

Our Gospel Meeting with Brett Hoggund of Lubbock, Texas will run from September 12 thru 17. Be sure to bring your friends.

When life's problems seem to overwhelm you. Look around and see what others are coping with and it may provide some perspective and ease your stress.

"You cannot control the length of your life but you can control the depth"
The Beacon Electronic Edition



August 22, 2010

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT PLACED IN CONTEXT Jim Stauffer

One common misconception.

Very often someone will make the argument that a "Christian" nation such as the United States has been called should not have the death penalty.

They usually refer to the teaching of Christ to "Resist not him that is evil; but whoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." (Matt. 5:39)

When this happens we return to the principles of interpretation and understanding. Jesus is not speaking to any government in this passage. He is speaking to the actions that proceed from the heart of man as an individual. (Matt. 15:19,20)

When Jesus does speak of government, He says, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's." (Matt. 22:21)

Paul, guided by the Holy Spirit, spoke to the responsibilities of governments in Romans 13. He paints a completely different picture of their responsibility when faced with evil. Not only does Paul say their responsibility is different but he augments their authority by saying they are "ordained of God." He tells us they are "not a terror to the good work, but the evil." He further says the government is "a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil."

This should debunk the myth and tired old argument against capital punishment based on the fact we should turn 'the other cheek.'

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MEETING TIMES
Sunday - Bible Classes: 9:30AM
Worship Services 10:20AM & 6:00PM
Wednesday - Bible Classes 7:00PM

Lenexa church of Christ

But let us not move away from the Sermon on the Mount without comprehending what Jesus is teaching when He says not to 'resist evil.'

So what does Jesus mean?

Jesus sets some very high standards in the beatitudes (condition of blessedness) at the beginning of Matthew 5. All of the attributes He teaches as necessary to discipleship demand much of His followers but at the same time prepare them for the challenges He mentions throughout the remainder of His lesson.

While Jesus does not speak to leaders of governments on this occasion, He does speak to the religious leaders of His day. His statement early on, that the righteousness of His disciples must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, tells us He is teaching the multitudes what they should have already learned from their religious leaders.

Is that not true still today? How many religious leaders today seek after power and wealth just as the Pharisees did then? The well known and accepted leaders of today appear on television programs with extremely expensive clothing. They sell their books ostensibly to enhance the spirituality of the reader, when in reality it simply empties his pockets and fills theirs.

Do they even resemble the sacrificial, non-materialistic, selfless followers Jesus is calling for in this sermon. They are the antithesis of everything Jesus did and taught while on the earth. Jesus had no bed or home. Yet they live in mansions with luxuries even few in the world can afford.

A brief look at the beatitudes in action.

Let us see how He demonstrates the practicality of these attributes in achieving the behavior He demands of His disciples. This is how they work in our lives.

Matt. 5:21-26

Not only refrain from killing your brother, but do not even hate him.

Do not worship God while you are at odds with a brother.

Do not contend with your adversary for the purpose of advantage.

One needs to be poor in spirit, merciful, meek and a peacemaker in these efforts.

Matt. 5:27-32

Do not pleasure yourself with immoral thoughts and deeds

Rather hunger and thirst after righteousness and be pure in heart.

Matt. 5:33-37

Live with integrity so your yea is yea and your nay is nay.

Being poor in spirit, meek and pure in heart is needed to fulfill this task.

Matt. 5:38-42

Live to serve others and not for personal comfort and enjoyment—love your brother.

Again we must be poor in spirit, meek, merciful and pure in heart.

Matt. 5:43-48

One of the toughest things to do. Love your enemy.

We must be poor in spirit, hunger and thirst after righteousness, be pure in heart and peacemakers to achieve this command.

I hope we can understand when we fail in these areas it is because we have not achieved what Jesus calls for in this sermon.

How often do you see these attributes demonstrated in the lives of the "great" religious leaders of our time. Anything they do for others is after they have cared very well for themselves. Jesus said the same thing about the religious leaders of His time.

The contrast between what the leaders of His day and the principles of discipleship He taught was the very reason for this lesson presented to the multitudes. There was no hesitation on His part to show the clear contrast in their behavior and His teaching. We need to do the same for them and ourselves today.

Now what if the disciples of Christ really practiced these principles today? Jesus says we will provide light for the world. That is, they can clearly see that which is truly good and some will be led to Him as a result. He further says we are the salt of the earth. We can save it from degenerating and spoiling further. We can influence it for good. We can provide a good flavor to overcome the foul stench of sin reigning in the lives of so many around us.

Jesus did not want His disciples to follow the Pharisees. He wanted them to lead them. We need to be the spiritual leaders of the world today. We can be if we follow these principles set forth by our Lord. Do you trust Him?

VOLUNTEERING IS IMPORTANT

It is very important for members to be involved in the work of the local church. It is difficult for us to know what you can do unless you volunteer that information.

There are many things that need to be done when we try to "get the word out" to the public.

There may be times when help will be needed passing out fliers. There may be needs in the future for more Bible Class teachers. It may be you cannot do all of the things suggested but be sure to help where you can.

There will be need for help from time to time in doing some work on the lot and the landscaping around the building. If you have free time and the ability to do some of these things, let us know so we can include you in our plans.

There may be a need for help in maintaining the website in the future. If you have particular skills such as this there will be plenty of opportunities.