

Introduction: What the world needs now is...

- How would you answer that question?
- Do you believe that America has a bright future? Why? Why not?
- What are your greatest concerns?
- What do you think really needs to CHANGE in our country, and why?
- How do you think Jesus would answer the questions above?

The setting and context

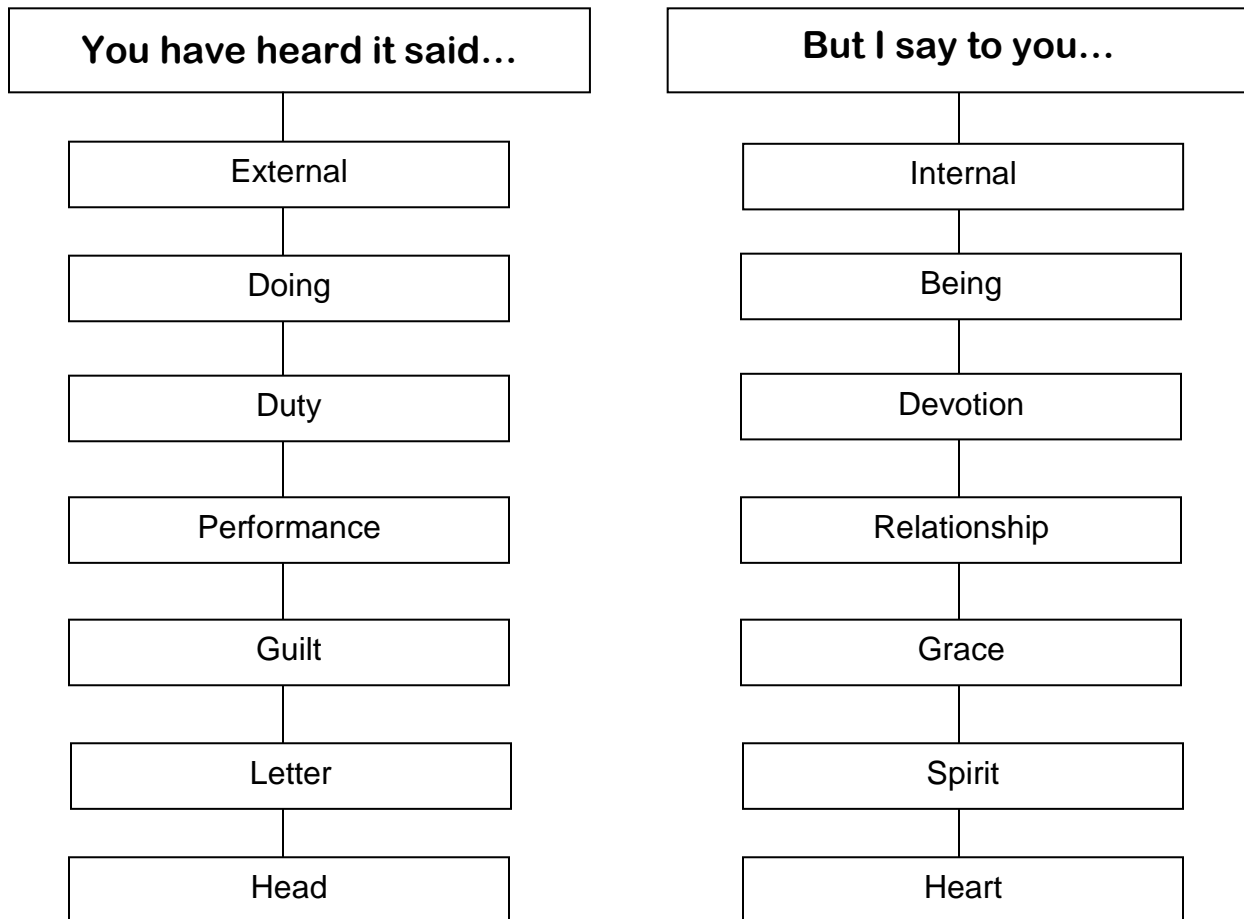
Matthew 4:23-5:2

- The world is woefully broken
- Jesus is wildly popular

Matthew 5 overview

5:3-12	The characteristics of His true followers and their promised rewards
5:13-16	Salt and light: The movement's strategy
5:17-20	Relationship of this new teaching to the Law of Moses

True righteousness (Matthew 5:20)



Application of Matthew 5:20 to...

- | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|
| • Murder | Matthew 5:21-26 | • Adultery | Matthew 5:27-30 |
| • Divorce | Matthew 5:31-32 | • Oaths | Matthew 5:33-37 |
| • Retribution | Matthew 5:38-41 | • Enemies | Matthew 5:43-48 |

Summary of Chapter 5 – Jesus condemns **EXTERNAL** righteousness (spiritual activities) when it does not flow from an **AUTHENTIC** relationship with God.

Jesus’ warnings – 4 “movement killers”

1. Key issue = **MOTIVES** Matthew 6:1-18
- Giving Matthew 6:1-4
 - Prayer Matthew 6:5-8
 - Fasting Matthew 6:16-18

The diagnostic question = Who am I seeking to **PLEASE**?

2. Key issue = **MATERIALISM** Matthew 6:19-33
- Money Matthew 6:19-24
 - Clothes Matthew 6:28-30
 - Food Matthew 6:25-27
 - Anxiety Matthew 6:31-33

The diagnostic question = Whose **AGENDA** (kingdom) am I seeking to accomplish?

3. Key issue = **MISAPPLICATION** Matthew 7:1-12
- Judging Matthew 7:1-5
 - Preaching Matthew 7:6
 - Asking Matthew 7:7-12

The diagnostic question = Where am I mis-applying Jesus’ teaching?

4. Key issue = **MISPERCEPTION**

Matthew 7:13-29

- Narrow gate
- A tree's fruit
- Wise and foolish builders
- Crowds amazed

Matthew 7:13-14

Matthew 7:15-23

Matthew 7:24-27

Matthew 7:28-29

The diagnostic question = Have I entered through the narrow gate and does my life reflect one who is...

1. Poor in spirit?
2. Mourns?
3. Meek?
4. Hungering & thirsting for righteousness?
5. Merciful?
6. Pure in heart?
7. A peacemaker?
8. Persecuted because of righteousness?

Discussion Questions:

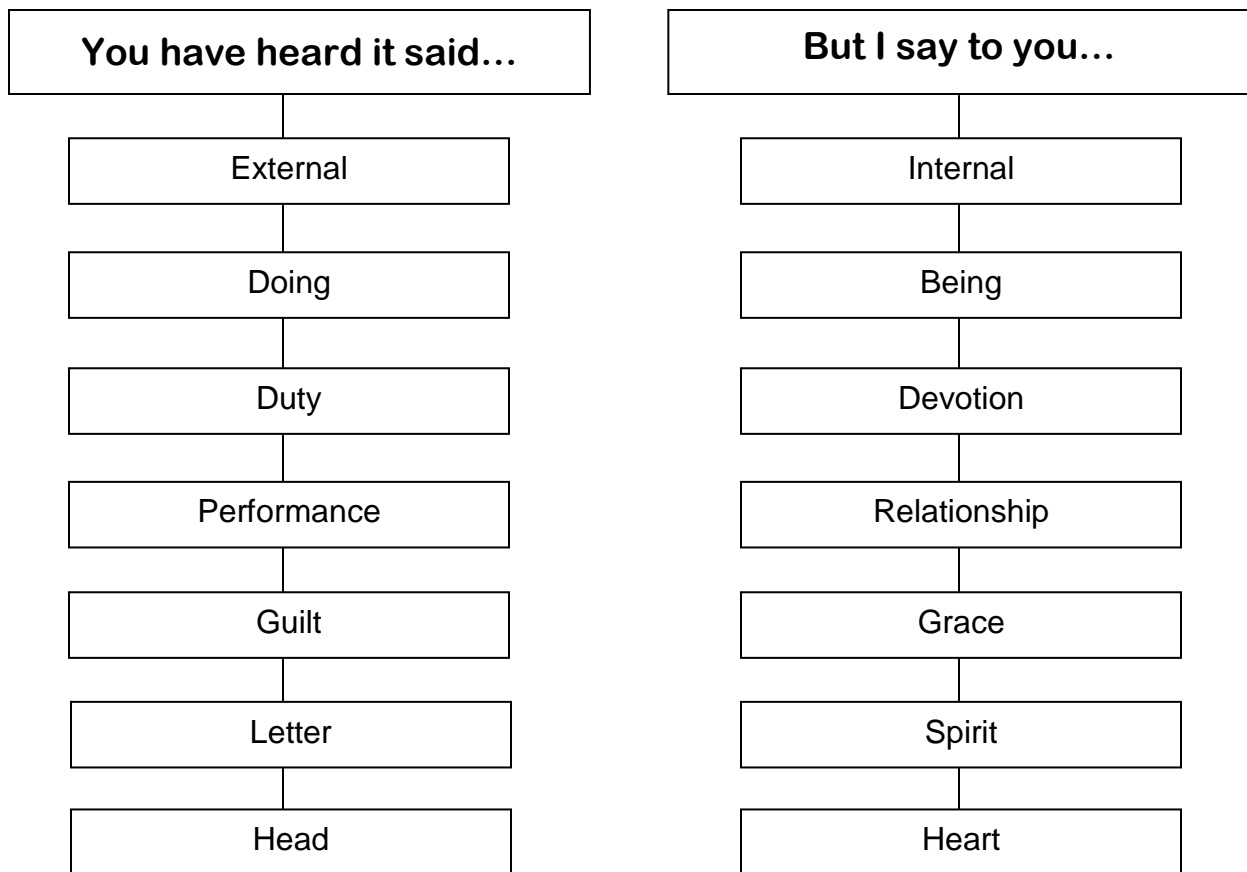
1. What parallels exist in the problems of today with the problems in the 1st century?
2. Where and how did Jesus gain the credibility to attract "serious" followers and crowds of thousands (see Matthew 4:23-35)
3. Why do you think Jesus began His movement by describing the characteristics of a true follower and the promised rewards?
4. Where did God speak to you in this message?
5. What needs to happen in your life? Time? Priorities? Relationships? To be a vital participant in Jesus' revolution of love and light?

“Thou shall not kill.”

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Topic #1 - The 6th Commandment

Two words: **NO MURDER**

One purpose: **PROTECT LIFE**

The current Interpretation

“You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’”

Matthew 5:21

The prohibition: No murder by **VIOLENT HANDS**.

Jesus’ authoritative interpretation

“But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.”

Matthew 5:22

The prohibition:

- No murder by **ANGRY HEARTS**
- No murder by **LETHAL LIPS**

Summary: All three prohibitions constitute **MURDER** in God’s eyes.

Jesus' application - Two parables

- **The parable of priority**

²³ "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift."

Matthew 5:23-24

The principle: Right **RELATIONSHIPS** trump religious requirements every time.

- **The parable of urgency**

²⁵ "Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. ²⁶ I tell you the truth, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny."

Matthew 5:25-26

The principle: Delayed **OBEDIENCE** will result in dire consequences.

Thoughts to ponder*

"Bitterness always feels justified."

"Bitterness creates an illusion of control and power."

"When we embrace bitterness we reject grace."

"Remember the good, and the good will grow."

* From Stand Against the Wind by Erwin McManus

Steps to humble bridge-building:

1. Do you have anger, bitterness, or resentment toward anyone, past or present?
2. Have you murdered anyone in your heart or with your lips?
3. Will you confess this sin right now and receive God's full forgiveness?
4. Can you think of anyone who might feel angry or resentful towards you? Will you commit to make that relationship right "as far as it depends on you"?
5. Will you STOP and thank God for His love and kindness and blessings in your life right now?

O Lord, You are so good, so ready to forgive,
so full of unfailing love for all who ask for Your help.

Psalm 86:5

Do you really “get” Jesus’ message?

The fundamental problem in the world is...

Life’s not fair!

In a word, **INJUSTICE**

The fundamental problem in our lives is...

We don’t measure up!

In a word, **UNRIGHTEOUSNESS**

- Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount introduces a Kingdom (way of life) that promises **justice** and redefines **righteousness**.
- Matthew 5:1-12 sets forth the **prerequisites** to enter and experience this King’s way of life, now and forever.
- Matthew 5:13-16 sets forth the **purpose** of this new way of living.
- Matthew 5:17-48 sets forth this King’s way of life by contrasting it with the current interpretation of God’s law.

Old Testament law

1. The law of murder
2. The law of reconciliation
3. The law of adultery
4. The law of divorce
5. The law of oaths
6. The law of retribution
7. The law of love

Jesus' Kingdom values

- Life
- Relationships
- Fidelity
- Marriage
- Integrity
- Mercy
- Everyone

- In each case, Jesus sets forth what **exceeding the righteousness** of the scribes and Pharisees looks like for His Kingdom followers. Matthew 5:20

- Jesus makes clear that living out His Kingdom values requires a **new heart** (Jeremiah 31) and **new power** only He can provide. Matthew 7:13-20

- Jesus makes clear that only those with an eternal perspective of His sovereignty (final justice) can live this counter-culture lifestyle. Matthew 7:21-33

- Jesus makes clear that only through death to **personal agendas** and **selfish ambition** can this supernatural life that expands His Kingdom be experienced. Matthew 7:24-28

Jesus' final and most outrageous teaching

The law of retribution

Matthew 5:38-42

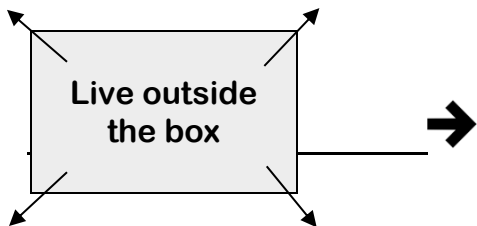
The existing interpretation, purpose, and context of Ex. 21:24, Lev. 24:19-20:

Legal limits
to "payback"
injustices



How far can I go to exact **REVENGE** for my injury?

Jesus' new standard of righteousness:



How can I respond to injustice with **MERCY** in order to reveal God's heart and expand His Kingdom?

The law of love

Matthew 5:39-48

The existing interpretation, omission, and addition of Lev. 19:18:

Love those in
my circle



HATE those outside my circle.

Jesus' new standard of righteousness:

Love those in
my circle



LOVE and **PRAY** for my enemies and persecutors.

We are never more like Jesus than when we treat people in a way they don't deserve.

Discussion Questions:

1. How does Jesus' revolutionary message differ from the common notion of "just try to be a good person"?
2. What is needed to live out this supernatural life in His Kingdom? How does this differ from being a nice, moral person?
3. How does a person receive this "new life" and go through the "narrow gate" of life?
4. Where or with whom do you need to release your "personal rights" for vengeance or payback?
5. In what ways could you expand your circle of love this week? Whom do you see as enemies or persecutors? What would loving them look like this week?