

Study Guide: Matthew Lesson 65-The Sermon on the Mount – Christ and the Law

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This study guide explores the teachings of Jesus Christ regarding the Law and righteousness, as found in the Gospel of Matthew. The focus is on Lesson 65 of the Sermon on the Mount series, specifically analyzing Matthew 5:20 and the surrounding context. This lesson compares the external legalism of the religious leaders of the time to the internal heart transformation required by God.

Quiz: Understanding the Lesson

1. According to the lesson, what is the primary purpose of God's Law for a believer?
2. How does the text describe the professional responsibilities of the Scribes?
3. What were the two specific types of Scribes mentioned as existing in Israel?
4. How did the Pharisees differ from the Scribes in their approach to the Law?
5. What was the main political goal of the Zealots as described in the source?
6. Who were the Essenes, and how did they choose to live out their faith?
7. In Matthew 5:21–22, how does Jesus Christ expand the definition of murder?
8. Why did the Pharisees develop a system of over 600 rules and rituals?
9. According to the teaching, why is human goodness or righteousness insufficient for entering the Kingdom of Heaven?
10. What does the speaker say is necessary for a person to properly prepare for the Lord's Supper?

Answer Key

1. The purpose of the Law is to show individuals that they cannot fulfill God's standards on their own. It demonstrates that a person needs more righteousness than they can produce through their own efforts.
2. Scribes were considered the scholars and authorities of the Law who dealt with its interpretation and recording. They were detail-oriented experts who struggled over fine points and copied the text verbatim.
3. There were civil Scribes and religious Scribes. Civil Scribes acted like notaries for government business, while religious Scribes studied, recorded, and interpreted the Law of Moses.
4. While Scribes were official scholars, Pharisees were a sect that developed a rigid system of ceremonial rituals and traditions. They focused on being "separatists" who believed they were spiritually superior to common people.
5. The Zealots were political radicals and assassins who wanted to overthrow the Roman government. They often carried small knives to stab Romans in crowds before disappearing.
6. The Essenes were a mystical, antisocial group that lived in monastic communities, such as Qumran near the Dead Sea. They withdrew from society to live in caves and were the precursors to the monastery movement.
7. Jesus Christ teaches that the Law against murder includes internal anger. He states that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause is in danger of judgment, just like a murderer.
8. They created their own rules because they could not keep the true Law of Moses. By lowering the standard and creating a system of human achievement, they could convince themselves they were righteous.
9. Human righteousness is external and often masks a heart full of impure thoughts or hatred. Entering Heaven is only possible through Jesus Christ because He is the conveyor of true righteousness that exceeds human ability.
10. A person must have a pure heart and be in a position of humility before the Lord. The speaker encourages believers to confess, repent, and search their hearts for any "unequal yokes" with the world before participating.

Essay Questions

1. **Internal vs. External Righteousness:** Explain the difference between the "external" righteousness of the Pharisees and the "internal" righteousness required by Jesus Christ. How does the example of the "whitewashed tomb" illustrate this difference?
2. **The Metaphor of the Potter's Wheel:** Discuss the meaning of the speaker's advice for Christians to "stay on the potter's wheel." Why is being moldable and pliable important for a believer's relationship with God?
3. **The Role of the Scribes and Pharisees:** Analyze why the Jewish people of that time believed that if only two people went to Heaven, one would be a Scribe and one a Pharisee. Why did Jesus Christ use these two groups as the standard to exceed?
4. **Redefining the Law:** Choose one of the examples Jesus Christ gave (murder or adultery) and explain how He moved the focus from a physical action to a heart condition. What does this tell us about God's standards?
5. **The Greatest Commandment:** Based on Matthew 22:37–38, explain how loving God with all of one's heart, soul, mind, and strength serves as the foundation for true obedience. Why is this considered the first and greatest commandment?

Glossary of Key Terms

Term	Definition
Covenant	A formal, solemn, and binding agreement; in the text, it refers to the New Covenant established by the blood of Jesus Christ.
Essenes	A mystical Jewish sect that lived in caves and withdrew from society to maintain holiness.
Hypocrite	A person who puts on a false appearance of virtue or religion; Jesus Christ applied this to leaders who were clean outside but "rotten" inside.
Legalist	Someone who focuses strictly on the letter of the law and external obedience rather than the spirit or heart behind it.
Monastic	Relating to a lifestyle of religious seclusion, similar to monks living in a monastery.
Pharisee	A member of an ancient Jewish sect distinguished by strict observance of traditional and written law, often characterized as "separatists."
Righteousness	The quality of being right or justifiable; in a biblical sense, it is a state of being in right standing with God.
Scribe	A scholar or professional clerk in ancient Israel who specialized in the study and recording of the Law of Moses.

Sect	A group of people with somewhat different religious beliefs from those of a larger group to which they belong.
Zealots	A political group in ancient Judea that used radical or violent means to seek independence from Roman rule.

Greek Language Reference Section

The following terms used in the study guide are derived from Greek words mentioned or described in the source context.

English Term	Greek Root	Phonetic Pronunciation	Definition
Scribe ¹	<i>Grammateus</i>	gra-ma-TE-oos	A person who deals with the letter of the law, including recording and interpreting scripture.
Pharisee ²	<i>Pharisaios</i>	fa-ri-SAI-os	A member of a religious sect; the name comes from a root meaning "to separate."

¹ The source identifies this word as the origin of the term "grammar" and relates it to those who handle the recording of the Law. ² The source defines this term based on its root meaning "to separate," identifying the Pharisees as religious "separatists."