

## Counter-cultural Beliefs

*Matthew 5:17-20*

Last week, we studied about 'The Beatitudes.' Jesus shared these things to show us what we should value in life—the attitudes we need to be blessed by God. This is the reason that Matthew 5:3-12 begin with the word, 'Blessed.' This word can be translated many different ways, but the idea is that these are the attitudes that we need to be blessed by God—to be happy.

### *What did Jesus mean when he said, “I have come to fulfill the Law”?*

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- He is the anointed One—the promised Messiah and fulfillment of the promises of the Old Testament.
  - The idea behind this word “fulfill” goes beyond Jesus’ position as Messiah. It also has to do with action—the actual carrying out of the Law.
  - Jesus upheld the Law perfectly.
  - James 2:10 – “For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.”
- Thayer’s Greek Lexicon
  - This word talks about “universally and absolutely being fulfilled,” or in other words to cause God’s will—as made known by the Law—to be obeyed as it should be; and God’s promises given through the prophets to receive fulfillment.
  - Jesus was not just the fulfillment of the Law—He did what it said!
  - Because of His perfect obedience to the Law, He was able to become the perfect sacrifice for sin.

### *What is the Bible referring to when it talks about an “iota” and a “dot”?*

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- Other Translations of these concepts:
  - KJV – one jot or one tittle
  - AMP – smallest letter or stroke [of the pen]
  - NLT – not even the smallest detail

- This is referring to the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

### *Smallest Letter & Stroke*

Matthew 5:18



*jot, yod, or  
smallest Letter*



*tittle or stroke  
- an extension or ornament*

*What are some of the ways that God's commands  
are being relaxed in our society?*

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- Verse 19 – “whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments”
  - From the Greek word λυω meaning to “loosen, unbind, dissolve or relax.”
  - We understand the concept of breaking the Law. But what about relaxing the Law, setting aside the Law, and ignoring the Law?
  - God's Word is clear. God's Word is precise. There is no wavering there, but mankind has a tendency to 'relax' the Law. Why do we do that?
- Why do we act as if the explicit obedience to God's Word is unimportant?
  - Satan has been teaching us to do this since the Garden of Eden.
  - When he was tempting Eve, he asked her, “Did God really say that you could not eat this fruit or even touch it?” He questioned God's authority and twisted God's words all while making God's commands seem unimportant.
  - It was that little bit of relaxing of the Law that caused the downfall of all mankind.
- Had it been me in the garden with the serpent, would I have chosen to disregard God's commands and done what I wanted to do? I'm sure I would have—as would you. It is in our nature to want to relax the rules and see God's Law as irrelevant to what we want.

*What are some of the ways that God's commands are being relaxed in our society today? How is the gospel being distorted?*

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- The Cake Mix Gospel
  - When making a cake, every ingredient is important. If we change one, or leave one out, it can change the final result (Pineapple Upside-down Cake).
  - When making a cake, the conditions in which the cake is baked is important. Things like elevation and humidity will affect the final product (Typhoon Cake).
  - Acts 18:24-26 – Apollos in the city of Ephesus; diligent follower of John the Baptist; what Apollos knew was good but it was insufficient; there was something missing.
  - There is a problem with some churches and preachers today. Many times, they want to leave out certain aspects of biblical teaching, and we cannot leave anything out (i.e. people are sinners who stand condemned to spend an eternity in hell; or the necessity of a blood sacrifice to appease the guilt of sin).
- The Cool Gospel
  - Jesus is our bro! Jesus is our buddy!
  - The Cool Jesus – from the 1999 movie, Dogma.
  - People are trying to portray Jesus Christ as a cool dude—a weed-smoking, beer-drinking, free-loving guy who loves everybody and says anything goes.
  - Marketing Jesus is cheap and powerless. We don't need to 'spin' the message we need to say it. We need to stop shaping Jesus in some misguided effort to make Him appealing. Jesus doesn't need to be like us; we need to be like Him.
- The Carnal Gospel (Prosperity Gospel / Health and Wealth Gospel)
  - What Jesus can do for me: health, wealth, happiness and prosperity?
  - Mark 8:31-35
  - God never promises us health, wealth and happiness—in fact, in James, God tells us to count it all joy when we experience trials and tribulations. That's when we know that God is at work in our lives. How self-serving was the gospel for the original disciples of Christ?



- How did Jesus' 12 disciples die?
  - Peter – crucified upside down
  - Andrew – crucified
  - James – beheaded
  - John – only one to die of natural causes
  - Philip – tortured then crucified
  - Bartholomew – beaten then beheaded
  - Matthew – killed with a spear
  - Thomas – killed with a spear
  - James the son of Alphaeus – stoned
  - Judas (not Iscariot) – stoned to death
  - Simon – crucified
  - Matthias – stoned to death
- The Careful Gospel
  - This is the gospel that says, “We don’t want to offend anyone...”
    - We don’t want to tell people that they’re sinners.
    - We don’t want to make someone feel uncomfortable.
    - We don’t want to be offensive, but we must not be afraid to speak the truth.
  - The philosophy is “keep ‘em comfortable and keep ‘em coming back!”
- The gospel without URGENCY is not the gospel!
 

2 Corinthians 6:2b (NLT) – “Indeed, the “right time” is now. Today is the day of salvation.”

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*What is the real, gospel message?*

- Matthew 7:13-14 – <sup>13</sup>Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. <sup>14</sup>For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.”

- Jesus tells us this clear message of the gospel just before his discourse about being aware of false prophets “who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.”
- Trusting in Christ is a simple process, but it’s not easy! Because of that, those who find salvation are few.
- If we want to live counter-culturally in our beliefs, we must not be afraid to say that Jesus is THE way, THE truth, and THE life; and no one can go to the Father unless they go through Him and Him alone.
  - There is too much syncretism and universalism in the world today.
  - The world tells us that any old path will get you to God so long as you’re sincere in your beliefs. You can be sincere and you can be sincerely wrong.
  - It’s not about making people feel comfortable. It’s not about inclusivism. It’s about getting the truth of God’s Word to the world—no matter race, creed or ethnicity. There is only one way and His name is Jesus!