

**MATTHEW (THE KING, HIS KINGDOM AND ME)
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WEEK 2 (910341)
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SERIES: Matthew (The King, His Kingdom And Me)

TITLE: Program 9 – The Higher Calling

THURSDAY

OPEN

I'm standing in the midst of mountains that surround the Sea of Galilee, the place of Jesus' main ministry. This is where He taught the Sermon on the Mount, where He taught us of what it's like to belong to the kingdom of heaven. Today we're going to talk about relationships. Today we're going to look at our relationship to others and how we need a purity of heart if we're really going to be true worshipers of God.

PART ONE

Come with me, Beloved, again to a mountain high, overlooking the Sea of Galilee. Jesus is about to do the first teaching segment in the gospel of Matthew. It's called the Sermon on the Mount and it's probably one of the most acclaimed teachings in all the world. And of course it would be, because it was taught by the Master Teacher. Jesus is going to show us what it's like to belong to the kingdom of heaven. He's going to show us that it is

righteousness that brings us into the kingdom of heaven. And that starts with a poverty of spirit. **“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of [God].” (Matthew 5:3)** In other words you recognize that in and of your own self you have no righteousness. And so when you come to that repentance, when you come to that knowledge then the kingdom of heaven becomes yours. Well we’ve looked at the Beatitudes and I want to pick up in Matthew chapter 5, verse 17. Jesus said, **“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law [or] the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.” (5:17)** Later on in the gospel of Luke, after Jesus’ resurrection [“He’s going to walk with the men on the road to Emmaus and He’s going to open their understanding as He takes them through the Scriptures, through the Law and through the Prophets and shows them all things concerning Him.”] (PARAPHRASE, Luke 24:13 & 27) He is the fulfillment. And so, as He’s about to tell them what they have heard versus what is reality, He wants them to understand that [“He is not abolishing the Law, rather He’s fulfilling it.”] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 5:17) He’s going to show them the true intent of the Law. He says in verse 18, **“For truly I say to you....” (Matthew 5:18)** Now this word “truly” is “amen” or in Aramaic “amayn” and this word means “so be it.” It means it’s “absolute.” It means “I am giving you truth.” Thirty-one times in Matthew you’re going to see “truly.” In the gospel of John it’s “Truly, truly.” So when you say “Amen” to something you’re saying, “It is truth. It is truth. It is truth.” So watch what you say “Amen” to. He says, **“For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.” (Matthew 5:18)** Now that “smallest letter” is a “yod;” a “yod” that is above many of the Hebrew characters. And then when it says, “a stroke”, a “stroke” would be like that little angle of, if you and I were writing an “r” or we were writing a “p” it’s that little angle that comes there and this is how careful He is being. God’s Word is God’s Word. I want you to understand that. [“It’s God’s Word and it is God-breathed.”]

(PARAPHRASE, 2 Timothy 3:16) And anytime you open a commentary and they begin to debate how they got this word or where Matthew got this information or that information what you need to remember is this: that it came from God. God supernaturally superintended those that were writing the Word of God so that you and I have the very words of God. This is what Paul says, [“You receive this as the very words of God.”] (PARAPHRASE, 1 Thessalonians 2:13) All the gospel writers affirm that this is God’s Word, not man’s. So He goes on to say, **“Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven....” (Matthew 5:19)** And once again you want to mark “kingdom of heaven.” **“...But whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:19b)** We need to pause right there, don’t we? Because God is saying that [“If you want to be great in the kingdom of heaven, then you’re going to keep His words and you’re going to teach His words, not your words, not your suppositions, not what you think might have happened as a result of this, not adding to the Word of God. But if you will stay strictly with obedience to the Word as it is written and teach it as it is written then, Precious One, you will be great in the kingdom also.”] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 5:19) Then He goes on to say in verse 20, **“For I say to you....” (5:20a)** Now this “for” implies hey, here’s a contrast. **“For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:20)** Now if we go back to the opening of the Sermon on the Mount Jesus sees the crowds. He leaves. He goes up on the mountain and His disciples come to Him. His followers come to Him. So He is talking to those that have followed Him. And as He talks to them He wants them to understand that [“their righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.”] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 5:20) Now the scribes and the Pharisees, they’re the popular religious leaders of the day. The scribes are those that copy the

Scriptures. The scribes are the teachers of the Law and so are the Pharisees. They were the predominant sect, so to speak, over the Sadducees. The Sadducees were more of an exclusive group of more of a noble rank or more wealthy and they disagreed with the Pharisees on some of the Scriptures. They didn't believe for instance, in the resurrection of the dead. And so He's saying that ["Your righteousness has to surpass their righteousness."] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 5:20) Why? You're going to see that there are two protagonists to the gospel. There is the world. There is Herod. We saw Herod who wanted to put to death baby Jesus. So there's the world. But there is also the religious community that do not have a poverty of spirit, that do not mourn over their sin, that are really not pure in heart, etc. They don't fulfill the qualifications of what is necessary to be blessed as He says, **"Blessed are the pure in heart..." (Matthew 5:8)** and **"Blessed the peacemakers..." (5:9)** etc. And they're not suffering persecution, because they're not living righteously. So this is the second protagonist. And so Jesus is saying, "Now as My disciple, you have to be above the scribes and the Pharisees when it comes to righteousness." (PARAPHRASE, 5:20) And then He says, **"You have heard...." (5:21)** Now what He's going to begin is six: "You have heard, but I say to you." And this is something you want to mark as we tell you in your study guide. You want to mark it in a very distinctive way. And by the way, if you haven't gotten your study guide you want to go to preceptsforlife.com and you can download it. It is our gift to you. Do you realize that you're an answer to prayer? Do you realize that we pray that God would raise up a multitude **"...who hunger and thirst for righteousness..." (5:6)** like it says? And if you're going to **"...hunger and thirst for righteousness..." (5:6)** the place that you're going to find it is in the Word because it's the Word that tells you what is right. Well what had happened was they had heard a distortion, so to speak, of the Word. And the scribes and Pharisees said that they were keepers of the Law when in actuality, in their heart, they were breaking it. So Jesus wants them to see,

now, okay, what is a righteousness that exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees? So He says, **“You have heard...,”** (Matthew 5:21) **“but I say to you....”** (5:22) He says in verse 21, **“You have heard that the ancients were told, ‘You shall not commit murder’ and ‘Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.’”** (5:21) In other words, if you commit murder then you’re going to be judged. And He says, **“But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court....”** (5:22a) Now “shall be guilty” is going to be a key repeated phrase so you might want to underline it. I underlined it in black. **“...and whoever says to his brother, ‘You good-for-nothing...,’”** (5:22b) [“You’re good for nothing. You shouldn’t have been born. You shouldn’t even exist. You’re absolutely worthless.”] (PARAPHRASED, 5:22b) He says, **“...Shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, ‘You fool’, shall be guilty enough to go into...fiery hell.”** (5:22c) What has He just said? If you’re saying that someone is worthless, that someone is good-for-nothing, that someone is a fool, you’re saying that God created someone that has no value whatsoever. And in your heart you have put them out of your life. You have “x’d” them out. You have canceled them. You have removed them. You have not treated them with the respect that you should treat them. Because if we would go back to Genesis chapter 9 you see that [“Whoever sheds man’s blood shall die as a result of that because man was created in the image of God.”] (PARAPHRASE, Genesis 9:6) And so then He goes on to say, **“Therefore...,”** term of conclusion. **“Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar...,”** if you have gone to make a burnt offering or a sin offering or a guilt offering, the different offerings that Leviticus talks about, He says, **“...and there remember that your brother has something against you.”** (Matthew 5:23) You’re making an offering to God and you remember that your brother has something against you, He says, **“Leave your offering...before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and**

present your offering.” (5:24) Mark the time phrases, the sequence, **“...first be reconciled to your brother, ...then come and present your offering [to the Lord].” (5:24)** This is how important relationships are to the Lord. And this is how much we are to value those relationships and to watch over those relationships and to care for those relationships. So if you find yourself in bitter animosity against someone, or you know that your brother has something against you, or you have something against your brother, don’t come with an offering to God until you make it right with your brother. Remember what He said in the Beatitudes, **“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called [the] sons of God.” (Matthew 5:9)** We’ll be back in just a minute.

PART TWO

Jesus has told us, **“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.... Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called [the] sons of God.” (Matthew 5:7 & 9)** So now He’s talking about relationships. In Matthew chapter 5 verse 25 He says, **“Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, so that your opponent may not hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. Truly I say to you, you will not come out of there until you[‘ve] paid...the last cent.” (5:25-26)** You know God does not spiritualize how you and I are to behave towards others. We are to try to be peacemakers as much as possible. And if we’re not, we’re going to suffer the consequences. Well He goes on to say, **“You have heard....” (Matthew 5:27)** Here’s the next “You have heard.” **“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery;’ but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman [to] lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” (Matthew 5:27-28)** Now you want to mark “you have heard,” “but I say.” Now what they heard was true. It was one of the commandments. **“You shall not commit adultery.”**

(Exodus 20:14) But He's taking it another step. He's taking it to the heart and you want to mark the "heart" because the "heart" is the issue. He says, **"If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. [And] if your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off ... throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go...to hell."** (Matthew 5:29-30) Now what is He saying? Is He saying, "Cut off your hand?" Is He saying, "Pull out your eye?" No, He's not saying that. But what He's saying is whatever it takes to bring your passions under control do it. He's saying, "Adultery is not just something external. It's a matter of the heart." Now this solves a lot of problems in our society today. Because we're saying, "Well I didn't have sex." President Clinton said, "I didn't have sex with Monica Lewinski." Well he's saying, "I didn't have the actual act of sexual intercourse." And many young people today are saying, "Well I'm not having sex because I'm not actually having sexual intercourse." But what He's showing us is that adultery is a matter of the heart. It's a matter of the eyes. ["And if you're looking and you keep on looking at a woman, and this is the tense of the verb right here, it's a present tense, then you're committing adultery with her in your heart."] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 5:28) And you see man doesn't see what's in your heart, but God sees what's in your heart. And so just know this: that pornography is forbidden because you're doing something in your heart. This is a righteousness ["that exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees."] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 5:20) he goes on to say, **"It was said, 'Whoever sends his wife away, let him give her a certificate of divorce,'"** (Matthew 5:31) and that's what Deuteronomy 24 says. (Deuteronomy 24:1 & 3) He says, **"But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the reason of unchastity...,"** (Matthew 5:32) except for the reason of moral impurity. He goes on to say, **"...Makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a**

divorced woman commits adultery.” (5:32) Now what is He saying to us here? He’s saying, “Listen, you’re writing certificates of divorce,” and they were, “just for any cause at all. You don’t like the way she cooked the meal. You don’t like the way she looks. And so you’re writing her a certificate of divorce and say, ‘Well God allows this in the Torah. The Torah says we can do this.’” But they’re misinterpreting the Torah. And so what He’s saying here is “It’s a matter of the heart.” He moves on. He says, **“Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, ‘You shall not make false vows, but [you] shall fulfill your vows to the Lord.’” (5:33)** And He says, and that’s true. If you make a vow you’ve got to fulfill it to the Lord. But He’s going to take it a step further. He says, **“But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, ...[or by] the throne of God.” (5:34)** They were saying, [“I swear by heaven. I swear by the throne of God.” He says, “You don’t need to swear. Just let your ‘yes’ be ‘yes’ and your ‘no’ be ‘no’.”] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 5:37a) He says, **“...Anything beyond these is of evil. You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on [the] right cheek, [then] turn [to him the left.]” (Matthew 5:37-39)** And then He goes on to say, **“If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.” (5:40-42)** What is He saying here? He is saying, “Yes, the Law says it.” In Exodus chapter 21 verse 24, in Leviticus 24:20, in Deuteronomy 19:21, in three books out of the Torah it says, **“...An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.” (Matthew 5:38)** And this though was a law to keep a man from taking greater vengeance. In other words, “You take my eye, Buster; I’m going to get both of yours. I’m going to make you blind. Or you get my tooth; I’m knocking them all out.” And He’s saying, “No.” He says, “It has to be a just punishment for the crime.” So if it’s a tooth it’s a tooth. If it’s an eye it’s an

eye. If it's a life it's a life. And so we see here even capitol punishment. But He is saying to them, **"...I[']m] say[ing] to you, do[n't] resist an evil person."** (5:39) What is He calling them to do? He's calling them to a righteousness, a righteousness that is seen again in the Beatitudes, a righteousness where you are a peacemaker, a righteousness where you are merciful. He's shown us a righteousness of purity of heart in the way that we look at people and the way that we treat our wives. Now He's talking about a righteousness that comes as a peacemaker. And so He goes on to say, **"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."** (Matthew 5:43-44) Go that extra mile. **"So that you may be sons of your Father who[']s] in heaven; ... He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and [He] sends rain on the righteous..."** mark it, **"...and the unrighteous."** He says, **"...If you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?"** He says, **"Therefore you..."** you, who are children of the kingdom of heaven, you, who have repented, you, who are walking in righteousness, **"...you are to be perfect..."** (Matthew 5:45-48) The word is "t-e-l-e-i-o-i" and it is a perfection of maturity. **"...You are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."** (5:48) Wow! What a new standard He called them to in their relationships, especially to others. O Beloved, let me ask you a question. Is your righteousness exceeding the righteousness of the letter of the Law? Is your righteousness a matter of the issue of your heart? Is your righteousness a righteousness like the righteousness of your Father in heaven that's even kind to the evil, even kind to the unjust, a righteousness that can only come from a righteous God? And this is how it happens through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the Spirit coming inside of us.