

SERMON ON THE MOUNT: A SERIES IN MATTHEW

**Week Seven — It Begins in the Heart****A Note to the Parents/Teachers**

We start this passage, remembering that the beatitudes came first. Jesus was clear that His kingdom started not with our own goodness, righteousness or power. But rather knowing that in our brokenness... we need Him. We are poor, have suffered loss, may be outcasts, but in Him we are filled, comforted, have a place and a kingdom. This kingdom doesn't look like our kingdom. It might be easy to think that we can meet a righteous goal like not murdering our brother or sister when we are angry with them. But Jesus exposes our hearts. We may not act out terribly in our anger but we still get angry. When we are tempted to have pride in our own righteousness, all we have to do is look back a few hours and there is someone that we have gotten angry with, a relationship broken because of our desires. We want something that we don't have and we are willing to fight for it. God's kingdom is different. Instead of fighting, name calling, asserting ourselves, God calls us to mourn over what we don't have and He will comfort us. He calls us to submit to Him for what He has given us and respond in meekness and we will inherit the earth. We will have more than we ever dreamed because we will be with Him. Pray that the kids understand that Jesus's kingdom is a kingdom of love that starts in our hearts as His spirit changes us. Only through Jesus can we enter into His kingdom.

- **Big Idea:** Gods Kingdom begins in our hearts, not in our actions, and only Jesus can change our hearts.

Starter

- **Evidences of Grace**

Ask kids to share ways they've seen God at work lately. Anything good, big or small, is from God. Take time to thank God together.

- **Ask:** Take a minute and think about the last time you were angry. What was it you really wanted?
- **Imagine:** Imagine with me that there is a girl in your class that loves to talk. One year she comes to class and says that she LOVES soccer. She talks about soccer ALL THE TIME. Finally, it's recess time. All the kids run out to the field... but she hangs back. The goals are up, the ball is out, but she is sitting on the steps reading a book. Everyone calls out for her to join in... come play!! Its your favorite thing to do!! they all say... but she refuses, she just keeps reading her book. This happens day after day, month after month. What does this say about her beliefs?

Sing Together Story — from Matthew 5:21-30

Read through Matthew 5:21-30 aloud.

In this part of the sermon on the mount, Jesus is bringing us back again to the law. The law was designed by God to show the Israelites that He had a better way to live with others. His law protected, upheld justice, and showed love to all (not just the powerful). He used this law to show a better way and, to point to Jesus. Some of the Israelites thought they had this under control. "I wont ever hurt someone else when I am angry" or "I'm never going to do anything bad to my husband or wife." But Jesus doesn't leave it where the law left it. He took it deeper, to the thoughts and desires of your heart. There is another book in the Bible, James, and the author says that we fight and quarrel (or get angry) because we desire something A LOT and we don't have it or can't get it. So we fight to get it. Our actions expose our heart. Or said another way, what we really deeply want. And Jesus wants us to see that he first cares about what we desire, because this will always lead to actions.

When Jesus was asked what the most important law was, He responded simply, "to love God and to love people, with ALL of your heart and mind and soul." In this sermon, Jesus is saying... yes the law is still important, how we act is important... but it is your heart that I care deeply about, because only I can give you a new heart. You can't do this on your own.

Jesus's kingdom looks different than ours. It's not all about ME... it's about WE. His whole kingdom, He wants us to live with others in love. He wants us to come to Him, to tell Him we can't do it without Him. And then slowly, over time, He will start making us into people that are filled up with His love, that fulfilled the law. Just like it says in Romans 13:9-10, *"The commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not covet,' and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command:*

'Love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law."

The law showed some practical ways to love people, but humans are good at following rules while our hearts/minds aren't really excited about it. It was and is still IMPOSSIBLE for anyone to keep this law all the time, especially in your heart. So Jesus was saying you can't consistently love people like I do... so come to me, ask me for forgiveness, and then ask others for forgiveness! And overtime, this process will get quicker and quicker. People outside of God's kingdom will see you as a person that doesn't always have it all together, but who quickly makes peace and seeks a different way of living life through Jesus. Those who follow Jesus, who have repented of their sin, and turned to Jesus, are given a new heart and a new power. What you desire changes as you follow Jesus. The Holy Spirit is this power and He will, over time, make you into the type of person described at the beginning of this sermon. Not perfect, but full of Jesus's love.

Dialogue Questions: *[you may use some or all]*

- Why do you think Jesus said the law says.... but I say...?
- Does Jesus think the law is important?
- What do our actions say about our heart or our beliefs?
- Why do you think Jesus cares more about our heart than our actions?
- Why do you think Jesus wanted His followers to wait to make a sacrifice to God until they had apologized to someone they had hurt?
- What does Jesus' love look like to us?
- Can we enter the kingdom of heaven by keeping the law?
- Do you think anyone can keep the law?
- Does this teaching mean that we cannot ever be angry in order to enter Gods kingdom? (see beatitudes)
- If we say we follow Jesus, but are angry all the time... what do you think this says about our beliefs?

Breakout Time

Pray:

God we thank you that you sent Jesus to show us your way. We thank you that the Law points to Jesus and that through His love the law is fulfilled. We ask that you help us see our hearts, confess our sins and draw near to you before attempting to change our behavior without you. Give us a new heart to see your love for others.

Craft:

- Coloring sheet attached

BLESS Activity

This week, ask your family how you can practice the **LISTEN** rhythm. God hears our cries so we listen to others. (Proverbs 15:8, James 5:16) To whom will I show Gods love by listening to their story?

