

ILIFE PART ONE
RELATIONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS
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MATTHEW 5:3-16
2-3-08

This series is about understanding what Jesus really taught about life through the Sermon on the Mt.

- Primarily, that God's love really is available to you and me..., and that God can transform me into the kind of person perfectly capable of expressing that love to the world around me.

Matt 5:3-ff
 Start w/ the end
Matt 7:28-29

When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching,²⁹ because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

When Jesus taught it was different. It carried a realism that pulled people into a new reality... They saw life differently... they saw their own life differently... People were being transformed.

People understood he was different. He did not teach in the same way as the teachers of the law.

Jesus explains this in Mark 7...

Mark 7:6a

He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites;

- Q: Who is he talking about here? The teachers law... These are very bright, intelligent, and moral teachers and Rabbi's... and he goes back to a lesson from Isaiah to make his point.

Mark 7:6b-8

as it is written:

" 'These people honor me with their lips,
 but their hearts are far from me.

⁷They worship me in vain;
 their teachings are but rules taught by men.' ⁸You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men."

- **In this passage Jesus is talking about what his teaching is, and what it's not.**

Arizona Driver License Manual

- Q: Have you ever seen this book? It's the rules of the road – It's our very own Arizona Drivers License Manual

If you want to drive on the streets of Arizona... You are supposed to follow the rules in this book.

The Aim

These rules are aimed to cover different kinds of situations you might face and it tells you the right way to act.

Quiz

Situation:

On your way home from church you're driving down La Cholla and as you approach the intersection of Ina & La Cholla you notice the traffic light is inoperative. What do you do?

- a) Floor it...! / Going through the intersection as fast as you can means spending less total time in the intersection / the less time you spend in the intersection the better.
- b) Come to a complete stop. / and wait... / a repair man will be there any minute to fix the inoperative light... / of course, he might not be on his way and you could be waiting all day, but waiting is still the safest thing to do.
- c) Wait for another car that believes it's best to floor it! / Simply pull in directly behind this car allowing it to plow through the intersection first... / in this way it will block out any cross traffic that might be coming through.
- d) Treat it as a 4 way stop. Come to a complete stop before entering the intersection and then proceed when the road way is clear.

Rules of the road... it tells us the right way to behave in a given driving circumstance... but

Joke

Anyone pick anything other than d)? *the rest of us would like to maybe go home before you actually get in your car to go home.*

The reason I bring this up is because often times people think of Jesus' teachings the same way we think of a Drivers License Manual. It's a set rules for the way I should behave in a given situation.

↳ Jesus teaches a bunch of rule... my job is to learn the rules... then follow the rules that apply to the situation I'm in.

This is the method of the teachers of the law. We create these rules from scripture and then you follow them... that's spiritual

Q: What does Jesus say the problem is...?

Mark 7:6b

'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.'

- The struggle we have is with our heart... fundamentally this is not a problem solved with rules... Rules never aim at the heart!

Rules of the Road???

Rules of the Roads are not aimed at the heart. They are designed to work with our behavior. Big difference... let me illustrate.

Police Officer Police officers don't pull you over and ask:
 "Did you spend time this morning reading and contemplating your Arizona Drivers License Manual?"
 "Do they express the longings of your soul?"
 "Do they increase your desire drive more? Were you hoping your kids would sign up another after school activity... just so you could drive more?"

Driving
 Bitterness They don't pull you over and say; "Well yes, you were going under the speed limit, but I detected that in your heart you have some **resentment** about the fact that there is a speed limit."
 "I sense a **root of bitterness** growing inside of you... sin is crouching at your door my friend... Now, have a nice day."

Pride "Yes, technically you followed the rules... but I can tell you have **contempt** for other drivers."
Pride is welling up inside of you... you're not filled with love for other drivers on the road."
 "In fact you think you know the rules of the road better than the other drivers"... and
 "You think you follow the rules better than they do"
 And bicyclist... oh my...! don't get me started. In your heart you believe they shouldn't even be allow on the road.

Yea... I'm going to write you ticket for **vehicular self-righteousness**.

~ It's just a set of laws to govern different behaviors under certain driving situations... that's all.

So... those of you who are real careful to follow the rules of the road, or know how to keep from getting caught – you probably feel pretty good about your self.

Show of Hands: How many of you are pretty good at following the rules of the road?
 How many of you haven't gotten a ticket in the past 5 years?
 You need to know the rest of us really don't care.
 Don't be thinking your bad stuff...

⇒ Jesus is rarely laying out new rules or commands.
Rather: He's teaching the way things really work in God's Kingdom...

Because his aim is to transform the human heart.

I say all of this because often time's the Sermon on the Mt. is portrayed as the "rules of the road" for Christian living.

To be spiritual... to be a good Christian... I need to learn all of these rules and obey them...

- ✓ I need to be mournful, and be meek...
- ✓ I should seek to be persecuted, if I'm being picked on for my faith then I'm really spiritual.

Problem

Q: But is this really what Jesus is teaching here... was that really his intent.
Because as you play this out things become a little strange.

Q: Once you see Jesus as primarily teaching to lay out new rules it all gets a little strange.

Matt 5:3

Blessed are the poor in spirit.

So... you have to look at being poor in spirit as something we need to do... Like it's a positive thing.

Def: Some describe it as a special kind of humility

Commentator

One commentator translated this as:

"Blessed are those who are spiritually poor and know it."

Problem... that not even remotely close to what it says in the Greek.

{Greek}

Q: you what this means in the original Greek? "poor in spirit"

But quite literally this means **spiritually deprived**... blessed are the people who don't have a single spiritual thing figured out. Spiritual zero's

Jesus is not saying new rule: If you want to be blessed by me... you must be poor in spirit.

⇒ Jesus rarely laying out new rules or commands.
Rather: He's teaching the way things really work in God's Kingdom...

He's not saying you must be poor in spirit to be blessed...
 He's saying despite being poor in spirit you will be blessed when the Kingdom
 God comes upon you...

That's the way it is in God's kingdom. You don't have to have all figured out to
 be blessed... you don't have to be at the top of your class.

Jesus is telling how his kingdom really works... He's driving us to this great
 truth about the kingdom of God...

- Primarily, that God's love really is available to you and me..., and that God can
 transform me into the kind of person perfectly capable of expressing that love to
 the world around me.

Back to the Sermon on the Mt.

“Blessed are the **spiritually deprived.**”

- ✓ It doesn't matter if you don't understand everything yet.

Ie Jesus is saying this in front of people who felt like spiritual zero's... They didn't
 have the chance to advance in the religious schools – they were too poor, or the
 wrong family name.

People who couldn't possibly think they could be included in a relationship with
 God.

- ✓ Think about the thief on the cross... this guy doesn't know a thing about
 God or spiritual things... but in a moment he says. “I'm giving my life
 over to that man Jesus... I'm going to trust him, and he's blessed.

Blessed are those who **mourn.**

- ✓ Those who've failed at work... or lost their job
- ✓ Parents who've lost a child
- ✓ Or children raised in an abusive home
 - Patients who here... it's cancer
 - People who ache with the pain of depression or anxiety
 - Maybe you have suffered for one reason or another your whole
 life...

→ Jesus is saying you have not be overlooked by God... I want you to
 know that...

Blessed are the **meek**

- ✓ Maybe you struggle to stand up for themselves, and when you do they
 pushed back
- ✓ Or you feel forced into a life that's not their own... like you've got to
 constantly wear a mask to appease others.

Blessed are those who **hunger for righteousness**

- ✓ Maybe... you feel caught by some sin that you can't shake... you hate it... but it's got it's claws in you.
- ✓ Maybe it's an addiction, meth, or pornography, or alcoholism... or prescription drugs
- ✓ Maybe it's some secret that fills you with guilt & shame... it eats at you everyday.

→ He's saying the Kingdom of God is **not being withheld from you...** You have been invited to have the very spirit of God live in side of you.

→

Blessed are the **merciful, the pure in heart, and the peacemakers**

- ✓ You work hard to do the right thing, but you live in a world where lies and deceit seem to rule the day
- ✓ You're honest or forth right... and you've got someone stabs you the back because they can.

Blessed are those who are **persecuted** just for being a Christ follower.

- ✓ Some bully or tyrant, or evil person is using their power to mock, or abuse you... in some case even take a life.
- ✓ And in that moment it seems like they are right... because they have the power.

→ He's saying you will be okay... in the end you will be the one supremely blessed.

→ You are friend of God. And in the end no matter how bad it looks right now... what friend of God won't be in heaven... even if you loose your life

- This is about transformation... not rules!
- This is Christ's invitation to share life with Him.

Make sense???

Can you see how viewing Christ's teaching as primarily describing the way things really are... more than rule dispensing... How it brings his teachings to life.

- ❖ But... it's more than just being loved. This love transforms you & me into a different kind of person.

- Primarily, that God's love really is available to you and me..., and that God can transform me into the kind of person perfectly capable of expressing that love to the world around me.

Salt & Light

Again, don't think of this as rules for... I better do this, I better become salt & light.

He is describing who I am as a person transformed by his love.

Matt 5:14-16

"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.

Pause for a moment... think of these words... Jesus is saying this to people would never in a million years thought of themselves as being a shining example of God's love.

Matt 5:15-16

Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

Simply defined in the sermon on the Mt... Good deeds is love... agape love.

Q: What is the light...?

1 John 4:7

- Primarily, that God's love really is available to you and me..., and that God can transform me into the kind of person perfectly capable of expressing that love to the world around me.

The mark of spiritual maturity is love

(Story)

Julie playing cello – It's amazing to me because she is my sister. I heard her when she first started. The Coyote killing one of our cats

But our parents knew the beauty of her as a cellist... so they made the investment so she could be transformed into a beautiful cellist.

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The music of my Life... the music of your life... is love.