

Talk It Over

Deep Problems...Deeper Grace

(Week 4)

How To Make Your Life A Sweet Fragrance

SMALL TALK

1. When in your life did you feel closest to God?

VIEWPOINT

2. **READ Matthew 5:17-20.** What did Jesus say was the goal with regard to the "Law and the Prophets"?
3. Have you heard any church leaders do what Jesus warned not to do (Matthew 5:19)?
4. **READ Matthew 23:25-28** What was the main problem with the Pharisees version of righteousness, and what surpassing righteousness does Jesus call us to?
5. **READ Matthew 5:1-16** Do you see the progression of steps Jesus already described for a surpassing kind of righteousness?

GETTING PERSONAL

6. What is step 1 for entering into Jesus' Kingdom? What helped you realize your need for step 1?
7. What does it mean to "practice" the commandments? (Matthew 5:19) Who's job is it to "teach" them? (Matthew 28:20)

MAKING PROGRESS

8. One of our core statements is: "Followers say, 'Follow me.'" What was Jesus' last commandment about commandments (Matthew 28:19-20) and what does that have to do with you this week? Anything?

September 27, 2020

Deep Problems, Deeper Grace

~~4-Lift The Sewer Lid~~

How to make your life a sweet fragrance!

Here is the target for us:

2 Corinthians 2:15 (NIV2011) For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing.

But there is a wrong way to get to that target...

I. **We want to HIDE our STINK**

Modern cities hide their stink. Sewers are all covered. It is a matter of pride.

Sewer lids are heavy metal lids. They are not easy to lift. I've seen where they have a little hole in them so you can insert a lever to open it.

God's law is that lever. And pride is the sewer lid.

This is a metaphor: God's law is the lever and the sewer lid is our pride.

Many of us have been trained to make sure the stink inside us is always hidden, clamped shut and never opened. We don't want anyone to know what is underneath so we hide it. It is a matter of pride! But this is the wrong way to become the sweet fragrance God wants us to be.

It seems right, but it doesn't work.

Jesus confronted the religious elite of his day repeatedly for this misleading approach:

*Matthew 23:26 (NIV) First clean the **inside** of the cup and dish, and then the **outside** also will be clean.*

*Matthew 23: 28 (NIV) “...on the **outside** you appear to people as righteous but on the **inside** you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.”*

When Jesus spoke to the crowd in what is called the Sermon on the Mount, he applied the lever to the pride of religion, and exposed it for what it was. He exposed what was underneath. And He spoke with authority. He interpreted the law in a way none of the teachers of his day interpreted it. And He interpreted it correctly. He lifted the heavy lid of religious pride and exposed the hidden stench by teaching God's Law correctly.

In His Kingdom Manifesto (The Sermon on the Mount) He shocked his audience with this statement!

*Matthew 5:20 (NIV2011) For I tell you that **unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.***

This was a shocking thing to say! It shocked the audience because everyone thought the Pharisees religiosity was the most rigorous standard of what it looked like to be “right with God”. But Jesus said, and I paraphrase: “NOPE!”

A sweet smelling life is nothing like theirs—not even close! You must aim for smelling sweet through and through and not settle for externally perfumed coverup or false appearances!

The Pharisees were known to be judgmental, harsh, and self-righteous, and they thought a lot of themselves. They were filled with PRIDE (the kind we talked about last week) presenting themselves and thinking of themselves as better than others. They viewed themselves as the standard of righteousness everyone should aspire to.

But Jesus said, NOPE, you need a completely different approach in my Kingdom. In my Kingdom I will reign in your life. I will help you clean stuff up from the inside out! You need this because God looks right past a good looking façade and into your heart! Jesus' Kingdom manifesto was so different, it sets a standard people have been studying ever since. The way he began it was shocking and so other worldly and different people had difficulty understanding it, but he pressed deeper and deeper as he spoke, and he spoke with authority.

II. But we must ADMIT our STINK SHOW AND TELL

BEATITUDES (See Matthew 5:1-10)

1...Poor	5...Merciful
2...Mourn	6...Pure
3...Meek	7...Peacemakers
4...Hungry	8...Persecuted

When you know you are POOR IN SPIRIT—Spiritually Bankrupt—you know your need and look to the King. When you do, you receive MERCY and the Kingdom, and now the **outflow** from your life is being MERCIFUL.

When you MOURN your sin and confess it, your heart is washed and you begin to experience a PURE HEART, that is it is no

longer duplicity, but **INSIDE** and **OUTSIDE** begin to match authentically. The **outflow** is authenticity and integrity!

When you are **MEEK** (humble) you have influence that is filled with Kingdom power to make peace...winning the war and bringing reconciliation. You are a **PEACEMAKER**, reflecting God's DNA, and you are called "children of God".

We used to play the old game **RISK** as kids, where we take over the world with powerful armies. The whole game is a calculating if you have enough power to take over. The meek know who has the power, and walk in **HIS** way not the way of this world. It isn't the way of a hostile take over. The outflow is the way of the meek, caring, gentle, loving **peacemakers**. Like in the game of **RISK** this way takes over the whole earth, and the meek inherit it.

When you **HUNGER** and thirst for **RIGHTEOUSNESS**...God fills you and you become the sweet fragrance of **CHRIST**...pleasing to God and those being saved, but offensive to others who will **PERSECUTE** you because of **RIGHTEOUSNESS**. Just know this... Yours is the Kingdom of Heaven. The same blessing that starts the series and progression caps the series and progression, it is all King Jesus through and through.

Main point: We all stink, and hiding your stink doesn't solve it! Exposing it to the King who rules first in **YOU**. Will change you from the inside out, and then rule the whole world.

III. The commandments expose what's INSIDE

Jesus uses God's commandments as a lever to lift the lid and expose what is inside so that we can have that good and beautiful life he described that must surpass the sham of the Pharisees and teachers of the law.

Now he uses the commandments to lift the lid of our sewer to be cleaned out and cleaned up. Are you ready? Hold your nose. Here we go.

Matthew 5:21-22 (NIV2011) “You have heard that it was said ... ‘You shall not murder... But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister ... will be in danger of the fire of hell.

God says, don't think you are clean just because you have not actually murdered anyone. You have the stuff of murder in you when you get angry with someone. Your smoldering anger stinks so bad, it will be judged. It precludes you from heaven if you don't do something about it.

Murderous feelings and words exposed

This is how Jesus exposes our hearts. Light exposes darkness by revealing what we want to hide. When light exposes the darkness, the best thing to do is walk in that light by agreeing with what God reveals!

Once exposed we need to cry out for mercy and forgiveness for our sinful contempt for another human being, or we will be in danger of what!?

Jesus is very clear. We will be in danger of the fires of hell if we don't allow the concealed words and feelings to be washed clean.

If we cry out for God's grace, through the cross that has already purified our stench through the fires of judgment on the cross, we can be cleansed, and grace received to change us from the inside out.

Matthew 5:27-30 (NIV2011) “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her

in his heart...

God says, don't think you are clean just because you have not actually committed adultery. You have the stuff of adultery inside of you every time you look at someone with lust in your heart.

Stop making excuses for it!! No more saying your entertainment choices are no big deal! Stop saying you are not hurting anyone. Your sin crucified Christ. It's warping you. Treat your sin like gangrene that is poisoning your soul!! Look at the lustful entertainment choice as a disease that is killing you. Do whatever you can to gouge it out. It is about to kill you and bring you your body to the judgment of Hell! Don't excuse your concealed hidden thoughts and behaviors..

IV. Look in the MIRROR as a daily routine

James 1:22-25 (NIV) ...Anyone who ... does not do what it says is like someone who looks ... in a mirror ... and immediately forgets what he looks like. {25} But whoever looks intently into the perfect law ...not forgetting ...but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

V. Obedience is the PROOF of grace received not the CAUSE of salvation.