

Week 1 What Does Jesus Expect of Me?

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Can a Christian Say "No"?

Description

We will explore the Gospels and see what Jesus's teachings call Christians to be like. What's it like to act like a Kingdom citizen? The most important question we will ask is, "Does Jesus give me any wiggle room?"

Opening Prayer (10 Minutes)

Teaching and Discussion (70 Minutes)

Becoming a Kingdom Citizen

When Jesus came and began His ministry, the gospel, or the good news, was that God's Kingdom was coming to earth.

We are citizens of that Kingdom. When you become a Christian, you are a Kingdom citizen. But how do we know how to be good Kingdom citizens?

The only way we know how to be a Kingdom citizen is to listen to Jesus's teachings, but even more, to watch what Jesus did.

How did Jesus show the Kingdom of God was breaking into the world?

- He preached this good news of God's Kingdom
- He taught with authority about the Kingdom parables and other teaching
- He healed the sick
- He cast out unclean spirits and demons

Why are these markers of Kingdom citizenship and ministry?

They show what God's Kingdom is like and all about. It is a Kingdom where there are none of these intruders like Satan and his demons, sickness, and oppression.

How do we know we are supposed to do these things?

Because He gave authority to His disciples to do them.

The challenge for us is to have the faith to do these things, relying on Jesus to do them through us. This is how He shows the world what it is missing and what He is like.

The Beatitudes ([Matthew 5:3-12](#))

We do not have time to go through each of the Beatitudes but I want to focus on a few of them to show Jesus's expectations for us.

Mourning ([Matthew 5:4](#))

Matthew 5:4 *ESV*

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

How will those who mourn be comforted?

Desiring Righteousness ([Matthew 5:6](#))

Matthew 5:6 *ESV*

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Why is it hard to desire righteousness?

Merciful ([Matthew 5:7](#))

Matthew 5:7 *ESV*

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

How do you think those who are merciful receive mercy?

Persecution ([Matthew 5:10-12](#))

Matthew 5:10–12 *ESV*

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are you when others 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, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

How are people blessed when they go through these situations? When will they receive blessing?

Give It Up ([Matthew 5:38-42](#))

Matthew 5:38–42 ESV

“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

Jesus quotes from the law ([Exodus 21:24](#); [Leviticus 24:20](#); [Deuteronomy 19:21](#)). Many people state this law in a negative way that it was actually a very good thing.

This law was prohibitive and presented a punishment of equal value. Instead of allowing someone to go overboard with justice, it made sure that the punishment fit the crime or was equal to it.

Let’s look at how Jesus redefined the law for Christians and what it has to do with compassion and mercy.

Matthew 5:39 ESV

But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.

How does this reflect personal and physical abuse we may suffer? Is there any Scripture that brings balance to this?

Matthew 5:40 ESV

And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well.

The tunic was comparable to a shirt. It is the inner garment and most Israelites only owned two garments. A person’s cloak was the heavier outer garment.

The law actually prohibited seven from taking this because it was the only form of protection against the weather ([Exodus 22:25-27](#); [Deuteronomy 24:12-13](#)).

How would you deal with someone who sued you?

Do you think Jesus is actually saying that we should forget about justice? Why or why not?

Should this be a voluntary thing (giving a person more than theyu4)? Where is the line to protecting your own livelihood?

Matthew 5:41 ESV

And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.

What would be a modern-day equivalent to walking an extra mile with someone?

Matthew 5:42 *ESV*

Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

Jesus teaches us to be generous, but how far should we go before we have nothing left for ourselves? How soon would we be the ones needing someone else to be generous?

Love Your Enemies ([Matthew 5:43-48](#))

Matthew 5:43 *ESV*

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’

The Old Testament does not actually say you should hate your enemy. This comes from the Dead Sea Scrolls and is a logical conclusion from what is stated there.

How does Jesus make this teaching harder?

Matthew 5:46–48 *ESV*

For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

What new standard does Jesus set here that seems to be harder as a principle?

A Tree and Its Fruit ([Matthew 7:15-20](#))

Matthew 7:15–20 *ESV*

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

Jesus speaks here of false prophets but we can use the principal of judging a tree by its fruit for anyone. In the beginning of [Matthew 7](#), Jesus told us not to judge others or we will be judged.

But here Jesus gives us another principle about judging others. We need to look at their works and what they say. If it doesn't line up with what Jesus teaches, we would be foolish not to see the inconsistencies in them.

The difference is that in the beginning of [Matthew 7](#), we should not judge other people critically. But here we can judge others according to what they say and do.

How does this principle about judging the fruit of others+2 guidelines or boundaries in our relationships with people who might take advantage of us?

The Good Samaritan ([Luke 10:30-37](#))

Luke 10:30–37 *ESV*

Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’ Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “You go, and do likewise.”

The parable of the good Samaritan teaches us to help anyone we meet the needs it within our abilities. The Samaritan gives this person a blank check at the inn. He pays for any additional expenses this man incurs.

The Jews did not like the Samaritans because they were half-breeds. The Samaritans lived in a part of Israel that had been taken over by Gentiles. They were considered have to and half Gentile.

Not only did the Samaritan stop and help the man with his own countrymen did not but he was considered his enemy. Jesus says that he was his neighbor.

Jesus obligates us to help our neighbors who are injured or need some kind of help. This requires compassion on our part because they may not be people we want to help.

How far are you willing to go to take care of your friends and people you consider your enemies?

Compassion Ministry 101 ([Matthew 25:35-40](#))

Matthew 25:35–40 *ESV*

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’

Jesus teaches us that anyone we help who needs it no matter what down-and-out situation they are in is like taking care of Jesus Himself.

We have church ministries that go to those who are hungry, thirsty, need clothing, and even those in prison. But what are you doing personally for people like this?

We will have people you are in great need in our lives and this is what Jesus calls us to do.

Does Jesus Give Me Any Wiggle Room?

We have seen a little bit of wiggle room in Jesus’s teachings about compassion. When he talks about judging the tree by its fruit, we realize that there are boundaries to being compassionate to everyone.

We must be careful as we’re taking care of others that we do not go so far as to be without resources and to be on the side of needing help from others instead of giving help to others.

You cannot give to others what you do not have. If we deplete our bank accounts or even go into debt to help others, we are not helping because we cannot help ourselves.

The compassion and hospitality we give to others must flow out of our resources. Our boundary is to not go beyond what we can do.

Application (10 Minutes)