

The Ethics of Jesus Kingdom Part 1: A Greater Life

Someone shared a story with me recently about a friend who had been unjustly accused of child neglect. The police were called when a four-year old boy was seen unattended between a neighbor's house and his own home. The boy had wandered off for a few seconds from the neighbor's, but the police pressed neglect charges on the father. In spite of his explanation and personal account of the story, the father was jailed, forced to post an exorbitant bond, acquire an attorney and forbidden to even see his son for over a month. Governing authorities and laws are meant to protect the rights of the helpless, but sometimes in our hurry for justice we look right past the truth and justice is thwarted. Jesus is the king (Son of David), and the ethics of his kingdom are built on the heart transformation of his subjects. He is less interested in prosecuting offenders and more concerned about the real story. By establishing a kingdom where justice springs from the heart and qualified by righteousness at the core of our being, the kingdom of God is a kingdom where truth works itself out from the inside and where no law can ever count against us. Jesus is crowned king of our hearts!

Journey Together:

- 1). Have you ever been treated unjustly? Describe how it felt?
- 2). Describe what God "desires truth in our inward parts" means to you.
- 3). How has God used you to explain the "real" story when someone was being misrepresented?

Road Map: Matthew 5: 1-20

- 4). How do the beatitudes help define the subjects of Jesus kingdom? What makes the *poor in spirit*, those *who mourn*, the *meek*, those who *hunger and thirst after righteousness*, etc., blessed? What is the blessing reserved for these people and how is it coming to them?

- 5). How do these blessings from Jesus speak to you? How do they give you hope? Which ones encourage you the most and why?

- 6). How is the new government of Jesus a fulfillment rather than a replacement of the old law? What is the law of Jesus kingdom and where is it written? What is the relationship between this new righteousness of Jesus and being the "salt/light" of the world?

Read Matthew 5:21-48. Note: In these verses Jesus addresses the law of murder (do not kill), marriage and divorce (do not commit adultery), oaths (do not lie), revenge (do not bare false witness).

- 7). What is so different about Jesus' requirement in our relationships with one another from the law of Moses?
 - 8). What is the relationship between blessing in the first half of the chapter and how we are to treat one another in the last half? Which of these commands do you find most difficult and why?
 - 9). If surrender to King Jesus is the first competency in discipleship, what is the second one? What steps will you need to take to move forward with Jesus as your rabbi?
- Discipleship challenge:** Jesus is challenging us to live from above. Focus on your own poverty of Spirit this week in contrast to Jesus gift. What do you need to follow Jesus from the heart?
- 10). How can this group pray for you right now?

My Journey:

- 1). How has God been using journey in your life this week to do *Great Things* for Him?
- 2). How has God been working in your heart this week?
- 3). How can this group pray for you today?