

Bible Marking Notes

The King's Manifesto for Life – Matthew 5 to 7

These notes are the first installment and focus only on Matthew 5 with particular emphasis on what are commonly called “the beatitudes”. This description tends to obscure the real meaning of the eight blessings. These eight blessings encapsulate the beauty of the character of the Lord Jesus Christ himself. It is a composite character and must be the ultimate objective of every disciple who seeks to follow and emulate him. The remainder of the discourse is an amplification of the qualities outlined in the eight blessings.

Matthew 5

¹ And ¹seeing the multitudes, ²he went up into a mountain: and ³when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

The eight blessings portray a composite character – that of Christ himself as the full manifestation of his Father's character – John 1:14,18; 14:6-10. The disciples are called upon to be “the light of the world” (V.14); i.e. to develop the Christ character.

² And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,
³ ¹Blessed are ²the poor in spirit: for ³theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
⁴ Blessed are ⁴they that mourn: for they shall be ⁵comforted.
⁵ Blessed are ⁶the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.
⁶ Blessed are they which do ⁷hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.
⁷ Blessed are the ⁸merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.
⁸ Blessed are ⁹the pure in heart: for ¹⁰they shall see God.
⁹ Blessed are the ¹¹peacemakers: for they shall be called the ¹²children of God.
¹⁰ Blessed are they which are ¹³persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
¹¹ Blessed are ¹⁴ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, ¹⁴for my sake.
¹² ¹⁵Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

The eight blessings of Matt. 5 are matched by the eight woes of Matt. 23. The woes exactly match the order, subject, principles and characteristics of the eight blessings. One sets forth the hallmarks of the true citizen of Zion, the other a counterfeit.

¹³ ¹Ye are ²the salt of the earth: but if the salt have ³lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be ⁴trodden under foot of men.
¹⁴ Ye are ⁵the light of the world. ⁶A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

Christ's discourse is based on Ps. 15 – its principles, structure and context among the Psalms. It sets forth the character of the true citizen of Zion and leads to Ps. 16-41 which introduce “the man Christ Jesus”. The discourse describes the character of the true citizens of the Kingdom. Each characteristic of Ps. 15 is fully amplified in the King's Manifesto for Life.

¹⁵ Neither do men light a ⁷candle, and put it under a ⁸bushel, but on a ⁹candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in ¹⁰the house.
¹⁶ ¹¹Let ¹²your light so shine before men, that they may see ¹³your good works, and ¹⁴glorify your Father which is in heaven.

¹ The discourse is given after selection of 12 disciples – after Mark 3:19.

² Contrast Luke 6:17-49 where delivered in the plain – reason is attitude of audience. Note Matt. 4:23-25 Jesus is teaching/preaching and then healing – they come for healing not hearing. In Luke 6:17 they come to hear and then be healed. Here he climbs the mountain to test resolve and motive.

³ Contrast giving of the Law to Moses – alone on mountain and written in stone. Christ writes his law on disciple's hearts.

Portrait of a citizen of Zion – The Christ Character

¹ *makarioi* – happy (a continuing condition of heart – John 13:17).

² From Isa. 66:2. Spirit of self-renunciation which trembles at God's Word. See also Isa. 57:15; Ps. 51:17.

³ Diag. & ISA – “of them” i.e. of this class. Without this first essential quality no progress can be made to develop this character.

⁴ Based on Isa. 61:1-3. Natural outcome of a crushed spirit – longing for the Divine will to be vindicated in all the earth – the end of corruption.

⁵ *parakaleo* – to call near to one's side.

⁶ From Ps. 37:11; 25:9-14. Not tameness, but teachableness and malleability flowing from self denial and “mourning in Zion”.

⁷ Based on Ps. 42:1-2; 63:1-2. An insatiable desire for identification with God.

⁸ Based on Ps. 18:24-27. A responsive mercy is ‘knowing’ God – Hos. 6:6; Jer. 22:16. Zeal for righteousness is balanced by knowing one's own need.

⁹ Based on Ps. 24:4. Cleansing of the mind of the domination of natural carnal thinking and motivation. See 2 Cor. 10:5.

¹⁰ Cp. Heb. 12:14; Job 19:26-27.

¹¹ Positive attitude of constructiveness motivated by love which repairs and builds up – Isa. 58:12.

¹² *uihos* – a son who resembles the Father in character and life – Rom. 8:14.

¹³ Consequence of the development of this character – the antithesis of man's natural tendencies. See John 15:18-20; 17:14; 2 Tim. 3:12.

¹⁴ This not a 9th characteristic. The change to “ye” from “they” and “my sake” from “for righteousness sake” shows that this character is now shared with Christ by individual disciples.

¹⁵ So they did later – Acts 5:41; 16:25. See 2 Tim. 2:11-12.

Believers and the world – Salt and Light

¹ Positive reinforcement of V.11 – incentive to strive for the Christ character.

² Salt here = the Christ character of V.3-12. Preservative and condiment – symbol for sound wholesome principle and zest – Job 6:6; Lev. 2:13; Mark 9:49-50 and covenant faithfulness – Num. 18:19; 2 Chron. 13:5.

³ *moraine* – make dull; become insipid, not acute. Diag. – “but if the salt become insipid, how shall it recover its savour?”

⁴ Savourless salt was spread on roads, the Temple steps and the ramp of the altar.

⁵ Christ is the light of the world – John 8:12; 9:5; hence light here = the Christ character of V.3-12 revealed in disciples – John 12:35-36; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Pet. 2:9; Eph. 5:8-13.

⁶ Profession exposes to public gaze – must be matched by performance – John 3:19-21; 13:35.

⁷ *luchnos* – a portable lamp. Represents individual disciple.

⁸ *modios* – a dry measure = commercial affairs. Cares of life may obscure the truth just as laziness does – Luke 8:16.

⁹ *luchnia* – lampstand = the ecclesia – Zech. 4:2, 11-14; Rev. 1:20.

¹⁰ Israel, i.e. “the world (*kosmos*)” of V.14.

¹¹ It is a matter of choice for disciples. To hide the light is to lose it –

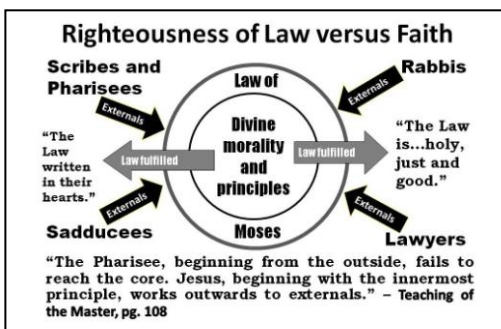
The Lord anticipates 3 questions – (1) What ‘works’ would evidence the ‘light’; (2) What law would govern the works; (3) What would its relation to the old law be? He anticipates that many would see his teaching as being subversive of the Law of Moses. They were mistaken!

17 ¹Think not that ²I am come to ³destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to ³destroy, but to ⁴fulfil.

18 For ⁵verily I say unto you, Till ⁶heaven and earth pass, one ⁷jot or one ⁸tittle shall in ⁹no wise pass from the law, till all be ¹⁰fulfilled.

19 ¹¹Whosoever therefore shall ¹²break one of ¹³these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the ¹⁴least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall ¹⁵exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in ¹⁶no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.



21 ¹Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, ²Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

22 But I say unto you, ³That whosoever is angry with his brother ⁴without a cause shall be in ⁵danger of ⁶the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, ⁷Raca, shall be in ⁵danger of the ⁸council: but whosoever shall say, Thou ⁹fool, shall be in ⁵danger of ¹⁰hell fire.

Every deliberate act has a motive, therefore every motive is a potential act. Christ’s teachings reach right into the heart – the source of decision making.

23 Therefore ¹¹if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there ¹²rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; ¹³first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

25 ¹Agree with thine ²adversary quickly, ³whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the ²adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

26 Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, ⁴till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

In verses 21-26 Christ provides two real life situations which act as a corrective to human pride – (1) the offended party must seek reconciliation; (2) the guilty offender must immediately acknowledge failure and seek to reconcile with his accuser.

Rev. 2:4-5; Mark 8:38; Matt. 10:32-33.

¹² Christ’s character must become ‘yours’ – John 17:14.

¹³ Contrast with works of law – V.20. These are fruits of the spirit – Gal. 5:22-23.

¹⁴ It is a paradox that men glorify God for the disciple’s works yet persecute them – V.11. Note Matt. 6:1 – no conflict as this is about motivation.

The new law in operation – Abounding righteousness

¹ The Lord anticipates a challenge from law keeping Jews.

² Implies he would bring a new dispensation.

³ *kataluo* – dissolve, destroy, demolish.

⁴ *pleroo* – to make full, to fill up; i.e. complete.

⁵ *amen* – drawn from Isa. 65:15-19. A Divine title used in the context of a new heavens and earth.

⁶ Judah’s Commonwealth which passed in AD 70 – 2 Pet. 3:10,13.

⁷ *iota* – the smallest Hebrew letter.

⁸ *keriaia* – a little horn; very small projections that differentiate Hebrew letters.

⁹ *ou me* – never, by no means (the intense negation).

¹⁰ *ginomai* – to become. The purpose of the Law of Moses would be accomplished – Gal. 3:24-26.

¹¹ Contrary to expectation of relaxation, Christ intensifies the hold of its principles on his disciples.

¹² *luo* – loosen, unbind, release from bonds.

¹³ Even ‘jot’ and ‘tittle’ principles must not be diminished.

¹⁴ Everlasting penalties apply to diminution of God’s law in practice or teaching.

¹⁵ *perisseuo* – to superabound, be in excess, excel. Therefore it has to be of a totally different kind.

¹⁶ *ou me* – never, by no means.

“But I say unto you” – This statement dominates the discourse (14 times). Christ asserts his delegated authority from God to lay down the principles of the new dispensation – the fulfilment of the Law and the era of “the hope of righteousness by faith” – Gal. 5:1-6.

The law of the heart – True righteousness revealed

¹ i.e. you have understood this to mean through Rabbinical interpretation of the Law.

² Cited from Ex. 20:13; 21:12.

³ Mere anger (even a ‘black look’) without genuine cause forbidden.

⁴ *eike* – idly, in vain. Some texts omit. ISA – “feignedly”.

⁵ *enochos* – liable.

⁶ An inferior court of judicature, in every city, consisting of 23 members, which punished criminals by strangling or beheading (TSK).

⁷ Aramaic term of contempt – empty; i.e. a senseless, empty headed man.

⁸ The Sanhedrin composed of 72 elders, who punished by stoning.

⁹ *moros* – dull or stupid (as if shut up), i.e. heedless, (morally) blockhead; i.e. character assassination.

¹⁰ *gehenna* – The valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem, where the filth and dead animals of the city were cast out and burned.

¹¹ Graphic picture of offering a peace offering seeking fellowship with God.

¹² *mnaomai* – to call to one’s mind.

¹³ Responsibility of restoration lies with the offended party because the offender may well be blinded to his problem and in eternal jeopardy. One seeking and depending on reconciliation with God must show God’s love towards others who have offended him.

Judgement and mercy – Humility when in error

¹ *eunoeeo* – to be well disposed, of a peaceable spirit.

² *antidikos* – opponent in a law suit. Christ shifts the focus from ‘offended’ to ‘offender’. Avoid self-justification when wrong.

³ Act before the tribunal – teaches a higher lesson. Men are in debt to God – Ps.130:2-4. Justification by works impossible – James 2:10; Ps. 143:2; Rom. 3:20; Gal. 2:16; 1 John 1:10. Lesson – make peace with God now by acknowledging failure.

⁴ In prison no income from labour is possible making payment of debt difficult. Stubbornness and pride lead to disaster.

Wish to appeal to law (the facts) – Be prepared to be judged by the facts.

27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, 1Thou shalt not commit adultery:

28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to 2lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

29 And if thy 3right eye 4offend thee, 5pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: for it is 6profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into 7hell.

30 And if thy 8right hand 4offend thee, cut it off, and cast *it* from thee: for it is 6profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into 7hell.

31 1It hath been said, 2Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, 3saving for the 4cause of 5fornication, 6causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

Two schools of thought governed marriage practice in Christ's day. Rabbi's Hillel and Shammai headed rival schools. Hillel taught that a man could divorce his wife "for every cause", including very minor infractions at home. One of his supporters Aquiba taught that if a man found a prettier woman he could put away his wife! On the other hand, Shammai taught that any sexual sin justified divorce and remarriage. No one opposed divorce and remarriage on any basis.

33 Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not 1forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine 2oaths:

"The morality of the Jews on this point was truly execrable: they maintained, that a man might swear with his lips, and annul it in the same moment in his heart. Rabbi Akiba is quoted as an example of this kind of swearing." Clarke

34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by 3heaven; for it is God's throne:

35 Nor by the 3earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is 4the city of the great King.

36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

37 But let your 5communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh 6of evil.

38 Ye have heard that it hath been said, 1An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall 2smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

Love must be the motive of non-resistance. It is not submission to evil that is required simply, but seeking to overcome the evil. Conversion of the antagonist must be the aim.

40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy 3coat, let him have *thy* 4cloke also.

41 And whosoever shall 5compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

42 6Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee 7turn not thou away.

43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, 1Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and 2hate thine enemy.

The thought and the act - Adultery

¹ Cited from Ex. 20:14; Deut. 5:21. The Law penetrated beyond external acts – Rom. 7:7; Ex. 20:17; Deut. 5:21. A grave sin – Job 31:1,9-12; with serious consequences - Prov. 6:32-33.

² *epithumeo* – to fix the desire upon; to have the affections directed towards – Gal. 5:17; Luke 15:16; 16:21. This does not result from a fleeting or casual glance that excites interest, but a fixed purpose.

³ The eye is a symbol for intelligence (Matt. 6:22) – operation of the mind. Harks back to the words "looketh" and "heart" in V.28.

⁴ *skandalizo* – to cause to stumble or fall; give offence.

⁵ Requires radical and direct action.

⁶ *sumphero* – profitable, expedient – 1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23.

⁷ *gehenna* – the valley of Hinnom (city dump) = eternal doom.

⁸ The writing hand – refers to V.31 – "writing of divorcement". The fixed desire of V.28 ends in divorce and remarriage. Christ has in mind the Pharisees and others who used the Law to justify putting away their wives in order to marry another preferred woman – Luke 16:14-18.

Divorce and remarriage – Rabbinical teaching refuted

¹ By rabbis like Hillel and Shammai but Deut. 24:1 does not say this.

² Deut. 24:1-4 provides no permission. It seeks to regulate a practice of hard-hearted Israelites – Matt. 19:8.

³ *arektos* – besides. Lit. - "apart from".

⁴ *logos* – reason.

⁵ *porneia* – fornication; illicit sexual intercourse. The word applies to sexual sin in general, including adultery.

⁶ This is the key issue. It was the practice of the time for innocent wives to be put away. Christ's teaching is that where adultery has not been committed by the dismissed wife then divorce and remarriage under Hillel's teaching forces her into adultery which then multiplies to encompass four people.

The thought and the word – Honesty and integrity

¹ *epiorkeo* - to swear falsely; to undo one's swearing. Drawn from Lev. 19:12; Deut. 23:23. Natural progression from the breaking of marriage vows. See Deut. 6:13; 10:20.

² 3 types of judicial oaths under the Law – (1) Voice of Adjuration - imposed on a witness by a priest to extract information about something seen or known (Lev. 5:1); e.g. Matt. 26:63; (2) Lost or damaged property - oath between the owner and trustee of property lost or damaged (Ex. 22:11); (3) Compulsory oaths - where a wife was suspected of infidelity this oath was imposed on her by the priest (Num. 5:19-21).

³ Drawn from Isa. 66:1.

⁴ Drawn from Ps. 48:2.

"...they would swear by the temple, by the head, by heaven, by the earth. So long as they kept from swearing by the name Yahweh, and so long as they observed the oaths publicly taken, they seemed to consider all others as allowable, and allowedly broken. This is the abuse which Christ wished to correct." Barnes

⁵ *logos* – expression of the thoughts of the mind.

⁶ Ygs. Lit. & Diag. – "of the evil", i.e. of the flesh.

The law of love – The way of non-resistance

¹ Cited from Ex. 21:24; Lev. 24:20; Deut. 19:21. The Law prescribed compensation, not retaliation.

Four illustrations – (1) Positive reaction to personal injury and insult; (2) Calm submission to harsh exactions; (3) Willing submission to the powers that be; (4) Liberality in giving.

² Therefore requires use of the back of the hand = insult. Insults are harder to bear than physical blows.

³ *kiton* – a tunic (inner garment).

⁴ *himation* – raiment (the outer garment).

⁵ 3 occs. N.T. – Matt. 27:32; Mark 15:21.

⁶ The highest ideal – basis – Prov. 3:27-28; Deut. 15:7-11. Cp. Acts 20:34-35.

⁷ *apostrepho* – turn oneself away from (Middle Voice).

The standard of perfectness – Mimicking the Father

¹ Cited from Lev. 19:18 (note context Vv.33-34).

² Incorrect Rabbinical interpretation of Deut. 23:3-6 (but note V.7). The

⁴⁴ But I say unto **you**, ³Love **your** enemies, bless them that curse ⁴**you**, do good to them that hate **you**, and pray for them which ⁵despitefully use **you**, and persecute **you**;

Sons of God - *uihos* - Those who now revere God as their father; in character and life resemble Him, and hereafter in the glory of life eternal will truly become the sons of God (Rev. 21:7).

⁴⁵ That **ye** ⁶may be the ⁷children of **your** Father which is in heaven: for ⁸he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and ⁹sendeth rain on ¹⁰the just and on the unjust.

⁴⁶ For if **ye** ¹¹love them which love **you**, what reward have **ye**? do not even the ¹²publicans the same?

Selfless love which seeks the greatest good for others is the apex of life in the Truth and its ultimate aim (1 Tim. 1:5). It is "the bond of perfectness" (Col. 3:14).

⁴⁷ And if **ye** ¹³salute **your** brethren only, what do **ye** more than others? do not even the ¹⁴publicans so?

⁴⁸ Be **ye** therefore ¹⁵perfect, even as **your** Father which is in heaven is ¹⁵perfect.

Jews were "contrary to all men" – 1 Thess. 2:15.

³ *agapao* – a profound respect or reverence, based upon knowledge, and manifested by self-denial. Its expression testifies to God manifestation.

⁴ Note repetition of the pronoun "you", "your" and "ye" = personal enemies. See Lev. 19:2-3. The challenge is to be 'holy' like "your Father" (Vv.45,48).

⁵ *epeereazo* – to use threats, treat with insult (Cp. V.39).

⁶ *ginomai* – to begin to be. ISA – "ye-may-be-becoming".

⁷ *uihos* – a son as the heir. Expansion of Matt. 5:9.

⁸ *hautos* – of himself. ISA – "the sun of him is rising".

⁹ *brecho* – to water with rain. Two deliberate acts of love provide basic necessities for life – light/water.

¹⁰ There is no discrimination in the extension of God's love. The reason – God loves first before men can love him – 1 John 4:7-10; Rom. 5:8-10; Deut. 10:12-19.

¹¹ Inferior, imperfect, selfish love natural to most human beings and many animals.

¹² *telones* – tax gatherers – a closed, insular society. Were mere traders or usurers in love. God's love is self-denying and unnatural to flesh.

¹³ *aspazomai* – to enfold in the arms; draw to oneself.

¹⁴ RSV, RV, Roth., Diag. all have "Gentiles" (Gr. *ethnikoi*).

¹⁵ *teleios* – what has reached its end, term or limit. Hence is complete, perfect, full, wanting nothing. Basis – Deut. 18:13 (Lxx. *teleios*).

Return to the Beatitudes – Christ has now come a full circle in returning to the theme of Vv.3-12. It was his character that was portrayed before his disciples and he was the complete manifestation of his Father – John 1:14,18.

Abbreviations

RSV – Revised Standard Version

Roth. – J.B. Rotherham's Emphasised Bible

Ygs. Lit. – Young's Literal Translation

Diag. – The Emphatic Diaglott – N.T. (1942)

ISA – Interlinear Scriptural Analyzer

TSK – Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge

Cp. – Compare

Lit. - Literally