

Gospels: Lesson Two,
Christ's Teaching Ministry: Sermon on the Mount
Matthew 5-7

Subject: Jesus taught His disciples about the character and conduct of Kingdom members.

Main Idea: Christ's disciples live by a higher standard than they can keep without His enabling.

Principles:

1. *God places a high value on our character.*
2. *A disciple's inner thoughts, motives, and attitudes are as important as his or her actions.*
3. *Christ's true disciples do not merely admire His teaching; they obey it.*

Introduction

Matthew 9:35 says, "Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom and healing every disease and sickness." His ministry was one of teaching and preaching, but it was also a ministry of healing and personal involvement with the public. In our next lesson, we will read of Jesus' personal involvement with the public. In this lesson, His teaching ministry is introduced. The Book of Matthew contains five teaching intervals, sandwiched between narratives. The Sermon on the Mount (chapters 5-7) is the first of the five. The others are instructions for the disciples as He sends them out (chapter 10), parables about the arrival of the Kingdom (chapter 13), training about relationships among Kingdom members (chapter 18), and teaching about the coming age (chapters 24-25). We will see that Jesus spent an increasing amount of time training His disciples during the three short years of His public ministry. All five of these teaching segments were given primarily for their benefit, but three of the five were given to them in private.

In our last lesson, we discovered that the Jesus's message was counter-cultural, especially challenging conventional religious thinking. This is abundantly clear in the Sermon on the Mountain. A key statement in it is, "Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and teachers of the Law, you will certainly not enter the Kingdom of Heaven" (5:20). Jesus challenged their teachings and their lifestyle in this sermon, saying that God values different things than what we tend to value and evaluates us on a different basis than we often evaluate ourselves. In fact, the standard Jesus set is so high that, after hearing it, one wonders, "Who can keep it?" Thus, Jesus' sermon is ultimately a call *to Himself*. It calls us to a standard that we cannot keep without His enabling.

I. **Corrections Concerning Kingdom Blessedness** – Matthew 5:1-16

- A. The Setting** – 5:1: The Sermon on the Mount was given outdoors. Matthew refers to a mountainside (5:1, 8:1) while Luke mentions a level place (6:17). The place in northern Israel known today as the “Mount of Beatitudes” is believed to be the site where Jesus delivered the sermon. The actual site is uncertain, but this mountainside on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee is near Capernaum, where Jesus was living (Matthew 4:13). It was a place where Jesus could speak and be heard by a large number of people. Such mountains had many “level places” along them.
- B. The Audience:** A disciple was one committed to learn from a teacher. In Jesus’ day, it was not uncommon for a teacher and his disciples to live together, in order to benefit from the teacher’s example, as well as his words. Close communion allowed the teacher to discipline the thinking and habits of his disciples. So far, Matthew has only mentioned Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John as being called to follow Jesus. It is possible all Twelve of those named in Matthew 10 had already been chosen. A broader group than the Twelve was disciplined by Jesus. Matthew identifies Joseph of Arimathea as Jesus’ disciple (27:57) and Luke referred to a group of seventy-two (10:1). According to John’s Gospel, at one point, many of the larger group of Jesus’ disciples “turned back and no longer followed Him” (John 6:66). When Matthew uses the term “disciple,” he generally seems to be referring to the Twelve.
- C. Eight Beatitudes** – 5:1-10 The eight blessings listed in the introduction to this sermon have been named “The Beatitudes.” “Beatitude” is not a Biblical term. It simply refers to blessing (usually, these in particular). The word “blessing” can be translated “happy” or “fortunate.” It certainly denotes joy but not happiness in the usual sense of the word. Jesus clearly had something spiritual in mind.ⁱ
- i. Poor in Spirit: The first blessing is for those who are “poor in spirit.” Those who are poor are needy. Poverty of spirit refers to awareness of one’s spiritual need and dependence on the Lord to meet that need. Repentance unto salvation requires exactly this acknowledgment and dependence. Therefore, those who are poor in spirit have inherited the Kingdom of Heaven.
 - ii. Mourning: Mourning can refer to mourning over the general plight of our sin-saturated world or mourning over personal sin. Again, mourning is a blessed state because it causes us to acknowledge our need and look outside ourselves for deliverance. This blessed quality or state and the following five are all promised *future* reward.

- iii. Meekness: Meekness can be defined as strength under control. It does not refer to passivity, as the word is often used, but to “active compliance”ⁱⁱ and gentleness. Its opposite is self-assertiveness and stubborn rebellion. Those who actively submit to Christ will one day reign with Him over all the earth (Revelation 20:4).
- iv. Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness: Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness are eager for God’s presence and God’s will. This hunger will be satisfied when we live in Jesus’ presence and He rules the earth.
- v. Mercy: Mercy is more than just compassion. It is compassion displayed in forgiveness and unmerited assistance. On the Day of Judgment, the merciful will be shown mercy (Titus 3:5).
- vi. Purity of Heart: Those who are pure in heart have no hidden agendas. They live with transparency because their motives are sincere. We must be honest and transparent before God to repent of sin and receive Christ’s salvation. Those who live this way will one day “see God” face to face.
- vii. Peacemaking: Peacemakers are concerned with reconciliation and harmonious relationships. Competitiveness and maintaining distinctions are the opposite of peacemaking. Later in the sermon, Jesus addresses the related issue of forgiving others, saying that if we expect God to forgive us, we must first forgive others (6:14). Peacemakers will be called “children of God.”
- viii. Persecution for Righteousness: Suffering persecution for Christ’s sake not only includes physical suffering but can take the form of ostracism, degradation, or slander. This blessing is specifically for those persecuted for righteous living, not because of their lack of good judgment or personal sin. On another occasion, Jesus told His disciples that since He was persecuted, we too should expect persecution (John 15:20). Here, He mentions that the prophets were likewise persecuted. Disciples should expect others to be made uncomfortable by our good conduct. Jesus commands us to “rejoice and be glad,” because this suffering is temporary and will result in a reward that is eternal (“theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven”).
- ix. Summary: The Beatitudes presented a sharp contrast to the things the Pharisees considered worthy of blessing. The religious leaders of the day were proud and judgmental, not poor in spirit and meek. They were legalistic, not inwardly righteous. In this introduction to His sermon, Jesus calls us to forsake worldly thinking and humbly depend on Him, our King and Lord. When we do, we will possess these character qualities in increasing measure and the world will take notice. That is the point of His comments that follow about salt and light.

D. Salt and Light

- i. Salt: The world around us is decaying, not only physically but also morally. Christians are to be agents of preservation with regard to God's righteous standard. In biblical times, salt was an important preservative. Additionally, salt creates thirst. When Jesus' disciples demonstrate these blessed qualities, others will become thirsty for information, wanting to know why.
- ii. Light: Light penetrates darkness and serves as a guide. The kingdom of the world and the devil is the "kingdom of darkness" (Colossians 1:13). Jesus, the "Light of the World" (John 8:12), intends to shine through us to illuminate the path leading to Him and to righteous living.
- iii. Summary: When light is hidden and when salt loses its unique properties, they are no longer capable of having influence. In the same way, Christians who do not display Christ-likeness or who isolate themselves from the world lose their effectiveness as His representatives.

Summary Statement: The beatitudes teach us that God places a very high value on our character.

Principle: *God places a high value on our character.*

We develop the blessed character qualities by remaining connected to Him. First and foremost, Jesus calls us *to Himself*. His disciples were already in a committed personal relationship with Him. Entering a relationship with Him is critical to salvation. When we enter it, by faith, we are immediately transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of Light.

However, there is also an outworking of our salvation that occurs within us. This process is called sanctification. It has a definite beginning, but it increases throughout our lifetime and will be completed at our death (or when the Lord returns). As we already learned, Christ's Kingdom was inaugurated in His first advent but will not be complete until His second coming. In other words, His Kingdom is both "already" and "not yet." This same fact applies to our sanctification. We who are in a relationship with Jesus know that we have been changed, but we are also aware that our transformation is a process, an "already" and a "not yet." How is this process accomplished? This is beautifully explained in Philippians 2:12-13, which says, "Therefore... work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure." Christ accomplishes it *and* our effort is also required. Our role is not proportionate to His. Nevertheless, our cooperation is required. We have an active role in working out our salvation by the time-honored methods of Bible study, prayer, worship, Christian fellowship, worship, and self-discipline. Our equally important passive role is trusting God to work in us.

Thus, we come full circle to the importance of remaining connected to Jesus. Kingdom life cannot be separated from the King Himself. John 15 explains, we are the branches connected to the Vine. Apart from Jesus, the vine, we can do nothing. The sap runs from Him to us. We cannot manufacture the sap independently; Kingdom life flows in and through us only to the degree that we remain connected to Him. We cannot help but recognize how short we fall of the standard Jesus presented in the Beatitudes. Yet, as believers with the Spirit dwelling in us, we do see ourselves progressing in this direction.

Application: God places a very high value on our character.

- What do you value more highly: accomplishment or character development?
- Which character quality will you pray for the Spirit of Jesus to more fully develop in you?
- Whether the progress seems slow or happens quickly, will you trust that He *is now* transforming you into a person with *all* of these character qualities?
- How would it affect you if you thought more about the fact that His Spirit is continually at work in you?

Transition: Jesus' statements about Christian character served as the introduction to His sermon. Next, we have the body of the message. Throughout, it is clear that Jesus is calling His disciples to a higher standard than the standard of the religious leaders of the day, and certainly higher than the world's standard. Jesus taught that God is concerned not only with our actions but also with our thought life, our motives, and our attitudes.

II. Corrections Concerning Kingdom Thinking and Conduct – Matthew 5:17 – 7:11

A. Correction Concerning the Law – 5:17-20

- i. Christ, the Fulfillment of the Law and Prophets: Jesus gave a thesis (5:17-20), which He then developed in the body of His sermon. The thesis begins with a statement about His attitude toward and relationship to the Law and Prophets.
 1. *The Authority of the Old Testament Scriptures:* We cannot skim lightly over Jesus' statement about the authority of the Old Testament Scriptures (the Law and the Prophets). The Old Testament Law and Prophets were the Bible of Jesus' day and He put His full stamp of approval on every word contained in them. Not the smallest letter or least stroke of a pen in them would remain unfulfilled. In other words, there will not even be the slightest deviation in their fulfillment. This is an important message for many today who manipulate the Scriptures for their personal agendas. As the New Testament was being penned, Paul affirmed, "All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16).

- In Peter's second letter, he affirmed that Paul's writings were already recognized as bearing the full authority of Scripture (2 Peter 3:15-16).
2. *The Authority of the Living Word over the Written Word*: Secondly, Matthew said Jesus' audience was keenly aware that He spoke with authority (7:29). That is equally apparent to us as we read this sermon. We sense that Jesus is claiming authority *over* the Law and Prophets. This was especially shocking and offensive to the Pharisees and Sadducees who upheld Moses as the supreme voice of authority. However, Jesus is the living Word of God (John 1:2) and the Scriptures have always been *His* message.
 3. *Jesus, the Fulfillment of the Law and Prophets*: Thirdly, Jesus claimed that He fulfilled the Law and the Prophets. The prophets had spoken concerning Him (1 Peter 1:10-12) and every word about Him would be fulfilled. Additionally, He would fulfill the Law by obeying it perfectly. However, as we see in the balance of His sermon, Jesus did not leave us without responsibility.
- ii. Rejection of Current Day Interpretation of the Law – 5:21-48: Having expressed the value of the Scriptures, His authority over them and intention of fulfilling them, Jesus then stated His intention of correcting the erroneous notions that His disciples had learned about the Scriptures from their religious leaders. His thesis concludes: “Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law, you will certainly not enter the Kingdom of Heaven” (5:20). It is followed by six examples of Old Testament Laws that the Pharisees had abused.
1. *Murder* – 5:21-26: Exodus 20:13 (one of the Ten Commandments) says, “You shall not murder.” Jesus said that we are not only to avoid murderous deeds, but that we must not remain angry with anyone. Rather, we are to actively work toward reconciliation with anyone who offends us. Clearly, He is saying that God is as concerned with our inner thoughts and motives as with our actions.
 2. *Adultery* – 5:27-30: Another of the Ten Commandments is, “You shall not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:14). Adultery never occurs in a vacuum. It begins with lustful thoughts. Jesus said that not only is the act of adultery sinful, but lustful thoughts are equally sinful. Jesus' remedy concerning gouging out one's eye or cutting off one's hand is not to be understood literally, for as many have pointed out, one can lust as well with one eye as with two. Neither will one less hand prevent us from committing sin. His point is that we should take drastic measures when necessary to avoid lustful thinking.

3. *Divorce* – 5:31-32
 - a. Divorce is not only rampant in many places in the world today, it was also common in Jesus’ day. Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 24:1, which required a man to give his wife a certificate of divorce if he “found something indecent in His wife” and divorced her. The point of the law was to prevent a woman from returning to her first husband if her second marriage ended (Jeremiah 3:1–5). Perhaps, it was also to make “divorce so solemn and final that it would not be entered upon lightly.”ⁱⁱⁱ
 - b. In Jesus’ day, two schools of rabbinic thought had developed about the grounds for divorce stated in Deuteronomy: “something indecent.” According to the school of Hillel, divorce was permissible if a husband found *anything* in his wife that displeased him, even the smallest thing. According to the school of Shammai, divorce was only permissible for sexual unfaithfulness. Jesus clearly sided with the school of Shammai.
 - c. The subject of divorce came up on at least one other occasion, described in Matthew 19. There, Jesus affirmed the original purpose of marriage (found in Genesis 1:27 and 2:24): a unity that is even stronger than the parent-child relationship. Although He permitted divorce for sexual unfaithfulness, He concluded that *God’s ideal is no divorce at all* (Matthew 19:6); marriage is to be permanent.
4. *Oaths* – 5:33-37: Next, Jesus referenced Leviticus 19:12 and Numbers 30:2, which speak of the importance of keeping oaths. The Pharisees had created many evasive loopholes, such as swearing “by heaven” (apparently instead of by God Himself). Jesus said that it is better to avoid oaths altogether and simply say, “Yes” or “No.” His disciples were to have reputations for trustworthiness in all they said.
5. *Revenge* – 5:38-42: Jesus quoted an example of an Old Testament law intended to prevent judges from issuing overly harsh punishment (Exodus 21:24). The law required that justice should be fair: “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.” Jesus stated that this principle should not be applied to personal retaliation. Rather, we should be kind and unselfish, even to the degree of laying down our legal rights. Jesus gave us the ultimate example when He refused to retaliate against His oppressors at the Cross (1 Peter 2:23).

6. *Love for Enemies* – 5:43-48

- a. The Law taught that one should love his neighbor as himself (Leviticus 19:18). The Pharisees found justification in it for hating for their enemies. Jesus set down a new standard altogether: “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” Loving our enemies is a true test of our Christianity, proving us to be like our Heavenly Father (5:45).
- b. *Perfection?* Our love should be “perfect, as our heavenly Father is perfect.” “Perfect” is better translated “whole,” “mature,” or “limitless.” We cannot be perfect in the sense of being sinless. However, we can become godly as the Bible describes it. How do we do this? According to Jesus’ teaching in these passages, it is by perfecting our thoughts and attitudes along with our actions.
- iii. Summary Regarding the Law: The Pharisees view of righteousness fell short of God’s standard. They followed the letter of these laws but not the spirit of them.

B. Correction Concerning Religious Practices – Matthew 6:1-18: Chapters 6 and 7 cover various aspects of the life of any true disciple of Jesus. Jesus began with religious matters, comparing false and true religion. Once again, Jesus countered the teaching and practices of the Pharisees, presenting a higher standard. He pointedly called them “hypocrites,” and in matters of giving, prayer, and fasting, tells His disciples not to do as they do.

- i. Generosity – 6:1-4: Jesus taught that we should not give in order to be praised by others. If we do, then that human praise will be all the reward we will ever get. But if we give in secret, the Lord will reward us.
- ii. Prayer – 6:5-15: With regard to prayer, Jesus not only instructs us not to pray in order to be praised by others, He gives us a model of *how* to pray.
 1. Connect with God: “Our Father in Heaven, hallowed by your name.”
 2. Submit ourselves to God’s purposes for our lives and for the world at large: “Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.”
 3. Talk to God about daily things: “Give us today our daily bread.”
 4. Confess our sins: “Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.” At the conclusion of this model prayer, Jesus adds that we cannot expect God to forgive us unless we have forgiven others. This fact is often overlooked or taken too lightly.
 5. Ask for deliverance from specific sins: “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”

- iii. Fasting – 6:16-18: Thirdly, Jesus told His disciples that when they fast, they must not make a show of it.
- iv. Concerning All Three: It is noteworthy that Jesus assumes His disciples *will* give, pray, and fast. His concern was with *how* we do these things. We should also note the repetition of the phrase, “they have received their reward in full,” concerning those who have sought and gained the praise of others. We have a clear choice to make: Do we practice spiritual disciplines for praise of men or the reward of God?

C. Correction Concerning Two Revealing Attitudes – 6:19-7:6: Jesus corrected the disciples’ thinking about the Law and about religious practices. Before moving to His conclusion, He also corrected their thinking about two matters that reveal a lot about the condition of our hearts: our attitude toward material possessions and our attitude toward other people.

i. A Disciple’s Attitude toward Possessions – 6:19-34

1. The Pharisees believed that one’s wealth was a measure of God’s love, approval, and blessing. Jesus taught that our primary concern should not be with materialistic things but with God and His Kingdom. The importance of this issue is shown in the number of words Jesus devotes to it in His sermon (more than any other subject). His points can be summarized as follows:
 - a. First, material possessions do not last, but what our giving and service for the advancement of Christ’s Kingdom is of eternal value.
 - b. Second, our attitude toward money and material possessions impacts every other part of our lives, for good or for evil.
 - c. Third, our attitude toward money and possessions reveals whether we are truly devoted to God and His Kingdom.
 - d. Fourth, it is not possible to serve God and material possessions at the same time. We must make a choice.
2. Next, Jesus states that worry is evidence that we do not trust God to provide for us. We worry because we are afraid. Jesus told us that God cares wonderfully for the birds of the air and the flowers of the field. If He cares for these things that are of far less valuable to Him, He is certainly aware of our needs.
3. *Summary*: Verses 33 and 34 are a summary of Jesus’ teaching on possessions: “Seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” Disciples are to serve God, not money, and to trust God instead of worrying.

ii. A Disciple's Attitude toward Others – 7:1-6

1. The second revealing attitude Jesus addresses is our attitude toward other people. Verse 1 tells us not to judge. This verse is often misunderstood. It is not about discernment. Elsewhere, the Bible commands us to evaluate and analyze wisely (1 Corinthians 5:5; 1 John 4:1). Later in this very chapter, Jesus tells us to “watch out for false prophets.” As with Jesus’ teaching on possessions, here again, Jesus is concerned with a dangerous attitude. This is evident in His instruction to remove the log from our own eye before we remove the plank from another person’s eye. We must evaluate ourselves honestly and know our own weaknesses before we can really be of any help to someone else. We must especially remove the “log” of a critical, unloving spirit. How often we expect others to treat us mercifully, while we treat them harshly! This double standard is dangerous and reveals that we regard ourselves too highly.
2. In this context, verse 6 tells us to use good judgment when sharing truth with others. There are times when it is wise to share it and times when it is unwise. We should share what will be appreciated as beneficial and not what will only be despised.

D. Much Needed Assistance – 7:7-11: Living by such high standards requires our utmost dependence on the Lord. Jesus was not merely calling people to a new way of living, He was calling them *to Himself*.

- i. At the conclusion of the central portion of the sermon, Jesus invites us to ask and it will be given to us. We would not give our children something bad or un-useful if they came to us in need. How much more will our heavenly Father delight to give us good gifts when we ask. Jesus encourages us to ask persistently. The tense of the verbs mean “keep on asking,” “keep on seeking,” and “keep on knocking.”
- ii. Of course, these verses tie into Jesus’ recent address on the subject of physical provisions. It is interesting, however, that in the parallel passage in Luke 11:13, Jesus said, “...how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him” rather than “good gifts to those who ask” (Matthew 7:11). The implication is that when we ask, God promises to grant the greater help we need in keeping the higher standard to which Jesus calls us.

Summary Statement: The central message of the sermon is Christ’s call to a higher standard than was exhibited by the religious leaders of the day. God is most certainly concerned about our behavior, but He is equally concerned with our inner thoughts, motives, and attitudes.

Principle: *A disciples inner thoughts, motives, and attitudes are as important as his or her actions.*

Application: Have you considered that you are being sanctified inwardly as well as outwardly? When we have been Christians for a while, we are less likely to struggle with outward sins. The stubborn sins that remain are in our thoughts, motives and attitudes.

Which parts of your intellect and emotions still need work? Do you struggle with anger and find it difficult to forgive? Do you have trouble with emotional attachments and faithfulness? Do your thoughts revolve primarily around yourself, making it difficult for you to be completely honest with others? Which motive needs to be purified?

Transition: Jesus closed His sermon by summarizing the Law and issuing a call to action.

III. Call To Action – 7:12-23

A. Summary of the Law – 7:12 First, Jesus gave a summary statement that embraces all the principles taught in the Law and Prophets. We know this statement as the “Golden Rule.” Some have transposed its message so that it tells us *not* to do to others what we would not want done to ourselves. But Jesus’ call, as usual, is to a higher standard: He calls us to *do* for others what we would have them do for us. This requires a positive response on our part, not merely the avoidance of what is evil.

B. Two Possible Responses – 7:13-29 Finally, Jesus illustrated two possible responses to His message.

i. The Narrow Gate and the Broad Gate – 7:13-14

1. The first illustration is of two gates, one that is broad and one that is narrow. The broad gate offers more convenient passage, but Jesus says that this gate leads to destruction. Many enter this gate, but few enter the narrow gate.
2. Two points are made by this illustration. First, living by the higher standard expected of Jesus’ disciples is more difficult. Second, few people will respond to Jesus’ call to discipleship. Will you take the narrow road?

ii. Good Fruit and Bad Fruit – 7:15-23: The second illustration is of good and bad fruit. Those who pretend to be Jesus’ disciples produce bad fruit. Outwardly, they appear good, but inwardly, their motives are self-serving (7:15). Jesus says that many who will claim to have served Him in word and deed will be surprised by His rejection of them on Judgment Day. It is important to clarify that no one but God knows with absolute certainty whether a person is really Christ’s disciple or not. Jesus’ point is that we should carefully examine our own lives and that what matters is whether or not we have been cleansed *inwardly* (7:15). Are you a pretender or have you genuinely received inner cleansing?

- iii. Foolish Builders and Wise Builders – 7:24-29: Lastly, Jesus compares those who do not heed and obey His words to a foolish builder who has no solid foundation underneath what he builds. Judgment will one day come, like a flood, and destroy all that is built on what is inauthentic. True spirituality only comes by building one’s life on Jesus Himself. He is the solid Rock. Any other foundation is no real foundation (1 Corinthians 3:11). Is your spirituality built on Jesus?

Summary Statement: Those whose spirituality is built on a genuine, personal relationship with Jesus will respond to His teachings obediently.

Principle: *Christ’s true disciples do not merely admire His teaching; they obey it.*^{iv}

Application: Until our deaths or Christ’s return, we will be practicing obedience to His commands.

- When have you last thanked the Lord for enabling you to obey Him?
- The further along we are in our walk with the Lord, the more keenly we may feel the burden of our sin and disobedience to Him.
- However, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1). Will you thank Him for giving you sensitivity to your sin?
- Will you praise Him for enabling you to respond obediently to Him in specific ways recently?
- We are not what we will be, but praise God, we are not what we used to be!

Conclusion

Matthew concludes, “When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at His teaching, because He taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the Law” (7:28-29). Jesus taught with authority because He *is* the supreme Authority. He has the authority to set the standard of righteousness and the power to enable us to meet it.

In our next lesson on Jesus’ public ministry, we will see that His authority and power were confirmed by His miracles.

ⁱ Morris, L. (1992). *The Gospel According to Matthew* (p. 95). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press.

ⁱⁱ Schroeder, David E. (1995) *Matthew: The King and His Kingdom* (p 39). Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications.

ⁱⁱⁱ McConville, Gordon (1994). *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition* (4th ed., p. 221). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.

^{iv} R.T. France (1987), *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Matthew* (p. 146). Chicago, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.