

Twenty-Eight Days With Matthew

Day 5 – John 5

Prayer:

Lord, so many times we like to bypass Your holy will for us. Instead of keeping Your commandments, we “step around” them and justify our own disobedience. /each time we do, we find ourselves unfit for Your Kingdom. Lord, as we read Matthew 5, enable us to have the resolve to keep Your commandments—Your way, not ours. Remove our tendency to justify our own evil and forgive us. Then move us to love, serve and obey You in Your Kingdom of grace.

Meditation:

Born as prophesied, Magi-adored as predicted, the ancient prophetic voices were convincingly being fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Certainly, the Kingdom of Heaven was near...very near...and advancing quickly! (Cf. Matthew 11:12).

Jesus’ keynote address, the Sermon on the Mount, was the next installment of Matthew’s “Advance the Kingdom” agenda. His inaugural sermon for the Kingdom, the Sermon on the Mount was the Jesus’ answer to the Pharisee’s “find-every-loophole-you-can” interpretation of the Mosaic Law.

In the Beatitudes, Jesus affirmed who the real Kingdom members were. Kingdom members were not the high-and-mighty, nose-in-the-air Pharisees, mired and enmeshed in spiritual snobbery. Instead, Jesus declared, the “blessed” ones God had chosen for the Kingdom were those who grieved, mourned, and suffered persecution for proclaiming Jesus’ Kingdom. “Blessed are you!” Jesus said.

In the balance of chapter five, Matthew depicts the sharp contrast between the Pharisee’s contorted and confused version of the Law and Jesus’ plain, simple, faithful-to-Moses version. Jesus, Matthew would have the reader note, was *not* there to abolish the Law (i.e. the first five books of Moses). He was there to fulfill it...and to clarify and restore what Moses *really* taught and meant.

Against the Pharisees who hypocritically paraded their own self-acclaimed holiness, Jesus said,

“I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven” Matthew 5:20 (NIV).

Note the seeds of enmity between Jesus and the Pharisees have been sown. It will continue grow until—and beyond—His crucifixion.

Note how Jesus took Pharisees and Teachers of the Law to task in some of the most basic, practical parts of the Ten Commandments. By doing so, Jesus unmasked their shallow, hypocritical loophole-infested legalism while unveiling the keynotes of the Law in a most simple, straightforward and practical manner...just as Moses intended.

Twenty-Eight Days With Matthew

Day 5 – John 5

What is murder? Jesus taught murder was a sin of the heart: hatred. What is adultery? It, too, is a sin of the heart. Its committed merely by merely lusting, Jesus taught. And, Jesus noted, don't think sinful thoughts and actions don't have the same consequence. They do! And God abhors *both*. That's why sinners ought to dismember themselves or gouge out their eyes to prevent sinning...and going to hell! Of course, that's *not* what the Pharisee's taught.

Jesus was not afraid to take up the difficult, controversial issues such as divorce. The Pharisees allowed divorce through a series of legalistic loopholes, gyrations, and twisted justifications which resulted in a "Certificate of Divorce." By it, they taught, one could get a divorce without really breaking the Law of Moses' Law. Jesus exposed this hypocritical nonsense. Anyone who divorces (except for adultery), sins Jesus taught.

Is Jesus, the Messiah, Moses resuscitated? Or was He some other prophet? (cf. Matthew 16:13ff.). The Scriptures declared the Messiah would be a Prophet greater than Moses. Could this Teacher—who taught things such as don't swear, love your enemies, don't take revenge, and pay your taxes—be the longed-for Messiah of whom Moses wrote?

For Matthew, the answer is a resounding "Yes!" Jesus, by setting the foundation of the Kingdom squarely on the foundation of the Mosaic Law, demonstrated that He was truly the Messiah of God.

The Kingdom, in Matthew 5, was advancing powerfully. But there's miles to go before the Kingdom comes to fulfillment. There is more—*so much more*—that the disciples need to know: how to live, think, serve, and pray in the Kingdom. They will know as the Sermon on the Mount continues in Matthew 6.

Prayer:

Lord, Your Kingdom comes when we believe in Your grace and follow Your will. Break every evil counsel and will that would prevent us from following Your plan for us. Help us to follow the Commandments and, in so doing, enable these works to be a witness to our love for You. In Your name we pray. Amen.

Thomas F. Fischer

Copyright 2008 Thomas F. Fischer
www.DailyBibleHabit.com All Rights Reserved.

+ + +

Unauthorized Duplication Or Distribution Of This Material
(by printed, electronic and/or internet/email)
Is A Criminal Violation And Strictly Prohibited
For Questions, Please Contact www.DailyBibleHabit.com