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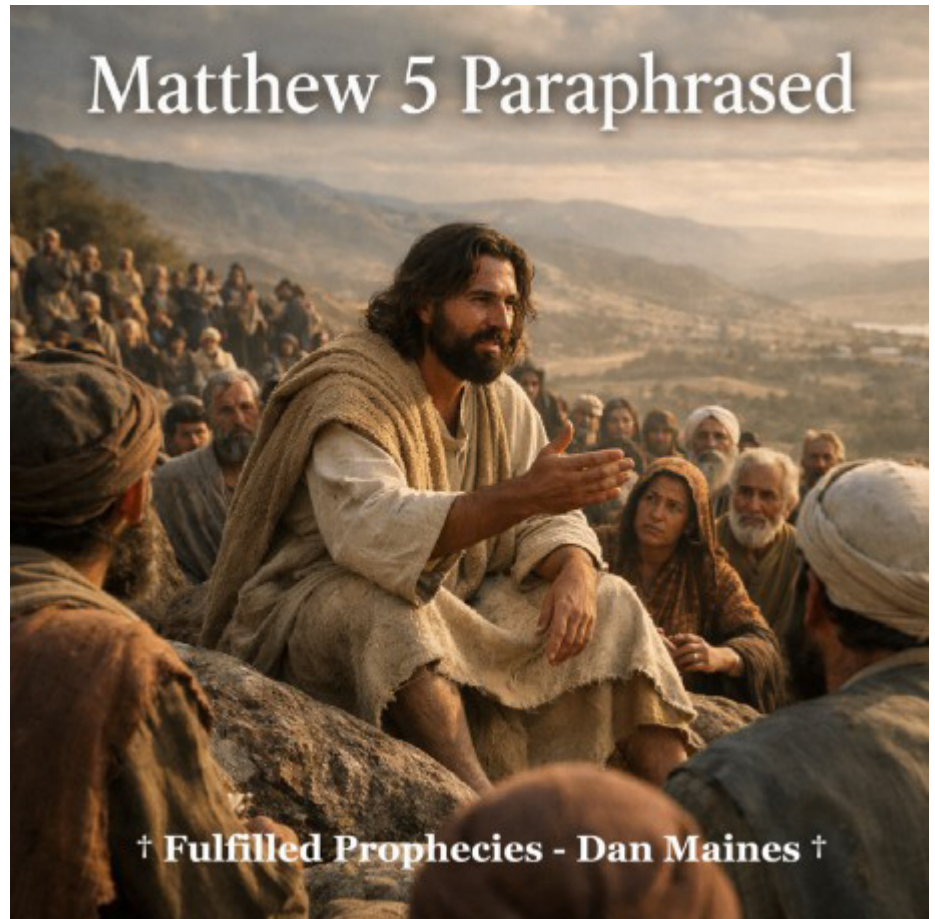
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Matthew 5 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

Matthew 5 Paraphrased

Introduction

† Jesus spoke these words early in His ministry while crowds followed Him through Galilee, explaining what life looks like inside the kingdom He was bringing to fulfillment (Matthew 4:23-25).

† This teaching wasn't about creating a new legal system but revealing the heart and character of the kingdom that was arriving in their generation (Matthew 16:27-28).

† The message exposed the failure of the religious leaders and pointed people back to God's true intent for righteousness (Matthew 23:23).

Matthew 5:1

When Jesus saw the crowds gathering around Him, He went up the hillside, sat down, and His disciples gathered close to listen.

† Sitting down was the common posture of a teacher with authority in Jewish culture, showing that what follows is an authoritative explanation of God's kingdom (Matthew 7:28-29).

† This moment marks the beginning of a major teaching section where Jesus reveals the true nature of righteousness beyond the traditions of the Pharisees (Matthew 23:2-3).

† The disciples are the primary audience, though the crowds also heard these words, meaning the teaching applies to those who follow Him (Matthew 7:28).

Matthew 5:2

He began speaking and started teaching them these things.

† The phrase shows deliberate instruction, meaning Jesus wasn't giving random sayings but carefully explaining kingdom truth (Matthew 13:10-11).

† This teaching would challenge the entire religious system of the time by exposing hypocrisy and restoring God's true standards (Matthew 15:7-9).

† What follows forms the foundation of kingdom living under Christ's authority (Matthew 28:18-20).

Matthew 5:3

Blessed are those who recognize their spiritual need and humility before God, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to them.

† Being poor in spirit means recognizing one's complete dependence on God rather than trusting personal righteousness (Luke 18:13-14).

† The kingdom wasn't promised to the proud religious elite but to the humble who knew they needed mercy (Isaiah 57:15).

† This reverses the expectations of the Jewish leadership who believed status and law-keeping guaranteed favor (Luke 16:15).

Matthew 5:4

Blessed are those who grieve over sin and brokenness, because they will receive comfort.

† Mourning here refers to sorrow over sin and the fallen condition of the world, not just personal hardship (Ezekiel 9:4).

† Those who mourn over sin are promised comfort through the redemption God was bringing through Christ (Isaiah 61:1-3).

† This comfort ultimately came through the completed work of Christ and the restoration of covenant relationship (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

Matthew 5:5

Blessed are the gentle and humble, because they will inherit the earth.

† This reflects Psalm 37:11 where the meek inherit the land promised by God.

† Meekness isn't weakness but controlled strength that trusts God rather than forcing power (Numbers 12:3).

† In the fulfilled kingdom, inheritance isn't gained through violence or dominance but through submission to God (James 4:6).

Matthew 5:6

Blessed are those who deeply long for righteousness, because they will be satisfied.

† Hunger and thirst describe intense desire, meaning true believers crave God's righteousness above all else (Psalm 42:1-2).

† Jesus Himself became the source of righteousness for those who believe (Romans 3:22).

† This promise points to the fulfillment of covenant righteousness through Christ's completed work (Romans 5:1).

Matthew 5:7

Blessed are those who show mercy to others, because they themselves will receive mercy.

† Mercy reflects the character of God, and those who understand His mercy naturally extend it to others (Micah 6:8).

† Jesus repeatedly condemned the Pharisees for lacking mercy while obsessing over minor legal details (Matthew 23:23).

† Mercy demonstrates true understanding of God's grace rather than empty religion (James 2:13).

Matthew 5:8

Blessed are those with sincere and pure hearts, because they will see God.

† Purity of heart refers to inner sincerity rather than outward religious performance (Psalm 24:3-4).

† Jesus constantly exposed the religious leaders for outward holiness while their hearts remained corrupt (Matthew 23:27-28).

† Seeing God speaks of covenant relationship restored through Christ (John 14:9).

Matthew 5:9

Blessed are those who work to bring peace, because they will be called sons of God.

† Peacemakers reflect the character of God who reconciles people to Himself (Romans 5:10).

† Jesus Himself came to bring reconciliation between God and humanity (Colossians 1:20).

† True peace is found in restored relationship with God through Christ (Ephesians 2:14-16).

Matthew 5:10

Blessed are those who are persecuted because they pursue righteousness, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to them.

† Righteous living often brings opposition from those who reject truth (2 Timothy 3:12).

† The early church experienced persecution precisely because they followed Christ faithfully (Acts 5:40-41).

† Jesus warned His followers this would happen, yet promised the kingdom belongs to them (John 15:20).

Matthew 5:11

You are blessed when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely accuse you of evil because you follow Me.

† Jesus prepared His disciples for the hostility they would face from the religious system of their day (John 16:2).

† False accusations were common against the early believers (Acts 6:13).

† Their suffering was connected to loyalty to Christ, not wrongdoing (1 Peter 4:14).

Matthew 5:12

Rejoice and be glad, because your reward in heaven is great, for the prophets before you were persecuted the same way.

† The prophets throughout Israel's history faced rejection when they spoke God's truth (2 Chronicles 36:16).

† Jesus placed His followers in the same line of faithful witnesses (Hebrews 11:32-38).

† The reward refers to God's approval and the coming fulfillment of His kingdom promises (Luke 6:23).

Matthew 5:13

You are the salt of the earth, but if salt loses its flavor, how can it be made salty again? It becomes useless and gets thrown away and trampled by people.

† Salt preserved and flavored food, symbolizing the preserving influence of God's people in the world (Leviticus 2:13).

† If believers abandon their calling, their witness becomes ineffective (Luke 14:34-35).

† Jesus was warning Israel's leaders who had already lost their spiritual influence (Matthew 23:13).

Matthew 5:14

You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill can't be hidden.

† Light represents truth and revelation from God (Isaiah 60:1-2).

† Israel was originally called to be a light to the nations but had failed in that mission (Isaiah 49:6).

† Jesus restored that calling through His followers (Philippians 2:15).

Matthew 5:15

People don't light a lamp and then hide it under a basket. Instead they place it on a stand so it gives light to everyone in the house.

† Truth is meant to be displayed, not hidden (Luke 8:16).

† The gospel was never intended to remain private but to spread outward (Matthew 28:19).

† Jesus' disciples were called to visibly represent God's truth.

Matthew 5:16

Let your light shine before people so they see your good works and honor your Father in heaven.

† Good works point people toward God rather than bringing attention to ourselves (1 Peter 2:12).

† Jesus contrasts this with hypocritical religious displays done for human praise (Matthew 6:1).

† True righteousness glorifies God through transformed lives (Titus 2:7-8).

Matthew 5:17

Don't think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I didn't come to abolish them but to bring them to their intended completion.

† Jesus fulfilled the entire Old Covenant system through His life, death, and resurrection (Romans 10:4).

† The law pointed forward to Him and found its goal in His work (Galatians 3:24).

† Fulfillment means completion of its purpose, not destruction

(Luke 24:44).

Matthew 5:18

Truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke will disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.

† Heaven and earth often symbolize the covenant world of Israel (Isaiah 51:16).

† Jesus was affirming the law's authority until its fulfillment was complete (Hebrews 8:13).

† That fulfillment culminated in the judgment of Jerusalem in AD 70 (Luke 21:22).

Matthew 5:19

Whoever relaxes even the smallest command and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches them will be called great.

† Jesus was correcting the misuse of the law by the religious leaders (Matthew 23:23).

† Faithful teachers explain God's truth accurately rather than manipulating it (James 3:1).

† True obedience flows from a transformed heart (Jeremiah 31:33).

Matthew 5:20

I tell you that unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

† The Pharisees emphasized external rule-keeping while ignoring the heart (Matthew 23:25).

† Jesus demanded a deeper righteousness rooted in genuine transformation (Romans 2:28-29).

† Only through Christ can that righteousness truly exist (Philippians 3:9).

Matthew 5:21

You have heard that the people long ago were told not to murder, and that anyone who commits murder would face judgment.

† Jesus refers to the commandment given in the Law, showing the people already knew the outward rule (Exodus 20:13).

† He begins exposing that God's concern has always included the heart, not just the visible act (1 Samuel 16:7).

† The religious leaders focused only on external behavior while ignoring inner corruption (Matthew 23:27-28).

Matthew 5:22

But I tell you that anyone who stays angry with his brother will also face judgment, and whoever insults his brother will answer before the court, and whoever calls someone a worthless fool risks the fire of judgment.

† Jesus reveals that hatred in the heart leads to the same destructive spirit as murder (1 John 3:15).

† God's standard of righteousness reaches beyond actions to the motives and attitudes within (Jeremiah 17:10).

† The warning shows how serious unchecked anger and contempt can become.

Matthew 5:23

So if you are presenting your offering at the altar and suddenly remember that your brother has something against you,

† Worship without reconciliation was never acceptable to God (Isaiah 1:11-17).

† Jesus teaches that broken relationships must be addressed before pretending to honor God.

† True worship includes peace with others whenever possible (Romans 12:18).

Matthew 5:24

leave your offering there in front of the altar, go first and make peace with your brother, then come back and present your

offering.

† Reconciliation takes priority over ritual activity (Hosea 6:6).

† God values restored relationships more than religious performance.

† This teaching exposes the emptiness of outward religion without genuine love.

Matthew 5:25

Settle matters quickly with your opponent while you are still with him on the way to court, otherwise he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you could be thrown into prison.

† Jesus uses a practical legal situation to show the wisdom of resolving conflict early (Proverbs 25:8-10).

† Delay in reconciliation often leads to harsher consequences.

† This reflects the broader principle of seeking peace and humility.

Matthew 5:26

I tell you the truth, you won't get out until you have paid the very last coin.

† The statement stresses the seriousness of unresolved wrongdoing.

† Justice demands full accountability when reconciliation is ignored.

† Jesus' listeners would understand the weight of debt and legal punishment in their society.

Matthew 5:27

You have heard it said, Do not commit adultery.

† Jesus refers again to the Law given through Moses (Exodus 20:14).

† The people knew the command outwardly but often ignored the deeper meaning.

† This prepares the audience for the deeper heart issue Jesus will address next.

Matthew 5:28

But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

† Jesus reveals that sin begins internally before it becomes external action (James 1:14-15).

† God judges the intentions of the heart, not only visible behavior (Hebrews 4:12).

† This teaching exposed the hypocrisy of leaders who claimed purity but entertained corruption internally.

Matthew 5:29

If your right eye causes you to stumble, tear it out and throw it away. It is better to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into judgment.

† Jesus uses strong imagery to emphasize the seriousness of removing sin from one's life (Colossians 3:5).

† The point is decisive action against sin, not literal self-harm.

† Radical commitment is required to avoid destruction.

Matthew 5:30

If your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be cast into judgment.

† The teaching reinforces the urgency of dealing with sin decisively.

† Anything leading to sin must be removed from our lives.

† Jesus often used vivid imagery to impress spiritual truth upon His listeners.

Matthew 5:31

It was also said, Whoever divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.

† This refers to the legal provision found in the Law (Deuteronomy 24:1).

† Many teachers had twisted this allowance into permission for easy divorce.

† Jesus addresses the abuse of this provision.

Matthew 5:32

But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except in the case of sexual immorality, causes her to commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

† Jesus restores the seriousness of marriage as originally intended by God (Genesis 2:24).

† The teaching corrected the loose divorce practices common among some Jewish teachers.

† Marriage was meant to reflect covenant faithfulness.

Matthew 5:33

Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, Do not break your oath, but fulfill the vows you make to the Lord.

† Oaths were meant to reinforce truthfulness before God (Numbers 30:2).

† Over time people created complicated systems to avoid responsibility for their promises.

† Jesus exposes the manipulation of oath-taking.

Matthew 5:34

But I tell you not to swear at all, not by heaven because it is God's throne,

† Jesus points out that invoking heaven still involves God.

† The teaching challenges dishonest attempts to appear truthful.

† Integrity should make elaborate oaths unnecessary.

Matthew 5:35

not by the earth because it is His footstool, not by Jerusalem because it is the city of the great King.

† Everything ultimately belongs to God and cannot be separated from His authority (Psalm 24:1).

† Swearing by these things was still indirectly invoking God.

† Jesus dismantles the loopholes people used.

Matthew 5:36

And do not swear by your own head because you cannot make even one hair white or black.

† Human beings lack the power to control life as they pretend.

† This exposes the foolishness of making exaggerated promises.

† God alone holds authority over life.

Matthew 5:37

Let your statement simply be yes or no. Anything beyond this comes from evil.

† Honest speech should not require elaborate guarantees.

† Jesus calls for simple truthfulness in daily communication.

† Integrity removes the need for manipulative speech.

Matthew 5:38

You have heard it said, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

† This principle originally limited revenge by establishing proportional justice (Exodus 21:24).

† It was meant for legal courts, not personal retaliation.

† Many people had misapplied it as justification for revenge.

Matthew 5:39

But I tell you not to resist an evil person violently. If someone slaps you on the right cheek, turn the other also.

† Jesus teaches restraint and humility instead of revenge.

† The example refers to personal insult rather than life-threatening attack.

† Kingdom living rejects retaliation as the normal response.

Matthew 5:40

If someone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also.

† Jesus illustrates generosity and non-retaliation.

- † This teaching challenges selfish attachment to possessions.
- † It encourages humility and peace.

Matthew 5:41

If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two.

- † Roman law allowed soldiers to compel civilians to carry loads for one mile.
- † Jesus teaches willing service rather than resentment.
- † This attitude reflects kingdom humility.

Matthew 5:42

Give to the one who asks, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

- † Generosity reflects the character of God (Deuteronomy 15:7-8).
- † The principle encourages compassion rather than selfishness.
- † True righteousness includes practical kindness.

Matthew 5:43

You have heard it said, Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.

- † The command to love neighbors came from the Law (Leviticus 19:18).
- † The idea of hating enemies was a later distortion by some teachers.
- † Jesus corrects this misunderstanding.

Matthew 5:44

But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

- † This command reflects the mercy of God Himself (Luke 6:35).
- † Loving enemies breaks the cycle of hatred.
- † It reflects the character of God's kingdom.

Matthew 5:45

In doing so you show that you are children of your Father in heaven, because He causes the sun to rise on the evil and the

good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

† God's kindness extends even to those who reject Him (Acts 14:17).

† This demonstrates His patience and mercy.

† Followers of Christ reflect that same character.

Matthew 5:46

If you love only those who love you, what reward is there in that? Even tax collectors do the same.

† Tax collectors were widely despised yet still showed kindness to friends.

† Jesus challenges His followers to exceed ordinary human behavior.

† Kingdom love goes beyond personal benefit.

Matthew 5:47

If you greet only your brothers, what are you doing that others don't do? Even the Gentiles behave that way.

† Genuine righteousness stands out through uncommon kindness.

† Jesus again contrasts kingdom character with normal human behavior.

† God's people are called to a higher standard.

Matthew 5:48

Therefore you must be complete in your character, just as your heavenly Father is complete.

† The word translated complete speaks of maturity and wholeness (James 1:4).

† Jesus calls His followers toward the character of God Himself.

† This summarizes the entire teaching of the chapter.

Historical References

† Josephus recorded the intense corruption among the religious leadership during the first century.

† Tacitus described the tensions in Judea that eventually led to

the destruction of Jerusalem.

† Eusebius later documented how early Christians understood Jesus' warnings and teachings in light of those events.

How It Applies To Us Today

† True righteousness begins in the heart, not just outward behavior.

† Jesus calls believers to radical honesty, humility, and mercy.

† The character of God's kingdom still shapes how believers live and treat others.

Q & A Appendix

Q: Why did Jesus focus on the heart instead of just actions?

A: Because sin begins internally before it becomes visible behavior (James 1:14-15).

Q: What does loving enemies accomplish?

A: It reflects God's mercy and breaks cycles of hatred (Luke 6:35).

Q: What does it mean to be complete like the Father?

A: It means growing toward maturity and reflecting God's character (James 1:4).

Q: What does it mean to be the salt of the earth?

A: It means believers preserve truth and influence the world by living faithfully according to God's ways (Matthew 5:13; Philippians 2:15).

Q: What did Jesus mean when He said He fulfilled the Law?

A: He completed its purpose and brought everything it pointed to into reality through His life and work (Romans 10:4; Luke 24:44).

Q: Why did Jesus teach about anger being connected to murder?

A: Because hatred in the heart is the root that leads to destructive actions, and God judges the inner motives of people (1 John 3:15; Hebrews 4:12).

Q: Why did Jesus warn about lust being adultery in the heart?

A: He was revealing that sin begins in the mind and heart long before it becomes outward behavior (James 1:14-15; Job 31:1).

Q: Why did Jesus command people to love their enemies?

A: Because God's mercy extends even to those who oppose Him, and His people reflect that same character (Luke 6:35; Romans 5:10).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Matthew 5:21-48; Exodus 20:13; James 1:14-15; Jeremiah 17:10; Isaiah 1:11-17; Romans 12:18; Hosea 6:6; Proverbs 25:8-10; Exodus 20:14; Hebrews 4:12; Colossians 3:5; Deuteronomy 24:1; Genesis 2:24; Numbers 30:2; Psalm 24:1; Exodus 21:24; Deuteronomy 15:7-8; Leviticus 19:18; Luke 6:35; Acts 14:17; James 1:4

† Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews; Tacitus, Histories; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History.

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