***Lesson: Seven Things Jesus Wants Us To Know (4)***

***November 24, 2019***

**From Mike:**

These seven principles from Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount are for those who are already seeking a relationship with the Father. They are Gospel, in that they are “good news” about that relationship being possible, but they are not Gospel in the spiritual sense of initial salvation. That would be found in John 3:16, about God’s love, and John 14:6 about Jesus being the way, the truth, and the life, and in Mark 16:16 when Jesus said, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” The Gospel is both the new birth and the maturation process. It is what God did to allow us to be His children and spend eternity with Him. The seven principles in Matthew 5,6, and 7 are Jesus telling us how to grow up and deepen our walk with God.

Just as a reminder, here is what we have looked at already:

Easy Truth #1: God loves seekers, 5:1-16

Easy Truth #2: Choose real over ritual, 5:17– 42

Easy Truth #3: Attitude drives application, 5:43-48

The fourth Principle/Easy Truth is a continuation of what Jesus is talking about but also deals with something that religious people have always struggled with. God gives His people tools to help us grow spiritually and to deepen our walk with Him, but we consistently take that tool and turn it into an idol to be worshipped and obeyed. When an act of obedience or an act of worship loses its meaning and the heartfelt connection that was supposed to accompany it, it becomes a tool for self-righteousness and a replacement for a real relationship with God. This is what Jesus was addressing when He challenged his audience, and us, to have a righteousness that was more authentic than the righteousness of their religious leaders (5:20) He was also addressing this when he challenged them to leave their sacrifice at the altar and resolve any conflict with a brother that hadn’t been taken care of first (5:23-24). A religious act without genuine godliness behind it is being out of touch with what God really wants. To take any tool He gives us to help us and then turn it into a showy performance to impress others is not only hypocritical but an insult to God. Just take a look at Matthew 23. God gives us tools to help us help each other — not to compare, show faithfulness, or divide His body over.

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