

Matthew 4:12 - 5:20

Day 1

Jesus Goes to Galilee. Read Matthew 4:12-25

1. Why did Jesus leave Judea and go north into Galilee? 4:12 What does this say about the atmosphere around Jerusalem? (See John 4:1-3)

Digging Deeper

How and why had John been imprisoned? Luke 3:18-20; Mark 6:17,18

FYI: "The region of **Galilee** was a fertile, progressive, highly populated region...Jewish historian Josephus [wrote] there were some 3 million people populating Galilee, an area smaller than the state of Connecticut." - David Guzik

"Matthew's reporting skips most of the first year of Jesus' ministry. Only John reports the early Judean ministry of that year (John 1:19-4:42. Jesus' Galilean ministry [began] the second year of His mission." - Irving Jensen (26)

"The Jewish population of the area had been deported by the Assyrians and replaced by people from other parts of their empire (2 Kings 17:23-24). This is why Isaiah referred to it as *Galilee of the Gentiles*. But many Jews had settled in Galilee after the exile...In general, Galilee was despised by the Jerusalem hierarchy."

- Africa Bible Commentary (1116)

2. Where was Jesus' ministry centered in Galilee? 4:13

- What had Isaiah said that this ministry would bring? 4:14-16 (See John 1:4,9)

3. What was Jesus' message? 4:17

Digging Deeper

How did Jesus announce his ministry in Luke 4:16-21?

How was He received in Capernaum (Luke 4:31,32) versus Nazareth (4:28-30)?

Calling the Disciples

4. What invitation did Jesus give Peter and Andrew? How did they respond? 4:18-20

- How had Peter and Andrew first been introduced to Jesus? John 1:35-42

FYI: "This was not the first time Jesus met these men, and other gospels describe previous encounters. But this is when Jesus called them to leave their professions and follow Him 'full-time'." - David Guzik

5. How did James and John respond? 4:21-22

- What would be some of the things it would cost these disciples to follow Jesus?

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Jesus' Ministry in Galilee

6. What accompanied Jesus' preaching? 4:23

- What do the words "every/all kinds" in 4:23 and the list in 4:24 say about the extent and types of healing Jesus performed? What kind of power would this take?

FYI: Epileptic/seizures/lunatick (4:24) Strong's NT:4583 *seleniazomai*, to be moon-struck, i.e. crazy:

"There is a definite difference between demon possession and lunacy (or mental illness, as it is called today)...Jesus...was able with just a word to cast out demons and also to cure...mental sickness, as well as 'all manner of disease.'" - Henry Morris

7. What are these works called in the gospel of John? John 6:2

- What did these works reveal? John 5:36; 20:30,31

8. How were the people responding? 4:24a,25 (*Imagine this type of instantaneous healing happening to your family and friends. What would you have thought?*)

Applying the Word: *What do you find most remarkable about this description of Jesus' early ministry? Is there anything that surprised you?*

1ST DISCOURSE 5:1- 7:27

Day 2

Sermon on the Mount: The Beatitudes. Read Matthew 5:1-6

FYI: "The essence of this sermon was probably preached many times during Jesus' early ministry. The Sermon on the Mount was not given as the way of salvation for the lost, but the way of life." - Nelson Study Bible (1583)

"The word means more than 'happy' because happiness is an emotion often dependent on outward circumstances. 'Blessed' here refers to the ultimate well-being and distinctive spiritual joy of those who share in the salvation of the kingdom of God." - Life Change Series (48)

"Jesus went throughout Galilee... 'teaching the good news of the kingdom.'" The Sermon on the Mount then, is to be seen in this context. It portrays the repentance (the complete change of mind) and the righteousness which will belong to the kingdom. It describes what human life and human community look like when they come under the gracious role of God." - John Stott (7)

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9. What do you observe about Jesus' method of teaching from 5:1,2?

The Poor in Spirit

10. Why would recognizing our spiritual poverty (i.e. our bankruptcy/our total dependence on God) be important? 5:3 (See Psalm 51:16,17) *The first four beatitudes describe a believer's relationship to God.*

Digging Deeper

In Luke 18:9-14, read the parable that Jesus told to illustrate this attitude.

IT'S GREEK TO ME **Poor** NT:4434 *ptochos*; a beggar (as cringing), i.e. pauper, (distressed): KJV - beggar (-ly)

"Poverty of spirit is a prerequisite for receiving the kingdom of heaven, because as long as we harbor illusions about our own spiritual resources we will never receive from God what we absolutely need to be saved." - David Guzik

"In our Lord's own day it was not the Pharisees who entered the kingdom, who thought they were...so rich in merit that they thanked God for the attainments; nor the Zealots who dreamed of establishing the kingdom by blood and sword; but publicans and prostitutes, the rejects of human society, who knew they were so poor they could offer nothing and achieve nothing. All they could do was to cry to God for mercy; and he heard their cry."

- John Stott (40)

Those Who Mourn

11. Do you think that "those who mourn" (grieve) 5:4 is addressing sorrow over our sins, our circumstances, or the sins of others?

- How has the Lord *comforted* you when you have mourned? What kind of comfort will we receive someday? Rev. 21:4

Digging Deeper

What brought Jesus sorrow?
Luke 19:41-42

John 11:33-35

Paul? Philippians 3:18

The Meek

12. How do you think meekness (gentleness/humility) shows strength of character? 5:5 (See Jesus' description of Himself in Matthew 11:29-30.)

IT'S GREEK TO ME **Meek/gentle** NT:4239 *praus* "means 'gentle', 'humble'. 'considerate', 'courteous', and therefore exercising the self-control without which these qualities would be impossible...this meekness denotes a humble and gentle attitude to others which is determined by a true estimate of ourselves." - John Stott (42,43)

"In the ancient Greek language, the meek person was not passive or easily pushed around. The main idea...was strength under control, like a strong stallion that was trained to do the job instead of running wild. To be meek means to show willingness to submit and work under proper authority. It also shows a willingness to disregard one's own "rights" and privileges... We can only be meek, willing to control our desire for our rights and privileges because we are confident God watches out for us, that He will protect our cause" - David Guzik

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13. In the following, underline what is associated with gentleness.

- Ephesians 4:1-2 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. 2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. NIV
- Colossians 3:12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. NIV
- James 3:17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. ESV

14. What should we recognize about ourselves that helps us be gentle with others? Titus 3:2,3

Those Who Hunger and Thirst

15. What did Jesus say about priorities? How should we feel about righteousness? 5:6 (See Psalm 42:1,2)

- State this beautiful in the opposite. What has doing the wrong things in your life yielded?

FYI: Righteousness *dikaiosune* Strong's NT:#1343 is "the character or quality of being right or just"; it was formerly spelled "rightwiseness," which clearly expresses the meaning."

- Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

"Legal righteousness is justification; a right relationship with God [See Romans 5:1,9]...Moral righteousness is that righteousness of character and conduct which pleases God."
- John Stott (45)

16. Underline how we achieve a right relationship with God.

- Galatians 2:16 know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified. NIV
- Philippians 3:8-9 ...may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. NIV
- 2 Corinthians 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. NIV

17. Underline what will enable us to live out that righteousness in our conduct.

- 2 Peter 1:3 His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. NIV
- Philippians 2:13 For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him. NLT
- Galatians 2:19,20 For when I tried to keep the law, it condemned me. So I died to the law—I stopped trying to meet all its requirements—so that I might live for God. 20 My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. NLT

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18. From the first 4 beatitudes (that describe a relationship with God, do you see a progression from being poor in spirit to mourning to meekness (humility/gentleness) to a desire for righteousness? Explain.

Applying the Word: Why do you think we often have a hard time admitting our spiritual poverty - our sins, our weaknesses, our doubts...? Why might it even feel wrong to admit these things?

Day 3

The Beatitudes (cont.). Read Matthew 5:7-12

The Merciful

19. Why should we show **mercy** to others? 5:7 (How would an estimate of our poverty and grief (vs. 3,4) lead to mercy toward others?)

- How or why might our mercy towards others affect how God shows mercy to us?

FYI: The next four beatitudes describe a believer's relationship to people.

Merciful Strong's NT:1#655 *eleemon*; compassionate

"It is 'the meek' who are also 'the merciful'. For to be meek is to acknowledge to others that we are sinners; to be merciful is to have compassion on others, for they are sinners too." - John Stott (48)

20. Why should we be merciful? Luke 6:36

- What does God want our mercy and compassion to look like? Ephesians 4:32

21. Underline what God's mercy caused Him to do for us.

- Titus 3:4-6 But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, NIV
- 1 Peter 1:3-4 All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, 4 and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay. NLT

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The Pure in Heart

22. How can we “see” God’s work and will in our lives? 5:8 (See Psalm 51:6,7) Why would a ***pure heart*** (i.e. clean, sincere, single-minded, free from evil/falsehood) enhance our relationship with God?

- How can we receive a ***pure heart***? Acts 15:8-9

IT'S GREEK TO ME "**See**" Strong's NT:#3700 *optanomai* "To see, perceive with the eyes, to look at...implying not only the mere act of seeing but also the perception of what ones sees....To experience, attain to, enjoy...In a wider sense, to see God...to enjoy His fellowship....(Matthew 5:8)." - The Complete Word Study Dictionary NT (1052)

The Peacemakers

23. How is a ***peacemaker*** identified with God? 5:9 (Compare Christ’s work: Colossians 1:20)

- How do we receive peace? John 16:33; Romans 5:1

IT'S GREEK TO ME "**Peacemaker**." "The one who, having received the peace of God in his own heart, brings peace to others." - The Complete Word Study Dictionary (521)
 "The peacemakers are rightly called the sons of God because they demonstrate in reality not just their relationship with God but their participation in His most characteristic work." - Africa Bible Commentary (1119)

Those Who are Persecuted

24. What blessings are believers promised in the face of ***persecution***? 5:10,12 (Cf. 1 Peter 4:13-16) *Why do you think this beatitude, unlike the others, is expanded upon?*

Digging Deeper

In this world, suffering happens whether we do wrong or right. How does suffering for doing right bring blessing? See 1 Peter 2:20; 4:12,13; James 1:2-4

25. What phrase explains the reason given for persecution in:

- 5:10a
- 5:11

26. Underline why believers who stand for God’s truth are often hated and persecuted?

- John 15:18-20 "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. 19 If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. NIV
- 1 John 4:6 We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood. NIV
- 1 Peter 4:4 They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you. NIV

Food for Thought: "The ways of the God of Scripture appear topsy-turvy to men. For God exalts the humble and abases the proud, calls the first last and the last first, ascribes greatness to the servant, sends the rich away empty-handed and declares the meek to be His heirs. The culture of the world and the counter-culture of Christ are at loggerheads with each other. In brief, Jesus congratulates those whom the world most pities, and calls the worlds rejects 'blessed'..."

And so the disciples are strangers in the world, unwelcome guests and disturbers of the peace. No wonder the world rejects them!"
- John Stott (56)

Applying the Word: *In your own words, explain how happiness can follow being meek, merciful, pure-hearted or even persecuted?*

Day 4

Sermon on the Mount. A Believer's Influence Read Matthew 5:13-20

Salt

27. As "**salt of the earth**," what do believers need to guard against? 5:13 What influences might cause Christians to become *tasteless (foolish)*?

- Beside flavoring, what other use does salt have (especially before refrigeration)? How does this fit the comparison?

FYI: Lost flavor/lost saltiness/tasteless NT:3471 *moraino*; to become insipid; figuratively, to make (passively, act) as a simpleton: KJV - become fool, make foolish, lose savour.

"In Jesus' day, salt was a valued commodity. Roman soldiers were sometimes paid with salt, giving rise to the phrase "worth his salt...Salt was (also) used to preserve meats, and to retard decay." - David Guzik

"What was then popularly called 'salt' was in fact a white powder (perhaps from around the Dead Sea) which...also contained much else, since, in those days, there were no refineries. Of this dust the sodium chloride was probably the most soluble component and so the most easily washed out. The residue of white powder still looked like salt...but it neither tasted not acted like salt. It was just road dust." - John Stott (60)

Light

28. How should our light" shine? 5:14-15 What do the phrases "of the earth" and "of the world" say about living in isolation? (Cf. Philippians 2:15)

- What purpose does this light serve? 5:16b

Ephesians
5:8-13 expands
on the idea of
being light to
the world.

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29. Underline other ways that believers are described:

- 2 Corinthians 2:15 For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing.
- 2 Corinthians 3:2-3 You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men; 3 being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. NAS
- 2 Corinthians 5:20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. NIV
- Ephesians 2:22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. NIV

Christ and the Law

30. How did Jesus associate Himself with the Law? 5:17 (Also 1:22,2:5,15...)

- How perfectly did Jesus fulfill the law? Hebrews 4:15; 9:11-14

31. How did Jesus view scripture? 5:18 *What does the phrase "truly I say to you/I tell You the truth" say about the authority Jesus was claiming?*

FYI: one jot or one tittle. "The 'jot' and 'tittle' were the smallest letter and a mark which distinguished two letters in the Hebrew words of the Old Testament." - Henry Morris

"The **law** was a comprehensive term for the total divine revelation of the Old Testament" (Stott)

"Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament by keeping God's law perfectly, by fulfilling its type and prophecies, and by paying the full penalty of death in the place of sinners, which the Law demanded." - Irving Jensen (28)

Believers and the Law

32. How did Jesus affirm the moral and ethical teachings of the law? 5:19 (Cf. 2 Timothy 3:16,17)

FYI: "The Christian is done with the law as a **means of gaining a righteous standing** before God... (Gal. 2:21) However, the law stands as the perfect expression of God's ethical character and requirements." - David Guzik

33. What did Jesus say about the "righteousness" of the scribes and Pharisees? 5:20

FYI: "The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was essentially external adherence to rules...Jesus' words must have shaken His disciples, since the meticulously righteous deeds of the scribes and Pharisees were regarded as being far above those of the average person." - The Nelson Study Bible (1584)

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34. Underline the problems the scribes and Pharisees had:

- Matthew 23:28 In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness. NIV
- Mark 7:6-8 Jesus replied, “You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, for he wrote, ‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. 7 Their worship is a farce, for they teach man-made ideas as commands from God.’ 8 For you ignore God’s law and substitute your own tradition.” NLT
- Luke 11:42 “What sorrow awaits you Pharisees! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens,[m] but you ignore justice and the love of God. You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things. ESV

35. What is the problem with depending on following the law for salvation? Galatians 3:10-11; James 2:10

36. What is the better way we have in Christ?

- Romans 8:2-4
- Galatians 2:16,20

37. Compare what it has been like when trying to perform (do good works) to **earn** God’s love, versus when you do them as an **outflowing** of the love God has **freely** given you.

Applying the Word: How do you see Christians being “salt” that enhances life or slows the decaying process of the world?

*“In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”
Matthew 5:16 ESV*



“The Sermon on the Mount ...drives [many people] to despair. They see in it an unattainable ideal. How can they develop this heart-righteousness, turn the other cheek, love their enemies? It is impossible. Exactly!

In this sense, the Sermon is...Moses multiplied to the highest degree’ (Luther), because it is a law of inward righteousness which no child of Adam can possibly obey. It can therefore only condemn us and make the forgiveness of Christ indispensable. May we not say that this was a part of the Sermon’s purpose?

Only a belief in the necessity and the possibility of a new birth can keep us from reading the Sermon on the Mount with either foolish optimism or hopeless despair...We do not, indeed could not, achieve this privileged status *by attaining* Christ’s standards. Rather...we give evidence of what *by God’s free grace* and gift we already are.”

- John Stott (36,37,29)