

## THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

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Session: August 31, 2012

Gracious Heavenly Father, we are blessed beyond our measure because of your grace. Grace, grace, God's grace. Nothing greater than your grace in our lives Father, for we are sinful men, but yet we're forgiven. We just pray, Lord, that your grace would override all of our frustrations and consternations of this world's life, and that you'd be pleased to open our eyes once again that we might behold you for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Well, we're continuing our study in the Sermon on the Mount. We're coming to the latter portion of Matthew 5, where last week we looked at Jesus' commitment to the law. We saw that he came to fulfill the law; he didn't come to destroy it, but in actuality, he did destroy it because he fulfilled it. By fulfilling it all, that means that you and I do not need to go through all those ritual rites of legalistic obedience. Those have all been fulfilled in Christ, so feast days and holidays and all of those things that were part of the old covenant have now been fulfilled in the person and work of Christ. What you and I are doing is we are trusting the One who fulfilled all of those.

Really, the real issue is this. Do we really believe that the cross is enough? Or do we think that we need to add something to it? Do we think that we take our sanctification and add it to his justification because Christ did not accomplish what he needed to at the cross? You see that's the heart of legalism. Legalism essentially is saying that the cross is not enough and I need to add something to it because what Christ accomplished at the cross on my behalf was not sufficient.

We need to be very, very careful as we move into this section on the law about understanding how Jesus said he didn't come to destroy the law, but actually he did destroy it in the one sense because he fulfilled it.

The timing of this is rather interesting with having the two party conventions going on. The Republicans just finished theirs, I think last night, and the Democrats start next week. There are some interesting things as we talk about Jesus and the law and the code of conduct. If you look at Matthew 5:21-6:34...now the list of the laws, which we read last week beginning at verse 17, and now we're looking at verse 21 through chapter 6, verse 34. The list of the laws describe the righteousness that exceeds that of the Pharisees. Remember Jesus told us in Matthew 5 that our righteousness should exceed that of the Pharisees.

The Pharisees were known as a group of theologians whose impeccable lifestyle set the standard for all religious conduct. What he says is you have to exceed that. By saying that, he's basically saying they missed the whole boat because they externalized religion. The way that you and I exceed it is that we have the laws of the Pharisees, which they obeyed, the laws are now in our heart. Ezekiel 36, when God removed that heart of stone and gave us a heart of flesh, now he said those laws are now in our heart. Jeremiah 31:11, "I will put my law in their heart," where with the Pharisees, the laws were external; now the laws are internal in us.

The reason that we have been instructed to exceed that of the Pharisees, now it has to do with our motives. It has to do with the fact that the laws of God are now in place by the Holy Spirit in our heart. That's how he says you've got to exceed that. We'll talk about that as we move through this passage.

It's interesting that the code of conduct that he describes for the kingdom of God, the citizen of the kingdom is really quite brief. If you'll notice in Matthew 5 and 6 there are only 62 verses. In chapter 5 and chapter 6, there are only 62 verses that deal with the code of conduct. But every aspect of human

life, be it individually, be it socially, or be it nationalistically, is conditioned within these statements, those 62 verses.

Contrast that with the volume of laws that make up the laws of the United States. We've just got volumes and volumes and volumes and just libraries full of the different laws, and they change about every four years when we have another administration come in. We're always refining, we're always changing the laws. But you'll notice the consistency here. There are only 62 verses. Within these 62 verses, every situation dealing with the individual, our social life and our nationalistic life are covered when you understand these verses here in Matthew 5 and 6. You can consider all the volumes of laws, the constitution of the United States, and the laws, and yet if we were just to go by these verses here, these 62 verses, every situation we would ever be confronted with would be covered.

He starts off by saying, "You have heard." He's not saying that you've heard this personally. What he's saying is not said by Moses, but this was said to Moses. He's saying this was said to Moses. When he says, "You have heard that Moses said," he's not saying that this was said directly to us. This is what Moses was told, and now he's passing it onto us. Jesus recognized the divine authority of the past law, and the divine authority of God himself, but he gives deeper meaning by deeper expression by saying it's now got to be internalized; it's got to be inside, so it's checking our motives.

Look at Matthew 5:48. You'll notice the summary statement of Jesus' instructions in the Beatitudes. In Matthew 5, if you go to the end, he ends with this expression in verse 48, "You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." Notice the next phrase, "Be careful," in Matthew 6:1. He goes from be perfect to be careful. He's saying that your righteousness must exceed that of the Pharisees, and the very next thing that comes out of his mouth is be careful how you do that. He goes from the point of having the law internalized in us, which is the way in which we exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees, but then he goes and warns us and says be careful how you do that. He goes from this idea of perfection now to the idea of motive. We'll come to that in chapter 6 in a few weeks when we get to that, but there's a wonderful bridge between be perfect and be careful.

What is it that when somebody thinks they're perfect, the first thing they have to do is what? Be careful of your motive. Be careful of your motive. That's why he goes in and Chapter 6, he talks about the expressions of worship. There are four ways in which he describes worship as a lifestyle—by our giving, by our fasting, by the way that we manage money, and by our prayer life. Four ways he describes ministry of worship when we get into Chapter 6, but he's now setting us up to understand that this code of conduct that he described in the latter part of Chapter 5 is really quite very basic.

When you read this, we really see how simplistic it is, but how powerfully inclusive it is. Notice that Jesus doesn't talk about the Ten Commandments, but he only refers to two of them in Matthew 5. These two reveal the formation of all our human society. Look at verses 21 and 27. In verse 21-22, "<sup>21</sup>You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' <sup>22</sup>But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire." Now there he talks about social relationships. If we had everybody in our world, everybody in our country, everybody in our city, everybody in our churches adhered to that one guideline, we would eliminate all the personal irritations we have with each other, because notice that deals with all of us individualistically.

It's in these two laws...look also at verse 27-28, "<sup>27</sup>You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' <sup>28</sup>But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery." There he talks about the preservation of the family. The two things that he covers here in this portion of his fulfilling the law is the preservation of the individual and the preservation of

the family. Those are the two things that are highlighted. He doesn't go through all the Ten Commandments. He says if you take care of these two things, you take care of the preservation of the individual dignity, of the human life, that all men are created as images of God. Now how do you treat that? How do we treat each other? He said if you would just treat each other individually and understand this one law that I fulfilled, you treat each other with respect and dignity, you preserve the human dignity. That's what you see in verse 21. Then in verse 27, he said, "If you do the same thing, you'd preserve the family dignity." If we were to take care of those two things, we wouldn't need all the laws in our books that we have in the United States.

The first is individual and the second one is social. If these two laws are broken, society cannot be held together. You break those two laws—verses 21 and 27—society cannot be held together because it destroys the individual dignity and it destroys the individual family dignity. Those are the two things that he highlights in this summary statement of the conduct that must exceed that of the Pharisees.

In forbidding murder, he went even further by stating there must be no anger. There must be no anger because, against a brother, there can be anger against the sin but not against the sinner. There's a difference of some significance. Where there is anger, where there is no anger there is no possibility of speaking disrespectfully. Notice verses 21-22 again, "<sup>21</sup>You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' <sup>22</sup>But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council."

Not only does he include, but he includes insults. What comes out of our mouth? Jesus says, "Out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks." Why do we say things that we say to each other in anger? He's saying, "If you eliminate the cause, you're not going to treat each other disrespectfully." Why is it we treat each other disrespectfully? It's because of anger—for something we feel that somebody's done something ill against, and we get irritated and we give them a response that they generate within us.

The whole key of the Beatitudes is this. You don't give them what they generate within you; you give them something that God has given you. You see, that's what ministry is. Ministry is giving away to someone else what God has given you. Rather than giving to what people stimulate within you, you give them something that God has given you. The whole point here is if you deal with the root cause of anger, you're going to eliminate murder, you're going to eliminate disrespect and insults of people, and how disrespectfully we treat people because of our mouth.

You can look at the Scripture—tongue is a great instrument of murder. You murder people by your tongue, just as much as you do by your gun. He's saying you've got to rid of it, because if you don't get rid of that, society will fall apart. Why is it that we have so many problems in our culture today? It's because we've violated this one principle of not managing our anger. The Scripture says, "Be angry and sin not." We need to work on the "what" portion of that; the sinning not. You might realize I'm angry. That's going to be a natural response of human nature. The issue is you've got to recognize your anger; now I've got to work at sinning not.

The question is how do I sin not? I can't answer that for you. All I'm saying is, brothers, that's what we've got to deal with. Somebody stimulates something within you that you know that you're getting angry. The real issue is how do I manage that and sin not? One of the first ways is to keep your mouth shut. That would be a good one. Example 14:14, "I will fight for you when you remain silent." One of the ways in which we have to deal with that is just to keep your mouth shut. People are going to say, "Well you become a doormat." Really? What does Jesus say in the Beatitudes? "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." That expression "inherit the earth" means that you take control of the earth because it doesn't control you anymore. You're not controlled by the things of this world. You

inherit the earth. You become the manager of it. You become the person who now manages the earth because you're not controlled by the system of this world. Meekness is really living according to the power of God. If you think you're being a doormat, try being a doormat the next time and see how difficult it is. That is not easy. But that's the whole point. That's what grace does. Grace gives us the power that we need to live a life of power under control, which is meekness.

*Don: I guess, I don't know, you said you might not be able to answer this, but when does anger become sinful? When is anger not sinful [UNCLEAR]...*

That's a great question Don's question is when does anger become sinful, and when is anger not sinful? Well I think the best I could do, Don, is take a couple of examples from Jesus' life. When he went into the temple and the moneychangers...now he got angry. It was righteous anger. There's a difference between personal anger and righteous anger. In my understanding of the Scripture, we can be angry righteously, as we are taking a righteous stand against sin. We can be angry when we see righteous anger against the sin of this world. When we see people violated. When we see sinful conduct infiltrates our society and begins to take over the whole society system. You see, we can be angry at that. That's righteous indignation, righteous anger.

What would become sinful is when we make the righteous against ourselves. In other words, somebody does something against me personally. We take it personal. Sinful anger is when I manage it personally like that versus that which Jesus modeled when he was angry. You see, his ego never got involved. The issue is whose ego is it? Is it my ego that's being offended? I would then say that that's sinful anger, when it's directed at me and my ego gets involved, then that takes over. There's difference between that and righteous anger as we saw in Christ's life. Bishop Rogers, can you add anything to that for me?

*Bishop Rogers: No. {LAUGHTER}*

Bishop John back there is my safety net. If he said no, we'll move on. Thank you sir. {LAUGHTER}  
Don is that somewhat helpful?

*Don: Yes.*

The difference is, I think the best thing I can say is whose ego is involved? When it's your ego involved, it's probably going to be sinful anger. When you're angry at that which is righteous indignation against sin in this world, in the system of society, that would not be sinful. That would be my understanding. Okay?

*Don: Yes. Thank you.*

We can be angry and when we see sin, but it's when we begin to take it personally and I begin to say my ego is involved, then I'm the one who's being offended, and therefore I lash out. That's what he's avoiding. This is the individual anger that we need to work on.

There is a time to be angry. Don't you get angry when you read about sin in the world? I really get angry at some of that stuff. I have to control my anger because of what I want to do. There's a difference between that and when it's angry generated at me and my ego's involved.

When you take a look at that, if we were to deal with that alone, that would deal with all of our individual issues of society. Notice there's a difference of some significance. "Where there is no anger there is no possibility of speaking disrespectfully." Now notice that in verse 21. I want to say this rather sensitively. I am very much angry at child abuse. But I'll tell you what I'm equally angry at. That's

parental abuse, by kids and their tongues. How they destroy and murder their parents, disrespectfully, by the way they talk to parents. Have you walked down the street and listened to the way the kids speak to their parents and parents speak to their children? Do you see how disrespectful that is? It's just insipid anger is the generation of all of that. I see kids just destroying their parents. I wish somebody would start the ministry, and we'd have a little red, white and blue cross or whatever you want to do, a little ribbon. You've got a ribbon now for every sin that we commit to call attention to it. Somebody ought to have a red, white and blue one, or whatever color you want, about parental abuse on the part of kids, just how absolutely disrespectful they are.

What he's saying, if you took care of verse 21, the standard of conduct of the kingdom is this. You don't treat people disrespectfully because you've managed your anger. If you don't manage your anger, there's no reason to speak disrespectfully. Why is it that I speak disrespectfully to people? It's because my ego has been affected and my anger has been generated and I'm taking a personal affront and I lash out. Out of the overflow of the mouth, the heart speaks.

You see, brothers, as we've been saying for several weeks now, one of the greatest barometers of our maturity in faith is what comes out of our mouth. If we understood what Jesus is saying about the law, that if you'd just adhere to this one instruction of the kingdom mandate, then that would be deal with your anger, it would eliminate all the issues of individual frustration and individual sin and violation of the individual person.

Then he goes to the second one. Notice he doesn't talk about the Ten Commandments. He covers another one that is basic and now societal, and that is, in forbidding adultery, he's not only providing for personal chastity, but he's also making it impossible as he's saying if you deal with the desire, you'll have no problem with the lust. You've got to deal with the desire because the desire is the issue. Here he's provided for the protection of the family; the sanctity of the family.

In these two verses (21 and 27), he provides for the sanctity of the individual person and now he talks about the sanctity of the family. If we, as society, would adhere to those two mandates, adhere to the sanctity of the individual and the sanctity of the family, look how many problems would be eliminated, if we just went along with those two. That's a great summary statement, but very, very challenging. Our trick a kingdom citizens is how do we do that and how do we infiltrate society and get them to the point of understanding that we need to preserve the sanctity of the individual person and the sanctity of the individual family? When we can do that, we've really changed society by being salt and light.

He now states that these two laws, which constitute the pillars of human society, now go to verse 33. He now talks about swearing. Verses 21 and 27, and now verse 33. He says, "Don't swear at all." The first pillar of truth is that truth needs no form of an oath. What's the very first thing that when you hear somebody say, "I swear," what's very first thing comes into your mind?

***Audience Member:*** *They're lying.*

Doubt. Exactly. That's exactly right. That's why he says don't swear at all. The moment you say, "I swear on the Bible," or "I swear on my mother's grave," or "I swear on the Pirates," whatever you want to swear on—the moment you say that, the first thing that comes into your mind is, "Uh huh." There's doubt. What Jesus is saying is, "Don't swear at all." What he's really saying is what? Speak the truth. Always speak the truth. If you're speaking the truth, there's no doubt. The reason we have doubt is because we've made all these oaths. He says, "Let your yes be yes, and your no be no." There should be no doubt as to what you're talking about. That's the third rule of society here. That becomes nationalistic. Individualistically, socialistically and now we see nationalistically. If we just told the truth, there would be no reason to swear. No one would have to swear on the Bible, swear on their mother's

grave or anything else. He's saying don't even do that, because the moment you do that, you're implanting the seed of doubt.

**Don:** *Okay. Let me play devil's advocate [UNCLEAR]. Paul, in Romans 9 says, "I speak the truth in Christ. I am not lying. [UNCLEAR] in the Holy Spirit." He's making an oath [UNCLEAR] swear, but it seems that he's doing that. It seems that he does that in other parts of Scripture, too. How could he do that in relation to what Jesus is saying here? Also, in courtrooms, we're to do, we swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. How do we handle that?*

We handle it carefully. I think what Paul is saying is this. Paul is affirming the fact that he's speaking truth. He's not saying, "I'm taking an oath." Paul is saying, "I'm telling you truth. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, this is the truth." I think Paul is affirming truth, not necessarily saying, "I'm making an oath or swearing an oath." He's saying, "I am affirming the fact that I'm going to speak the truth." We need to do that. Paul is a wonderful example of the importance of our taking a position of saying, "I am telling the truth. I'm going to say this with great passion. I'm affirming the fact that this is under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. I'm going to tell you the truth."

That's a little bit different than saying, "I swear on this particular item," that I'm say something. He's saying, "I'm really confirming that I'm going to tell you the truth as given to me by the Holy Spirit." So I think there's a difference of affirming the truth and swearing to the truth. That would be one response.

Now how do we handle that in the law, in the land? Well, we have laws of our land. All I'm saying is, certainly if you go to court, you do have to make that oath. I understand that. I know some people who've gone to court, and I'm not saying this is right or wrong, but I know one friend who said, "I can't do that." He was brought up in front of the court and he said, "I can't do that because I can't swear on an oath." He took this literally. What I'm saying here is the general rule. He took that literally and he spent 30 days in jail. He was willing to do that because he knew the consequence of his particular conviction and personal stance was that, "I can't swear because I am commanded not to make an oath."

**Dale:** *I believe you can affirm that in court even today.*

Help me understand that please. I've never been there, so I don't know that. Could you explain that please?

**Ted:** *[UNCLEAR] in court you can say I swear or I affirm. You can substitute the word affirm. I think Quakers and some of the early Protestant groups, that was one of their...*

They wouldn't do that.

**Ted:** *[UNCLEAR] Amish can do it either.*

That was the background of my friend, who could not do that. I didn't realize the whole affirming issue, but he said, "I cannot swear that oath," and they put him in jail for because of contempt of court.

**Ted:** *Is he Amish in his background?*

Yes.

**Audience Member:** *I was in court a month ago with my son. The oath that they had [UNCLEAR] at the Allegheny County court, the oath that they asked him to swear was the most Christian oath I had ever heard. They had him put his hand on the Bible—we were surprised to begin with—and then the oath, I*

*don't want verbatim, but the woman said, "Do you swear to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth that is before God in this court and he knows all and sees all?" something to that effect, which I thought was, that took me aback. It seemed like a whole different kind of thing just to acknowledge that we are here to tell the truth and God knows the truth, and so help you God, you'll tell the truth," something to that effect.*

Interesting. I wasn't aware of that. Interesting.

**Ted:** *Does this also have to do with taking Scripture in a wooden fashion, I mean, that, in a sense becomes a law in itself versus balancing it from the other part, the other parts of Scripture.*

I would say it does. That can be dangerous; danger in that. In other words, when you take a verse of Scripture and make it a wooden plank, that's very, very difficult, and very, very dangerous, as opposed to having it balanced by other portions of Scripture. The greatest commentary on a particular wooden plank verse is the other verses of Scripture. We have to be very, very careful.

You notice that Jesus is speaking here in broad generalities. This is a broad generality. He's talking about a kingdom lifestyle. He's not saying do this, do this, do this, do this, do this. He's saying there are several things that guide our kingdom life. One of those is this—preserving the sanctity of the individual. He doesn't tell you how to do that. All he's saying is this. You and I as kingdom citizens, have a responsibility as kingdom citizens to preserve the dignity and the sanctity of the individual life. All people are made in God's image.

Bishop Rogers and I were talking several weeks ago about Bin Laden. I was really sad and really grieved to see how people cheered and had celebrations and parades when we celebrated the death of Osama Bin Laden. You had parties and you had firecrackers going off. That saddened me. Yes, it needed to be done. I'll have to say that. It needed to be done. But how can you celebrate the taking of another person's life who is made in the image of God? So yes, it needed to be done because of justice. I understand all that, but that was not a cause of celebration; it was a cause of grief, that we actually had to do that.

Bishop Rogers and I were talking, if we had been the Navy Seals and we had to pull the trigger, we both probably said we'd pull trigger, but I would not rejoice and say, "Oh happy day." You see, there's a difference. What Jesus is saying here is a broad generality. He's not saying specifically do this and don't do that. It's not legalistic. He's saying this is the way that a kingdom citizen thinks. You've got to think about how is my conduct going to be restrained so that I can preserve individual dignity? If we all think like that, and we've got to deal with our anger because anger is the root cause of all of that imposition of the violation of individual dignity. Even the way you speak about people disrespectfully.

He's giving a broad generality. You've got to be careful not to make this a wooden plank. That can be very, very dangerous. He's talking about broad generalities.

**Audience Member:** *I think what he's getting at, too, what Jesus is getting at, is that we can't rely on our own human strength. If we're saying, "I swear. I won't," like Peter, for example, "I swear Jesus I will not deny you." And Peter couldn't do it. So we need to realize that in and of ourselves, we can't even uphold an oath, so why make one?*

Good point.

**Audience Member:** *So why bother? We're going to fail at it, and then we're just going to mess up.*

Excellent point. Good point. He's dealing with generalities, three major generalities. One, the individual. Now it's the same thing with the family. You see, he's saying you've got to deal with the desire issue because if you don't do that, the family is going to be destroyed, and so then our egos get involved.

**Randy:** *If you realize the sinful nature of man and your own sinfulness, I think at that point in when you're not sure, even [UNCLEAR] Saddam Hussein was hung, I felt the same way. The newspapers were all happy about it and then I just thought what a sad thing that took his life to where he ended up, and he most likely died without Christ. That was what I was thinking.*

You see, we need to grieve over those situations because we see the violation of human dignity because of sin. That's where we have righteous indignation against sin. Bishop Rogers and I both had the righteous indignation about the sin of Osama Bin Laden, but we could not rejoice in the death of Osama Bin Laden. That's a different thing.

What Jesus is saying here is you've got to have the broad generality here and don't make this a wooden plank. That can be very dangerous.

**Brian:** *I was just going to say, if we don't do this front part right, nothing else falls into place. If we don't get this first portion right, we can't truly attempt to live out the rest of it because we [UNCLEAR] to how does this affect us, let me be stronger in this, and we miss the whole entire point. You've brought this up before, but the order in which [UNCLEAR] Scripture lays this out is really the stepping off point for everything else [UNCLEAR]...*

It starts with the individual and then goes to the family, and then it goes to society. You see, there's a great sequence there. Deal with the individual, then you deal with the family, then you deal with society. Society has to do with the oaths. Family has to do with the lust. Anger has to do with the individual. Take care of the individual, then you take care of the family. When you take care of the individual, you'll be taking care for the family and so forth.

**Carl:** *Bruce, I think that goes back to what you were saying about kids cussing out parents and parental abuse. If the individual is taken care of, then you're going to teach your children like that. If you're teaching your children right, which is the family, then they are going to learn how to teach their children [UNCLEAR], and it spreads. It's what we don't do at the outset, individually, [UNCLEAR]...*

Amen.

That's right. Robert E. Lee made a statement about leadership, if I can remember it; I'll paraphrase it a little bit. He said, "The role of faith in leadership is to recognize the depravity of human nature and be successful in spite of it." That's a pretty good statement. To recognize the depravity of human nature and to overcome it and manage it. We really have to realize the depravity of human nature. It starts with recognizing our own personal depravity, because that's where it starts individually. I've got to realize that myself. And then as you deal with that, you begin to deal with it, then it translates into your family and then not society. It starts with the individual.

Jesus is giving us here in Matthew 5 a whole big picture. This is a big picture of the kingdom life. He's basically saying if you take care of these three basic things, you'll take care of the individual, you'll take care of the family, then society, and you'll take care of your nation. Those are the three things. That's the principles that we need to deeply instill into our children are these three issues, because that will be the impact upon the next generation as we go through this.

**Audience Member:** *Excuse me. I don't remember the name of the coach at North Catholic, but I*



*remember him saying, “I don’t want to be a buddy.”*

I don’t want to what?

**Audience Member:** *“I don’t want to be a buddy to the kids I am teaching. I want to be a friend.” A lot of parents today are confused, and I think some of the confusion begins with their own personal guilt of their behavior themselves, and so as they come to their own children, they want to be friends, buddies, with them more than should be friends, where the friend tells the truth to the child. So these children become disrespectful, which, what was that old saying about familiarity...it breeds contempt. That’s where we are with the kids today—disrespectful. They don’t [UNCLEAR].*

When you look at the big picture again, Scripturally...you see, the beauty about Scripture is this. Jesus, in the Word of God, gives us the big picture of teaching us how to think. It doesn’t tell us do this, do this, do this, don’t do that, don’t do that. There’s a lot of freedom that we have in Christ. That’s where we need to be careful about legalism. We need to realize this—that a justified sinner, positionally, at the moment of your salvation, cannot be improved upon your status before God for anything that you do. That’s justification by faith alone. In other words, at that moment of your first belief, you’re justified by faith, you will be as righteous at that point in your life as you will be any other time because you’ll be as righteous at the moment God declares it when he declares it. You’re justified by faith alone, in Christ alone, by grace alone.

Now at that moment, what we do is we practically live out our positional location with Christ because of justification. We need to be careful not to come up with these do this, do this, do this, because it’s going to give me merit and God’s going to be more impressed with who I am. That’s not what it is. You see, there’s great freedom. He’s just saying this is how a kingdom person thinks. Now you begin to figure out how to live that out with the great freedom you have in Christ and don’t violate these things. I’m giving you some general principles about kingdom living.

He talks about the individual, about society, the family, and he talks about the nation, which would be truth. We need to be careful not to make these wooden planks as we move through this. The whole point of it is, you know, there’s such great freedom that we have in Christ. That doesn’t mean that we are licentious. Licentiousness says that God doesn’t care what you do. Legalism says there’s merit in what I do. Grace says you’re accepted by me because of what I did for you. You see, there’s a difference. Legalism says I’m going to earn merit because you’ll approve of me because of what I do. Grace says, “I approve of you because of what I did for you.” There’s a difference between legalism and grace.

We need to be careful about not making these legalistic, but we need to understand the grace behind it all. And so we come understanding, you know, when you look at biblical instruction of raising children, it’s really quite simple. You’ve got two kinds of families. You’ve got a child-centered family or a parent-directed family. One of the two—take your pick. Child-centered or parent-directed.

Years ago, in the 1950’s, there was a book that came out published by the American Medical Association, that basically said the rule of family engagement is the child needs to be the center of the family. For about 40 years, pediatricians taught this. My wife told me about this, what she learned in medical school, was basically this—children are the center of the family. That’s what medical society was teaching. Now that’s turned around a little bit because we’ve seen the fallacy of that, but for about 40-50 years, the standard of pediatric practice was children are to be the center of the family or they will lose their self-esteem.

**Audience Member:** *Is that Dr. Spock?*

Yes. And several others. Several others, not only him, but there's a whole bunch of other people. But the issue is you either have a child-centered family or a parent-directed family. When you have a parent-directed family, you can take the child's life and divide it up in about 21 years, roughly speaking. The first six years with the child, it is the parent's rule to establish the right to rule. The first six years, you establish the right to rule. Six to 12, you become their trainer. You teach them what to do. Twelve to 16 or 18, you become their coach. A coach doesn't play for you. A coach refines what you've been trained to do.

So you look at these imageries. You look the right to rule, then a trainer. What does a trainer do? A trainer says, "Do this, do this, do this, don't do that, don't do that." A coach says, "Go in and play. I'm just going to watch you do it, and we'll make corrections as you go." There's a difference between a trainer and a coach. The last thing is a friend. You see, the goal of parenting is friendship. It doesn't start there. That's the end result. That may take 21 years to get there.

Now just in my own step-children's life, I have tremendous friendship with Bill, by step-son, who's now 32 years old. It took me many, many years to get to that point of having a wonderful friendship with him. In those early years, I wasn't his friend. The other day, I was asking him...he's a teacher, he teaches English in a university down and Charlotte. I said, "Bill what's the most difficult part of teaching? Is it reading term papers or giving grades?" He said, "I don't give grades." I said, "You don't give grades? What do you do?" He said, "I do what you did to me." I said, "What did I do to you?" {LAUGHTER} He said, "You always taught me...what I do with my students is the way that you reared me. You gave me the consequences of my choices before I act, and that's what I do with my students. I'll come in and say if you want an A, this is what you're going to do. If you want a B, then do this. If you want a C, then do that. If you want a D, do this. And if you want to flunk, here's what you do. I'm not going to give you a grade. You're going to tell me what grade you want me to assign you based upon what you do. That's the way you raised me. I don't give grades. I just do what you did to me."

Now you see, we have a tremendous friendship. That took a lot of...I didn't even know he thought, what I just said. {LAUGHTER} I was amazed. I said, "You mean you actually heard what I was trying to do?" {LAUGHTER} But the point of it was this. He was saying, "I don't give them grades. I tell them if they want this grade, then this is what they'll do. If they don't want that grade, then act like this. All I'm going to do is I'm going to give you what you tell me you want me to give you. So grading, for me, is the easiest thing I do. I just give them what they said they wanted. When they come in, and they complain about their grades, I say, 'Then why did you do that? You got what you wanted. If you didn't want that B, why didn't you act like an A? Because here's what an A acts like.' I'm just doing how you raised me as a kid."

That, to me, was a severe mercy. I just thought, "Wow! He actually grasped something I was trying to do all those years." You see, it's going to be in the rearing of children, you're either going to have a child-centered family or you're going to have a parent-directed family. That's all part of what Jesus is saying about. It's the preservation of the individual, the preservation of the family, and the preservation of the nation by truth. What we do as we affirm truth, then we don't need to swear on oaths because we need to be very, very concerned about proclaiming truth and doing it under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Brothers, if we would just adhere to those three things of the big macro-schedule of society, the world would change radically. You don't need all the volumes of do this and do that and this exception for that and this exception for that, if we just understood the basics of the kingdom of God living, and that would be the preservation of the individual, the preservation of the family and the preservation of truth. If we did that alone, we could be salt and light and change the world a little bit.

We'll pick this up next week as we come together. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for the significance of what you teach us about maintaining the sanctity of individual human life, we thank you for what you teach us about preserving the sanctity of family life, and we thank you for what you teach us about the preservation of the sanctity of truth. Faith, if we've said anything that is inconsistent with your intention was in preserving this wonderful Scripture for us in this greatest sermon ever preached, we pray, Lord, that you'd just remove that from our minds and only those things that are consistent with your nature, your glory and your intent would be the things that we would remember. We just pray this humbly because of our sinfulness and thank you for your mercy to us for Jesus' sake. And all the Brave Men said...Amen!!