

Wisdom From the Gospels

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Some of the best-known teachings of Jesus are contained in a talk he gave on a mountain near Capernaum, a city located on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Commonly known as the Sermon on the Mount, this talk is recorded in chapters 5 through 7 of the Bible book of Matthew. These teachings are presented here to help you benefit from the wisdom of Jesus.

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MATTHEW

5 When he saw the crowds, he went up on the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. **2** Then he opened his mouth and began teaching them, saying:

3 “Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need, since the Kingdom of the heavens belongs to them.

4 “Happy are those who mourn, since they will be comforted.

5 “Happy are the mild-tempered,* since they will inherit the earth.

6 “Happy are those hungering and thirsting for righteousness, since they will be filled.*

7 “Happy are the merciful, since they will be shown mercy.

8 “Happy are the pure in heart, since they will see God.

9 “Happy are the peacemakers,* since they will be called sons of God.

10 “Happy are those who have been persecuted for righteousness’ sake, since the Kingdom of the heavens belongs to them.

11 “Happy are you when people reproach you and persecute you and lyingly say every sort of wicked thing against you for my sake. **12** Rejoice and be overjoyed, since your reward is great in the heavens, for in that way they persecuted the prophets prior to you.

13 “You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt loses its strength, how will its saltiness be restored? It is no longer usable for anything except to be

5:5 *Or “meek.” 5:6 *Or “satisfied.” 5:9 *Or “peaceable.”

thrown outside to be trampled on by men.

14 “You are the light of the world. A city cannot be hid when located on a mountain. **15** People light a lamp and set it, not under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it shines on all those in the house. **16** Likewise, let your light shine before men, so that they may see your fine works and give glory to your Father who is in the heavens.

17 “Do not think I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I came, not to destroy, but to fulfill. **18** Truly I say to you that sooner would heaven and earth pass away than for one smallest letter or one stroke of a letter to pass away from the Law until all things take place. **19** Whoever, therefore, breaks one of these least commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in relation to the Kingdom of the heavens. But whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in relation to the Kingdom of the heavens. **20** For I say to you that if your righteousness does not surpass that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you will by no means enter into the Kingdom of the heavens.

21 “You heard that it was said to those of ancient times: ‘You must not murder, but whoever commits a murder will be accountable to the court of justice.’ **22** However, I say to you that everyone who continues wrathful with his brother will be accountable to the court of justice; and whoever addresses his brother with an unspeakable word of contempt will be accountable

to the Supreme Court; whereas whoever says, 'You despicable fool!' will be liable to the fiery Ge-hen'na.*

23 "If, then, you are bringing your gift to the altar and there you remember that your brother has something against you, **24** leave your gift there in front of the altar, and go away. First make your peace with your brother, and then come back and offer your gift.

25 "Be quick to settle matters with your legal opponent, while you are with him on the way there, so that somehow the opponent may not turn you over to the judge, and the judge to the court attendant, and you get thrown into prison. **26** I say to you for a fact, you will certainly not come out of there until you have paid over your last small coin.

27 "You heard that it was said: 'You must not commit adultery.' **28** But I say to you that everyone who keeps on looking at a woman so as to have a passion for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. **29** If, now, your right eye is making you stumble, tear it out and throw it away from you. For it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be pitched into Ge-hen'na.* **30** Also, if your right hand is making you stumble, cut it off and throw it away from you. For it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to land in Ge-hen'na.*

31 "Moreover, it was said: 'Whoever

5:22 *The place for burning refuse outside of Jerusalem. The Greek name for the Valley of Hinnom, southwest of ancient Jerusalem. There is no evidence that animals or humans were thrown into Gehenna to be burned alive or tormented. So the place could not symbolize an invisible region where human souls are tormented eternally in literal fire. Rather, Gehenna was used by Jesus and his disciples to symbolize everlasting destruction, annihilation. **5:29, 30** *See footnote for 5:22.

divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' **32** However, I say to you that everyone divorcing his wife, except on account of sexual immorality,* makes her a subject for adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

33 "Again you heard that it was said to those of ancient times: 'You must not swear without performing, but you must pay your vows to Jehovah.'

34 However, I say to you: Do not swear at all, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; **35** nor by earth, for it is the footstool of his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. **36** Do not swear by your head, since you cannot turn one hair white or black. **37** Just let your word 'Yes' mean yes, your 'No,' no, for what goes beyond these is from the wicked one.

38 "You heard that it was said: 'Eye for eye and tooth for tooth.' **39** However, I say to you: Do not resist the one who is wicked, but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other also to him. **40** And if a person wants to take you to court and get possession of your inner garment, let him also have your outer garment; **41** and if someone in authority compels you into service for a mile, go with him two miles. **42** Give to the one asking you, and do not turn away from one who wants to borrow* from you.

43 "You heard that it was said: 'You must love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' **44** However, I say to you: Continue to love your enemies and to pray for those who persecute you,

5:32 *From the Greek *por-nei'a*, a term used in the Scriptures to refer to certain sexual activities forbidden by God. It includes adultery, prostitution, sexual relations between unmarried individuals, homosexuality, and bestiality. **5:42** *That is, borrow without interest.

45 so that you may prove yourselves sons of your Father who is in the heavens, since he makes his sun rise on both the wicked and the good and makes it rain on both the righteous and the unrighteous. **46** For if you love those loving you, what reward do you have? Are not also the tax collectors doing the same thing? **47** And if you greet your brothers only, what extraordinary thing are you doing? Are not also the people of the nations doing the same thing? **48** You must accordingly be perfect,* as your heavenly Father is perfect.

6 “Take care not to practice your righteousness in front of men to be noticed by them; otherwise you will have no reward with your Father who is in the heavens. **2** So when you make gifts of mercy,* do not blow a trumpet ahead of you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be glorified by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. **3** But you, when making gifts of mercy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, **4** so that your gifts of mercy may be in secret. Then your Father who looks on in secret will repay you.

5 “Also, when you pray, do not act like the hypocrites, for they like to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the main streets to be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. **6** But when you pray, go into your private room and, after shutting your door, pray to your Father who is in secret. Then your Father who looks on in secret will repay you. **7** When praying, do not say the same things over and over again as

5:48 *Or “complete.” **6:2** *Or “gifts to the poor.”

the people of the nations do, for they imagine they will get a hearing for their use of many words. **8** So do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need even before you ask him.

9 “You must pray, then, this way:

“‘Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified.*’ **10** Let your Kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also on earth. **11** Give us today our bread for this day; **12** and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. **13** And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver* us from the wicked one.’

14 “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; **15** whereas if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

16 “When you fast, stop becoming sad-faced like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces* so they may appear to men to be fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. **17** But you, when fasting, put oil on your head and wash your face, **18** so that you may not appear to be fasting to men but only to your Father who is in secret. Then your Father who looks on in secret will repay you.

19 “Stop storing up for yourselves treasures on the earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal. **20** Rather, store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes, and where thieves do not break in and steal. **21** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

6:9 *Or “be held sacred; be treated as holy.” **6:13** *Or “rescue.” **6:16** *Or “they neglect their appearance.”

22 "The lamp of the body is the eye. If, then, your eye is focused, your whole body will be bright.* **23** But if your eye is envious,* your whole body will be dark. If the light that is in you is really darkness, how great that darkness is!

24 "No one can slave for two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will stick to the one and despise the other. You cannot slave for God and for Riches.

25 "On this account I say to you: Stop being anxious about your lives as to what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your bodies as to what you will wear. Does not life mean more than food and the body than clothing? **26** Observe intently the birds of heaven; they do not sow seed or reap or gather into storehouses, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth more than they are? **27** Who of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his life span? **28** Also, why are you anxious about clothing? Take a lesson from the lilies of the field, how they grow; they do not toil, nor do they spin; **29** but I tell you that not even Sol'o-mon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. **30** Now if this is how God clothes the vegetation of the field that is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much rather clothe you, you with little faith? **31** So never be anxious and say, 'What are we to eat?' or, 'What are we to drink?' or, 'What are we to wear?' **32** For all these are the things the nations are eagerly pursuing. Your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

33 "Keep on, then, seeking first the Kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you. **34** So never be anxious about the next

6:22 *Or "full of light." **6:23** *Lit., "bad; wicked."

day, for the next day will have its own anxieties. Each day has enough of its own troubles.

7 "Stop judging that you may not be judged; **2** for with the judgment you are judging, you will be judged, and with the measure that you are measuring out, they will measure out to you. **3** Why, then, do you look at the straw in your brother's eye but do not notice the rafter in your own eye? **4** Or how can you say to your brother, 'Allow me to remove the straw from your eye,' when look! a rafter is in your own eye? **5** Hypocrite! First remove the rafter from your own eye, and then you will see clearly how to remove the straw from your brother's eye.

6 "Do not give what is holy to dogs nor throw your pearls before swine, so that they may never trample them under their feet and turn around and rip you open.

7 "Keep on asking, and it will be given you; keep on seeking, and you will find; keep on knocking, and it will be opened to you; **8** for everyone asking receives, and everyone seeking finds, and to everyone knocking, it will be opened. **9** Indeed, which one of you, if his son asks for bread, will hand him a stone? **10** Or if he asks for a fish, he will not hand him a serpent, will he? **11** Therefore, if you, although being wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more so will your Father who is in the heavens give good things to those asking him!

12 "All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must do to them. This, in fact, is what the Law and the Prophets mean.

13 "Go in through the narrow gate, because broad is the gate and spacious is the road leading off into destruction, and many are going in through

it; **14** whereas narrow is the gate and cramped the road leading off into life, and few are finding it.

15 “Be on the watch for the false prophets who come to you in sheep’s covering, but inside they are ravenous wolves. **16** By their fruits you will recognize them. Never do people gather grapes from thorns or figs from thistles, do they? **17** Likewise, every good tree produces fine fruit, but every rotten tree produces worthless fruit. **18** A good tree cannot bear worthless fruit, nor can a rotten tree produce fine fruit. **19** Every tree not producing fine fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. **20** Really, then, by their fruits you will recognize those men.

21 “Not everyone saying to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter into the Kingdom of the heavens, but only the one doing the will of my Father who is in the heavens will. **22** Many will say to me in that day: ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and expel demons in your name, and per-

form many powerful works in your name?’ **23** And then I will declare to them: ‘I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness!’

24 “Therefore, everyone who hears these sayings of mine and does them will be like a discreet man who built his house on the rock. **25** And the rain poured down and the floods came and the winds blew and lashed against that house, but it did not cave in, for it had been founded on the rock. **26** Furthermore, everyone hearing these sayings of mine and not doing them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. **27** And the rain poured down and the floods came and the winds blew and struck against that house, and it caved in, and its collapse was great.”

28 When Jesus finished these sayings, the effect was that the crowds were astounded at his way of teaching, **29** for he was teaching them as a person having authority, and not as their scribes.

