COMMUNITY GUIDE

Kingdom Come // A Different Kind of Righteousness (Part 2)
Matthew 5:27–37

OVERVIEW

The teaching explored Jesus' teachings in Matthew 5, verses 27 through 37, where he addresses lust, divorce, and the integrity of our words. Rather than lowering the bar of the law, Jesus takes it all the way into the human heart, the place where every outward sin begins. In a culture that constantly preaches self-fulfillment and moral flexibility, Jesus calls his followers to a different kind of righteousness, one that starts at the root, not the fruit. His words are not meant to burden us but to lead us into genuine freedom through the transforming work of the Holy Spirit.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **The Loophole Problem.** People in Jesus' day were reading Scripture to find loopholes -- keeping the letter of the law while dodging its heart. We do the same thing today, whether through selective reading, taking verses out of context, or applying the Bible to everyone except ourselves.
- **Sin Starts at the Center, Not the Surface.** Jesus consistently traces sin back to the heart. Adultery begins with lust. Broken covenants begin with a hardened heart. Gossip begins with envy. Jesus is not interested in behavioral modification alone -- he is after heart transformation.
- **Three Areas Jesus Targets:** ***Faithful eyes*** - how we look at others and what we allow our eyes to dwell on. ***Faithful vows*** - how seriously we treat the covenant of marriage. ***Faithful words*** - whether our yes actually means yes.
- **Jesus Protects the Vulnerable.** In a culture where women had little legal standing, Jesus placed the responsibility of lust on the one doing the looking, not the one being looked at. His words were a wall of protection, not a weapon of shame.
- **His Faithfulness Is the Foundation of Ours.** We do not pursue faithfulness to earn God's love. We pursue faithfulness because Christ was faithful first. His yes has never failed. Even when we are unfaithful, he remains faithful.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- C.S. Lewis used the phrase "chronological snobbery" to describe the assumption that older things are automatically irrelevant. How does that tendency show up in the way people approach Scripture today? How do you guard against it in your own reading?
- Jesus says if your eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out. The sermon clarified this is hyperbole, an exaggeration meant to communicate urgency. What in your life might need to be cut off or removed because it is feeding a pattern that you know is not healthy? What has made it difficult to take that step?
- The sermon was careful to say that Jesus is not condemning people who survived difficult or unsafe marriages. How do you hold together a high view of the covenant of marriage and genuine compassion for people whose marriages have ended? Where have you seen the church get that balance wrong in either direction?
- The people in Jesus' day had a ranking system for oaths. Some counted, some did not. What are the modern equivalents of that? Where do we communicate, even subtly, that some of our words carry more weight than others?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Close your time together by reading this passage aloud as a group from 2 Corinthians 1, where Paul writes that all of God's promises have been fulfilled in Christ with a resounding yes, and that through Christ our amen ascends to God for his glory.

Then invite someone to pray over the group, asking God to do the heart surgery only he can do, not so that you earn his love, but because he has already given it.