

Collide – The Heart People

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New Series: The Sermon on the Mount

I'll admit something to you. I was going to continue the God's Mission series today and speak about what it means for us and how it should change us, having a clearer understanding of what the unified story of the Bible tells of God's mission that He is pursuing. I kind of took a rabbit trail, but it's not really a rabbit trail—I've ended up starting a new series, Collide, and we'll speak about that here in just a minute.

So in the God's Mission series that we've been discussing the past few months, we discussed the Bible as a story that unifies all of its contents, pointing to something big. The climax of God's plan, His mission to restore humanity, His relationship with them, that His complete and fierce peace would overtake the world once again. This week, we're going to jump into a very famous event that took place in the timeline of Yeshua's ministry. It's one of the first events that's clearly documented. It's called the Sermon on the Mount. Very famous. You've heard of it. Good. And it's in [Matthew 5](#), and if you could go ahead and turn to Matthew chapter 5, that's where we will begin this week and in coming weeks.

The Context: From Baptism to Disciples

At this point in the story, if you remember, the first couple chapters of Matthew, Yeshua is born and we have that whole Herod incident. Then Yeshua grows and he gets baptized. Then he gets sent into the wilderness, right? You remember the wilderness and the temptation Jesus was talking about? What does it parallel? It parallels the wilderness of Israel. And the three times,

major times, that they fell in the wilderness. He comes out of the wilderness and then he starts picking his disciples.

Now, if you were a typical rabbi, you would go to the best schools and the best universities, right? You'd be asking questions about GPAs and wanting resumes. How did they do in high school? Did they do any extracurricular activities that they were really good at? President of the 4-H club? He sounds like he could be a winner. No, that's every other rabbi that was going to choose disciples to replicate themselves into, right? Yeshua goes for a walk on the beach and he sees a couple of guys fishing, packing up a boat. This was not an elite occupation by far. These young men were likely fishing with their father because they didn't have those grand GPAs. They didn't have all those high school resumes that were just fantastic. They didn't have degrees and certificates from college with honors. They didn't have that, which is why they were learning how to fish. Yeshua comes up and he says, The world's looking at you as underqualified, that this is all you have potential for. Follow me. I see more. I see more. And this is how he begins choosing his disciples.

Matthew, a tax collector, a traitor to his own nation and to his own people. He looks at Matthew and he says, more. You can do more. You can do more. Follow me. This is how he picks his disciples.

Proclaiming the Kingdom

And he goes into all of Galilee and he begins to teach in all the synagogues and everywhere he could get a platform. He starts proclaiming something very specific. What does he teach? What is he proclaiming? The kingdom. The good news of the kingdom of God. God's reign is here. God's reign is birthing into this world now. It is at hand now. And that's so encouraging because the prophets in the Tanakh speak about the gospel and they speak about the good news. It's amazing when I see people get excited, more excited about the Gospels proclaiming this coming good news that's going to happen in the future, sometime. God is on the same mission here, and he's proclaiming this good news. And the New Testament is amazing because the New Testament documents when that good news was birthed into the world. I love that. It's a very big deal.

The Mountain and the Message

And we come to [Matthew 5](#) and Yeshua sits down with a crowd like any other good teacher would do. He's going to sit down, get himself comfortable, and he's going to give this powerful

message that spans several chapters in Matthew. And it's radical. It's a radical message and it's a messy message and it's a hard message. Very hard, but it's powerful.

In Matthew chapter 5 verse 1, Yeshua sat down. Where did Yeshua sit down? On the mountain. Yeshua went up to a mountain and sat down on the mountain. Is that what it says? No, Matthew's being very specific here. Matthew uses a definite article here in the Greek. It's "the." And he makes a point to specify "the." Doesn't give it a name. Doesn't need to. Yeshua went up and sat down on the mountain. Yeshua is about to speak on behalf of God on the mountain. Why does that sound so familiar? Matthew here is intentionally phrasing it this way. It's intentional phrasing. It's not a mountain. It's not a vague phrase. The mountain. He's trying to put an image of the mountain in your head. And it's the same image of the mountain that's all through the Exodus. The mountain. Matthew's trying to force an image of Mount Sinai in your head.

Yeshua went up on the mountain to give a message from God. That happened before with Moses. It was Mount Sinai. This isn't Mount Sinai, but it's the mountain. See, that's when Moses went up on the mountain and he spoke on behalf of God and gave the Torah. This is where the covenant was made after God brought them out of Egypt—the mountain. And here Matthew is setting the stage to show you, not Moses, but a greater Moses, give a greater, deeper message from God.

The Beatitudes

And Yeshua starts out with the Beatitudes. What's that first word? So I got blessed. How many of you think it's blessed? Raise your hand. So we got one, two, three, four. Okay, how many of you think it's blessed? Majority wins. It's amazing because we love to speak in religious language when we read the Bible. A language that we don't speak any other time, but when we open up the word of it, there is a new language. Blessed. No one responds to someone sneezing and says, God blessed thee. May thee be blessed. No, it's blessed. Blessed.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those of you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my

account. Rejoice, be glad, for your reward in heaven is there, for they persecuted the prophets who were before you as well.

Blessed, blessed. And it's fascinating because we always look at this and we think of blessed as being rich. I'm blessed because I got this new car. I'm blessed because this great thing happened to me. And those are blessings. But Yeshua here is making a statement. He's not necessarily saying, if you do this, you'll be blessed. If you do this, you'll get all these blessings. No, he's saying the Greek word there is makarios for blessing. And it actually means it's a state of existence. It's how God sees you. It's the status that God gives you from his point of view and his kingdom. It's providing a very special focus. And this is God speaking. He's saying, yes, yes, you. It's a status that God sees of his kingdom dwelling up. And what is Yeshua preaching? He's preaching God's kingdom.

Blessing for the Overlooked

Who's he preaching it to based on what we just read? The poor. He goes to the poor. Blessed. Those who are mourning, blessed. Those who are persecuted, you're blessed. Those who can't get ahead in this world, those who are outcasts of this world, those who the religious look down on, blessed are you. Those who don't have a fair chance in society, blessed are you. The people that no one really cares about, blessed are you. He looks at them and he says, yours is the kingdom. He looks at them and says, you are included. You're included here. And there's a space here just for you. Just for you.

Be comforted. You yearn to see righteousness and the justice of God manifest. You will be satisfied. You want peace? You will be the sons of God. Sons of God. That sounds familiar. Who's that referring to? Hosea speaks about Israel being the sons of God. Yeshua says the peacemakers will be the ones who are God's people. You want peace? You will be called the sons of the living God.

Right off the bat, radical. Imagine the people sitting around him instead of the other rabbi in town. Couldn't get a front row seat.

Heaven and Earth Colliding

You guys remember the illustration we did a month or two ago about heaven and earth? So heaven and earth in the biblical account were never perceived as these physical domains that heaven is way up there. Beyond that somewhere, you see the Milky Way around the planet and outside the solar system.

And the next couple over, that's heaven. We go there when we die. We float, speed of light, something like that. And then here's earth down here. And the two shall not touch. This is not what the Bible talks about.

The Bible speaks about heaven and earth being created as interlocked. They were created as one. Heaven is the place where God's dominion and reign is fully manifest. It's like his space. And the biblical account speaks about how it was mankind that pushed heaven away from earth to where it was no longer fully engulfed. This is the story of Eden, if you will. And there's several different examples all throughout scripture where heaven is still barely hanging on through these threads and ropes, through these little portals, maybe the temple or altars. These are ways to kind of lasso heaven and just kind of keep it staked down, not separating completely.

This is where heaven meets earth. Yeshua is inviting us to participate in a mission with him, to defeat the powers that are intent in pushing heaven away, and to join him in bringing heaven back. This is the point of his mission. And this is why he's speaking to the people that have experienced hell. No, you have access to heaven now more so than anyone. You are blessed. Your reward is in heaven. He's not talking about way yonder. Follow me. And this is what the sermon that he's about to start preaching is all about. It's about stepping out from how this world says you're supposed to live and walk differently.

Let's say there's a crowd. What a perfect example. What side of the road do we drive on here? The right side. This is great. Have you ever been in a large grocery store or a better example is one of them clubs—Costco, Sam's, BJ's, whatnot—and you got the big cart, like Lowe's or Home Depot style cart to go get your food, right? America, right? I wish all the wheels worked better to make it easier to go around. That's a first world problem. So I can get my food. There's a protocol in America when you operate any form of a vehicle or cargo movement device: you are supposed to drive or operate said vehicle on which side of the road? The right. So when you go into Costco, you are operating a tank. You're supposed to walk on what side of the lane? The aisle. The right side. Everybody knows this. This is why everyone does it.

Heaven and Earth Colliding

What if we all decided to go in, get our buggies, and walk on the left side? What if we wanted to walk on the left side? The world's telling us to go on the right. What if we want to go on the left? What happens? Everyone else who thinks we've got to follow this protocol of this world on the right side, what happens? A collision is going to happen. Same thing in traffic. I want to

start driving on the left side of the road. What if a movement started where everyone started driving on the left side of the road? There would be some collisions. And Yeshua is inviting us. He's calling us out to put ourselves in the direct path of everything this world wants to accomplish apart from God. He wants us to be against it. And he wants us to stand in the wrong aisle, in the wrong lane—because that's not right according to the world. No. This is how we're going to do it God's way. And we're called to say, no, I'm not going to live like that. I'm not. No, I serve a God and he gives the wisdom of what the knowledge of good and evil is, not us. No, I will not be moved. No, I will not walk that way just because everyone else is. No, I will not yield to the pressure. No, I will not allow the powers that be to separate me from my God. I will not. No, I will stand firm. And I don't care how big the force is that's coming. I don't care what you say. My God's reign is stronger than you. And no matter what you throw at me, you are not going to stop him from being victorious.

That's what we're invited to do through this radical struggle. Rabbi by the name of Yeshua. And it's not because of us, it's because of him. And you will collide with everything this world wants to accomplish. And this is Yeshua's invitation to join him in this collision course of heaven and earth. This is the invitation. Be an ambassador of a world that is not here. And let's establish it one step at a time. Let's live out that reality now in the world where they hate you and they will persecute you and it wouldn't seem foreign to them.

It doesn't make sense why you would not strike someone back if they strike you. Doesn't make sense. Yeah, but that's not the reign in the kingdom of God because the reign in the kingdom of God is that there is no retaliation because there is no violence and there is no war and it is supreme peace. And our God has the final say in this declaration of supreme peace. So now someone may strike you and someone may cuss at you and someone may throw something at you. But in the world to come, when heaven fully engulfs this world, it will not be like that. You're not called to live in the world now. You're supposed to live out the world that is not yet as a testimony of it. This is what walking out your faith is. It's your faith in establishing the things that are not seen yet.

So it doesn't work like that. And that you don't understand—explain it to Yeshua. You need to love my enemies. We don't do that. Yeah, but in the world to come, there is no hate and there is no unforgiveness. And there is no war and there are no enemies. So if there's an enemy, it means there's something wrong here, so you need to live out the correct way. You forgive them and you love on them. Do you know what he called me? Send him some flowers. Love on him. Do whatever it takes. Ouch! Ouch! It sounds great, doesn't it? Yeah, that's the right thing to do. Yeah. People who had the biggest problem with this were the religious in the first century.

You Are the Salt of the Earth

Keep going. We get a verse. This is a fun one. So, you are the salt of the earth. Verse 13, if you're still following the scriptures. You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

So, this is one of those verses where, when we assume an author or narrative's position on something and stand by it no matter what, we make ourselves and we make Yeshua look foolish. It's not because the verse is made to look foolish, but because we are assuming a context on something that actually has nothing to do with that.

Let's say we treat this verse like a science textbook. If salt loses its flavor, how can it be restored? You just toss it out the front door, right? But that's a problem because sodium chloride is a very stable compound. It doesn't—salt does not lose its saltiness. Has anyone eaten Himalayan salt? Not something that was made last year, something dug out. The ocean is not salty because we poured salt in it yesterday. Salt doesn't lose its saltiness. Sodium chloride does not.

And if we try to use this verse and say, "Yes it does!" This is why—I was looking at an atheist blog the other day and it was throwing this verse here. People think this is what the Bible says. But that's not what Yeshua was saying. Yeshua knows that salt doesn't lose its saltiness. So in the verse where it says "lost its taste"—this phrase in Greek means to be stupid. Yeshua is playing a word play here, and he's trying to trip his disciples up because disciples know that salt, of course, doesn't lose its flavor. And he's wanting his disciples to ask the question, "Yeah, but salt doesn't lose its flavor, does it?" And he will respond, "Exactly."

I found a great gem. It's in the Talmud, Tractate Becker 8b. This is an identical situation of a rabbi playing the same card. Here's what a rabbi says: "When salt becomes unsavory, how do we get it salty again?" Is that a good question? So the rabbi responds, "You take the afterbirth of a mule and you put it on it." A couple people get it. Does a mule have afterbirth? Can salt be made unsalty? So for those of you who are totally lost, a mule is a mixture between a donkey and a horse, and they are sterile. They cannot have children. They cannot have afterbirth. So someone's asking, "How do you restore saltiness to salt if it loses its flavor?" And the other guy responds, "You put the afterbirth of a mule on it." And the guy says, "Do mules have afterbirth?" And he responds, "Does salt become unsalty? Ask a stupid question, get a stupid answer."

Right? Tasteless salt lacks value. And what Yeshua is setting up here is that there's no way a professed disciple can actually be a disciple and lack commitment. You can't be salt that's lost its

flavor. You can't be a disciple that's lost commitment. This is a very Jewish thing to do, right? So when Yeshua says this, let's put the verse back up.

You are the salt of the earth. Oh, okay. I like this. This is good. But if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It's no longer good for anything. You just toss it out. And the disciples immediately go, yeah, but salt can't lose its flavor. It's like, exactly. You can't claim to be a disciple and not have the commitment and the passion to follow me. It doesn't work like that. And the result's going to be the same. You're tossed out because you're no good and you never were because you never were. You never were salt if you lost your—you see what I'm saying? It's a very striking phrase there. Was that neat?

Tossed Out if You're No Good

Okay. So this is one of those examples that we have to be careful about. You are the light of the world. Verse 14. So Yeshua is saying that God made you to be a human being, fully human, his image. That's what we were made to be—fully human divine image. And you were meant to carry out his reflection to the world. Remember, God's mission, right? Through his images. Working through his images to be fruitful and multiply. Israel's charge. Mankind's charge. Fill the earth with my image. With my reign. Do it. Everything we do should show the world the greatness of our God. Be that light. Be his light. Why? Why are we doing this? So that others may see the light and give glory to God. That's what images do. They see the light and give glory to God. How many of you guys have ever seen this verse before? Verse 17. This is a popular one. We love this one.

"I Have Not Come to Abolish"

Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets, anything that's been written so far. I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. So, background on this phrase. You guys like history? I do. Okay. So, in the first century, when you'd read a commandment in Torah, like the Old Testament, you'd wonder, how do we apply that? How do we even fit that into our culture? That scenario doesn't even exist. How do we fulfill this commandment when it doesn't seem relevant or applicable? I mean, if we can be honest. Or there's some commandments that are very vague. Do not work on the Sabbath. Yeah, well, what does that even mean? Now, yeah, but so when it was written, they were not picturing a hostess at a restaurant. Yeah, right this way. Here you go. Picturing that guy out there chopping wood, getting the donkeys out. Yeah, getting the harvest up, right? I actually saw an Orthodox discussion about this, and one of the Orthodox rabbis was petitioning to say that a hostess isn't breaking Shabbat according to what

the commandment is. And then, of course, 10 other rabbis were like, yeah, she is. But it's a debate. How many of you guys have ever met someone who has a different perception of what working on the Sabbath is? You got someone who's like, are you gardening today? Yeah, I like to garden. It's okay. You're going on a hike today? Yeah, it's just a couple miles up a mountain. What are you doing? Hey, you're not doing anything today? You don't even come to fellowship? Well, yeah, walking's work. True story. It's a very vague commandment.

The Houses of Shammai and Hillel

And so throughout the century, specifically in the first century, there were rabbis and teachers with new interpretations. They wanted to find ways to keep the Torah applicable, to clarify certain commandments, and to allow people to fulfill them in new and impactful ways. Same thing we do today in many churches and synagogues. And there were many different times when this happened. We'll probably discuss this next week a little bit. But consider the house of Shammai. A great rabbi named Shammai, and another one by the name of Hillel. And they had followers, and they had their own yoke or their own teaching of the Torah. And we'll talk about it next week, but they disagreed on the interpretation of divorce in [Deuteronomy 24](#) and what that meant. One rabbi said, well, yeah, I mean, [Deuteronomy 24](#) says if a man finds something unclean in the woman that he marries, he can give her a bill of divorce. Okay, what does that mean? What is unclean? So Hillel said, man, that is anything that makes a husband unhappy—if she talks too loud, get rid of her. If she burns your toast, true story, bye-bye. Anything that you perceive as very liberal and broad. House of Shema comes along. He's like, no, that's stupid. You were abolishing the Torah with that decree. I say that it specifically has to do with adultery. You can't just divorce your wife and break that covenant over burnt toast. Come on, bro. This is what it was. And so if one rabbi, if someone disagreed and saw an interpretation of Torah as completely detrimental to the life of a follower of God, yeah, you're abolishing the Torah. You've totally ruined it. The rabbi would come and say, hey, you've heard it said this, I say, I give this interpretation with authority. This is how you fulfill, right? And this was common. And Yeshua was about to do something very Jewish. And if you want more information on that, IVP, Bible Backgrounds Commentary, has a huge section. It's pretty neat.

Writing the Torah on Your Heart

So Yeshua is giving this preamble of what he's about to say. It's like me coming up here and saying, guys, before I start talking today, I just want you to know what I'm not saying. I have not come to give you something that is going to diminish the word of God in your life. I've come to

talk about how to properly fulfill it. All right. Don't take what I'm fixing to say as obedience from the Torah. Don't take what I'm about to say to be against the Torah and the prophets. Don't take what I'm about to say as destroying the Word of God. No, I've come to show you how to fulfill it, how to fulfill the Torah and the prophets. And I'm bringing you a new and a better interpretation of the Torah than you have right now. I'm going to show you the heart of the Torah—what the Torah looks like when it's written on your heart. And some of you may recognize that phrase. So, jump back. I guess it's an exit ramp. We love those.

Abraham's Charge, Israel's Failure

So a little bit of history, kind of a review on God's mission the last couple weeks. We know that God called a man by the name of Abraham, and he gave Abraham a vocation, a mission. Go out to the world, be fruitful, multiply, and bless everybody. Okay? In my name. Do this. Be a blessing to everyone. I'm charging you with my authority to go out and do this. Abraham has a son by the name of Isaac. Isaac has Jacob. Jacob gets his name changed to Israel. Israel becomes a large nation in Egypt. They become trapped and enslaved. God hears their cries. He takes them. He redeems them. He places them at the foot of the mountain. He gives them the Torah at Mount Sinai. He makes them a covenant. And these stone tablets—their duties and their laws—are filled with justice: how to treat the poor, how to be a good neighbor, don't murder, don't sleep around. Pretty good things. And what was Israel supposed to do as a response to the covenant?

The Torah as Response to Covenant

They were supposed to keep the Torah. Now, how many of you guys know that Torah is not the same as covenant? Torah is the response to covenant. Covenant is relationship. Think about it—relationship is established. We have a relationship, and now the Torah is a way that this relationship is expressed. Okay? And so Israel was supposed to take the Torah, keep the Torah, guard the Torah, and then do what? What was their mission? To go out and be priests of all nations, taking heaven to the ends of the earth. Expand Eden. Go out and multiply. Make more images. Be the mediators of heaven and earth. And Israel did a great job at that. No. It was a farce. Just a huge fail. Huge. And they sought autonomy from God and from the ways and the mission of God, and they found themselves exiled from God because of their disobedience. Story of the garden, right? And they found themselves taken away by the Babylonians because they did not treat the poor with mercy. They enslaved other nations. They did not treat the widows with respect and dignity. They did not love.

Exile in Babylon, Hope in Prophecy

And so God took them to Babylon and made them slaves again, just like in Egypt. And while they were in Babylon, once again in exile, you can imagine being taken away in a foreign land. When are you going to get to go home? When can your family be restored? When can you look out and see the sunset over the Judean mountains like you used to every morning? When can you go back to the temple that was destroyed and worship God like you were supposed to? Can we try again? How will we ever get out of here? God, have mercy. What do we do? And God raises up prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah to preach. And they preach words of peace, encouragement, and hope. In the last few weeks, we've been working through this series, relying heavily on Isaiah's perspective—his encouragement about what God is going to do and how God is going to bring you back.

A Greater Exodus

This is where we get the themes of a greater Moses, the greater Passover, a greater Exodus. Not like the first one. This one's going to be bigger, bigger. It's going to be awesome. Isaiah talks about the true son of David that's coming to rule and reign with God's authority over heaven and earth. This is Isaiah pushing this. And today we're going to jump over to Jeremiah's words, where Jeremiah is talking about the same thing, but differently, and how this scenario of God's redemption, what it will look like, how it will be perceived, and how it's spelled out.

And this takes place, if you turn with me, to [Jeremiah 31](#). [Jeremiah 31](#), 31. Some of you are familiar with this section of Scripture. I thought we were talking about Sermon on the Mount. [Jeremiah 31](#), 31. Everyone got it?

So this is a promise that the prophet is making to Judah in Babylon, and he says, "It's not going to be like that. This is going to be something new. Because they broke my covenant. They broke my relationship. Though I was a husband to them, declares the Lord."

A New Relationship

And so Jeremiah is describing this covenant, and it's this new revelation of God's relationship with Israel. There's something great coming, and it will be a new type of relationship that will not be like the old relationship. No, this one's going to be established on something else. Its foundation is going to be on something else that's going to create it to be something unbreakable.

In verse 33, he said, "This is the covenant. Do I have it up here?" Yeah. "This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my law, my Torah, in their minds, and I will write it. I will inscribe it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will they teach their neighbor or say to one another, 'Know the Lord, know the Lord,' because they will know me intimately. They will all know me. From the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord."

So God's speaking to his people, and when he says they will know him, we think of knowing as association. Yeah, I know who he is. Yeah, I know her. I know him. Yeah, I know God. I know that. The word there, in the ears of the Judeans, yada is a very intimate word. It encompasses intimacy. It's a sexual term. It's one that promotes reciprocity. It's very intimate. When Adam knew Eve, same context. He will know me in a way that produces the strength of this relationship. The word packs a big punch.

And God's telling his people that this new revelation is going to produce a relationship that is based on God's love in their hearts and it will be contagious. And peace will flow through his people and this is going to be a new experience on a level that you could have never imagined.

Not Like the Old

And it's hard to read in the English sometimes when we see that new covenant because we think of this as a completely separate thing that's going to happen. And it's like there's no attachment to the old. And this is something that's taught in a lot of churches today. The new covenant's coming, so the old, let's just unhitch the Old Testament, right? And that's not what it's saying here.

This sense of hope that God is—here's how this section ends. Do I not have it? Here's how the verse ends. Here's how that section of Scripture ends. See, God's making these promises about how this new relationship, they are going to internalize the Torah. It's not just going to be a checklist on the outside, which it's never supposed to be, but something about this relationship is going to force the laws of love and justice and the Torah to be internalized. And it will be a yearning for people to walk out.

And what is this new covenant going to be based on? See, it's not going to be based on, like the last one, him taking them by the hand and pulling them out of Egypt. Something else is going to birth this covenant. And it's this right here: "For I will forgive their wickedness and remember their sin no more." This is the basis of this new covenant that he's speaking about.

Founded on Forgiveness

People who are stuck in Babylon, who know they have sinned, who know they have transgressed God, who are sitting in this foreign place, slaves to pagan gods. And God says, "Listen, I'm going to make another relationship with you. And it's going to start with me forgiving you and with me wiping away your sins and with me blotting out your iniquities." I'm going to forgive you and my forgiveness is going to be the basis of everything that our relationship represents moving forward because you broke the relationship last time. You broke it. This is not a brand spanking new covenant. This covenant depends on—

Like the Phoenix

So I am about to do something that I'm not supposed to do, and that is use a pagan mythological creature as allegory. And this creature is the phoenix. The phoenix. You're familiar, perhaps, with several different names. The phoenix is a bird. It lives for a couple hundred years. And when it dies, what happens? Fire shoots out. I like fireworks, but fire and lava and whatever, and lightning and whatever, and the bird re-emerges as this new creature that is powerful and vibrant and something that wasn't there before. It's reborn.

And I hear a lot of people talk about how the covenant is renewed, like the moon is renewed, the new moon or whatnot. And I feel like that's a horrible injustice to Jeremiah, to speak of God's covenant as something as petty or casual as the moon renewing. No, renewal is like when the phoenix breaks his wing and it gets a bandage and it gets some pills, antibiotics or something. And it's good. It's good. It's like it was before. It's like it was before. So it's renewed.

Specifically, Jeremiah says, "This is not going to be like the one before. This is going to be something different. This is going to be like the phoenix when it dies and it births forth and the fire shoots up and this new creature emerges and is birthed into existence based on the contrast of the death and the decay and the sin and the transgression that it left behind." The backdrop of the new covenant is sin and death and transgression. And the point when God says, "I'm going to wipe all of this away, this is a new covenant. This is a covenant that's reborn. It's a covenant that's born again." And it's powerful.

Relationships Reborn

Think of the first time you became friends with somebody and you have this good relationship. Fast forward to the first fight. Fast forward to that moment when your heart turned to lash out at them and to strike them and to speak words intentionally to wound them. Any married

couples? Never? Never? Just that one time? Shouldn't have said that, but I wanted to because they made me so, right? You wronged someone. Has anyone ever asked forgiveness from someone before? Did you maintain a relationship after that? Was it different? Was it different? Was it stronger? Did you know each other on a different level at that point forward?

This is what Jeremiah is proclaiming. He's saying there's a new covenant that is going to be rebirthed from your sin and your transgression and your breaking of the old covenant. And it's going to be founded on this right here: God's love, mercy, forgiveness. Really inspiring, right? Really inspiring what Jeremiah speaks here. God's ultimate forgiveness, right? I love that.

A Heart People

And yeah, Yeshua speaks during this sermon that we're going to be exploring today. And what Yeshua's looking to create is he's wanting to create a people that have God's spirit and word imprinted on their heart. Not a people that are searching for a checklist to check off because that was the people that existed in the Bible. And they saw the Torah and they said, "Great, I just checked these commandments off. This will be great. I don't actually have to feel for my heart or love or be committed to God's mission that he gave to us. No, I just check off these things." And it didn't work.

And it wasn't God's Torah that failed in the first covenant, the first relationship. It wasn't God's Torah that failed. God's Torah was a blessing to the people. It was the people, the hearts of the people. They chose sin. They chose separation from God. God's going to fix that. It's not going to be like that again. Not going to be like that again.

So I got ahead of my notes. Yeshua's on a mission now when he's speaking to redeem this new kind of people, this redeemed people, that through God's forgiveness do his will because they love him and they know him and pursue him with all of their being. And Yeshua was on a mission to create this heart people, this [Jeremiah 31](#) people, this people that would respond with God's gracious love and in pursuing that mission. This people that will live out God's kingdom the way they were supposed to. This people that will be ambassadors of heaven and bring it to earth. And it all starts with the renovation of the heart.

Renovating the Heart

And if you've read the Sermon on the Mount, you know exactly that's the theme. As Yeshua is speaking about, yeah, I know you can do a checklist, but what about your heart? Because we need to renovate that. And a lot of people think and teach, unfortunately, that the new covenant

comes and the Torah is done away with or Yeshua is doing away with the Torah or something. And no, the Torah is very much part of the new covenant because it's kind of like Jeremiah says it—it's still there.

And Yeshua even gives this huge warning—what I'm about to say may sound controversial because they've been searching for this new breakthrough, this new exodus, this new king, this new covenant, right? Hundreds of years now, is it coming? Is it coming? Will the Messiah come? Is it coming? And Yeshua is about to proclaim, "It's among you now. Let's do it, right?" And so yeah, he says, "I've come to fulfill the Torah."

Anyone in here a father? We've got dads in here. When your child was born, did you fulfill the role of a father in that moment? You're still fulfilling it? You're fulfilling the role of a father. I've not come to abolish the Torah. I've come to fulfill it. I've come to show you how to fulfill it and how to live that out and everything that that's about.

The Smallest Strokes Matter

So, verse 18. Do we have it? Verse 18. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever relaxes 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. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

So, real quick, how many of you guys have iota and jot in their Bibles? Anybody? What does your Bible say? A what? Iota? Anyone got tittles? King James is good stuff. Jots and tittles, right?

So speaking about the smallest Hebrew letters like the Yod—and it's also speaking about, you know, when you're—if you're someone like Audra that does beautiful calligraphy, you know, you stroke the brush every which way and make these little details. I'm not asking, right? I mean, I can't imagine, but right, little stroke here, stroke there—okay, that's how a Torah is written. That's how Hebrew letters are written out. And this is—we're actually using modern Hebrew here—but the point will be the same.

So these are Hebrew letters if you haven't guessed, and up here—if you can kind of see—this is a bet. And it makes the "ba" sound. Right? And here is a "kaf." So what is the difference between these two letters? They're two completely different letters. Can you tell the difference? That little itty-bitty tail almost looks like a mistake. Right there. About the only difference. It's a "jat."

How about a dalet and a resh? What's the difference between these two? This little tail up in the top of the "dalet." Just a little, yeah, just that tiny insignificant stroke. How about a "hey" and a "chet"? A little itty-bitty space in one of the legs. Not one itty-bitty brush stroke will be removed from my Father's rule and reign till heaven and earth pass away. I'm not here to do that. But I'm here to show you how those little strokes, dots, can have a huge impact if you apply them and internalize them in the place where it matters.

Torah as Blessing and Burden

And so Yeshua's, you know, telling us that the Torah is a very special part of God's plan. It's supposed to be a blessing, but we became a slave to it when we sought autonomy from God. It condemns us, as it should, when we refuse to allow it to work in us.

And then Yeshua says something that's really disturbing. Did any of you get a little disturbed when I read the last part of that verse, in verse 20? "I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you will never inherit the kingdom of heaven."

Everyone's just smiling and happy-go-lucky, no problem. And I'm over here like, uh-huh. Because the Pharisees, I mean, they did pretty well at the whole Torah thing and prophets thing and religious thing. And the scribes memorized it. I mean, just. So unless you're better than them, you can never enter it.

How many of you guys have read that—Yeshua's asking you to be a Pharisee, but I want you to crank it up a couple notches. Be better than a Pharisee, right? You need to be an uber-Pharisee, right? Anyone ever read it that way before and been a little confused? Like, that's a lot. I can't hardly go outside without tripping around on something. You know, good gracious, all those laws and commandments. And which Pharisaic group do I attach myself to? And, you know, can I walk more than 50 feet on Sabbath? Like, what if I use a restroom? Like, how does that work? It's a true story. And the thing is, I've heard some people claim that. I've heard some people say that no, you need to be above. So the most Orthodox Jewish man you can find today, you need to be more Orthodox than he is. That's what Yeshua said. And you're not a follower of Yeshua if you don't do that. I've heard this. Maybe some of you have as well.

What Yeshua Actually Does

And if we actually read the rest of the Bible and the rest of the gospel accounts, this is not what Yeshua does. This is not what Yeshua does. When Yeshua tells a man to carry his bed on Shabbat, yeah, go ahead and carry your bedroom furniture on Sabbath. That was very un-

Pharisee. I mean, I believe so. It's very un-Pharisee. When Yeshua was healing on the Sabbath, playing doctor, it's very un-Pharisee. No, there were some Pharisees. "Oh, no, no, no, we need to do that. That's okay." They were considered a little liberal. Liberal fringe.

Harvest grain on the Sabbath to eat? Very un-Pharisee. How about inviting unclean people to come sit at your table, share salt with them and dine? Allow prostitutes to fellowship with you, tax collectors, traders to fellowship with you. That's not really a Pharisee thing to do either.

And in [Matthew 22](#), an expert of the Torah comes up and he's a Pharisee and he challenges Yeshua. He says, "Yeshua, what is the greatest commandment?" And Yeshua does something very Jewish again. He gives him two. Love God and love your neighbor. So if we were going to merge those two and have a single commandment, what would that commandment be? It's one word: love. Love God and love your neighbor as yourself.

And then he says something very profound: "Among all the commandments, all the Torah, they hang on these two." So when we look at the Ten Commandments, we know the first, what, four, are all about loving God. Don't take his name in vain. Don't cheat on him with other gods. Don't make, you know, keep the Sabbath, keep it holy. It's his day that proclaims his reign. Keep that holy. It's a testimony of him bringing you out of your sin and slavery. We keep that day. And the last six are about loving who? Your neighbor.

Love, the Greatest Commandment

And we see Yeshua criticizing the Pharisees, not God. Not for abolishing the commandments of loving God. They seem to do those commandments very well. What did he scold the Pharisees constantly for doing? Abolishing the Torah as far as loving their neighbor from their heart. And then he kind of flips it around. He's like, if you can't love your neighbor, then how have you ever experienced God's love in you? And how are you ever going to be a vessel of God's love to the world?

Yeah, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Pharisees and the scribes, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Love is kind of a big one. It's what the new covenant's based on. It's God's love for us. And we share that with the world.

And I don't know if we have time. I'd like to... Yeshua now starts his sermon! Yay, okay. He now starts his lecture, and we're just going to read one part of it today in verse 21. It speaks about anger, and he says: "You've heard that it was said of those of old, 'You've heard it said, you shall not murder,' but whoever murders is liable to the judgment. But I say to you, everyone who is

angry with his brother will be liable to judgment. It's the same thing. Whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council. Whoever says, 'You fool,' will be liable to the hell of fire."

Reconciliation Before the Altar

"So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled with your brother and then come and offer your gift. Come to turns quickly with your accuser while you were going to him to court, lest your accuser hands you over to the judge. And the judge to the guard and he puts you in prison. Truly I say to you, you will never get out until you've paid your last penny."

Let me change this around a little bit. So basically he's making murder synonymous with being angry with someone. So my intimidation levels just went up. And he says in verse 23: so if you're kneeling before God in prayer and you have an offense from another brother to you or vice versa, stop and go reconcile with your brother and make sure that you have forgiven them before you approach God again. Because you need to make sure those things are taken care of. Because if you have things in your heart that are not of the kingdom of God, don't try to go before. This is how the Lord's Prayer actually concludes. If you do not forgive your brother, God's not going to forgive you.

Like, why are you? "You've heard it said, don't murder." Where does that come from? Where have we heard that word? Where is that? It's the Torah. Okay, Yeshua's quoting Torah. Yay. No one else excited that Yeshua is confirming Torah? Okay. Yeshua's quoting Torah, and it's not done away with, far from it.

You Are a Murderer

But I say—here we go. Yeshua is about to do something very Jewish again. In the first century, he's giving an authoritative application of the Torah. If you have anger or hatred towards your brother, where? Where? Down in my heart. You are a murderer, and you have broken the Torah. But I didn't murder anybody. Like, I didn't. What are you talking about? Like, that's a little extreme. No, you didn't get a knife and jab it into someone's chest. No. But that's how you've interpreted that commandment and what it means. So you feel righteous because you haven't lashed out and stabbed somebody to death.

Interpreting Murder in the Heart

Yeshua is saying that your interpretation is wrong. Yeshua is saying that you're interpreting that commandment wrong. No, I'm saying that fulfilling the law and what it means to be on your heart is that if you become angry and you dehumanize someone in your heart and you want hurt to come to them and you want to mock them in your mind and you want to lower their status in your own heart, you have taken their identity away, at least even in your own heart. You've killed them. You are a murderer and you have broken the law of God. He was just being metaphorical or whatnot. It's not what he says. But I say, you're a murderer and you've broken the law of God. See, because someone who has the Torah internalized and on their heart doesn't go around and think those things to people.

It's hard, isn't it? It's hard. It's hard. God's calling us to a higher standard. One of the Pharisees apparently couldn't meet. And I will be the one in here. Hey guys, my name is Matthew Vanderells, and I think badly about people sometimes. I get angry. It's a struggle. And Yeshua is saying you need to acknowledge that. And you do not let that grow in your heart towards anybody, despite what they've done to you, what they've said to you, how they've hurt you. But I feel justified. But you're not. The Torah in your heart is still valid, and it's more valid in your heart. It's not just a checklist. I didn't stab someone today. Some of us, that's a struggle. Yeshua is saying, in your heart, it's in your heart. It doesn't have to translate to action for it to be broken. If your heart is molding the murder of someone, then guess what? You're a murderer. And if you struggle with that, it's time to renovate. It's time to acknowledge that.

If that unforgiveness has been with you for so long now and you can't, it's time to get rid of that. It's time to get the hammer, chisel it out today, like now. That one person that you always think badly about or you want to see them fail, it's time to chisel that out because you're a murderer. Stop it. Stop killing. Stop being a murderer. Stop slaughtering others in your heart. I told you it was going to be a hard message, and it's not mine. This is the words of Yeshua. And yeah, we can go ahead and have the worship team come up to conclude the message.

Matthew's Gospel and the New Covenant

Matthew has a very specific agenda here, and he's portraying a greater Torah being given on the mountain through a greater Moses. And Yeshua is giving and portraying the Torah in this way because it imprints on the heart. And he's saying, guess what? God is doing a new thing, and there is a rebirth that can happen with you today. You can be reborn, and there is a new covenant that God is working in and working through, and it will not be like the last one. This one will make you different. There will be a difference. And Yeshua says that if you've hated

someone in your heart, you have dehumanized them. If you desire evil in your heart, gosh, our hearts produce the most awful things, don't they? It's horrible.

This is how we flip the world upside down. These are the teachings that were spoken forth by this radical rabbi that flipped the world upside down. And this is what we're called to participate in. We're called to walk on the wrong side of the aisle. The world wants to walk on this side. No, we walk on this side. The world says, yeah, but you can think those things about other people as long as you don't actually do something or say something. You can think about —no, no, I cannot. That's wrong. You're a murderer. That's murder.

These words started a revolution 2,000 years ago, and it has spread to all four corners of the world, and the elect have been gathered, and you're part of that in this teaching of this rabbi from Nazareth who gave this interpretation that had the authority of God behind it. This is how we imprint Torah on our hearts. This is what it looks like to be the heart people, the [Jeremiah 31](#) people of God, to obey Torah from the foundation of the reborn covenant, and we live out that vocation. We are forgiven. And that is why we strive to go forward. That is why we serve our God, because he first forgave us.

Invitation to Live Heaven Now

And so Yeshua invites us—he invites us to live out this world differently, and he wants us to live out heaven. He wants us to live out this world that he spoke about and established, the reign of heaven here in this world now. And I'd ask you to stand. We'll go ahead and conclude services with a time of worship and praise and to a God that wants a new revelation and wants you to know him in a new way, a new testimony, a new covenant. And he wants a relationship with you based on his mercy and his love and his forgiveness in your life.

And I don't know where you're at today, but maybe you know what it's like to be hurt by someone else with heart issues. Maybe you know what it's like to mourn. Maybe you know what it's like to be poor in spirit. Maybe you desire peace in the world that denies it from you. Or maybe you're the one with a heart issue. I don't know. Maybe you're the one that has those issues of slander and murder in your heart, of lust and arrogance in your heart. Yeshua invites you to follow him and to begin that renovation now. And we have a prayer team here up front if anybody would like for someone to intercede with them. Because, guys, this is a fellowship where we believe we should support each other. And if that's you today, I invite you. Take advantage of this. Take advantage of this. And if you've never experienced the overtaking weight of God's forgiveness and God's yearning to hold you, you can. You can. You can.

And I invite you to commit your life to that king, to this rabbi, who said, "Hey, there's a better way to live." Shalom.

I'm Matthew Vanderells and I hope you enjoyed this message.

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