

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT, PART 1

BIBLE TEXT: Matthew 5:1-48.

LESSON 19 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Matthew 5:1-48.

¹ And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

² And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

³ Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ Blessed *are* they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

⁵ Blessed *are* the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

⁶ Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

⁷ Blessed *are* the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

⁸ Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

⁹ Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

¹⁰ Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

¹² Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

¹³ ¶ Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

NOTES:

The world to which Jesus came with His message of love knew little of Christian virtue or the gentle graces that make happy living. The world was ruled by the Romans, and theirs was called the kingdom of iron because of their strength and the brute force with which they governed. There were vast armies of strong Roman soldiers; gladiators fought in the arena to show their physical power; and men strove hard to excel one another in running, jumping, throwing the discus, and in other sports. The poor could live only to satisfy the wicked desires of the rich and powerful. When the emperor went for a ride in his chariot, slaves would run ahead and shout to all the bystanders, "Bend the knee." Children had to work so hard that some of them never grew up; women were given little consideration. Anyone weak or gentle was despised.

God's Love

Then came Jesus with His doctrine of love, gentleness, meekness and kindness. He told the people, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. . . . Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. . . . Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."

When Jesus saw the great crowd that had come out to see His work He went up to a mountain where there was plenty of room, so that everyone could listen to Him talk. Jesus has never kept His message for a select few, but has preached it so that everyone could hear and be saved.

The Poor in Spirit

He opened His sermon by telling the people what would make them happy. "Blessed [or happy] are the poor in spirit." It meant that they should be humble; and He said that theirs was the kingdom of Heaven. The people were looking for Christ to set up a kingdom on earth and overthrow the Roman rule by force, to release the Jews from bondage. But Jesus told them right from the beginning that He had a different method of winning the hearts of men: the meek shall inherit the earth. The people could not understand how such things could be, but through the eye of faith we can see that the children of God who are going through their humiliation now are going to rule the world during the Millennium after Jesus comes again.

The Peacemakers

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." One cannot be a Christian and quarrel and fight. When Jesus puts His peace into our hearts the troublesome nature is taken out. A little boy who was a Christian came home from school and said to his mother: "Mamma, do you know a good way to make people stop doing something you don't want them to do? Just let them go on, and they will stop. A boy kept pushing me and punching me with his foot, as he seemed to want to start a fuss. But I prayed inside, and pretended not to notice, and he stopped." Jesus gives each one of His children power to overcome when they are tried.

The Children's Kingdom

Jesus loved the children, and said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14). One time when Jesus was in the Temple the children sang "Hosanna to the Son of David," and the priests were displeased;

14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

17 ¶ Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

21 ¶ Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

23 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

but Jesus said, "Have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" Jesus wanted the children to sing praises to Him. He often called His followers, even the grownups, "children," because He said that unless men became humble and obedient as little children they could never get into Heaven (**Matthew 18:3**; ³ And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven).

Your Light Shining

A little later in His sermon, Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." Another time Jesus said, "I am the light of the world," so you see He expected His followers to be like Him.

How do we become a light? By getting saved and having Jesus in our lives. If the Light is in us, He is going to shine out. Again we are commanded: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. "People are not -- listening particularly to the one who says he is a Christian; but they are watching his life to see if he lives like Christ.

It doesn't take a big light to be seen of men. We are told that the light of a match can be seen for a mile in otherwise complete darkness. Each one of God's children has a light, and he must let it shine where God places him.

"Jesus bids us shine, with a clear, pure light,
Like a little candle burning in the night;
In this world of darkness we must shine,
You in your small corner, and I in mine."

Someone has said, too, that the sunshine of life, which lights the whole world is made up of very little beams, that are bright all the time. That is what is important: let your light shine -- and all the time. People have no confidence in those who are saved one week, letting their light shine; and the next week backslidden and their light out. It is wonderful to keep saved, so that at school or anywhere you have something that helps you and glorifies God. There is power in Jesus' Blood to keep us saved all the time.

The Heart Seen by God

Jesus went on to talk about the Law and that the people were falling short of its commandments. The scribes and Pharisees, who were the religious people, declared that they obeyed the Ten Commandments, and were very careful that no one saw them break one. But they did not have any love in their hearts for God or their fellow men. They would stand and pray long prayers in order to appear holy, and then would "devour widows' houses" (**Matthew 23:14**; ¹⁴ Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation). They probably charged more taxes for the upkeep of the church than the poor women could afford, and thus took away everything they had. Jesus told them they had omitted the "weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith" (Matthew 23:23).

The Law said, "Thou shalt not kill"; but Jesus said a Christian would not even have the thing in him that would make him want to kill. One might never kill a man; but if he hated, he was already a murderer. Jesus said, "Love one another" - even your enemies. He said if you love only those who love you, how are you any better than the sinners? Jesus loved us when we were His enemies, and He expects us to love our fellow men so much that we will be kind to them, and pray for them so that they will get saved, too. God lets the sun shine on the sinners as well as on the Christians, and the rain falls on all alike.

When Jesus gave the command, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," He was not giving them a new commandment. God had told Abraham the same thing, "Walk

²⁴ Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

²⁵ Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

²⁶ Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

²⁷ ¶ Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

²⁸ But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

²⁹ And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell.

³⁰ And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell.

³¹ It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

³² But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

³³ ¶ Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

before me, and be thou perfect" (Genesis 17:1). When Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God, "He gave us the secret of perfection. Purity of heart is sanctification, holiness, through which we gain Christian perfection. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14).

QUESTIONS

1. What should be our attitude if we are persecuted for Jesus' sake?
2. How can we let our light shine?
3. If our brother has something against us, what should we do about it
4. What did Jesus teach about lending and giving to others?
5. How did Jesus instruct us to treat our enemies,
6. Does Jesus expect us to be perfect?
7. Commit to memory "The Beatitudes."

³⁴ But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:

³⁵ Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.

³⁶ Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

³⁷ But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

³⁸ ¶ Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

³⁹ But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

⁴⁰ And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have *thy* cloke also.

⁴¹ And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

⁴² Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

⁴³ ¶ Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

⁴⁴ But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

⁴⁵ That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

⁴⁶ For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

⁴⁷ And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others?* do not even the publicans so?

⁴⁸ Be ye therefore perfect, even as
your Father which is in heaven is
perfect.