

Matthew 19-07-14a

Good morning, this is Sunday, the 14th of July, 2019. Every time I announce these dates, I marvel at their incredible longitude. Seems to me like time has passed without me being completely cognizant of it.

But it is the 14th of July, 2019, and we continue our study this morning in Matthew, chapter five, moving into chapter six. This has been historically known as the Sermon on the Mount. It is the teaching on the hill.

It is aimed specifically at the disciples. We're gonna see an emphasis on that again this morning. But let's take a moment as we approach our time of investigation in God's word to go to the Lord in prayer and ask His blessing on our fellowship and on our study, on not just our perception, but our understanding and the goal that it has, which is to result in bearing fruit, in changing us and equipping us for service and function, both now and in God's kingdom.

Shall we pray? Father, we thank you for the privilege we have of approaching your throne and representing ourselves directly and making claims on your grace and having confidence that you hear us and answer us in accordance with your own will. We know that this privilege is ours because of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we thank you for the privilege and the wonderful time in which we live as believers, where we belong to Him, we represent Him, we partake of His attributes. We are those who are uniquely gifted to Him from your own hand, and we thank you for that unique and wonderful status that we enjoy, the privileges that pertain to it, and we pray that we will be mindful of that and that your Holy Spirit will impress the potential and the opportunity on our hearts as we look at these things together so that we'll be even more motivated, challenged, and develop an enthusiasm for redeeming the time and making the most of each and every day that you give to us in the time remaining before the Lord Jesus comes to take us to Himself.

We pray that you'll bless each one that joins us in this study, both now and in the future, and that our fellowship and our study will be that which will be useful and fruitful to each one. We pray these things in Jesus' name, amen. As I said, we're in Matthew chapter five this morning.

Let's take a quick look at what we have already covered, which is most of the chapter. It began with the Beatitudes, as they're commonly known, the blessed are, the poor, and so on. But if you remember what we studied last time, what is the concept, what is the thrust? You have heard it said, but I say.

This is the central and latter portion of the chapter. We saw that there are six of those statements addressing five areas of life. The first one addresses anger.

You have heard it said, don't murder. I say, if you're angry, you've committed murder. The second area that has two sayings attached to it is adultery.

You have heard it said, but I say. You've heard it said, you shall not commit adultery. I say, if you're lusting in your heart, you've already transgressed that commandment.

And then the second part of it is, you've heard whoever divorces his wife, let him write her a piece of paper and he's done. But I say, you are creating an adultery situation when you do that. The third one in verse 33, you've heard it said of old, you shall not swear falsely.

You shall perform your oaths to the Lord. I say to you, do not swear at all. And we didn't spend quite as much time on this yet, but we're going to take a look at why this particular subject.

You would think if Jesus is just going to pick five topics that are going to represent the law, there are some biggies, taking the Lord's name in vain, remembering the Sabbath, and a lot of those that are on the first table, he does not mention. He here is talking about interactions with one another. Your brother, your wife, those with whom you have business dealings and you make a commitment.

The fourth one down here is, you have heard it said an eye for an eye and a tooth for tooth. So you've got those with whom you're on friendly terms or business terms and some sort of cooperation. Now you've got someone who is an adversary, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

And this returns to the adversarial nature of a relationship that turns bad with a brother in the first situation. But you have the adversary, eye for an eye, tooth for tooth. This is punitive.

This is retribution. This is not quite revenge, but it's justice that demands satisfaction in the terms that fit the crime. You knock out my tooth, I want your tooth knocked out.

You cost me an eye, I want you to lose an eye. And then the fifth, you've heard it said, you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. And you have a further expansion from an adversary with whom you have a judicial negative relationship to someone who is an actual antagonist or opponent, whether or not there is a legal element involved.

So we'll be finishing that up this morning, but let's step back just for a second and put this in what you might call a theological context. What is Jesus doing here with the law? And this is review. We've talked about this.

The law is a symbolic language. And what Israel had done, what the Jews were doing in Jesus' day was focusing on that language the way they focused on phylacteries and on mezuzahs. You know, the phylactery, I accidentally, when I pulled up my Logos software

this morning, it always has a little front page with things that they front load for you to look at.

And they had a picture, oddly enough, of a phylactery open with a little box with straps that you strapped to your head or your hand. And inside were these little tiny scrolls that had representative passages of scripture on them. Well, what does the law say? What does the Old Testament say about God's word? Bind it on your hand.

Let it be as frontlets between your eye. And if you understand how Israel messed that up, you understand Jesus' message here. Because the law is not about getting pieces of paper strapped to your hand or dangling between your eyes, is it? That's metaphor, that is symbolic language for let it influence everything you observe and everything that you analyze.

Let it influence everything you do. It's a good thing the law didn't say, you know, let it guide your feet, or they would have been strapping one on a foot and been limping along with a box strapped to their foot as well. To take it too literally and too limited a fashion is like Christians who say, well, I'm a good Christian because I go to church and I put money in the plate.

You've missed what those things represent. If you have a desire for fellowship and instruction and worship, you're going to be in church. You're not in church because being in church makes you good.

Church is the place you go. And there used to be a common acronym for what church does. And it was related to the fact that, you know, there's two different kinds of church.

Church universal, that's all believers from the time of Pentecost until the Lord Jesus comes at the rapture. That's the church. Paul, Peter, John, the apostles, church.

You and I, church. Martin Luther, church. There's another church, which is the local assembly.

They are two different things. And as we were reading some material being offered to believers with the intention of being helpful, it winds up not being helpful because they conflate and confuse what the Bible says about the church universal versus the local church. For example, in Ephesians chapter one, right at the end, Paul says that the Lord Jesus Christ is the head of all things to the church, right? He's the head of the church.

Which church is that? Church universal or church local? Church universal, right? Christ is the head of the body. The body contains all believers in this dispensation, this age of the church from Pentecost to the rapture. That's the body of Christ, unique, called out.

We are a gift from God the Father to the Lord Jesus Christ uniquely. Moses is not church, Daniel is not church, Joshua, Caleb, Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, all of the wonderful

believers of the Old Testament, great guys, but they are heirs to different covenant promises and future hopes that God promised them. We are a special, a peculiar people, right? Christ is the head of that.

Well, someone writes a book and says, Christ is the head of the local church. No, he's not. Christ is not the head of this church.

He's not the head of any other church in the country. Why is that? That's like saying the Commandant of the Marine Corps is the commanding officer of my platoon. Does he have authority over my platoon? Does my platoon fall under his broad sweep? Yes, but I don't say because he commands the Marine Corps, he commands my platoon.

Sorry, no. There is a system of delegated authority and accountability and the Commandant is not responsible for my platoon. If I'm a platoon commander, I am.

I'm accountable ultimately to him, but it's a confusion to say and then take passages where it talks about Christ being the head of the body and head of the church and say that he is performing that function at the local church level because he's not. He has delegated that function to elders and pastors. They are the ones who execute that function.

And if you're waiting for the Lord Jesus Christ to issue your daily orders at the platoon level, you're gonna wait a long time and you're gonna be looking in the wrong place and you're gonna be asking in the wrong direction to the wrong purpose. You're gonna be confused. You're gonna be distracted.

You're gonna be off base. You're gonna be out of order and you're eventually gonna get in trouble. And this is the trouble with a lot of local churches today is they're not observing the structure that God put in place.

Christ is the head of all things to the church, all believers. And there are different aspects of that. Let's talk about, we've talked about local church, let's talk about priesthood.

There is someone designated to manage, be accountable for, responsible for, and have authority in a local church. And that's the elders, the pastor, however you wanna organize that. There just needs to be somebody who's gonna stand in front of God's desk and give an account if things are done decently in good order or not.

If they're done to the glory of God and reflecting the Lord Jesus Christ, that's somebody's responsibility. Let's talk about priesthood. Let's talk about communication with God.

Does that go through the local assembly authority? No, it does not. You don't come to me and I don't transmit your prayers to a district manager who goes to the national manager who goes to some Bible church pope guy who then offers them up on some

altar in Rome or anywhere else. How does that facet of life work? You are a priest, Jesus is your high priest, and you go through him directly to the Father.

I am not in that loop. No elder in the church is in that loop. If you're a woman, your husband's not in that loop.

Is there authority structure in the family that God has set up? The husband is the head of the wife, Christ is the head of the man, God is the head of Christ. That's Ephesians in detail, right? But not for priesthood purposes. You don't say, excuse me, honey, you're the wife.

Excuse me, husband, here's my prayer list. Could you send this on up the chain? Different parts of our function have a different structure. What Jesus does with the law is remove what they have falsely inserted into the chain.

It is true that in Jesus' day, the Levitical priesthood is still functional. There is still an altar, there is a temple representing what the tabernacle used to be, right? And for certain facets of worship, that's where you go. If it's an assembly feast, you go to Jerusalem and you do what you do at the temple.

Jesus did that, his disciples did that. But you don't put the scribes, the Pharisees, the chief priests and elders into the loop of your personal righteousness, even as an Old Testament saint. And that's what they had done.

And Jesus says, you've got to be more righteous than those guys, because they've messed it up. They have inserted themselves in the same way that you have a hierarchy in the Catholic church that has inserted itself into the priesthood chain. There's no such thing as a priest between you and the Lord Jesus.

You're the priest, he's the high priest representing you to God the Father. That's a short distance. And anybody that inserts themselves into it is wrong.

Anybody in the Protestant church who says, I'm going to be your mentor, I'm going to be your spiritual guide, I will insert myself between you and your God-given gift of the Holy Spirit and your God-given spiritual gift and your spiritual perspicacity and your access to the word of God. But I'm going to put myself in that chain and I will, let's hold each other accountable. Let's disciple each other.

You tell me when you're having impure thoughts and I'll shake my finger at you and I'll tell you if I have impure thoughts and you can shake your finger at me. It's confusion. You have to observe what scripture says.

This is what Jesus is clarifying in Matthew 5 and Matthew 6. He is explaining to the Old Testament people of Israel under the old covenant and the old promises, the kinks that they have put in the very simple system of God's plan. Now, the law, we recognize, we

affirm, we agree, it's got symbolic language. A mezuzah, when God said, have my word at the doorposts of your house, what does he really mean? As soon as you go out into the world, you be thinking.

When you come back into your home, you be thinking. The word of God applies when I'm in my home. The word of God applies when I go out of my home.

Instead of strapping something to my hand, anytime I set my hand to do a task, I remember that the word of God applies. Anytime I'm looking at the world, it ought to be a front lip between my eyes in the sense that I have a biblical worldview. I am trying to look at things the way God does, prioritize them the way he does, set goals the way he does, have values that comport with his values.

It's a deeper truth communicated in a symbolic way. That's what the law does. Now, the law is holy, righteous, and good.

Paul will tell us all about that in Romans 6, 7, and 8. I'm carnal soul under sin. Is the law bad because it shows me my sin? No, but when the law came, sin revives and I die. By the law comes the knowledge of sin.

But what are the promises in the law? If you're just going to generalize, and you can do this out of your resident biblical knowledge, it's even in the 10 Commandments. What is the result of honoring your father and mother? Honor your father and mother that what? Say it out loud, that your days may be, come on now, have confidence, that your days may be long where? In the land which the Lord your God gives you, right? Honor your father and mother. This is a command of the law.

And what is the result? What is the benefit? That your days, and this is not just your individual life, but you as a nation, y'all's days, may be long in the land. The downhill slide of Israel that eventually resulted in the Assyrians taking out the Northern Kingdom in 721, and the Babylonians taking out the Southern Kingdom in 586. You know where it started? They stopped honoring their father and mother.

What's the last thing the Old Testament says to those very same people? I will send you Elijah the prophet. And what's he going to do? What's he going to do in Malachi? He will turn the hearts of the children to the fathers, because that's where it starts. You break down the family, everything else slides into the dumper.

So what's John the Baptist going to do when he comes and is going to prepare the way of the Lord? He's going to remind people of their responsibilities before the Lord. And the symbolic one of those is the hearts of the children need to turn back to the fathers, and the fathers need to turn back to the children, train them up in the way that they should go, have that instruction in the way, remind them of what the pile of stone stands for that came out of the middle of the Jordan and so on. There is a spiritual instruction and

temperament and environment that parents are to create and encourage in and for their children, and the children are to honor their parents.

And it's the first, remember, the first commandment with promise, that your days may be long, but notice the consequence, that your days may be long in the land. Now think about Matthew chapter five, and it's going to be the same in six. What's the difference? Jesus says, you know, I'm going to tell you some things, you disciples.

And he eventually gets into, you have heard it said, but I say, do you notice that there is a new element in Jesus' recapitulation and revivification of the law? What does he add that's not in the law? I've given you a clue, honor your father and mother so that your days are long in the land. Where is the land? It's on the earth, down below, it's temporal, right? How does he start in Matthew chapter five? Blessed are the poor in spirit, because their days will be long in the land. Where does Jesus encourage them to lift their eyes in terms of results and expectation and hope? Kingdom of heaven.

Did the law ever say, you know, love your neighbor as yourself, because it's going to be great when you get to the kingdom of heaven? Do you find that anywhere in the law? The law, and that's kind of a trick question, because it is in the law, but it's in symbolic terms, because your days being long in the land represents future hope. Your days being long, that's future from a law perspective, right? And their goal was the land. People have always said, you know, there's a gospel song about Canaan land, you know, I long to see it and all that.

I'm longing for you, Canaan land, fair Canaan land. Well, we treat that as a metaphor for heaven and the eternal future, right? Well, it is. And so Jesus says, these things that you do, if you're humble and if you're properly oriented and have the right viewpoint in spiritual terms, your hope is heavenly.

So the poor in spirit, theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Those who mourn shall be comforted. Is he talking about this life or the next? Well, yes, but there's that element of future expectation.

Inheritance of the earth, being filled, obtaining mercy, seeing God, be called sons of God in verse nine and possessing the kingdom again in verse 10. The verse three and verse 10, just bracket that with that hope. So what is Jesus doing here? He's taking the law and elevating it beyond its symbolic language and its metaphorical language to the truth that it was supposed to represent.

So over and over again, he talks about your father in heaven, your father in heaven, let your light so shine before men, verse 16, that they may see your good works and glorify your father in heaven. There's not a lot of that in the law. There are some allusions that they'd be a light to the Gentiles and that they represent God on the earth and that Gentiles are gonna be drawn to the light, but it's your father in heaven.

Jesus says, don't you see that the instruction to the people of God is designed to lift your eyes beyond the mundane and the short term. So now these, you have heard it said, but I say sections that we saw last time, you have heard it said, don't murder, that's a consequence in earthly terms, don't commit adultery, but I say, pay attention to what's in your heart. Anger is what you ought to be worried about.

It's kind of like honoring your father and mother. You ought to be worried when that starts going downhill in a culture or in a society or in the nation of Israel, because it is a threshold. It is a, you know, they talk about, they got all this cannabis legal stores opened up all over the place, but they say that marijuana can be a gateway drug or these low level hallucinogenics can be a gateway to harder, more dangerous things.

Well, loss of that initial respect for God's structure, which is in the home, the first authority that God has ordained that anybody's exposed to is normally authority in the home, your father and mother. That's a God ordained authority. And when you're flippant and arrogant and rebellious and, you know, I can remember one of the first chastisements I ever received was for sassing my mother.

I gave her a flip response when she asked me to do something and boy, my dad grabbed me under the arms and raised me up to where my head was about an inch from the ceiling and stared me in the eyes and said, very quietly, you don't talk to your mother that way. And you want to talk about a lesson that sticks, being suddenly raised to four times your height and being given a quiet command can really make an impression. But it's key, it's critical to recognize God's authority.

And that extends beyond just honor your father and mother, honor your fathers, honor the elders, honor the authority that God has designed throughout his people. Well, same thing here. So you have said, but I say, Jesus ties these things to higher spiritual values and eternal expectations.

That is why he says in the adultery in the heart section, beginning in verse 27, looking at a woman to lust after her, you've committed adultery in your heart. Verse 29, if your right eye causes you to sin, plus to pluck it out and cast it from you, more profitable that one of your members perish than for your whole body to be cast into Gehenna. What kind of expectation is this? Say, well, he might've been talking about short-term consequences or the actual loss of your possessions in Gehenna.

Keep your finger here and turn over to Mark chapter nine. Mark chapter nine. This is an important enough concept that it is repeated in the gospels.

Mark nine, beginning at verse 43. Jesus is talking about the little ones in verse 42. Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.

Now, because it's going to be worse later, right? Look at 43. If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to do what? Enter into life.

Now, what does it mean enter into life? Because look at verse 45. If your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life.

Is he still talking about earthly life? He could be, except look at verse 47. If your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God.

So life is a synonym for the kingdom of God. Jesus says, you need to pay attention to what you're doing now, not because of the earthly consequences. If you fail in some of these areas, it would be better for you if you had a horrible earthly consequence.

Lost an eye, lost a hand, lost a foot, or had a millstone around your neck and got drowned in the sea. That would be better for you because the future consequences in terms of the kingdom are going to be worse. You see the issue here.

It's Jesus has done a new thing. He's done a new thing. He has raised their gaze from the earthly to the eternal.

And he says, if you're thinking about the future, think about the eternal future. If you're thinking about transgressing the law, think about the internal components, not the simple externalities. The externalities are symbolic and representative of what goes on in the heart.

So I'm back to my question I asked a week or two ago. Are you and I obliged to keep the law? What's your answer? Yes. Yes.

Not necessarily the letter, but we will know which parts of the letter to keep. Parts of the letter of the Old Testament law are good, aren't they? Do not commit adultery. I'd say that still pertains in all of its detail.

Well, a lot of the regulations of the law are still pertinent. How do we know which ones apply and which ones don't in the letter of the law? Where is the spirit? The spirit behind that letter tells us whether it is still pertinent or not. Dietary law is different.

Sabbath law is different. Feast law is different. Regulations about what to do with enemies that you conquer and what you can and can't do with slaves, what you can and can't do with your neighbor's ox and so on.

We look at the principle as it is reflected today, but Jesus gives us the key. You say, well, it's just arbitrary. You're just picking and choosing.

You like bacon, so you don't want to obey the prohibition on dietary law. It is easy to discern and to parse. This is the reason that the church throughout history in its vast majority has understood that the letter of the law kills.

It is the spirit of the law that gives life. And the sheet that was let down for Peter, arise, Peter, kill and eat. What God has declared clean, let no man call common.

There's a time when God said these are unclean animals. God has now said they're clean. And the symbol changed because the spiritual truth changed.

There was a time when if you were going to be clean, if you were going to have a relationship with God, you came to Israel. Israel was the place where God communicated with his people. If you're his people, you need to be in, near or connected in some way with Israel.

The change in diet for this age reflects the change in God's dealing that Israel is no longer the place where God deals with his people. He comes to us individually and directly. And it is symbolized by that.

So we learn, we observe, we take to heart what Jesus is doing here, but it's about your expectation in the kingdom. I'm no longer looking for a vindication or consequence in this life. Now, what did I just say? I am no longer looking for vindication or explanation in this life.

Many, many times we or believers in our periphery talk about, well, I don't understand why this has happened, but pretty soon I think I will know why God has allowed this tragedy or this negative factor or this difficulty in circumstance or this problem with people or whatever it is. I don't know why God has done this, but I'm gonna be watching for the answer and pretty soon I'll understand it. I direct your attention once again to 1 Corinthians chapter 15, where Paul is talking about resurrection.

And he says, if in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable. So, 1 Corinthians 15, 19. One thing we can take away from our study here in Matthew chapter five is don't expect things to necessarily make sense in this life.

If the positive benefits of inheritance and long life and so on don't necessarily pertain because they reflect and represent God's favor, right? God's favor on his people is to give them a long period of dwelling in the land. Prosperity, peace, and the other, you know, land flowing with milk and honey and so on. These are reflections and expressions of God's favor, right? So you can expect that if you're doing what you're supposed to do and living as you should live and hoping as you should hope, then you are content that God's favor is there and is going to express itself in God's time and in God's way.

And you may not know in this life why. I fully expect that a second or two before John the Baptist had left his body, he might've wondered, is this the reward for my faithful work as the Elijah for the Lord Jesus, imprisonment and beheading? Paul the apostle ran his race, fought his fight, was poured out as a drink offering, suffered cruelly, brutally, gives us a list of the various things that he underwent. Is this God's favor for a faithful servant?

Three times the 40 stripes minus one, beat, imprisoned, stoned and left for dead, shipwrecked, snake bit, flayed, abused, run out of town, harassed, vilified, insulted, bad-mouthed by the people that he formerly was a Pharisee among? If his hope had been in this life only, what do you think Paul would say about, well, if I had it to do over again, but it is God's favor that we look for.

This is what Jesus is talking about. Theirs is the kingdom of heaven. They shall be filled.

All of these wonderful promises. This is the hope. It's the new element that Jesus adds to interpreting and following the law.

Your understanding should be elevated and your expectations should be elevated. Don't think in this life's terms only. Don't worry if things seem to be to no purpose.

Are you doing what God says pleases him? Are you in a place where you can expect God's favor? The last shall be first. The first shall be last. Was that an element in the Old Testament law? The last shall be first.

Who said that? This same Lord Jesus. The last shall be first and the first shall be last. So you can expect somebody like the Apostle Paul who suffered all of those things, somebody like John the Baptist, someone like Stephen.

I always think about the Boanerges, the sons of thunder, James and John. James, the brother of John, faithful disciple, one of the three inner circle disciples. Jesus takes James with him to the upper room when he raises the little girl and says in Aramaic, Talitha cumi.

James is on the Mount of Transfiguration. James is in all of those inner circle discussions. It's Peter, James, and John.

They are the three great disciples. Jesus is crucified, raised, speaks to his disciples, says, wait here, not many days hence, power's gonna come on you from on high and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria till the end of the age. You're my guys.

And very shortly thereafter, James is executed. All of that preparation, all of that experience, all of that instruction, all of that knowledge. Think about the devastation to John.

These brothers were close. They were friends as well as brothers. You think about the heartache for John and the shock for the rest of the disciples just as the things getting off the ground.

Don't you need as many good disciples as you can get? You lost Judas already, you're down to 11 and now James is executed and you're down to 10. What a blow to the whole esprit de corps and the rest of it. How could they cope with such a tragic central loss?

One of the three pillars of the group of disciples is slain, executed.

They pray, they expect God to deliver him, he's killed instead. What a heavy blow. Well, what's the answer to that? You can't be looking at the immediate and the short-term and the earthly.

Is there a reason? Did Jesus know that James was gonna get it right after Pentecost? I think he did. Did he take James aside like he does Peter on the road and say, feed my sheep, feed my lambs or don't worry or take John aside and say, now I just want you to prepare yourself. Shocking things are coming and sword is gonna pierce your heart the way it pierced my mother's when I was crucified or James gets no special attention at all and yet the Lord had to know.

So what do we do with that? Well, it's just, it's inscrutable. It's a mystery. It's a non understandable happenstance in God's plan.

What about James? Is he coming back? Yes, he is. And you all know when and where I think he's coming back and why I think he is a beautiful symbolic picture. He is the first disciple to die.

His brother John is the last in the apostolic age. And if you haven't heard our Revelation study, I encourage you to go read the section in Revelation on the two witnesses. And the thunder and lightning that they command and they go to the passage where they and their mother come to the Lord Jesus and say, when you come into your kingdom, grant that we can sit one on your right hand and one on your left.

And what was Jesus' response? He ends up saying that privilege is not mine to give, but what does he say before that? How does Jesus often answer questions? With a question. And what questions does he ask? Are you able to be baptized with my baptism? Are you able to drink the cup that I am going to drink? And what do they say? James and John. We are able.

And what is Jesus' response to that? You will indeed be baptized with my baptism. You will indeed drink the cup that I drink. So what happens to the two witnesses? They are slain for their testimony.

Their bodies lay in the street, how long? Three days. And they are raised. I would call that being baptized and drinking Jesus' cup.

So does James have an important function even though he leaves the scene in the earliest days of the church age? He didn't see that coming. Jesus told him rather cryptically, there's a baptism coming and there's a cup that you will drink. But even I can't tell you what the consequence of that will be.

That's for my father to decide. So we entrust ourselves to the hands of a faithful creator.

When we are faithful, when we do what we are supposed to do, and when we see tragic and seemingly inexplicable consequences in this life, like the death of James, how do we respond? I know whom I have believed.

And I'm persuaded he's able to keep what I've committed to him against that day. Theirs is the kingdom of heaven. They will be filled.

Those who mourn will be comforted. And so on. Our hope, our vindication, our expectation and confidence is God's favor.

At whatever point, in whatever way, God chooses to express it. I am confident that it is there. Faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen.

Inexplicable circumstance, sorrow, tragedy, difficulty, challenge, doesn't make sense. Loss of a child, loss of a spouse, loss of a parent. Losses, bereavement to death is one of the hardest things in this life.

And that's why I've been talking about James. You just can't imagine the intimacy amongst those disciples who traveled together, ate together, took instruction together from the Lord Jesus, experienced the ship in the midst of the Sea of Galilee, watched Peter walk on the water briefly, saw the miracles of the Lord Jesus, shared in his explanation of the parables and all the rest, and then to lose him. I think we greatly underestimate, second only to the loss of the Lord Jesus himself, that what that did to the disciples.

But how did they get through that? And how did they go on to turn the world upside down? They have faith. They see the big picture. It's just the hope that Jesus ties to the law.

Fulfilling the law has a hope beyond the mortal and beyond the earthly. Our fulfillment of the law, especially in this age, with our knowledge and revelation, ought to stabilize us, ought to really motivate us and steady us on the course to travel the narrow road that leads to the straight gate. Of life, life which is the kingdom of God, as we saw in Mark chapter nine.

Well, that's the big picture here. So now as we move through the end of Matthew chapter five and into chapter six, this is going to help us sail smoothly through these next couple of items that Jesus covers. Let's pause here and take our break.

And when we come back, we'll cover these last two sections of five and go into chapter six.