

Matthew Lesson 9 ... Teaching Notes

Last week we saw Yeshua begin His public ministry. It is significant that His ministry began in Galilee, as so many Gentiles lived there. Remember that Isaiah called this area, "Galilee of the Gentiles," and he went on to say, The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death, a light has dawned. And here was the great light, teaching the Sermon on the Mount. And not only were the Gentiles there, but Matthew gives us more details about who was hearing this message:

Matthew 4:25 Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him.

From **Matthew 4:25**, let's look at the people who would have been listening to these teachings. The Galilee was a Gentile area. The Decapolis consisted of 10 cities made up of Gentiles and many Hellenized Jewish people. This area was ruled by Rome.

Then we add to this mix Jewish people from Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan. From this location, Yeshua was teaching to both Gentiles and Jews.



After telling the people the kingdom of heaven belongs to the poor in spirit, that those who mourn will be comforted, that the meek will inherit the earth, that those who pursue righteousness will be filled, the merciful will get mercy, the pure in heart will see G-d and peacemakers will be called sons of G-d, He now is going to bring everything full circle and the next statement He makes will be like the first

statement and bring those willing right back to the kingdom of heaven. What will this quality be?

Matthew 5:10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

1. We need to notice what is bringing about this persecution. How would you define "righteousness sake?"
2. What do these persecuted receive?

Are there examples in the Word of people who were persecuted for righteousness sake?

Romans 11:3 Lord, they have killed Thy prophets and torn down Thine altars, and I am left alone and they seek my life?

Mark 12:3-8 And he began to speak to them in parables. A man planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a pit for the winepress and built a tower, and leased it to tenant and went into another country. When the season came, he sent a servant to the tenants to get from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. And they took him and beat him and sent him away empty-handed. Again he sent to them another servant, and they struck him on the head and treated him shamefully. And he sent another, and him they killed. And so with many others: some they beat, and some they killed. He had still one other, a beloved son. Finally, he sent him to them, saying, They will respect my son. but those tenants said to one another, This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours. And they took him and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard.

Luke 22:63 The men who were holding Jesus began to mock Him and beat Him. They blindfolded Him and kept demanding, "Prophecy! Who hit You?"

Mark 14:65 And they said many other blasphemous things against Him.... Then some of them began to spit on Him. They blindfolded Him, struck Him with their fists, and said to Him, "Prophecy!" And the officers received Him with slaps in His face.

3. Who was persecuted in the above verses?
4. Who else is going to be persecuted?
5. How does this affect you as you consider pursuing righteousness?

Now Yeshua will encourage the persecuted:

Matthew 5:11-12 Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

6. What are we being told to keep in mind when we are persecuted? How do we do this? Does the Sermon on the Mount factor in at this point?

And now Yeshua will continue to add understanding to what it means to be a believer - one who follows Him:

Matthew 5:13 You are the **salt of the earth**; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

In these times when Yeshua was teaching, salt was vital for life. In the Talmud it is stated that "The world cannot exist without salt." (Tractate Shofrim 15.8)

We see salt used in the Bible in many ways:

Leviticus 2:13 You shall season your every offering of meal with salt; you shall not omit from your meal offering the **salt of your covenant with God**; with all your offerings you must offer salt.

2 Chronicles 13:5 Do you not know that the LORD, the God of Israel, has given the kingship of Israel to David and his descendants forever by a covenant of salt?

Salt covenants endure through the generations. Salt speaks of endurance. Once salt is mixed together with something, it cannot be taken out or separated, as anyone knows who had added too much salt to a recipe; therefore, salt is a permanent covenant. Salt gives life and flavor. Salt preserves and even gives life - without salt there cannot be life. Yeshua said, **YOU ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH.**

7. What does it mean to us that we are to be the "salt of the earth?"

8. How do we bring people to lasting, eternal life?

Salt was used to keep meat from spoiling.

Matthew 5:13but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

Salt was used to keep meat from spoiling. Salt is anti-corruption. So if we are the salt of the earth, we are not like the earth, we are not assimilated into the culture of our day where things are easily corrupted, but we speak G-d's truth and bring Torah and the good news of the Kingdom to men.

8. How do we remain salty in our times?

Matthew 5:14 You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

Israel was to be a light, and take Torah to the nations.

Isaiah 42:6 I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness;
I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you
as a covenant for the people,
a light for the nations.

This was in the days when the temple still stood, and the menorah was a constant reminder that the light was never to go out. But if covered what good was it?



The question has been asked: To what may Moses be compared at that time? To a light which is set upon a lamp stand from which many lights are ignited.

What did Moses do? He taught Torah to people and tried to keep people on the path of Torah. In these ways Moses was a light to people. Now Yeshua is calling all who desire to follow Him, to be a light, to call others to live a life of Torah and then those people, too would be lights.

Matthew 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

8. How do we let our lights shine? Are they to bring attention to us?

And not Yeshua makes a statement of his absolute intention!

Matthew 5:17-20 Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; **I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.** For truly I say to you until heaven and earth pass away, not an jot, **not tittle, will pass from the Law** until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

It is known when the rabbi's of Yeshua's time argued about the meaning in a passage in the Torah, when it was thought the rabbi was misinterpreting the passage, they would say, You are canceling the Torah. This meant the other rabbi believed he was misinterpreting the understanding. But if you were fulfilling the Torah, you were teaching it correctly. Canceling the meaning to one rabbi, meant fulfilling it for the other as the rabbis were each interpreting Torah with their understanding.

Yeshua is clearly saying – I am teaching you the true understanding of the Torah. It does not say I am fulfilling it so it can be done away with as He clearly states in His next statement....**not a jot or tittle will pass from the law.....**

Idiomatic Translation of the Hebrew Reconstruction:

"Do not think that I have come to weaken the Torah and the Prophets. I have not come to weaken them, but to strengthen them."
(David Bivin, Jerusalem Perspective)

At the same time, Yeshua is using a teaching technique called kal ve chomer, or lighter and heavier. The Oxford Reference Dictionary says kal ve chomer means that what applies in a less important case will certainly apply in a more important one. The phrase has come to mean an **inescapable conclusion**.

A light commandment would be freeing a mother bird.

A heavy commandment would be honoring one's parents.

Both commandments however had the same outcome - that the lives of those doing these commandments would be prolonged.

What was G-d teaching them? He was teaching them that if you are in a position of power, use your power with gentleness.

And so Yeshua says, **Matthew 5:19,20** Whoever therefore, breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

Titus 3:5 He saved us, not by works in righteousness that we did, but according to His mercy, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,

9. What is Yeshua teaching about the Law? about His mercy?



10. Do you remember the first to attributes of G-d that G-d proclaimed about Himself?

Now Yeshua is going to teach that the Law is really all about the heart!

Matthew 5:21,22 You have heard that it was said to those of old, You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, "Raca" shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, You fool! shall be in danger of hell fire.

Is he saying, you may not be murdering outright, but what is in your heart is just as important. Kingdom thinking is more than external obedience. It goes directly to thoughts and motives of the heart. It all starts in the heart.

(Fool: dull, stupid, foolish)

The word "raca" means "empty, worthless, vain, shallow brains". It was a word of contempt. Some commentators say that in that culture it meant that a person was worthy to be "spit upon" when they were referred to as **raca**. (Our Ancient Paths)

The Greek *raca* meant something a little different than "fool" did. It expressed a judgment call on someone's character. In that culture, this word was a vulgar insult.

Raca is both insulting and condemning.



******But what about the word "fool"? Now we have a problem because both Yeshua and Paul used the word "foolish" when addressing certain people.

Luke 11:39-41 Now then, said the Lord, you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. You fools! Did not the One who made the outside make the inside as well? But give as alms the things that

are within you, and you will see that everything is clean for you....

Romans 2:20 "...an instructor of the foolish..." (Paul referring to the students of Jewish scholars - the scholars were not teaching the true meaning)

1 Corinthians 15:36-38 You fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or something else. But God gives it a body as He has designed, and to each kind of seed He gives its own body....

(Paul is giving a hypothetical argument)

**What is he saying? Is he insulting and condemning these people?

2 Corinthians 12:10-12 That is why, for the sake of Christ, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. I have become a fool, but you drove me to it. In fact, you should have commended me, since I am in no way inferior to those "super-apostles," even though I am nothing. The true marks of an apostle—signs, wonders, and miracles—were performed among you with great perseverance....

(Paul speaking of himself)

1 Peter 2:15 "...put to silence the ignorance of foolish people." (Peter referring to hypothetical unbelievers)

foolish: anoetos: not understanding, uninformed, unwise - not giving thought to an issue

Luke 24:25 O foolish ones... (an angel speaking to the disciples at the empty tomb - They had not listened to Yeshua's warnings about this very event!)

**What warning is there in this for us?

Romans 1:14 I am under obligation...to the wise and to the foolish (Paul speaking of those he tries to reach with the Gospel)

Galatians 3:1 O foolish Galatians!... (Paul to the people in the church at Galatia who are easily swayed this way and that)

Titus 3:3 For we ourselves were once foolish... (Paul describing himself and his co-workers before they saw the truth of who Yeshua is)

We see the difference between "foolish" and "raca". Neither Yeshua nor Paul though they did seem to get frustrated, never cast angry insults and condemnation. They were warning people not to act unwisely and thoughtlessly, which is really a wake up call, but to say someone is "raca" is to say G-d's nature is not in them.

Galatians 6:1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

11. How does the Sermon on the mount help us at this point, when we are angry without a cause?

12. What is a cause for anger? (Can you think of times when Yeshua displayed anger?)

Yeshua was concerned about how we treat each other.

It is important that we see each other through His eyes. He died for each one of us.

And He concludes with this:

Matthew 5: 23-24 "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.