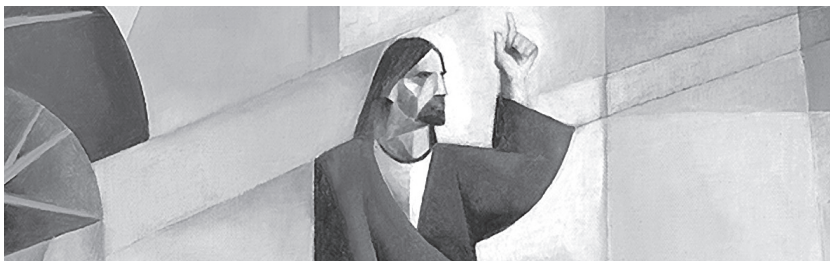


# The SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Being Remade from Within



**Oswald Chambers**



*introduction*

# Sermon on the Mount

Being Remade from Within

**W**e are pleased to share with you this excerpt from the updated-language edition of *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount* from the Oswald Chambers Library.<sup>1</sup> It is our hope that this reading will fuel your passion to know and love Jesus Christ, the living Word, and further your appreciation for the teaching of God's written Word and the application of its truth in all of life.

These Bible studies on Matthew 5–7 were first given by Chambers at the League of Prayer’s annual summer convention in Perth, Scotland, in July 1911. They were published as articles in 1912, and as a book in 1915 by God’s Bible School, in Cincinnati, Ohio. Consistent with all of his work, Chambers reminds us that our focus must be on God alone and not on those among whom we live.

### *Our Daily Bread Ministries*

<sup>1</sup> The complete, original text of *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount* is available in *The Complete Works of Oswald Chambers* (Discovery House).

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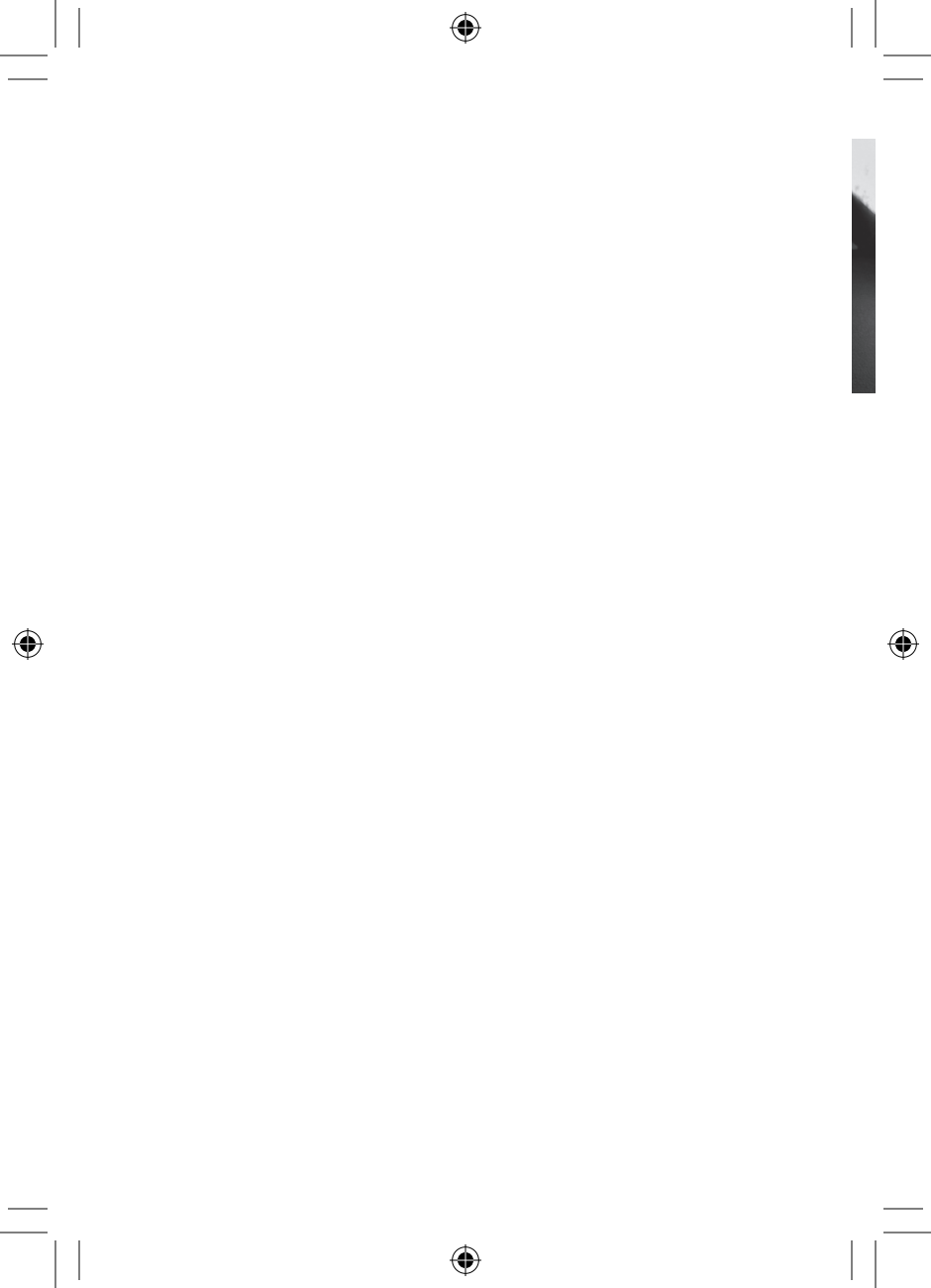
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*prologue*

## His Teaching and Our Training


MATTHEW 5:1–20

**B**eware of placing our Lord's role as *teacher* ahead of His purpose as *savior*. That tendency is prevalent today, and it is dangerous. We must know Jesus first as savior before His teaching can have any meaning for us—or, we could say, before it can have any meaning other than that of an ideal which leads to despair. What is the use of giving us an ideal we cannot possibly attain? We are happier without it.


If Jesus is only a teacher, all He can do is tantalize us by erecting a standard we cannot come anywhere

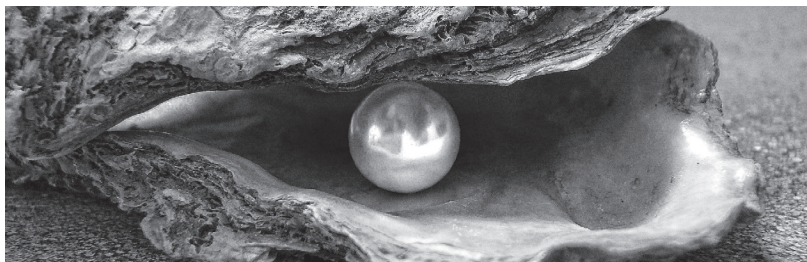


near. But if—by being born again from above—we know Him first as savior, we know that He did not come only to teach us: *He came to make us what He teaches we should be.* The Sermon on the Mount is a statement of the life we will live when the Holy Spirit is having His way with us. The Sermon on the Mount produces despair in the heart of an unsaved person, and that is the very thing Jesus means it to do—because as soon as we reach the point of despair we are willing to come to Him as paupers to receive from Him.



“Blessed are the poor in spirit”—that is the first principle of the kingdom. As long as we have a conceited, self-righteous idea that we can do these things if God will help us, God allows us to go on until we break the neck of our ignorance over some obstacle. Then we will be willing to come and receive from Him.





*one*

## Divine Disproportion

MATTHEW 5:1–12

**O**ur Lord began His discourse by saying, “Blessed are . . .,” and His hearers must have been staggered by what followed.

According to Jesus Christ, they were to be blessed in every condition which they had been taught—from earliest childhood—to regard as a curse. Our Lord was speaking to Jews, and they believed that the sign of God’s blessing was material prosperity in every shape and form. Yet Jesus said people are blessed for



exactly the opposite: “Blessed are the poor in spirit. . . . Blessed are those who mourn,” and so on.

## **The “Mines”<sup>¶</sup> of God** • MATTHEW 5:1–10; *compare to* LUKE 6:20–26

The first time we read the Beatitudes, they appear to be simple and beautiful statements, not at all startling; they go unobserved into the subconscious mind. We are so used to the sayings of Jesus that they slip past us; they sound sweet and pious and wonderfully simple, but they are in reality like spiritual torpedoes that burst and explode in the subconscious mind. When the Holy Spirit brings them back to our conscious minds, we realize what startling statements they are.

<sup>¶</sup> *Chambers used this word in the militaristic sense, i.e., a mine that explodes.*

For instance, the Beatitudes seem to be merely mild and beautiful principles for otherworldly people, of very little use for the stern world in which we live. We soon find, however, that they contain the dynamite of the Holy Spirit. They explode like “spiritual mines” when our circumstances require them to do so. They rip and tear and revolutionize all our ideas of life.

We are not called to apply the Beatitudes literally, but to allow the life of God to invade us by regeneration,<sup>¶</sup> and then to soak our minds in the teaching of Jesus Christ. This teaching will slip down

into the subconscious mind, and at some point, circumstances will arise in which one of Jesus Christ's statements emerges.

➤ *This is a theological term referring to the spiritual birth we experience upon believing in Christ. Paul uses this word in Titus when he writes, "But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (3:4-5).*

To begin with, the teaching of Jesus Christ comes with astonishing discomfort, because it is out of all proportion to our natural way of looking at things. But Jesus puts in a new sense of proportion, and slowly we form our way of life on the line of His precepts.

## **The Motive of Godliness • MATTHEW 5:11-12**

The motive that underlies the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount is love of God. Read the Beatitudes with your mind fixed on God, and you will realize their neglected side. Their meaning in relationship to people is so obvious that it scarcely needs stating, but the aspect toward God is not so obvious.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit"—toward God. Am I a pauper toward God? Do I know that I cannot prevail in prayer, I cannot blot out the sins of the past, I cannot alter my disposition, I cannot lift myself nearer to God? Then I am in the one place where I am able to receive the Holy Spirit. People cannot

receive the Holy Spirit until they are convinced of their own spiritual poverty.

“Blessed are the meek”—toward God’s commands and promises.

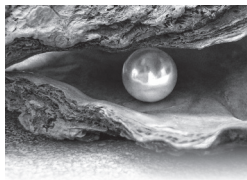
“Blessed are the merciful”—to God’s reputation. When I am in trouble, do I awaken sympathy for myself? Then I slander God, because the reflexive thought in people’s minds is, “How hard God is with that person!” It is easy to slander God’s character because He never attempts to vindicate himself.

“Blessed are the pure in heart”—that is obviously Godward.

“Blessed are the peacemakers”—making peace between God and man, the note that was struck at the birth of Jesus.

Is it possible to live out the Beatitudes? Never—unless God can do what Jesus Christ says He can; unless He can give us the Holy Spirit, who will remake us and bear us into a new realm. The essential element in the saint’s life is simplicity, and Jesus Christ makes the motive of godliness gloriously simple—that is, be carefully careless about everything except your relationship to Him.

The motive of a disciple is



**Is it possible to live out the Beatitudes? Never—unless God can do what Jesus Christ says He can.**

to be pleasing to God. The true happiness of the saint is found in purposefully making and keeping God first. Here is the great difference between Jesus Christ's principles and all other moral teaching: Jesus bases everything on *God*-realization, while others focus on *self*-realization.

There is a difference between devotion to principles and devotion to a person. Jesus Christ never proclaimed a cause, He proclaimed personal devotion to himself: "*for My sake.*"

Discipleship is not based on devotion to abstract ideals, but on devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ, so the whole of the Christian life is stamped by originality.

Whenever the Holy Spirit sees a chance to glorify Jesus Christ, He will take your whole personality and make it blaze and glow with a passionate devotion to the Lord Jesus. You are no longer the devotee of a cause or principle—you are the committed, loving slave of the Lord Jesus. No person on earth has that love unless the Holy Spirit has imparted it. People may admire Jesus, and respect Him, and reverence Him—but we cannot *love* God until the Holy Spirit has "poured out" that love in our hearts (ROMANS 5:5). The only true lover of the Lord Jesus Christ is the Holy Spirit.

"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake."

Jesus Christ says that blessedness—high goodness

and rare happiness—comes from suffering “for My sake.” It is not suffering for conscience’ sake or for conviction’s sake or because of the ordinary troubles of life, but something beyond all that: “for My sake.”

“Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man’s sake” (LUKE 6:22).

Jesus did not say, “Rejoice when men separate you from their company because of your own crotchety notions,” but when they criticize you, “*for My sake.*” When you begin to conduct yourself among others as a saint, you will stand absolutely alone—you will be reviled and persecuted. No one can stand that unless he or she is in love with Jesus Christ. You cannot stand that treatment for a conviction or creed, but you can do it for a Being you love. Devotion to a Person is the only thing that tells—devotion to the death to a *Person*, not to a creed or doctrine.



two

## Divine Disadvantage

MATTHEW 5:13–16

**O**ur Lord uses as illustrations some of the most conspicuous things known to humanity: salt, light,<sup>¶</sup> and a city set on a hill. He says, essentially, “Be like that in your home, your business, your church. Be a conspicuous Christian, ready for either ridicule or respect depending upon the people you are with.”<sup>¶</sup>

### Concentrated Service • MATTHEW 5:13

Not *consecrated* service, but *concentrated*. Consecration (our dedication) would soon become sanctification

(holiness) if we would only concentrate on what God wants.

▶ *Chambers says, "It would be like a baptism of light to allow the principles of Jesus Christ to soak right down to our very makeup. His statements are not put up as standards for us to attain; God remakes us and puts His Holy Spirit in us—then the Holy Spirit applies the principles to us and enables us to work them out by His guidance."*

▶ *Later, in Matthew 10:26–28, our Lord again taught the need to be bold proclaimers of the truth. We are not to cover it up for fear of wolfish people.*

Concentration means pinning down the four corners of the mind until it is settled on what God wants. The literal interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount is child's play; its interpretation by the Holy Spirit is the hard work of a saint, and it requires spiritual concentration.

"You are the salt of the earth." Some teachers today seem to think our Lord said, "You are the *sugar* of the earth," meaning the ideal of the Christian is gentleness and winsomeness without any curative discomfort. But our Lord's illustration of a Christian is *salt*, one of the most concentrated things we know, something that preserves wholesomeness and prevents decay.

It is a disadvantage to be salt. Think of the action of salt on a wound, and you will realize this. If you get salt into a wound, it hurts—and when God's children are among those who are "raw" toward God,

their presence causes discomfort.

The man who is wrong with God is like an open wound, and when “salt” gets into him, it causes annoyance and distress—he becomes spiteful and bitter. The disciples of Jesus today preserve society from corruption; the “salt” of their presence causes irritation, which leads to their persecution.

How are we to maintain the healthy, salty tang of saintliness? By keeping our right relationship to God through Jesus Christ. In this present age, Jesus says, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation. . . . For, indeed, the kingdom of God is within you” (LUKE 17:20–21). Christians are called to live out Jesus’s teaching in a culture that will not recognize Him, and that spells resistance and very often persecution.

## **Conspicuous Setting** • MATTHEW 5:14–16

The illustrations our Lord uses are all conspicuous: salt, light, and a city on a hill. There is no possibility of mistaking them. To preserve something from corruption, salt has to be placed in the midst of it. Before it can do its work, it causes excessive irritation—which leads to persecution. Light attracts moths and bats, and points out the way for burglars as well as honest people. A city is a gathering place for all the human driftwood that will not work for its own living, and a Christian will have any number of parasites and ungrateful hangers-on. Jesus would have us remember that other people will certainly



defraud us. These considerations form a powerful temptation: we may want to pretend we are not salt, to put our light under a bushel basket, and to cover our city with a fog. But Jesus allows nothing in the nature of covert discipleship.

“You are the light of the world.” Light cannot be soiled; you may reach for a beam of light with the dirtiest hand, but you leave no mark on it. A sunbeam may shine into the filthiest home in the slum of a city, but it will not be soiled.

Merely moral people may be soiled in spite of their integrity, but those who are made pure by the Holy Spirit cannot be soiled—they are as light.

Are we the salt of the earth? Are we the light of the world? Are we allowing God to exhibit in our lives the truth of these startling statements of Jesus Christ?



three

## Divine Declaration

MATTHEW 5:17-20

**His Mission** • MATTHEW 5:17-19: *"I came . . . to fulfill."*

**W**hat an amazing statement! When we hear Jesus Christ speak, we should remove our shoes as if we are standing on holy ground, and strip every careless, commonsense attitude from our minds. In Jesus, we deal with God as man, the God-Man, the representative of the whole human race in one Person. The men of His day traced their religious pedigree back to the nature of God, and this young Nazarene carpenter said, "I *am* the nature of God." So to them He was blasphemous.

Our Lord makes himself the exact meaning and fulfillment of all Old Testament prophecy. His mission,

He says, is to fulfill the Law and the Prophets. He further says that any person who breaks the old laws (because they belong to a former dispensation) and teaches other people to break them as well, will suffer severe impoverishment.

If the old commandments were difficult, our Lord's principles are unbelievably more difficult. Everything He teaches is impossible unless He can put into us His Spirit and remake us from within. The Sermon on the Mount is quite unlike the Ten Commandments in the sense of its being absolutely unworkable—unless Jesus Christ can remake us.

There are teachers who argue that the Sermon on the Mount supersedes the Ten Commandments, and that—"because we are not under law but under grace" (ROMANS 6:15) <sup>¶</sup>—it does not matter whether we honor our father and mother, whether we covet, or so on.

¶ *The very context of Romans 6 shows that the apostle Paul is exasperated by those who would say that the law is of no consequence for us. Later, Paul writes "the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (GAL. 3:24).*

To be "not under law but under grace" does not mean that we can do as we like. It is surprising how easily we can wriggle out of Jesus Christ's principles by one or two pious sayings repeated often. The only safeguard against this is to keep personally related to God. The secret of all spiritual understanding is to walk in the light—not the light of our convictions or our own theories, but the light of God (1 JOHN 1:7).

## His Message • MATTHEW 5:20

Think of the most upright person you know who has never received the Holy Spirit. Think of the most moral, sterling, religious person, such as Nicodemus or his fellow Pharisee Saul of Tarsus, who was called “blameless” according to the law (PHILIPPIANS 3:6). Jesus says you must exceed that person in righteousness. You have to be not only as moral as the most moral human being you know, but infinitely more—to be so right in your actions, so pure in your motives, that almighty God can see nothing to blame in you.

Is it too strong to call this a spiritual torpedo? These statements of Jesus are the most revolutionary statements human ears ever heard, and we need the Holy Spirit to interpret them to us. Today’s shallow admiration for “Jesus Christ as a teacher” is of no use.

Jesus says our inclinations must be right to their depths, not only our conscious motives but also our unconscious ones. Now we are beyond our own abilities. Can God make me pure in heart? Blessed be His name, He can! Can He alter my disposition so that when circumstances reveal me to myself, I am amazed? He can. Can He impart His nature to me until it is identically the same as His own? He can. That, and nothing less, is the meaning of His cross and resurrection.

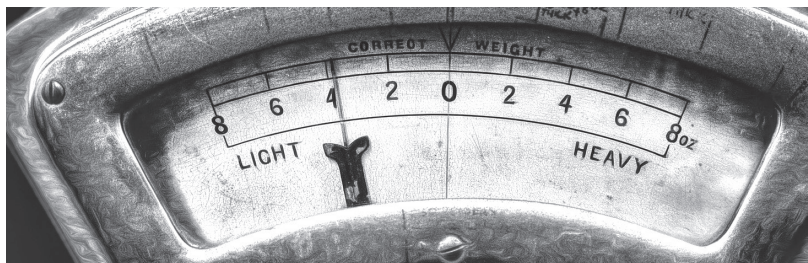
“Unless your righteousness *exceeds*...” The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was right, not wrong. Of course, they did things that were not righteous, but Jesus is speaking here of their *righteousness*, which His disciples are to exceed. What exceeds right *doing*? Is it

not the addition of right *being*? Right being without right doing is possible if we refuse to enter into relationship with God, but that cannot exceed “the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.” Jesus Christ’s message here is that our righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, who were very good at *doing*, though they were nothing in *being*. Otherwise, we will never enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Monks in the Middle Ages refused to take the responsibilities of life and shut themselves away from the world; all they wanted was the *being*. Many people today want to do the same thing and cut themselves off from one relationship or another. But that does not exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. If our Lord had meant exceed in *being* only, He would not have used the word *exceed*—He would have said, “Except your righteousness *be otherwise than . . .*”

We cannot exceed the righteousness of the most moral people we know on the line of what they *do*, but only on the line of what they *are*.

The teaching of the Sermon on the Mount must produce despair in the unsaved person; if it does not, it is because he or she has paid no attention to it. When you do pay attention to Jesus Christ’s teaching, you will soon say, like the apostle Paul, “Who is sufficient for these things?” (2 CORINTHIANS 2:16). The answer is this: “Blessed are the pure in heart.” If Jesus Christ means what He says, where do we stand? “Come to Me,” He says (MATTHEW 11:28).



four

# Christian Characteristics

MATTHEW 7:1–5

**The Uncritical Temper** • MATTHEW 7:1: *“Judge not, that you be not judged.”*

**C**riticism is part of the ordinary mental powers of human beings. We have a sense of proportion; we see where things are wrong and we’ll often pull the other person to bits. But Jesus says, “As a disciple, cultivate the uncritical temper.”

In the spiritual domain, criticism is love turned sour. In a wholesome spiritual life there is no room for

criticism. The critical faculty is an intellectual one, not a moral one. If criticism becomes a habit it will destroy the moral energy of life and paralyze the spiritual force. The only person who can criticize human beings is the Holy Spirit. Human beings dare not criticize each other, because as soon as they do, they put themselves in a superior position to the ones they criticize.

A critic must be removed from what he or she criticizes. Before we can criticize a work of art or a piece of music, our information must be complete. We must stand away from what we criticize as superior to it. No human being can ever take that attitude toward another; if we do, we put ourselves in the wrong position and grieve the Holy Spirit.

People who are continually criticized become good for nothing; the effect of the criticism is to knock all the initiative and power out of them. Criticism is deadly in its effect because it divides people's powers and prevents their being a force for anything. That is never the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit alone is in the true position of a critic; He is able to show what is wrong without wounding and hurting.

The temper of mind that makes us eagle-eyed in seeing where others are wrong does not do them any good, because the effect of our criticism is to paralyze their powers. That only proves that the criticism was not of the Holy Spirit; we have put ourselves into the position of a superior person.

Jesus says a disciple can never stand away from another life and criticize it. So He advocates an

uncritical temper: “Judge not.” Beware of anything that puts you in the place of the superior person.

The counsel of Jesus is to abstain from judging. At first, this sounds strange because the characteristic of the Holy Spirit in a Christian is to reveal the things that are wrong. But the strangeness is only on the surface. The Holy Spirit does reveal what is wrong in others, but His discernment is never for purposes of criticism—it is for intercession. When the Holy Spirit reveals something of the nature of sin and unbelief in another person, His purpose is not to make us feel the smug satisfaction of a critical spectator—“Well, thank God, I am not like that!” It is to make us take hold of God for that person, so much so that God enables him or her to turn away from the wrong thing.

Never ask God for discernment, because discernment increases your responsibility terrifically. You cannot get out of it by talking, but only by holding up those people in intercession until God puts them right. “If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death” (1 JOHN 5:16). Our Lord allows no room for criticism in the spiritual life, but He does allow room for discernment and discrimination.

If we let these searchlights go straight down to the root of our spiritual life, we will see why Jesus says, “Don’t judge”: we won’t have time to. Our whole life is to be lived so completely in the power of God that He can pour through us the rivers of living water



to others. Some of us are so concerned about the outflow that it dries up. We continually ask, “Am I of any use?” Jesus tells us how to be of use: “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water” (JOHN 7:38).

“Judge not, that you be not judged.” If we let that maxim of our Lord’s sink into our hearts, we will find it brings us to a halt. “Judge not”? Why, we are always doing that! The average Christian is the most penetratingly critical individual—there is nothing of the likeness of Jesus Christ about many of us. A critical temper is a contradiction to all our Lord’s teaching. Jesus basically says of criticism, “Apply it to yourself, never to anyone else.” Or, as the apostle Paul put it, “Why do you judge your brother? . . . For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ” (ROMANS 14:10).

Whenever you are in a critical temper, it is impossible to enter into communion with God. Criticism makes you hard and vindictive and cruel, and leaves you with the flattering idea that you are a superior person. It is impossible to develop the characteristics of a saint and maintain a critical attitude. The first thing the Holy Spirit does is to give us a spring-cleaning, and there is no possibility of pride being left in us after that. I never met a person I could despair of after realizing all that lies in me apart from the grace of God.

Stop having a measuring rod for others. In essence, Jesus says about judging, “Don’t. Be uncritical in your temper, because in the spiritual domain you can accomplish nothing by criticism.”

One of the hardest lessons to learn is to leave the cases we do not understand to God. In every life, there is always one fact more of which we know nothing. So Jesus says, “Judge not.” We cannot do that once and assume we are done. We always have to remember that this is our Lord’s rule of conduct.

**The Undeviating Test** • MATTHEW 7:2: *“For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.”*

This statement of our Lord’s is not a haphazard guess—it is an eternal law<sup>■</sup> that works from God’s throne right down. The measure you dole out is measured to you again. Jesus speaks of it here in connection with criticism. If you have been shrewd in finding the defects of others, that will be exactly the measure brought back to you—people will judge you in the same way.

♪ David wrote, *“With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful; With a blameless man You will show Yourself blameless; With the pure You will show Yourself pure; And with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd (PSALM 18:25–26).”*

“I am perfectly certain that man has been criticizing me,” we think. Well, what have you been doing? Life serves back in the coin you pay; you are not necessarily paid back by the same person, but the law holds good: “with what judgment you judge, you will be judged.” And it is so with regard to good as well as evil. If you have been generous, you will meet with generosity again; if you dole out criticism

and suspicion to others, that is the way you will be treated. There is a difference between repayment and revenge. According to our Lord, the basis of life is repayment, but He allows no room for revenge.

In Romans 2, this principle is applied even more definitely.

What if I am guilty myself of what I criticize in another person? Every wrong I see in you, God locates in me; every time I judge you, I condemn myself. "Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things" (ROMANS 2:1).

And God does only not look at the act, He looks at the possibility. Do we believe the statements of the Bible to begin with? For instance, do we believe that what we criticize in another we are guilty of ourselves? We can always see sin in another person because we ourselves are sinners. The reason we see hypocrisy and fraud and unreality in others is because those sins are all in our own hearts. The great danger is when we call carnal suspicion the conviction of the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit convicts people, He convicts for conversion, that people might be converted and show other good characteristics. We have no right to put ourselves in the place of the superior person and tell others what we see is wrong; that is the work of God's Spirit.

The great characteristic of the saint is humility. We must fully realize that all these sins (and others) would

have been shown in our own lives but for the grace of God. Therefore, we have no right to judge. Jesus says, basically, “Don’t judge others, because if you do, it will be measured back to you exactly as you have judged.”

Which of us would dare stand before God and say, “Lord, judge me as I have judged my fellow humans”? We have often judged other people as sinners; if God had judged us like that, we would be in hell. God judges us through the marvelous atonement of Jesus Christ.

## **The Undesirable Truth-Teller • MATTHEW 7:3–5**

When it comes to pointing out the defects of others, the “helpful” boldness of the average truth-teller is inspired of the Devil. The Devil is eagle-eyed over things he can criticize, and we are all shrewd in pointing out the speck in our fellow believer’s eye. It puts us in a superior position.

Where do we find that characteristic? In the Lord Jesus? Never! The Holy Spirit works through saints without their knowledge; He works through them as light. If you do not understand this, you will think your preacher is criticizing you all the time. He is not—it is the Holy Spirit in the preacher discerning the wrong in you.

The last curse in our lives as Christians is the person who becomes a providence to us; he is quite certain we cannot do anything without his advice, and if we do not heed it, we are sure to go wrong. Jesus Christ ridiculed that notion with terrific power: “Hypocrite!

First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye." Hypocrite—literally, "play actor"—one whose reality is not in keeping with his or her sincerity.

Hypocrites consciously play two parts for their own ends. When we find fault with other people we may be quite sincere; yet Jesus says in reality we are frauds. We cannot get away from the penetrating words of Jesus Christ. If I see the speck in my brother's eye, it is because I have a plank in my own. The statement really hits home. If I have let God, by His mighty grace, remove the plank from my own outlook, I will carry with me the implicit confidence that what God has done for me He can easily do for you—because you have only a splinter, and I had a log of wood!

This is the confidence God's salvation gives us. We are so amazed at the way God has altered us that we can despair of no one: "I know God can undertake for you—you are only a little wrong, but I was wrong to the remotest depths of my mind. I was a mean, prejudiced, self-interested, self-seeking person and God has altered me. So I can never despair of you, or of anyone else."

Our Lord's statements save us from the fearful peril of spiritual conceit—"God, I thank You that I am not like other men" (LUKE 18:11). They also make us realize why such a man as Daniel bowed his head in vicarious humiliation and intercession—"confessing my sin and the sin of my people" (DANIEL 9:20). That call comes every now and again to individuals and to nations.



*five*

## Christian Comprehensiveness

MATTHEW 7:12

**C**hristian grace encompasses the whole person. “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength” (MARK 12:30). Salvation means not only a pure heart, an enlightened mind, and a spirit right with God, but that the whole person is involved in the manifestation of the marvelous power and grace of God. Body, soul, and spirit are brought into a

fascinating captivity to the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them.”

The measure of our growth in grace is our attitude toward other people. “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” Jesus says (MATTHEW 19:19). Satan comes in as an angel of light (2 CORINTHIANS 11:14) and says, “But you must not think about yourself.” The Holy Spirit will make you think about yourself, because that is His way of educating you to deal properly with others. The Spirit makes you picture what you would like other people to do to you, and then He says, “Now go and do those things to them.”

Matthew 7:12 is our Lord’s standard for practical ethical conduct. “Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them.” Never look for right in the other person, but never cease to be right yourself. We always look for justice in this world, but there is no such thing as justice. Jesus essentially says, “Never look for justice, but never cease to give it.”



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### **Scriptural Concentration • MATTHEW 7:28–29:**

*And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that*

*the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.*

The Sermon on the Mount concludes with this epilogue—a descriptive note by the Holy Spirit, describing how the people who heard Jesus Christ were impressed by His doctrine. Its application for us is not, “What would Jesus do?” but rather, “What did Jesus say?” As we concentrate on what He said, we can stake our immortal souls upon His words. It is a question not of sentimental consecration but of scriptural concentration.

When Jesus brings something home by His Word, don’t shirk it. For example, if you remember something your brother has against you (MATTHEW 5:23–24), some debt, or some other thing that presses—if you shirk that point, you become a religious fraud. The Holy Spirit’s voice is as gentle as a breeze, the merest check; when you hear it, do you say, “But that is only a tiny detail—the Holy Spirit cannot mean that; it is much too trivial”? The Holy Spirit *does* mean that, and at the risk of being thought fanatical, you must obey.

When we are beginning to walk in the right way



**Jesus essentially says, “Never look for justice, but never cease to give it.”**



with God, we will find the spirit of self-vindication will be unearthed. Trying to fulfill what Jesus says will bring it to the light. But what does it matter what anyone thinks of us as long as Jesus Christ thinks we are doing the right thing? What will anything in this life matter as long as we can hear Him say, “Well done, good and faithful servant” (MATTHEW 25:21)? 🌟