

# **Week 8: Monday      Scripture: Matthew 5:8; 5:27-30**

## **SUMMARY/BACKGROUND OF TEXT**

Jesus, in His sermon on the mount, gives examples for Christian living. Jesus says that the pure in heart are blessed, and they “will see God”. This is the ultimate comfort in Christendom that for all the toil and trouble that we have on this earth, we will see God one day and be reconciled to His presence. Pure in heart is not to be confused with perfection. We will never be perfect—even though it is something to strive towards. But God, in His redemptive power and sanctifying process, purifies our hearts as we learn and grow with Him. Now a little while later, we have Jesus talking about adultery, which is a part of law found in the Ten Commandments. While the thought of the day was that adultery was an outward action Jesus says otherwise. He says it is a matter of the heart. Someone doesn’t have to have committed the act in order for it to be a part of their heart. Their heart is not pure it still has that sin in it. This is echoed by Paul when he says that “All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.” But yet there is hope. God’s sanctifying work can and will continue in us even though we struggle with sin.

## **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

1. Have you ever sinned in your heart before actually acting on the sin?
2. If adultery is a sin of the heart before it is in action do you think there are other sins that are similar?
3. What can we do about sins of the heart?

## **GOSPEL CONNECTION**

Sin is not only a matter of what we do but it is a matter of the heart and it is a matter of the heart long before it manifests itself in action. This should not discourage us from continuing in our faith. In fact, it should spur us forward into the grace and love of God and what He has done and will continue to do as we learn more about Him and His grace, mercy, love, and kindness.

## **OPTIONAL ACTIVITY**

Have a jar of salt that you bring with to Bible time. In front of the campers sprinkle black sand, or something similar, into the salt. Use a fork to push down the black substance into the salt a couple of times. Talk about how sin does not just affect us in that moment but infiltrates into who we are.

# **Week 8: Tuesday    Scripture: Matthew 5:9; 5:21-26; 7:12-14**

## **SUMMARY/BACKGROUND OF TEXT**

Jesus' sermon outlines how Christians should be conducting themselves. Here, Jesus promises that peacemakers will be blessed and be seen as sons (and daughters) of God. Christians should be promoting peace and reconciliation among one another. Jesus later goes on to say that those who are angry with one another will be judged for that anger. Instead of holding onto anger and resenting someone, we are to approach them and work towards reconciliation with them. We are to treat others how we want to be treated—with grace and respect and kindness. This way of living is difficult; yet, following Jesus' commandments leads to great life.

## **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

1. Is it always easy to make peace between others?
2. How does striving towards forgiveness and reconciliation help us thrive?

## **GOSPEL CONNECTION**

Jesus is commanding us to be reconcilers with one another. Although it may be easier to be angry and hold resentment towards someone, when we have conflict we need to go to people right away and talk with them. Part of being peacemakers is the maturity to go to one another and talk through that conflict—even when it is uncomfortable. Jesus also goes over the Golden Rule. The Golden Rule does not say “treat others well when they treat you well.” If we are holding onto anger and resentment towards others we will not be able to treat them in the way we want to be treated.

## **OPTIONAL ACTIVITY**

Have campers write letters to people they need to reconcile with.

# **Week 8: Wednesday      Scripture: Matthew 5:10; 7:1-6, 15-20**

## **SUMMARY/BACKGROUND OF TEXT**

Jesus tells us in Matthew 5:10 that those who are persecuted for righteously following after God will be blessed. In this life, we will face persecution from others. It may be easy to respond with harsh words and judgment when the world persecutes us. However, persecution will come and our faithfulness to God will be noticed and blessed. In Matthew chapter 7, Jesus is very clear when He tells us not to judge others. How we judge others and see others is how God will judge and see us. So, if we are harsh and condemn others, we will be condemned for that. However, if we treat others with mercy and grace that is how we will be treated.

## **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

1. What does the fruit of someone following after God look like?
2. Can you think of time that you have felt judged by others? How did you respond?

## **GOSPEL CONNECTION**

Jesus is warning against walking around and pointing out the faults in others and exploiting others. Rather, He tells us to look at ourselves and our own issues and sin. Instead of acting like we have all of the right answers and judging others for their sins, we should be reflecting on ourselves and noticing the things about us that don't reflect the Bible. That's what he means when He talks about the plank in our eye—we need to address our own vision before looking to others. Later on in the chapter, Jesus goes on to talk about the fruit of others. He warns against false prophets and those who falsely say that they follow God. Jesus tells us to look to the fruit of people's lives to see if they are following Christ. Those who are walking with God will be bearing fruit for Him as opposed to those who say they are following God but have no fruits to show. So, while we're looking to ourselves and looking at the plank in our eye, we should also be examining the fruits that are in our lives. If we aren't bearing fruit for God then we need to work towards displaying those fruits. One of the fruits is gentleness—we need to be gentle in our conversations with others, not judgmental. We also should be speaking to others with love and grace. God shows us great grace which we should be showing to others.

## **OPTIONAL ACTIVITY**

Skit time! Have a counselor with a HUGE log in their eye for the entirety of Bible Time. Have another counselor pointing out the log the entire Bible Time. Then, towards the end, have the one who is making all the negative remarks start acting like their eye is irritated. The person with the log in their eye goes over to help get that speckle out.

# **Week 8: Thursday Scripture: Matthew 5:12; 7:24-27**

## **SUMMARY/BACKGROUND OF TEXT**

In Matthew 7:24-27, Jesus describes the importance of having a firm foundation—of building your house on the rock. To have a house built on the rock requires hearing the words of Jesus, listening, and acting upon them. The firm foundation only comes through having a life dedicated to God and following Jesus' teachings. However, those who hear the words of God and don't listen will not have a firm foundation for their life. Jesus also commands us to rejoice in Matthew 5:12. We have reason to rejoice when we follow Christ because our rewards are not in this life but in heaven. We have reason to rejoice because we have the promise of salvation. We have reason to rejoice because a life in Christ is cause for celebrating.

## **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

1. What does it mean to have a house built on the Rock?
2. How can we be building our house on the Rock—what steps can we take to have a firm foundation?
3. What are some reasons to rejoice? How can we continue rejoicing even in the difficult times? Why do we always have a reason to rejoice?

## **GOSPEL CONNECTION**

God is constant. He is strong. He is resilient. He should provide the foundation for our lives. Throughout the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gave instruction for how we should be living our lives. He never said it would be easy. However, Jesus does tell His followers that those who follow His instructions will have a life that is built on the foundation of God—a life built on a solid rock—and that foundation of following what He has said will provide strength through the storms of life that will come. Notice how Jesus didn't say *if* the rain comes. He said *and* the rain fell. But because God is constant and steady, if we are built on Him our foundation will be able to stand through the storm of life. Jesus also talks about rejoicing in chapter 5. He commands us to rejoice because we have the promise of eternity and rewards in heaven, even when life doesn't feel rewarding. We have constant reason to rejoice because of our foundation with God and our promise of heaven if we believe and follow after Christ.

## **OPTIONAL ACTIVITY**

Take campers to volleyball court/sand box and have them try to build a "house" in the sand. After a while, pour some water on their houses and see how it holds up. Then go back to the shelter and have a structure already made out of rocks. Pour water on the rocks and demonstrate what a better foundation does for the structure.

# **Week 8: Friday      Scripture: Matthew 5:13-16**

## **SUMMARY/BACKGROUND OF TEXT**

This passage of Scripture is found on the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus is talking to crowds of people. In these verses, Jesus explains how followers of God are the salt of the earth and the light to the world. Both of these metaphors explain how our life in Christ should be one that sets us apart from the world with the purpose of pointing to Christ and what He has done for us.

## **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

1. What does it mean to let our light shine? How can our light be shining at all times?
2. What is salt used for? What does it mean for us to be salty in this context?

## **GOSPEL CONNECTION**

Both salt and light have important roles in society. Salt has two purposes: flavor and preservation. As Christians, our lives have more flavor, more zest, because we are following God and in relationship with Him. Salt also helps to preserve things from becoming rotten. So, if we are to be salt we should be helping to preserve things—the world—from rotting. It is only by having God work through us that we can be the salt. However, life as a Christian should “taste” differently than living of the world; also, life as a Christian should be helping the rest of the world experience Christ and help to preserve.

Being the light is an important responsibility. Light provides contrast to darkness and helps to expose. By being the light in the world, we are shining Christ so that others can see Him. Also, by being the light of Christ our lives should expose the darkness of the world and show what true light looks like.

## **OPTIONAL ACTIVITY**