

Lesson 5 . . . Attitudes and Actions of God's Children
Gospel of Matthew



Notes From the Podium

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***These notes are intended to augment your own reading and study of the lesson.
Please use as an aid to help document the main message of the lecture.***

Matthew 5:1-48

- I. Jesus said, "Follow me".
 - A. Those who Jesus "caught" in Galilee now follow Him.
 1. "What am I to myself as a guide except a guide to my own self destruction" – St. Augustine
 2. Those who follow Him have forsaken themselves as their own guides.
 - B. Like Moses, Jesus goes up a mountain.
 1. Moses went up to receive the law; Jesus is the law.
 2. "...He opened His mouth and taught them, saying..."
 - C. The Law and the idea of modern freedom are in conflict.
 1. A law is commonly thought to be restrictive or constraining of our freedom.
 - a. Modern society views freedom as freedom "from" something.
 - i. Shackles
 - ii. Responsibilities
 - iii. Pain
 - b. Ultimately, genuine communion with another person is potentially an obstacle to our freedom.
 - c. This is why there is so little love.
 2. In reality, freedom is a means not an end.
 - a. We are not free to be free.
 - b. We are free *for* something: excellence, love, to give ourselves to another.
 - c. This freedom, as our Lord demonstrates, doesn't mean freedom from coercion, constraint or pain.
 - i. Christ with His hands and feet fettered to the cross with nails, is the perfect manifestation of freedom.
 - ii. Being divine, He did not have to stay on the cross.
 3. The Jews understood the Law as a gift from God.
 - a. "What nation has a god so great as our nation, that he would give us the Law...?"
 - b. The Law gave to the Jews the mind of God.
 - c. The Ten Commandments, St. Augustine said, are written on the heart, we know them by nature but because of sin, God was pleased to remind us of them.
 - d. The Law was the gift of a guide, so that the Jews did not have to be their own guide.



Notes From the Podium (cont)

- e. The Law was a guide for how to be human.
- 4. There is a desire in man to be like God.
 - a. The Law gave knowledge of human nature.
 - b. The Beatitudes give knowledge of divine nature.
 - c. The Beatitudes are the guide to be more than human, to be like God, to be divinized.
 - d. The Beatitudes change the human heart into a place where God can dwell.
- II. “Makariori” – the blessed, to be blessed
 - A. The “blessed” are a different class of people.
 - 1. Most view the moral law (the 10 Commandments) as if it is the edge of a cliff; As a boundary beyond which we will fall.
 - 2. The Beatitudes are not just the boundary, but the guide that turns us around and leads us back in the other direction.
 - 3. Blessed are the happy few who move against the flow of traffic, away from the cliff’s edge.
 - B. The Greeks referred to the gods as the “makariori”, because they were immortal, they did not die.
 - C. Our Lord uses this word, “makariori” for those who willfully die.
 - D. “Bienventurada” – fare well, travel well
 - E. Our Lord leads this special group of people in a different direction, the direction of Calvary.
- III. The Beatitudes
 - A. The Beatitudes fulfill the law by preparing the human heart to participate in the very nature of God.
 - 1. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
 - a. Realization that your entire existence depends upon His creative action at every moment.
 - b. You “pant” for Him, for your very life’s breath (breath = soul)
 - 2. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
 - a. The word used for “comfort” is similar to the word used for the Holy Spirit.
 - b. The Holy Spirit is the one who is called beside you, to fill you with love, to comfort you.
 - 3. Blessed are the meek, they will inherit the earth.
 - a. Meek does not mean weak. Meekness means great strength.
 - b. It means you are willing to suffer an evil rather than commit one.
 - 4. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for they shall be satisfied.
 - 5. Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.
 - a. *Misericordia* – a suffering of the heart.
 - b. To be merciful is to be willing to suffer the pains of another.
 - c. Mercy fulfills the demands of justice and goes beyond.
 - 6. Blessed are the pure of heart for they shall see God.
 - a. In this life the more the heart is purified, the more we see His face.



Notes From the Podium (cont)

- b. How much more clearly light comes through a window when it is clean.
- 7. Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God.
 - a. “Not as the world gives peace but as I give peace.”
 - b. “I came not to bring peace but the sword.”
 - c. Peace is not the absence of conflict, but is right order, harmony, a state of being in the Divine Will.
- 8. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
 - a. “Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account; rejoice and be glad for your reward is great in heaven.”
 - b. You will suffer to purify your hearts to make you capable of participating in divine life.
 - c. You will be hated by men because you will be in their way as they run in the opposite direction, towards the edge of the cliff and that freefall to “freedom” that is death. (like the swine heard that runs into the sea –)
 - d. You will be among good company - there is life and genuine communion with Jesus and others who fare well on the journey to the Father through the Cross.
- B. The Beatitudes are a fulfillment not only of our human nature but of that infinite and divine desire placed in us for nothing less than heaven.
 - 1. “Bienvenrurada” – “you’re faring well”
 - 2. The path seldom trod
- IV. Salt of the Earth
 - A. *Moronthe* – the word used to describe salt that has lost it’s taste, it becomes *moronic* (*moronthe* is the root word for *moron*)
 - 1. In Greek, to be *moronic* is to be forgetful.
 - 2. When salt loses its flavor, it loses its purpose because it has forgotten what it is.
 - B. The law was given to remind us of what we are – human.
 - C. The Beatitudes are given so that we may achieve it.
- V. The Light of the World
 - A. That which we walk by, that which we follow.
 - B. When we follow the light, we shed light – we reflect it, each of us uniquely and beautifully.
 - C. Others notice the beauty of our Lord reflected in us as we follow the Light.
 - 1. Conversion begins with beauty and holiness.
 - 2. “Lamor che mi fa bella” –Dante (“the love that makes me beautiful”)
- VI. Beyond the law
 - A. It will not be enough to keep the Law.
 - 1. “...unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”
 - 2. Keeping the law just keeps you from falling off the edge of the cliff.



Notes From the Podium (cont)

- B. "...not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law..."
 - 1. "iota" (Greek) or "yodh" (Hebrew)
 - a. *Yodh* is the smallest letter in Hebrew alphabet and the *iota* is its nearest Greek equivalent.
 - b. The smallest and most insignificant letters
 - 2. "Our Lord's name in Hebrew begins with a yodh" -St. Origen
 - a. In Greek the name "Jesus" begins with an iota.
 - b. Our Lord makes Himself small, emptying Himself as He fulfills the law and fills the human soul making it magnificent.
- C. Jesus makes the Law radical.
 - 1. He gets to the root of the Law, whether it is anger, adultery, divorce, or the taking of oaths.
 - 2. "You have heard it said..... but I say to you even if you....."
 - 3. Jesus transforms the human heart from the inside out.
- D. "... be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."
 - 1. *Telos* - the Greek word translated as "be perfect"
 - a. Means "to fulfill your purpose", "achieve your goal".
 - b. The purpose of our existence is to come to communion with the Father.
 - 2. "*Tetelestai*" – Greek meaning it has reached its end, it is accomplished
 - a. Translated: "It is finished." John 19:30.
 - b. Jesus had accomplished His goal. He achieved His purpose.
 - 3. When every drop of blood is spent for Him and you are filled in Him in that perfect communion they you are blessed indeed.