

SOTM - Matthew 5:17-20

The Joy Of the Lord Is Your Strength!

Hardly anything beats a "radiant face"

1. Good morning friends!
2. VISION/MISSION/FIRST TIME
3. Starting Point - June 14th!!

INTRO:

1. Have you ever stopped to wonder: *What did Jesus actually think about the Bible?*
- 2.

Negative View

1. Some people see the Bible as:
 - a. anti-science,
 - b. on the wrong side of history,
 - c. restrictive,
 - d. outdated,
 - e. oppressive.
2. Now, this is not the case - in fact, I believe that most people who share these views have not actually read it.
 - a. It's not anti science - science is actually pointing more and more to the truth claims of scripture.
 - b. It's not on the wrong side of history - it in fact changed the course of history.
 - c. It's not oppressive or restrictive - it is what actually brings true life.
3. What's interesting is that the negative view is slowly shifting in our culture to what I consider the...

Neutral View

1. Genuine curiosity but not grasping the weight of it's authority.
2. Things that you might hear people say...
 - a. "I'm sure there are some good lessons in there."
 - b. "Jesus seems to be a pretty cool guy... "
 - c. "All religions basically teach the same thing anyway."
3. Barna found that something like 65% of Americans believe the Bible, the Koran, and the Book of Mormon basically teach the same message.
4. Which is honestly hard to believe if you've read any of them.
5. They have fundamentally different views of:
 - a. salvation,
 - b. sin,
 - c. the character of God,

- d. who Jesus is,
 - e. and how a person is made right with God.
6. The issue is, you can't be neutral with the scriptures.

Narcissistic View

1. And then there's the narcissistic view of the Bible.
2. This is where I come to the Bible primarily asking:
 - a. "How can this help me?"
 - b. "How can this fix me?"
 - c. "How can this improve my life?"
3. Now don't get me wrong — the Bible *is* for us.
4. But it is not primarily *about* us.
5. The Bible is primarily *about* God:
 - a. His glory,
 - b. His kingdom,
 - c. His holiness,
 - d. His redemption plan through Christ.

1. So, Jesus puts in plainly

Look at verse 17.

JESUS FULFILLED THE WORD

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them."

1. Jesus begins by correcting an assumption.
2. Which - by the way - is important to think about.
3. Jesus is not afraid to tell people they might be thinking wrongly about something...
4. Jesus says "Do not think"... *Meaning - you might be thinking things that are not true...*
5. Question: *Does Jesus have the ability to challenge your thinking???*
- 6.
7. Apparently people were already beginning to think:
 - a. "Is Jesus replacing the Old Testament?"
 - b. "Is Jesus lowering God's standards?"
8. And Jesus says:
9. No. Not at all.
10. When Jesus says "the Law and the Prophets," He means the entire Old Testament.
11. And then He gives the key word of the whole passage: *fulfill*.
12. Now, this is different than thinking that Jesus had come to erase the Old Testament.
 - a. He came to complete it.
 - b. Accomplish it.
 - c. Bring it to its intended destination.
13. The entire Old Testament was pointing somewhere.
14. *the sacrifices, the priesthood, the temple, the covenants, the prophets.*

15. All of it was ultimately leading to Christ.
16. It's like your phone searching for signal. "looking for connection... looking for connection..."
17. And then finally the connection locks in.
18. That's the Old Testament.
 - a. Humanity waiting.
 - b. Longing.
 - c. Pointing forward.
19. And then Jesus arrives and says: "The story has always been about Me."
20. The Law was never the destination.
21. It was the signpost.
22. It pointed forward to the One who would:
 - a. perfectly obey the Law,
 - b. perfectly fulfill the Law,
 - c. and ultimately satisfy its demands on our behalf.
23. And this matters deeply because people still misunderstand Christianity here.
24. Some people hear grace and think that obedience doesn't matter anymore....
25. But that's not grace. *That's rebellion wearing church clothes.*
26. Grace does not produce lawlessness. *Grace produces transformed hearts.*
27. Before Christ, obedience feels like obligation.
28. After Christ, obedience becomes affection.
29. The gospel is not: "Jesus obeyed so obedience is irrelevant."
30. The gospel is: "Jesus obeyed perfectly because we never could... and now through Him our hearts are being transformed."
31. So, first, Jesus believed that He came to FULFILL the scriptures...
32. Second, Jesus...

JESUS TRUSTED THE WORD

"For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished."

1. Jesus now says something incredibly strong.
2. An "iota" was the smallest Hebrew letter.
3. A "dot" was the tiniest pen stroke.
4. Jesus is emphasizing the enduring authority of God's Word.
5. Meaning: **God is not careless with truth.**
6. Every command matters.
7. Every promise matters.
8. Every prophecy matters.
9. And honestly, this pushes directly against the kind of casual Christianity we see everywhere today.
10. Because culture constantly asks:
 - a. "What do I feel?"
 - b. "What do I prefer?"
 - c. "What seems true to me?"

11. But discipleship begins with a different question: "What has God said?"
12. Followers of Jesus do not stand above Scripture evaluating it.
13. We stand beneath Scripture submitting to it.
14. And notice: In this entire sermon, Jesus does not merely affirm the comfortable parts.
15. He affirms:
 - a. the difficult parts,
 - b. the confronting parts,
 - c. the inconvenient parts,
 - d. the parts that challenge us.
16. Because God's commands are not given to rob human flourishing.
17. God designed human flourishing.
18. The Designer knows how life works best.
19. Here's what submission to Scripture means: *when Jesus disagrees with me... I assume He's right.*
20. We need to not be careless with what God commands about:
 - a. my sexuality,
 - b. my money,
 - c. my bitterness,
 - d. my marriage,
 - e. my pride,
 - f. my priorities,
 - g. my forgiveness.
21. Discipleship begins where self-rule ends.
22. Not occasionally. But a daily dependence.
 - a. We read it.
 - b. We sit under it.
 - c. We memorize it.
 - d. We discuss it.
 - e. Ultimately, we obey it.
23. Because disciples are not people who admire truth occasionally.
24. They are people being shaped by truth continually.

JESUS CALLS US TO SUBMIT TO THE WORD

"Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven..."

1. Jesus now moves from believing the Word... to handling the Word.
2. There are a few times in a Bible teachers life where it gets uncomfortable - and this is one of them.
3. All scripture is for all of us - but this one seems to be directed at me.
4. Apparently there were already teachers minimizing God's commands.
5. Softening holiness.
6. Explaining away what God had clearly said.
7. And Jesus says that is dangerous territory.
8. **Because what you do with God's Word eventually shapes what you do with God Himself.**

9. A casual view of Scripture eventually produces a casual view of holiness.
10. And honestly... we are incredibly skilled at selective obedience.
11. We love verses about grace toward us.
12. We struggle with verses about surrender from us.
 - a. *We love*: "God forgives."
 - b. *We resist*: "Deny yourself."
 - c. *We love*: "Come as you are."
 - d. *We resist*: "Take up your cross."
13. And slowly, if we are not careful, we begin editing Christianity into something more comfortable.
14. But Jesus never invited people to customize discipleship.
15. He called people to follow Him.
 - a. Not perfectly.
 - b. But sincerely. Wholeheartedly.
16. And then Jesus says something that probably shocked everybody listening.

"Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

 1. The crowd would have been stunned.
 2. Because if the Pharisees were not righteous enough...who is?
 - a. These were the spiritual elites.
 - b. They memorized Scripture.
 - c. Prayed publicly.
 - d. Fasted regularly.
 - e. Obsessed over obedience.
 3. And Jesus says: "Even that is not enough."
 4. Why?
 5. Because the Pharisees mastered outward religion while avoiding inward transformation.
 6. They looked holy... without actually becoming holy.
 7. And before we criticize them too quickly, we should probably ask ourselves:
 - a. Is it possible to sit in church every week and still not know Christ?
 - b. Is it possible to know Christian language without having a transformed heart?
 8. Because we learn how to *look* spiritually alive.
 - a. We know the phrases.
 - b. We know the Instagram captions.
 - c. We know how to clean up behavior in public while chaos lives underneath.
 9. But Jesus is not interested in image management.
 10. He wants your heart.
 11. And over the next several weeks in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is going to press beneath outward behavior and expose what is underneath it.
 - a. Because you can avoid murder and still hate people.
 - b. You can avoid adultery and still cultivate lust.
 - c. You can appear generous while secretly craving applause.
 12. The Pharisees reduced righteousness to external compliance.

13. But Jesus says righteousness reaches deeper.
 - a. Down into the motives.
 - b. Down into the desires.
 - c. Down into the heart.
14. And that is terrifying...
15. ...until you realize what Jesus came to do.
16. Because verse 20 is not merely a command.
17. It is an invitation to a righteousness you could never produce on your own.
18. The beauty of the gospel is this:
19. *Jesus does not merely demand righteousness from us. He provides righteousness for us.*
20. The Pharisees could modify behavior.
21. Only Jesus can resurrect hearts.
22. And that means Christianity is not about pretending to be spiritually alive.
23. It is about being made new.
24. Not self-reformation. Resurrection.
25. Not "try harder." "Be transformed."
26. That is why the gospel is such good news.
27. Because some of you are exhausted trying to appear righteous.
28. Trying to perform. Trying to clean yourself up.
29. Trying to convince everybody — maybe even yourself — that you are okay.
30. But Jesus never asked dead people to perform life.
31. He offers life as a gift.
32. **THE GOSPEL:** Jesus Christ is the ultimate hope for every person. Though we are all sinful and our sin separates us from God, God made a way for us to be in right relationship with him again. That way is Jesus. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus was the perfect sacrifice for our sins. God promises that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ will be saved. This is the good news of the Bible.
33. So the question becomes:
 - a. If Jesus believed the Scriptures completely...
 - b. if Jesus fulfilled the Scriptures perfectly...
 - c. and if Jesus transforms people through the truth of Scripture...
34. **then what will we do with the Bible?**
35. Really, there are only three responses.

1. Reject It

1. You can decide Jesus was wrong.
2. That the Bible is outdated.
3. That truth is self-defined.
4. But if Jesus truly rose from the dead, then His authority cannot be casually dismissed.
5. You do not get the empty tomb without the authority of the King who walked out of it.

2. Edit It

1. This is the temptation of our culture.
2. Not to completely reject Jesus... just to reshape Him.

3. To keep the verses that comfort us and ignore the ones that confront us.
4. But a Jesus remade in our image cannot save us.
5. A Savior we edit will never transform us.

3. Submit to It

1. Not because Scripture always says what we *want* to hear... but because it is the very Word of God that leads us to life.
2. Christians do not stand over the Bible judging it.
3. We stand under the Bible and let it judge us... correct us... shape us... and ultimately lead us to Jesus.
4. Because the goal of Scripture is not information alone.
5. It is transformation.
6. And the invitation from Jesus today is not: "Make yourself righteous enough."
7. The invitation is: "Come to Me and be made new."
 1. How will you respond?

COMMUNION: 1 Corinthians 11

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, broke it, and said,^[b] "This is my body, which is^[c] for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

"May the Lord bless you and protect you;
may the Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
may the Lord look with favor on you^[b]
and give you peace."