

Word notes Sunday 18/7/2010 Tony Hodge
Jesus' teachings: The Sermon on the Mount 2

Summary (read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday)

Key Text: Matthew 5:17-20

Following on from telling the assembled crowd what Kingdom People look like, how they act and their relevance to the world (5:1-16) Jesus then begins to teach about the Law. First he makes it clear that he has not come to do away with it – not even the slightest part. He underlines its importance by stressing the outcome for anyone who tries to dilute or pervert it and teaches that to others. Then he makes the statement that unless a person is more righteous than a Pharisee or teacher of the Law he/she will not enter the Kingdom. How can any hope to surpass the Pharisees, and what does that mean anyhow?

Jesus explains how to surpass the righteousness of the Pharisees. Rather than keep the Law legalistically, to the letter and no more (do not murder, adultery etc) one should apply it to our inner being (don't even be angry with someone or have lustful thoughts). Our outward actions arise from our inner being (Matt 15:10,11). The Pharisees and teachers of the Law were very hot on how to keep the Law, we should be more concerned with why God gave the Law:

- The Law – Ten Commandments etc *were to point to Jesus* (Gal 3:24)
- Other Laws eg how to divorce *because people's hearts were hard* (Mk 10:2-5)

We were never meant to live God's way under our own strength. At The Fall we were changed from the inside (became aware of good and evil) and our outward actions changed (hid from God). What we need is an inward change so that our outward actions line up with the Law. That is what Jesus came to achieve. In the New Covenant our sins are paid for by his perfect sacrifice and we are renewed on the inside (Jer 31:33, Heb 8:10, 10:16). A covenant is an agreement – I have to agree by accepting Jesus as Lord (Rom 3:19-24) – when I do this I am renewed on the inside and change on the outside. God's Law in my heart and mind results in different actions. Halleluiah!

Application (this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points)

Pharisees taught strict observance to the letter of the Law. Take a large piece of paper and divide it vertically into two columns. At the top of the left column write "Pharisees", at the top of the right "Jesus". Now go through Matt 5:21 to 6:4 and find each point where Jesus contrasts what folk were taught and what he now teaches and write the reference, and in the two columns a few words to summarise. EG: "5:21&22" | "Do not murder" | Anger is like murder. Not all are this simple!

At the foot of each column try to summarise the difference between Pharisaic teaching and what Jesus is saying. Remember when we talked about Jesus as a Rabbi and how followers were said to be 'yoked' with their teachers?

Whose teaching looks to be the easiest? Read Jer 31:33, Heb 8:10, & 10:16. Does that make a difference?

Does the promise in Jer 21 etc mean we're all sorted or do we fail? If so what can we do?

Pray through Heb 10:16-25.

Witness (this is the bit where the cell talks and prays about how to share the Good News)

What will your cell be doing of the holidays that can involve outreach – BBQ, parties, picnics?