveal about our heart? What is the remedy to such a heart problem?

WRAP-UP

Jesus has shown us that for us to become “good” requires much more than a matter of “doing good”, it requires a total makeover by God from the inside out. Then our actions will reflect the goodness of the very Spirit of God within you.

Memory Verse

For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:20 NIV

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____

Pray for your group members’ needs:

Challenge: Do you need to reconcile a relationship, repent of lusting, improve your marriage, or be more trustworthy? Select an area and meditate on the appropriate scripture, then tack action this week. Consider sharing this with a group member.

Q1.

Matthew 5:20, NIV - 20 For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:48, NIV -48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Matthew 19:26 NIV - 26 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Matthew 23:27-28 NIV - 27 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. 28 In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

Q2.

Matthew 5:21-22 NIV - 21 "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' 22 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca, ' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

1 Samuel 16:7 NIV - 7 But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

Ephesians 4:2 NIV - 2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

Q3.

Matthew 5:27-28 NIV - 27 "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' 28 But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 NIV - 3 It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; 4 that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, 5 not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God;

2 Corinthians 10:5 NIV - 5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Philippians 4:8 NIV - 8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things.

Q4. *Matthew 5:31-32 NIV - 31 "It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' 32 But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery.*

Read Ephesians 5:21 -33 in your bible

Matthew 19:8-11 NIV - 8 Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. 9 I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery." 10 The disciples said to him, "If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry."

Q 5. *Matthew 5:33-34, 37 NIV - 33 "Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.' 34 But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; ... 37 Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.*

Psalms 51:6 NIV - 6 Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.

Matthew 15:18 NIV - 18 But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.'

Ezekiel 36:26 NIV - 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.