

A Different King

Jesus Restores the Heart of the Law Matthew 5:21—6:18

“You have heard that it was said....But I tell you....” Matthew 5:38a, 39a

1. Read Matthew 5:21–48. This passage contrasts the meaning of the Law according to religious tradition and the Law according to Jesus. Fill in the chart to highlight the differences.

| | <i>“You have heard that it was said....”</i> | <i>“But I tell you....”</i> |
|---------|--|-----------------------------|
| 5:21-26 | | |
| 5:27-30 | | |
| 5:31-32 | | |
| 5:33-37 | | |
| 5:38-42 | | |
| 5:43-48 | | |

2. Jesus raises the bar by interpreting the Law in a way that requires more than external actions. The resulting standard is impossible for his followers to achieve. (Consider verse 48.) Why does Jesus do this? (Romans 3:19–24) What response do you think Jesus wants his followers (including us) to have to his call?
3. Look again at the chart. What does column two require of us that column one does not? (Isaiah 29:13)
4. Read Matthew 6:1–18. What three areas of our spiritual life does Jesus focus on? What do you think are God’s intentions for these practices?
5. What title does Jesus give to people who perform their acts of righteousness before men, in order to be seen by them? (verses 2, 5, 16)

How do these people make sure they are noticed by others when they do the following:

Give (verse 2):

Pray (verse 5):

Fast (verse 16):

6. What reward do those who practice their righteousness before others receive? What reward do they miss out on?

7. Consider your desire for the praise of men or the approval of others. What makes it so attractive? How does it feel when you don't get it? Why is it an empty reward? What do you do to try and get it?

8. Christian teaching often exhorts believers to do things from "pure" motives. This is often understood to mean doing things with no thought of reward or personal gain. On the contrary what does Jesus hold out as motivation? (verses 4, 6, 18)

9. As you read through the Lord's Prayer (verses 9-13), what general principles about prayer is Christ teaching us here?

10. How does Jesus make clear the importance of forgiving one another? (verses 14, 15) What is the motive for forgiving others? (Ephesians 4:32, Matthew 18:23-34)

11. How does the model of prayer given by Jesus encourage or challenge you as you pray? Take some time over the next few days and pray the Lord's Prayer—really thinking about the words and letting it sink deep into your heart.