

Sermon on the Mount Part III

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[0 : 00] This morning is the Sermon on the Mount, Part 3, and the scripture we'll be looking at is in Luke, Chapter 6, and we'll be reading verses 20 through 33.

In turning his gaze toward his disciples, he began to say, Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.

Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man.

Be glad in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven.

[1 : 26] For in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets. But woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full.

Woe to you who are well fed now, for you shall be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.

Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers used to treat the false prophets in the same way.

But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.

Bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also.

[2 : 30] And whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either. Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back.

Treat others the same way you want them to treat you. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?

For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you?

For even sinners do the same. This passage that was just read from the Sermon on the Mount is found here in Luke, and the principal passage that we will be addressing shortly is parallel to this, but it's found in Matthew's Gospel.

And neither Mark nor John provide any reference at all to the Sermon on the Mount. They simply have other content that they include in their records.

[3 : 57] But you can readily see if you just look carefully at the verses. In fact, you don't even have to look very carefully. Just look kind of halfway at the verses that were just shared with you.

And you ought to be able to understand the confusion that arises over these, considering when our Lord said, Woe unto you that are rich. Well, is there something wrong with being wealthy?

Some of the godliest men who ever lived are found in the Bible, and some of them were very wealthy, and they were very much blessed of God. So what does he mean by this? Woe unto you that are rich.

And then verse 26. Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you. Wouldn't you like to be thought well spoken of by the general population?

Wouldn't you like to be a person of good reputation that people would say nice things about? Is there something wrong with that? What do you suppose he means by that? Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you.

[5 : 03] And then the love your enemies do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you. How applicable are these things to us today as believers?

Now, I want you to turn to the Matthew account. It encompasses a larger portion, three chapters in fact. And I know we have already spent some time in introductory content to the Sermon on the Mount.

But I want to share with you something from the pen of Dr. Charles F. Baker. He's written a volume called Understanding the Gospels, A Different Approach. And it is one of few dispensational treatments that we will find regarding the Gospels.

And Dr. Baker, who is now at home with the Lord, has done us a great service by what he has written here. And some of his introductory comments really need to be shared with you.

So this is based on Matthew 5, 6, and 7, and also Luke 6, 20 through 49. And he is dealing, as we already have, with the whole backdrop of that. But I still want to insert this because it may clarify some things that I did not make as clear as I would have liked.

[6 : 21] The Sermon on the Mount is a summary of the moral and spiritual qualifications of candidates for the Millennial Kingdom. There are certain moral and spiritual absolutes which are unchangeable and which apply equally to God's people in all ages.

Therefore, many of the principles enunciated in this Sermon on the Mount are as applicable to members of the body of Christ as they are to members of the kingdom.

But there are certain features of this sermon which are applicable only to members of the kingdom, and there is, therefore, need to rightly divide this portion of the word.

The purpose of the sermon is to instruct the disciples how to live in view of the persecutions and tribulation which they would suffer while waiting for the actual establishment of the kingdom.

They are instructed to pray for the kingdom to come. The sermon was given to the disciples in the presence of a multitude. The sermon does not present the gospel of salvation or explain how sinners may be saved.

[7 : 36] Now, that is really important. The Sermon on the Mount does not contain, does not give, does not explain the gospel of salvation.

It just doesn't. It isn't in there. It is addressed to people who were already saved, who could call God their heavenly Father.

Much confusion has come from supposing that one can become a Christian by trying to live up to the Sermon on the Mount. There is a vast difference between living in order to become a saint and living as becomes a saint.

And in addition to that, you need to keep in mind the fact that everything in the Sermon on the Mount and almost everything in all four of the Gospels, with the exception of the last, very last couple of chapters in each of the Gospels, all of the content that is addressed is pre-cross material.

All of the sayings, all of the expressions of our Lord and of anyone else in the text was uttered before the cross of Calvary.

[8 : 48] And when Jesus Christ died on that cross, that changed everything. That set the basis for a whole new order to begin. And it was what our Lord was referring to when on the last night before he was betrayed, he said as he held the cup up, this cup is the new covenant in my blood.

That was extremely significant. Even though the apostles were not able to understand the implications of that, they would later, but they didn't then. Not one of them believed that Jesus was within a matter of hours after he said that, that he was going to be suspended upon a Roman cross, shedding his own blood.

And in fact, what he said about this cup represents or is the covenant, the new covenant in my blood, he intended very, very literally.

But none of them took it that way. It just couldn't mean that. But it did mean that. So you've got to take into consideration that everything that was uttered on the other side of the cross has to be kept in mind with that understanding.

Don't take the reality and the truths that were provided by Christ's death on the cross. Don't take the information that comes to us after that fact and try to read it back into the events that happened before the cross and try to interpret the passages in that light.

[10 : 31] Because in reality, you just can't do that. It doesn't make sense. And yet, Christians do it even today. There are multitudes of believers in the body of Christ who try to interpret the Gospels in light of events that had not yet transpired.

And when you try to take our present understanding and our appreciation of great biblical truths and read them back into an area where they were not realized, where they did not belong and could not have been understood and try to make sense of it, it's just a hopeless situation.

You're going to arrive at all kinds of contradictions. It just cannot be rectified. So all of this is in keeping with what we have shared with you from time to time regarding Miles Coverdale and his wonderful formula for interpreting the Scriptures.

We have already pointed out to you also the overarching theme of all of the Sermon on the Mount and of all of the Gospels for that matter and of all the New Testament for that matter and of all the Old Testament for that matter for all of everything for that matter.

And what is it? It is the establishment of the kingdom. It is the rectifying of everything that needs to be done. And this whole thing is set up in two phases.

[11 : 58] Two phases. Well, let's go to Acts chapter 3. Keep your place if you're in Matthew. And let's go to Acts chapter 3 and just set this on the record once again because it is so very important.

It is such a simple principle, but you would be surprised how many people have missed it. And I'm embarrassed to tell you that I was among them for about the first 15 years of my Christian life.

Acts chapter 3 and verse 16. The Apostle Peter is delivering what we might call a continuation of his Pentecostal message in Acts chapter 2.

His theme is the same. It is unchanged. And his audience, in most respects, is pretty much unchanged because while there may be a different number of Jews present at Peter's preaching in Acts chapter 3 than what there were in Acts chapter 2, I can promise you one thing for sure.

Both companies were wholly Jewish. And this took place within the confines of the Jewish temple and its immediate courts. And we know they were all Jews because there were certain areas where Gentiles were not even allowed to penetrate.

[13 : 27] You had to be a Jew to even have access to this place. So Peter is here, and he is with John, and they are giving this message. And it is in response to the man who was healed, who had been lame from his mother's womb, and he is approximately 40-plus years of age and had never walked a day in his life.

And when Peter and John were instrumental in his healing, that really gained the attention of everybody. And they all wanted to know, what's going on here? What's happening? How did this occur?

What's behind all of this? And Peter's answer is the explanation. And we're just going to jump into verse 16 of chapter 3 and try to pick up the thought, realizing that Peter is answering their question about what has happened to this man who was born lame.

And he says in verse 16, And his name, that is Christ, his name through faith in his name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know.

Yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I know that through ignorance you did it.

[14 : 49] He's talking about the crucifixion of Christ. As did also your rulers. He's talking about the scribes, the Pharisees, and the chief priests. He goes on to say, But those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets that Christ should suffer, he has so fulfilled.

Now, all Peter is doing is reminding these people of something that they were already familiar with from the prophets. Because from Moses on through the prophets, it was prophesied that God's Messiah would come to earth and he would be crucified.

He would die for the sins of the world. The Old Testament prophesies that quite clearly. Especially is it clear after the fact. After it's happened, you can go back into Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22, and it becomes crystal clear what they were talking about when they wrote it.

But it wasn't all that clear before the event actually happened. So all he is doing is saying, You know the prophecies about Christ, about the Messiah suffering?

You're aware of that? He has so fulfilled. In other words, God prophesied it and God made good on it. Christ has fulfilled that.

[16 : 17] He has suffered. That is a reality. That's phase one. That is the first thing that has to happen before the wrongs on planet earth can be righted.

The penalty had to be paid for human sin. The moral scales of the universe had to be balanced. And the only way they could be balanced would be for justice to be served.

And justice could be served only by the penalty being exacted. What was the penalty? The wages of sin is death. And Jesus Christ died specifically to pay that penalty.

So God has fulfilled his part. And that's what he means there when he says that Christ should suffer. He has so fulfilled. This, as we've reiterated time and again, is the first of two phases that must occur before the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven can be established on earth.

Before everything that is broken can be fixed. Before all of the wrongs of the earth can be made right. Before the earth can undergo a major healing, renovation, so that it will be a new heaven and a new earth wherein will dwell righteousness and peace.

[17 : 40] We're not there yet. We've never been there. We are halfway there. Phase one has been completed. That's God doing his part.

Phase two is for Israel to do their part. Why Israel? Why not Ireland? Why not Japan? Why not the United States?

Why Israel? Why are they such a significant players? Because to God, God made the promise to Israel through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And this starts in Genesis chapter 12.

It is an unconditional covenant. It is through thee and thy seed all nations of the earth will be blessed. Well, in a sense, they already have been just by the Messiah coming and doing what he did.

But the earth is going to undergo an entire renovation. And this will be after the tribulation period, after Armageddon is history, when Jesus Christ is enthroned on the throne of David in Jerusalem.

[18 : 45] Then, peace and safety is going to dwell throughout the whole world. It's never happened. It's never come close to happening. But it's going to happen.

And as I've said, the world is halfway there. Fifty percent of what is required has been completed. Christ has made the payment.

God has done his part. Israel is still dragging their feet. Israel rejected the Messiah in chapter 2.

And this, I think, leads a lot of people astray. It led me astray for a long time. And yet, I'm certain there was no intention to do that in the Word of God. But when you read in Acts chapter 2 that Peter preached this message and 3,000 believed, the tendency is to think, wow, the whole place was converted.

But it doesn't say that. It just says 3,000 became believers. 3,000 believed Peter's message that Israel had been guilty of actually crucifying the one for whom they had waited for 4,000 years.

[20 : 00] And when he came, they put him on a cross. They didn't know any better. Jesus Christ, Jesus the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth simply did not fit their template for what they thought the Messiah would be.

Therefore, Jesus of Nazareth has to be an imposter. Not only that, but he made himself equal with God, saying that God was his Father and saying ridiculous things like he existed before Abraham and all kinds of things like that.

Obviously, the man is an imposter and a blasphemer, and he deserves crucifixion. So they crucified him. But now, as a result of Peter's message in Acts 2, they've reversed themselves and they've said, you know what?

This man is right. That is exactly what happened. And oh my, oy vey, we crucified the very one for whom we had been waiting all these years.

What now can we do? The deed is done. We can't undo it. And Peter says, no, you can't undo it, but you can repent. You can admit you were wrong.

[21 : 11] That's what repentance is. That is a big item. And let me tell you something. This doesn't go on very often. If repentance were applied as it is supposed to be, the divorce rate in this country would fall through the bottom.

Relationships would be mended and healed like they're supposed to be. Wrongs would be made right like they're supposed to be. Repentance is God's silver bullet.

Repentance is God's chief fix-it mechanism. God loves repentance like he loves nothing else. And I'll tell you why. repentance means that you have come to the light and you have admitted you're wrong.

There's a verse in Luke, I believe, that says, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels over one sinner that repents. when the rich young ruler, not the rich young ruler, but the prodigal son came to himself, woke up in the pigsty there, came into reality, he had a tremendous about face.

He repented. He said, I will go to my father and I will say, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight. Do you think he felt that way when he left home?

[22 : 47] Of course not. And he went and went through all of his funds in a profligate way and gave himself over to licentious loose living and finally bottomed out when he was down there wallowing with the pigs and the text says he came to himself.

It was a wake-up call. He said, Oh, what am I doing? This is insane. And he completely reversed himself. That's repentance. And I want to tell you from one who has experience, this is the hardest thing you're ever called upon to do.

And this is why so many people don't do it. Because we don't want to admit we blew it. We were wrong. We sinned.

It's my fault. Nobody else's. Do you realize that? Do you realize how many marriages could be repaired if husbands and wives would be willing to do that?

Honey, this is my bad. This is on me. I had no right to say that. I was out of line.

[23 : 52] I am sorry. Would you please forgive me? Do you realize how many repaired relationships could be real? Just, well, when Israel nationally repents, it won't be just a Jew here and a Jew there.

It will be a corporate repentance. And when those 3,000 were saved on the day of Pentecost, thinking like a typical preacher counting noses for converts and marks to put on our evangelistic belt, we'd just like to think the whole place was converted.

I think those 3,000 were just a drop in the bucket to what was there. Unfortunately, I can't verify that because we aren't told how many people were there. We're just told that there were 3,000 that responded positively and we aren't told anything about those that didn't.

But please don't make the mistake of thinking that everybody was converted. I think it was just a small percentage. That's a Wiseman opinion, but I base that on what follows later in the book of Acts because there's going to be a number saved.

And later when you come into chapters 4 and 5, the number is about 5,000, so it is growing. But what were 3,000 compared to how many there were likely present for a significant time like the Feast of Pentecost where Jews would come from all over the world to conduct a pilgrimage?

[25 : 28] And that's what Acts 2 tells us. All the Mediterranean world had representatives of Jews who had at one time left the country and then came back. And when they were in these far countries in Asia Minor and even in Rome and Greece and places like that where they had fled, they had settled down, they had opened businesses, they had started families, they were raising families, etc.

and they picked up the local language, which probably was Greek in so many cases, but as a generation, the next ones were born and the ones after, they lost the language, they lost the Hebrew, they lost the Aramaic, and they picked up the local language where they were living then.

But they never lost their Judaism, they never lost their connection with Jehovah, the God of Israel. And during these feast days, one of which was Pentecost in Acts 2, thousands of them would come from all over the Mediterranean world to make that pilgrimage, to come to the temple and to present themselves there by offering a sacrifice to the Lord and so on.

And when you consider how huge this place was, when Herod got through with the renovation of the temple, it was just absolutely magnificent, and he had not changed the temple proper because that was the dimensions of that were divinely established, but he changed the whole temple mount area and expanded it enormously.

And if you've ever stood out in the middle of a football field, you know how large it is. This temple mount is 12 football fields in area.

[27 : 12] It's really big, and it would hold tens of thousands. It could hold hundreds of thousands of people. Have you seen a picture lately in St. Peter's Square where a lot of activity is going on because of the new pope that's going to be chosen, and they show St. Peter's Square, and when they think or when they believe that the time for a new pope to be announced and the white smoke goes up, I can promise you this, St. Peter's Square is going to be jam packed.

There will probably be a couple of hundred thousand there, and you get an idea of that area. Well, 12 football fields is bigger than that, so how many there were, we don't know, but there were a whole lot of people there.

And now, Peter is preaching in Acts 3, and I'm satisfied that it is likewise to a very large group, and he says in verse 18, by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he has so fulfilled.

It's done, over with. Christ has died. God provided Christ, Christ provided himself on the cross, that phase one is finished, that's complete.

Repent you, therefore. Therefore, is in light of what has gone before. And when he says, God has fulfilled his part, now he is saying to this group of Jews who are there, now what?

[28 : 44] The therefore of God having fulfilled his part is for you to fulfill your part, which is repent, reverse yourself, change your mind, admit you were wrong, acknowledge that Jesus was the Christ, and come full circle, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, and he, the Father, shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you.

Well, where was he when Peter was saying these things? Where was Christ? He had already ascended. Whom heaven, verse 21, must receive until the times of restitution of all things.

That's what we're talking about in the Sermon on the Mount. That's the kingdom of heaven come to earth. Never been realized. Whom heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

So, what are we waiting for? We're waiting for phase two. That's for Israel to come full circle. Where are they now? Israel as a nation is abiding in unbelief.

They are set aside in the plan and program of God while God is doing an entirely different thing called the church, the body of Christ. Israel right now is pretty much out of the picture.

[30 : 27] Although, isn't it interesting that this tiny, seemingly insignificant little nation is almost every day front page news. How do you account for that?

Isn't that something? And as I pointed out to you before, Washington, D.C. has more foreign news correspondence in the capital there of Washington, D.C.

than any other nation in the world. And the reason, I think, is quite obvious. It's because in many respects, as the USA goes, so go a great many other nations, we have been recognized as a world leader, superpower, etc., shaker and mover among the nations, probably ever since World War II ended.

And it is a status that in many respects, we have not utilized to the fullest of extents. But, nonetheless, I think it is generally conceded worldwide that the United States is the number one superpower.

So, what happens in Washington, D.C. is going to impact a lot of places throughout the world. And that would explain why there are more foreign correspondents in Washington, D.C.

[31 : 46] than in any other capital in any other country in the world. Guess who's second? Israel. What?

Why not London? Why not Moscow? Why not Paris? Israel? Israel? You've got to be kidding. Israel is the size of New Jersey. Just a few million people there.

What makes them so special? This is what makes them so special. This whole kingdom thing. And you know what? The world doesn't have a clue. And let me tell you something else.

Israel doesn't have a clue. Isn't that amazing? Oh, they know in some vague general kind of way they are the chosen people of God. They're aware of that and they're very proud of that.

But they don't have a clue regarding this kingdom thing, phase one, phase two, God fulfilling his part, them fulfilling. They're clueless. If you told this to the average Jew, he would probably think you were from another planet.

[32 : 49] He does not realize how utterly strategic he is in the plan and program of God. Many Jews today are living in atheism. Did you know that?

And did you know that Israel is not really a religious nation at all? Some people think that it's very religious, it's full of Jews. Yes, but they are secular Jews.

They're not believing Jews. They're not even Jews who believe in Judaism. They are Jews who are Jews because of their biological birthright and because of tradition.

That's it. They do not adhere particularly to the Old Testament except for a tiny minority of the Jews. So basically they're out of it and they're pretty much clueless. They just don't have any idea how strategic they really are.

But God has not forgotten. And God has made an unconditional promise to the nation of Israel through the founder of the nation, Abraham, his son Isaac, his son Jacob, and his 12 sons.

[33 : 56] that's how God is going to bring it to pass. He's going to make good on his promise. And when he starts to make good on his promise, guess what? Israel is going to say, voila, what is this?

Israel is going to become the target. Israel is going to have a big bullseye printed on it. And the nations of the world are going to come against Israel with the intent of annihilating.

The only ones that feel that way now are the seven neighbors that surround them, the Arab world. But the rest of the world is going to feel that way. I don't know if you're aware of it or not, but there is a resurgence of anti-Semitism in this nation, in the U.S. of A., particularly in the South, and it is spreading.

And Jews and Judaism and Israel is becoming very, very unpopular on many of our nation's campuses, universities.

What do you make of that? It is going on even as we speak. And some of the leadership of Israel are becoming quite nervous about it because they are sensing rumblings like there were that were so obvious that they couldn't see clearly before World War II broke out.

[35 : 19] and now some of these things are starting all over again. So when Israel has their back to the wall, and they will in the tribulation period, they will be on the brink of destruction.

And then Christ will return. And when he does, they will recognize him. Zechariah 12, 10 says, And they shall look upon him whom they pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourns for an only son.

Israel will come alive, and the nation of Jewry throughout the world, wherever they are, will recognize this one to have been their Messiah.

Messiah. And the Lord will go forth and will fight for them as in days of old. And he will vindicate his people. And that, when that happens, that will be phase two.

And Christ will then put down all the enemies of Israel, a la Revelation 19, and he will then go to Jerusalem and install himself as the rightful king of Israel.

[36 : 42] And that's when the kingdom of heaven, spoken of in the Sermon on the Mount, will be established. It has never happened, but it will.

As surely as God is God, and as surely as phase one is now already history, phase two is right on track, and in God's timing, it will occur.

So, when Christ was here the first time then, the common thinking then, was that the Messiah would establish the long awaited kingdom, and they didn't have the slightest notion that it had anything to do with the death of the Messiah on the cross.

that too was totally foreign to them, and still is, still is today. You talk to the average Jew today about the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and about him being the Messiah, as far as they are concerned, Jesus dying on the cross was proof positive that he was not the Messiah, because God would never allow his Messiah to come to an end like that.

You think that God would send the Messiah to earth and then couldn't protect him from the cruelty of men who would crucify him? But you see, even though they were steeped in the whole principle of substitution, which began with animals way back in Genesis, they never made the connection between this one being a substitute for the whole world.

[38 : 19] Never saw that. Although substitution was what Israel was all about, sacrifice and substitution installed way back in Genesis, and they practiced it with thousands and thousands of rams and bullocks and they never connected the dots.

They never saw the Messiah as being necessary to die. The innocent dying for the guilty. Just one more thing that they didn't connect. But when this time comes, they're going to put it all together and Israel is going to have a national aha moment.

And it will be something. something. It will be something. Their thinking was, of course, if Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, the one whom Moses and the prophets promised and spoke of, he would bring this kingdom, establish it.

Forget about the death and all of the resurrection and all of that stuff. None of that would be necessary. He would just come riding in pomp and splendor and he would chase the Romans out and he would set up everything. That's what they expected.

That's what they looked for. But Jesus didn't make any moves in that direction at all. And as far as they were concerned, that proves he's not the Messiah because that's what he's supposed to do when he comes.

[39 : 39] And he didn't do it. So, when Christ gives the Sermon on the Mount, the question then becomes, who would qualify as candidates for it?

Righteousness and peace would characterize it. question is this. What righteousness was acceptable to gain entrance into this kingdom of heaven?

Let me stop here and inject something else. When we talk about the kingdom of heaven, don't be thrown by the word heaven. That's a major area of confusion and misunderstanding.

Because when you talk about the kingdom of heaven, almost everybody thinks about dying and going there and going to be with Christ in heaven, like Paul was caught up into the third heaven, absent from the body present with the Lord.

Where's that? Well, when Christ was the sin that he went to heaven. Well, when the Bible talks about the kingdom of heaven, it's talking about, no it isn't. No it isn't. When the Bible talks about the kingdom of heaven, it's not talking about the stellar place beyond our place where God dwells and abides now.

[40 : 49] When the Bible talks about the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God, it's talking about God's rule and reign in heaven coming to earth. This globe, this sphere, this ball of dirt is going to be the location of the kingdom of heaven come to earth.

And it will be a renovated heaven and earth. Revelation calls it a new heaven and a new earth. The old will be purged and all that ruined it and wasted it is going to be done away with.

It's going to be renewed and it will be dwelled in by a renewed people. So, in this kingdom of heaven that is spoken of in the Sermon on the Mount and that is referred to as the restitution of all things, referred to as the refreshing of all things, or the making over, or the regeneration of all things, when that happens, it will be right here on the earth.

And, what will be the qualifications for gaining entrance into that kingdom of heaven?

That's what the Sermon on the Mount is all about. So, you can see, can you not, how it is radically removed from what we are doing and what we are about today?

[42 : 23] Because we are not concerned or ought not to be concerned with the requirements set forth in the Sermon on the Mount because we already have an updated marching order that supersedes this that is connected to the church which is the body of Christ Christ and is removed from Israel.

If you do not understand the distinction between these two programs, what was planned and provided for Israel, what is planned and provided for the church, you're going to really be knee-deep in confusion.

Because, you see, the church, the body of Christ, is like a parenthesis. It's like an insertion. It's called a mystery because it was not foretold.

It was not planned for. It was not prophesied. It was not explained. It was not anticipated. It was just something that God brought in to being in connection with Israel's rejection of the Messiah and their being set aside.

And we have not taken Israel's place. Nobody can take Israel's place because of the inviolate, unconditional promise that God made to Israel.

[43 : 43] They will never be displaced. The church is not the new Israel. The church is altogether a separate entity spoken of as a mystery, not prophesied or predicted.

It just came into being with the blending of Jew and Gentile who believed in Jesus into one body. So that's entirely different.

And the things that are set forth here in the Sermon on the Mount have to be kept in the context for which they were intended. So the big issue, if you will go with me to Matthew chapter 5, the big issue has to do with the quest for righteousness and what righteousness is required.

We are in chapter 5. And the righteousness that was acceptable to gain entrance was, I think, what we can safely call pharisaical righteousness.

And this was nothing more than the interpretation of the law of Moses by the religious leaders who were in the positions of authority in the nation of Israel.

[45 : 00] Who were these people? They were the chief priests, the rabbis, the scribes. These were the religious experts. They were the theologues of the day.

They were the ones who were supposed to know and understand the law of Moses, how it applied to Israel, how it was to be carried out, what its provisions were, what its penalties were.

These guys were the experts on the law of Moses. And there was just a handful of them. Most of the people were just what you would call common, ordinary, everyday Joes.

And they were not experts or authorities on the Bible, but they looked to those whom they believed were. Because after all, these scribes, priests, and so on, gave hours and hours of every day of their life, just pouring over the laws of Moses, just trying to understand and interpret and read what the rabbis had said that had gone before.

They devoted themselves. They were entrenched in the law of Moses. If anybody knew the law of Moses, these guys did. They had it down pat. The only problem was, they were all wrong.

[46 : 15] And because they were wrong, they were leading the people astray. And when Jesus Christ came on the scene, he clashed with the religious authorities.

Because while they had it wrong, he had it right. How do you think that's going to make them feel when he starts issuing his pronouncements?

The stage is set for a real red-hot conflict. And it was going to begin way back here. Now, I want you to read, if you will, and let's go to verse 20.

Let's go to verse 20 of chapter 5. verse 20. Our Lord is speaking, and he says, For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed, go beyond, be better than the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Now, this is a real put-down. Do you see that? They're not going to take kindly to this. Jesus is here simply dismissing the scribes and the Pharisees as the go-to guys, as the authorities.

[47 : 57] And he is as much as saying, Now, I know you have been adhering to and following the advice, the dictates, the interpretations of the scribes and Pharisees.

But I am here to tell you that unless your righteousness exceeds theirs and what they call righteous, you're not going to make it.

you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Does that mean that Jesus is saying these are actually leading the people astray?

That's precisely what he's saying. And that's the only way they could interpret it. And then's fighting words. We ought not to have any difficulty at all understanding why the religious establishment was so upset with Christ.

He really made them look bad. He called them out. Some might say Jesus should have been more moderate. He should have been more understanding.

[49 : 04] He should have been more patient. Well, I don't think so. And I'll tell you why. Because he knew what was at stake.

And there's no time for mincing words or playing games. Let's get on with this thing. Let's call a spade a spade. I don't have any time or space for political correctness.

And that lit the match. Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you are not a candidate for the kingdom of heaven when it is established here on the earth.

And let me tell you something. There was nothing bigger to miss than that. There was nothing more important to be excluded from than that.

This kingdom of heaven come to earth was what any loyal Jew ate, slept, drank, thought, dreamed of, anticipated, prayed for, everything else.

[50 : 19] This was it. This was the ultimate. This, we're talking about, this is utopia. This is paradise. This is, this is the whole world as good as God can make it.

That's what's at stake here. And wouldn't you want to be in that? Because without his outer darkness and weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, they are those who are excluded from this kingdom.

Now, we today, we're not concerned about this, because this is not where we're at, but this is where the Jew was of Jesus' day. This is where the Jew was in the Gospels. This is where the Jew was in the Sermon on the Mount.

it's an entirely different thing for us today in the body of Christ as believers. Entirely different. And we will see. So let me just leave you with these thoughts and we'll develop them in our next get together.

When Christ said, your righteousness has to exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees, this meant that the interpretation placed upon the law of Moses was the standard that everyone had accepted as pleasing to God.

[51 : 37] But was it? No, it wasn't. It wasn't at all. And this is what caused the perpetual conflict between Jesus and the religious establishment.

I'm going to make a statement now. I'll be making it later on, but it's so important that you understand this. Our Lord never once went against the law of Moses or what it taught never once.

He consistently went against the Pharisees interpretation of the law of Moses and that's what got him in trouble.

Big trouble. Because their interpretation stood. It was the accepted norm. This is what you did. This is what you believed.

This is what you practiced. It was as they defined the law of Moses. Now, question. Why didn't they just take the law of Moses at face value in and of itself and by itself without encumbering it with all of the so-called religious authorities' interpretations and understandings of it?

[52 : 55] Why couldn't the common average man just read the law of Moses for himself and take it as it is face value? He could have if he had access to the scriptures, which many of them, of course, did not because it was at a very high premium.

So they put their confidence and trust in these who were the so-called experts. And you know something? Nothing has changed. There are still multitudes of people the world over who will gladly surrender their brains if they can get somebody else to think for them.

And that's true spiritually too. And let me tell you, our churches are filled with these people. I just don't want anyone here to ever entertain the thought for the moment.

And I just want Marv to think for me and tell me what to believe. Get out of here. I don't want you here. I don't have room for you. We all have personal volition.

We are to think for ourselves. I want you to take what I say and weigh it. Evaluate it. Think about it. And never forget to be a Berean.

[54 : 15] Check with the scriptures and see whether these things are so. Because you know that not everything that Marv says is so. Marv has already admitted that and changed my position on a number of things.

And I say that not proudly but embarrassingly. So, Mark 20, Mark Matthew 520 is setting the stage for Christ's objection to and correction interpretation of the law.

And I want you to look quickly now at verse 17, chapter 5, verse 17.

Christ, first of all, assures his audience that he is not at odds with the Mosaic law. Jesus is saying, I have a bone to pick with Moses.

I think he got it wrong. He isn't saying that at all. He is not contradicting the law. He is not opposed to the law. He is the major supporter of the law. And he makes that quite clear when he says in verse 17, do not think that I am come to destroy the law.

[55 : 33] Oh, that will be the accusation that some will make. But he says, I did not come to destroy the law or the prophecies. I am not come to destroy but to fulfill.

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 will be fulfilled. The jot and the tittle represent the very smallest mark in the Hebrew language.

We would liken the jot or the tittle to the English comma. It's just a little, just a little tiny twist. That's like the jot and the tittle.

And Christ says, not one of those will pass away until all is fulfilled. And then verse 21, you have heard.

Oh, now he isn't saying it is written. He isn't saying that. He's saying you have heard. who did they hear it from?

[56 : 38] They heard it from the religious establishment, the religious authorities. You 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.

judgment. But, there's the first introduction of a major fighting word. But, all that means is in contradistinction to what I have said.

You have heard thus and so, but, now he's going to contradict that. 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, Raka, shall be in danger of the council. But whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall be in danger of hellfire.

What is all of this about? You're in danger of hellfire for calling somebody a fool? But there are so many that qualify, aren't there?

[57 : 44] So, you're going to hell if you call somebody a fool? What is this saying? We shall see. And then, he talks about the law regarding divorce, the law regarding adultery, the law regarding the taking of oaths, the law regarding non-retaliation, and the law of love.

And each one of them, Christ reiterates what the official standard position was and had been that was foisted upon the people by the religious establishment under which they lived.

And he came to tell them, got it all wrong. And the reason they did was this, and with this we will close. The religious establishment was completely given over to the letter of the law of Moses, Moses, and they completely missed the whole point because Christ is going to interpret the law of Moses in accordance with the spirit of it.

And that means there is a law that has the letter of it, there is a law that has the spirit of it, and the spirit of the law is its intent. It is what was behind it.

And that is a beautiful thing, because the contrast is so obvious and will become even more so as we look at it. This sermon is loaded with all kinds of practical application for believers today, even though it is not really in our milieu at all, because we are in the church age, the body of Christ.

[59 : 30] But just as there are numerous things in the Psalms, and Proverbs, the book of Esther, in Exodus, in Judges, that contain valuable principles for believers of all dispensations and all ages.

So there are things like that in the Sermon on the Mount. And we want to reach in and show you which ones they are, and how they are reinforced by what is given in the epistles in the New Testament.

And then we'll know that we are on safe ground. Father, we are grateful for this time that we have shared together. We trust that you will take the truths that have been shared and enable these people to sift and sort and to be Bereans and to not take any man's word, especially this man's word, for anything as pure gospel.

You and your word is the only thing that is to be completely trusted. And we are glad that it is that way. Thank you for the passage. Thank you for what we will mine from it that will be practical for us and that will be applicable to the state of Israel.

We bless you for it all in Christ's name. Amen.