

Matthew: The Kingdom of Heaven

Matthew 5:17-26; Exodus 20:1-17 | Fulfilling the Law & the Prophets

→ *Survey: Let's understand the background and context of the passage.*

What is the Kingdom of Heaven all about? Last week we learned that God's Kingdom is really an Upside-Down Kingdom - one marked by humility, love, and sacrifice - not in the ways that the Jewish people expected. Most thought their true King would be a mighty warrior, victorious over those in opposition to God. But the true Kingdom is marked by meekness and gentleness, ultimately displayed through Jesus on the cross. Through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, God is restoring all things back to their intended good. The Kingdom of Heaven is marked by life, peace, love, and all things good.

For those of us that follow the risen Jesus as our King, our goal is to build God's Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. As we read last week, Kingdom people should be light to the world, and salt to the earth - to enhance the 'flavor' of everyday living and preserve what is true and good. However, sometimes it's easy to get caught up seeking 'orders' from the wrong Kings or Kingdoms. Have you experienced this? Maybe you do things (or don't do things) to fit in and gain the approval of those around you. In those moments, instead of following Jesus as King, you're letting those things - people, grades, desires, fears, etc., - to ultimately be king. So how does someone become a part of God's Kingdom? Is it by obeying all the laws and doing the right things all the time? What happens if I mess up, even just once?

The good news is that there is someone who lived perfectly, loved greatly, died sacrificially, rose victoriously, and he welcomes you into the Kingdom of Heaven - his name is Jesus. Tonight we will learn from him as he continues his Sermon on the Mount in the book of Matthew.

Read: Matthew 5:17-26 (NIV)

→ *Observe: Let's take a close look at what the text is saying.*

1. What is Jesus' relationship with the Law and the Prophets (v. 17)?
2. How much of the law is important (v. 18)? When will it disappear?
3. What happens to those who set aside, even the smallest parts of the law (v. 19)? What is the requirement for entering the Kingdom of Heaven (v. 20)?
4. What law example does Jesus give (v. 21), and what are the consequences for breaking it? What point does Jesus make to those listening in verse 22? How is it the same/different?
5. What example does Jesus use in verses 23-24 to expound upon his previous statements?

→ *Interpret: Let's seek to understand the meaning of this text in its original context.*

1. What is the law? What is its purpose? *Who are the prophets? What is their purpose?* What does Jesus mean that he has not come to abolish the law or the prophets, but to fulfill them? In what ways does this help us see Jesus as the new and better Moses?

Read: Exodus 20:1-17 (NIV)

2. Let's look at the 10 commandments in groups. What is the commandment, and in your own words, what is the purpose of that commandment? How do these laws reflect the Kingdom of Heaven? In other words, what do these laws reveal about God's character?
3. Let's look again at the 6th commandment which Jesus used in Matthew. Why would someone who is angry at a brother or sister be subject to judgment (v. 22)? What point is Jesus making?
4. Why does Jesus command interrupting this act of worship with reconciliation in verse 23-24? What is he trying to help people understand? What does this reveal about God's priorities?

→ *Apply: Let's explore where the text intersects with our lives and our world.*

1. When and/or where does sin start? Are there areas in your life where you are not *technically* breaking the law, but deep down your heart is not in the right place? Think about the example Jesus uses of murder & anger. What is it for you?
 - Are there places where you need to 'lay your gift down at the altar' & pursue reconciliation? Either with God and/or someone else? What is holding you back?
2. How does the law help you understand your need for Jesus? Does being confronted with your sin (missing the mark of the law) lead you to shame or to worship? Why do you think this is?
3. Which of the 10 commandments do you want to improve on this week? Why?