

Invitation to the Sermon on the Mount Lifestyle - Pt. 1

Jim Hall - July 2010

Foundations that Cannot Be Shaken

A) The question that we have been speaking about recently has been this: Is the future friendly?

B) In the light of the reality of Christ's return, how ought we to live? According to Jesus we want to ensure that we are wise and faithful servants

“So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions.” - Matt. 24:44-47

C) This requires a 'sermon on the mount lifestyle', (or one that is patterned after the Sermon on the Mount). It is Jesus' great declaration about the nature of the Kingdom of God. It is found in Matthew 5-7.

D) Is the future friendly? According to Jesus the answer depends on how we respond to the Sermon on the Mount:

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.” -Matt. 7:24-27

i. Jesus is speaking of both this age and the age to come. We experience the benefits of living in agreement with the Sermon on the Mount in this life but there are also far larger 'rewards' in the next age.

ii. "...whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:19) We know that the kingdom of heaven began to be established through the first coming of Jesus, but will only be fully established through Christ's second coming. Therefore Jesus' promise of being called 'great in the kingdom' speaks primarily of the age to come, after Jesus' return.

Invitation to the Sermon on the Mount Lifestyle - Pt. 1

Jim Hall - July 2010

The Garden of our Heart

A) We will look at the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount using the biblical analogy of the 'garden of our heart' (Song of Songs 4:1).

B) Part 1: Weeding the garden: Jesus gives six practical areas in which we must wage war in our hearts. If we are to grow in spiritual maturity, and become 'wise and faithful servants' we must remove certain 'weeds' from our heart that choke the life out of our spiritual lives. We find these six areas discussed in Matt. 5:21-48

C) Part 2: Watering the garden: Jesus also gives five specific spiritual practices that are essential for us to see our lives established in fruitfulness before God. It is not enough for us to take out the weeds; we must also water and nurture our spiritual lives. We find these in Matt. 6:1-23.

Weeding the Garden: Removing the Toxins that Choke our Hearts

A) In each of the six areas, Jesus expands on an Old Testament reference that had been narrowly misapplied by the teachers of the law. Our tendency is to pursue the an interpretation that may follow the 'letter of the law' but misses the 'spirit of the law'.

B) Jesus did not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to make a way to fully express their glory and intent. This righteousness is agreement with the spirituality seen in the Old Testament (5:17-20).

C) Jesus makes clear that the 'seed form' of each of these six areas is just as deadly to our spirits as the 'full grown expressions'.

Anger: Matt. 5:21-26

- Anger is the seed form of the spirit of murder.
- Murder is the full blown expression of anger that has gone unchecked and allowed to run rampant in our hearts.
- "Killing does only mean destroying life physically, it means still more trying to destroy the spirit and the soul, destroying the person in any shape or form" - Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Lust: Matt. 5:27-30

- Some have pointed out that each of these six areas deal with a form of the various lusts that exist within the human heart.
- In these verses, physical lust is identified as the seed form of the spirit of adultery
- 'Eye adultery' is connected to what Jesus said elsewhere about the importance of what we set our eyes to (see Matt. 6:22-23) and the vision (pardon the pun) for purity (Matt. 5:8)

Invitation to the Sermon on the Mount Lifestyle - Pt. 1

Jim Hall - July 2010

Disloyalty: Matt. 5:31-32

- While Jesus' teachings on divorce require great attention and study, what must be highlighted here is the importance Jesus places on the sanctity of marriage. This speaks powerfully to our present day culture that treats divorce so casually.

Deception: Matt. 5:33-37

- Jesus addresses the common practice of using 'spin' or subtle manipulation (i.e through exaggeration) to present ourselves more favorably in the eyes of others.
- "For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks." - Matt. 12:34

Revenge: Matt. 5:38-42

- Jesus confronts our concepts of fairness and challenges us to rid ourselves of the seed form of revenge
- Jesus is in no way condoning abusive relationships (physical or emotional). The focus is on our tendency to demand justice in our relationships in ways that are rooted in pride or bitterness. Remember, Jesus is addressing the garden *of our hearts*. Our actions and words are far too often rooted in our desire to enforce our personal rights.

Retaliation: Matt. 5:43-48

- This is an extension of v. 41 and gives specific application of 'going the extra mile'

Walking in Freedom: Practical Steps

How do we pull out these 'weeds' from the garden of our heart?

"In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace." -Romans 6:11-14

A) The Power of saying NO:

- i. The power of our verbal confession: 'count yourself dead to sin' (v. 11)
- ii. The weeds of anger, lust, deception etc. do not suddenly cease to exist in our hearts when we are born again through Christ. However sin is no longer our master. We are no longer slaves to sin. We have been given access to the power to take our stand again sin and the temptations that come into our hearts.

Invitation to the Sermon on the Mount Lifestyle - Pt. 1

Jim Hall - July 2010

iii. There is power in our verbal confession. This is a significant, practical part of what Paul meant when he said that we are to 'count ourselves dead to sin'. We say NO to sin when temptation grows up in our hearts.

B) The Power of saying YES:

i. It is not enough to say no to sin; we must say yes to God: 'offer yourselves to God' (v. 13)

ii. We can do this through simply through 10-second prayers throughout the day:

- 'I am yours God'

- 'I want to obey you God. Help me to be more like Jesus'

- 'Thank you Holy Spirit for your peace...(etc.); let you peace touch my heart right now'