

Working With The Voice Transcript

WWTV Episode 011

Commentary on The Sermon on the Mount: Part 1: The Beatitudes

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Hi listeners! This is Juliet Mee with working with the voice. We are back to the part of the course that goes into the scripture of the book of Matthew. Nobody likes to be told what to do, unless they are in a really bad spot or on if they want to shorten the way to something very good. Today's lesson will be on something very good, the list of eight blessings called the Beatitudes, that begin the Sermon on the Mount the most famous and longest recorded sermon that we have from Jesus. And it tells us what to do. There's a lot to deal with in this sermon, and it forms a basis of what we think of as a Christian morality and ethics code. There is a copious amount of material available in this sermon that contains these three chapters, Matthew 5, 6 and 7. The two sources I feel have helped me the most are the Matthew Henry Commentary and the 12 part series that Ron Julian did for Gutenberg College. The series is available as a podcast and through iTunes U. Both of these sources provide much more insight into the material than I could ever do through this podcast. Realistically, there is so much material in the Sermon on the Mount that is important that we could probably do an hour on each line. So although this episode will just scratch the surface of the material, let's get started.

I want to begin by thanking the reader of the actual scripture of the Sermon on the Mount, JoDee Herschend. JoDee is a person I have learned so much from, and she is the perfect person to read this section. She is one of those people that I don't think there is a term for, but we all have them. She just kept showing up in my life and now is so important to me that I don't know what I would have done without her love and loyalty. Her presence affirms to me that God watches over us in every minute and has a plan for our protection and support. He provides solutions before you even know you have a problem. I met JoDee first when I was six years old. My dad and her mother were friends, and I momentarily met her while my father was dropping something off at her mother's house. I was more interested in her children that were with her because they were about my age. I thought it was ironic that I ended up worked for their company, Silver Dollar City, when I was a teenager. Years later, she would come into my life again as a client. We had many odd bonding moments, and JoDee and her husband Peter became business and spiritual mentors to me. They taught me the meaning of forgiveness, love, and devotion. They listened to me, gave me advice, and supported me in ways that I am undeserving of. Their kindness to me and care for me is so humbling that just thinking about it has made me cry many times. At first when she was my client, I thought she was simply nuts. She would stay on me all the time to acknowledge the presence of God in my life, especially when I got blown up in importance over one of "my" achievements. I thought she was preaching at me, trying to convert me to her way of thinking, and I knew I was smarter than that so I made sure I stayed slippery. One day I had said to her something about not wanting to be preached at and she said, "It's so funny you see it that way. To me, I'm offering my friend the best candy I ever ate." She once said to me that I should be careful of the influence of "the evil one" in my life, and I practically snorted with laughter when I told her I needed to put "Remember to believe in the devil" on a sticky note for my bathroom mirror. Once I figured out that the voice that had been helping me was the Holy Spirit, so many things she had said to me previously fell into place, and I saw her in such a different way. She had been providing me stable and consistent love for close to twenty years in the face of my unbelievable disrespect. I don't know why she didn't give up on me, but she didn't. She had been right, telling me truth all along. If she got mad at me, she never let me know.

The Sermon on the Mount teaches us many things about how we are to treat one another. Life is about our relationship with God, our relationship with other humans, and the work we do that leaves this place better because we were here. It's about how we qualify ourselves to be used by the Holy Spirit at the highest level. There is absolutely nothing so wonderful as having a friend who treats you the way that God wants us to treat one another. JoDee, you are a gift, and I cherish our friendship. Thank you for reading this sermon.

Chapter 5 Introduction to the Sermon on the Mount

Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him,² and he began to teach.

The Beatitudes

He said:

³Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

⁷Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

⁸Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.

¹²Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

So the last time we heard about what Jesus was doing, he had been tempted by the devil in the wilderness, and began to teach once he heard that John the Baptist had been put in prison. He chose four of his main disciples who would become apostles, and his teachings began to create big crowds of people coming to be healed and to hear what he had to say. It is said that every person was healed, and that the message of his teaching was, "repent for the kingdom of heaven has come near".

It is always important to maintain the understanding that Jesus was an observant Jewish man who was considered to be a rabbi. He taught people who were Jews, and who saw him in that light. The book of Matthew's intended audience was the Jewish people, and there are many cultural things that would have been understood at that time because they were part of the culture.

For instance, Jesus was considered to be a rabbi, which didn't signify the formal position that the term does now. Rabbi means "my great one" and if a person was considered to be a rabbi, he was a teacher who had students who were disciples. There isn't really a good way to signify the relationship between a rabbi and his disciples in Jesus's time, but it wasn't just a regular teacher-student relationship or preacher-congregant relationship like we have today. The tie went much deeper. A person would consider carefully who they wanted to become a disciple to because every Jewish person of this time knew that the scripture had all authority over every aspect of life. They hadn't been delivered the New Testament covenant yet and they were living under the Old Testament covenant where it wasn't the internal processes of the person that determined if they were to be considered "righteous", it was their behavior. The rabbi was the example of conduct and character for his disciples. Many Jews truly desired to honor God by doing the right things, and a rabbi was to teach not only facts, but reasoning processes and how to perform religious practices that related to the over 600 rules that governed Jewish life. A

person would request to be a disciple of a rabbi and if the rabbi allowed them to be his disciple, the disciple was expected to totally submit to the rabbi's teachings for his life. The fact that the rabbi had to allow the request of a person to be a disciple was because once a person was a disciple, the rabbi was responsible for the disciple. Jesus would not have taken his responsibilities to his disciples lightly, and he knew that he was asking them to believe and act upon principles that were treacherous at the time. He promised them that he would be with them always, that he would never leave them. He didn't say, I will be with you until I can't do it anymore because these guys over here are going to kill me, and heads up, they are going to kill a bunch of you guys too. He said, I will be with you always. And He still says that to us and fulfills the promise made by the actions of the Holy Spirit. That is one thing that is told repeatedly by people who experience direct communication with the Holy Spirit. He promises you he will never leave you.

So Jesus had regular students, he had disciples, and he specifically chose twelve disciples that then became his apostles. The apostles were disciples who had been specifically trained by Jesus because they would be given the rights and responsibilities to teach what Jesus had taught them and to spread his message throughout the world. These apostles were with Jesus constantly and would be eye witnesses of miracles and would have heard his teachings daily. They would have been able to ask him questions about anything and get answers. The Holy Spirit will do the same for us now. Once you establish the communication and have faith in it as true, then you can ask questions at any time and get answers. But in my experience, the Holy Spirit answers clearly but expects us to do some work too. He expects us to think deeply, not just use formulas that are popular today like "Ten steps to prosperity; do them to gain earthly wealth!" or "What you can do to end suffering in your life and world!" Although the message of Christianity is supposedly well known, looking around me with a neutral, non-criticizing eye, I have to say that its not well practiced. To know the words of Jesus is different than wrestling with your nature to align with them. But know this for sure, God knows your every thought and intention. If you have a true desire to find God and you are wrestling to implement that understanding, you will be taught and fed. Just don't expect to be able to set up your own curriculum. The Holy Spirit will teach you everything you need to know, and it is a great adventure.

So as we get back to the story, Jesus was becoming a big deal. Lots of people were coming to him to be healed and to hear him teach. Some were disciples, and some were just regular students, and some were just curious to see the show, just like now. Biblically, God uses the mountains to reveal himself to the people, and that's what happens here, but what is interesting is that when God revealed himself and gave the 10 Commandments on the mountain in the Old Testament, he had the people go away from the mountains, to stand back. The mountain was covered in a fog which made it impossible to see, and the people were told that if they touched the mountain at this time, they would die. This time, Jesus comes, sits down, and draws the people close to him. Again, this is showing how the teachings from Jesus that represent the New Covenant are different. Instead of stay away and fear the power of God, Jesus says, come close and feel the love of and safety of God. The Old Testament 10 Commandments were written on stone and focused on expressions of external life. Jesus's message was one that focused much more on an internal message that placed priority on a person attempting to understand God, and the practical implications of placing ourselves as beneath him, but equal to every other human being. It required humility and authenticity. The Beatitudes are the beginnings of the unfolding of the full teachings of Jesus, and it's important to remember that this whole sermon was intended to correct what the people were being taught by the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Each of these eight blessings identifies how we are to act if we are to be blessed, and then identifies that there is a great future for those people who cultivate this character. There isn't a word in the English language that exactly means blessed like it is used here. Blessed or bless-ed is a blending of the concepts of blessed, fortunate, and happy, and all of these combined provide a description of a state that you would be glad to get. Some have described it as Jesus saying that people with these characteristics were wealthy, and that would have had shock value to the listeners. The Sermon on the Mount is a message to the disciples that is in direct opposition to the message that they were receiving from the Pharisees about what was the way to be. The Pharisees were definitely trying to do the right things, but they had gotten to the point that practicing the religion was far more important than the actual pursuit of God. They held themselves up as being better than other people, and they were allowing themselves to be prospered by their titles and power. They weren't necessarily bad people, but they had gotten to the point that they were blind to their hypocrisy, and to the fact that they were taking money from the poor to support their lifestyles. There is something really important about this issue that you must understand to get to the crux of what Jesus did that led to his persecution and crucifixion. The Jewish people had been promised for thousands of years that they were God's chosen people, and that there were rules they had to live by to separate themselves from other people. They were also promised that although they had to live by very specific rules of conduct, it would all be made right when the Messiah came. They had been looking for a Messiah to be born in the specific times that they were living in, and they had a vision that was completely understandable. They imagined the Messiah would come as a powerful and wealthy person who would pat them on the back and reward them for how they had kept the faith. Many of them saw him coming in as a military fighter who would defeat the Romans who were oppressively ruling them and taxing them unfairly. They were outraged that this man who had no money or political power and who didn't seem to appreciate them or their authority very much would have the audacity to claim that he was the Messiah. This may not be a good example, but imagine how it would be in America, where so many people are currently focused on their vision of the return of Jesus and his final apocalyptic destruction of this horrid world. Imagine what would happen if a non-white woman with no formal education or power came out of a backwater town and began saying she was the returning Jesus. What if her message was that nothing even remotely like their vision is going to occur, and that their job is to focus on daily life here on this planet, no other one, to love one another, end poverty and hunger in every corner of the world, clean up the environmental mess we have made, and to never touch another device or substance intended to kill people under any circumstances. I don't know that anything like that would be the message, but if it was, there would be some who would be very glad to listen to her, most would completely disregard her and her followers completely as crack pots, and some would be plotting to imprison or kill her. The message wouldn't be as outrageous to them as her claim to be the second coming of the Messiah, a messenger whose message came from God.

So this message from Jesus was a problem, and his claim to be the Messiah was a bigger problem. Jesus's message said to his followers, the teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees isn't exactly wrong, it's just not complete enough AND I'm calling BS on their claim that they are doing all the rules exactly as they are teaching them, because no one can. To go into this next phase of what God wants from you will require a proper internal state that produces proper external behavior, not external rituals that have lost their true meaning and now are serving just to separate people from one another.

The first teaching is: Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs in the kingdom of heaven. To be poor in spirit means that you understand that you have a need for more spiritual guidance and information, and to not ever fall into the trap of using religion to say, "I've got this down and I'm doing great!". Many spiritual traditions speak about approaching life with the beginner's mind and that is what it means to

be poor in spirit. To approach life in a way that says, "I'm open to learning new things without my preconceptions of how it's going to be." That's how you receive the kingdom of heaven. If you think you already know how the Holy Spirit is going to guide and direct you, you will never reach the kingdom. So, blessed are the people who can approach God from the place that they don't know what he wants to tell them, what he wants them to do, and so they can be truly guided by God to receive the entire kingdom of heaven while they are alive. Understanding the term "the kingdom of heaven" is important. The Jewish New Testament Commentary by David Stein says that the concept of the Kingdom of God is crucial to understanding the bible. The terms Kingdom of Heaven and Kingdom of God are the same. Jewish people would never have said the word "God" unless they were saying it in a prayer or while reading the torah. It was forbidden. This kingdom doesn't refer to a place or a time but to a condition in which people acknowledge the fact that God rules us. The New Testament two different things, that this kingdom is occurring now, and that it will also occur in the future. If you put your faith in God and commit to living your life based on the principles Jesus taught, it is experienced now, inside of you. For example, you can have peace inside yourself now even though there isn't peace in the world. There is also another promise, and that is that in the future there will be a time when there is a worldwide kingdom of God or Kingdom of Heaven. The focus of this podcast is on the searching for the present Kingdom of God, the one that does not require looking to the future, but is accomplished and experienced today. The first beatitude signifies that if you will repent, or think differently, and search with an understanding that you always need more instruction from the Holy Spirit, and in that searching you will experience the kingdom of god within yourself now.

Second, there is a more simple promise. Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted. The definition of mourning is to be sad or regretful, but in this context it isn't identified why the person feels this way. Some people mourn for reasons we understand, like a death, but others mourn for internal reasons, lost opportunities, or the loss of friendship. The Holy Spirit is called the great comforter, and this is a promise that if there is true feelings of loss, the Holy Spirit will provide you what you need.

The third blessing, Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth, provides us a place to look further than what we initially might think. The word "meek" is one that we could do a full episode on, but don't worry, we won't. Many people think that a meek person is one who is weak and timid and speaks softly. This couldn't be further from the real meaning. This is another place where there isn't a word that translates well, and the best way that I can describe meek is to identify that it means I will know my place and I will understand that God is in charge. I will not push ahead and grab for what I want. I will wait. The person who is not meek grabs for what they want and pushes ahead. They are the person who butts in line, has road rage, and expects to be taken care of first. It takes strength and courage to say, "I will not grab for what I want. I will not be resentful for what I have not yet received. I will trust in God and wait." There is a promise inherent in this message, and that is that you will get much more by waiting than you could ever get by grabbing on your own. There are many interpretations of what inheriting the earth means, but one that is practical for us now is to say, inheriting the earth means that you will receive the things you need on this earthly plain, not as a servant or an employee, but as a child of God. You need to do nothing but just wait, and receive the benefit of being a child of God. Rather than a timid and weak nature, to be meek requires strength, courage, and patience.

The fourth beatitude is, Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness because they will be filled. Righteousness is a word that sometimes trips me up by the ways that it is used in the bible. To be righteous simply means to be morally right, but it infers that there is a "wrong" way to be. We all have a personal moral code, and most people bristle when being held up to any moral standard except their own. But this beatitude identifies that people who sincerely have a desire to figure out what God wants

from them will find it. They will have the infilling of the Holy Spirit, which will help them every day make decisions about what is the right thing to do in all situations. So many people come to me and say that they have been searching and that they haven't gotten anywhere. It's hard for me to believe this because it is a promise, if you look, you will find the thing you are looking for. These people are sincere, and sincerely depressed and concerned about the fact that they aren't feeling very filled, they are feeling empty. This is where we can help one another with love and compassion. Sometimes we aren't finding or being filled because we are putting on blinders. We have things that the Holy Spirit is pointing at that are in our life that we are doing or tolerating that aren't in alignment with moral rightness, and until this is recognized, there's no way to be filled. Giving examples about other people is a dangerous business but it's necessary for illustrations. For instance, I know a person who says they have looked for God and found silence. Now, this specific person works regularly and requires that they are paid in cash. They don't report it on their tax return, and they stash their money in a safe. And they have accumulated a lot. This practice is not morally correct not because there is a problem inherent in cash, but in the reliance upon deceiving the system in which we live that is represented by the cash storing and to believe that you can only rely upon yourself. This cash system is like a tumor, but it's only a symptom of a deeply seated belief about how they live life. I don't think that they are probably going to feel filled until they deal with the tumor and the tentacles that it has created in all areas of your life. But if they can gain the understanding that the problem is the underlying system of thought, and that the way to the cure is to look at the symptom by stopping the tumor, which in this case would mean to stop the cash system, then the understandings will rush in like water filling a container.

Fifth, Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy. Okay, now I find it interesting that the fifth amendment to the US constitution says that we don't have to answer questions in court that might make us seem guilty, and that we can't be punished for "pleading the fifth" or claiming mercy for ourselves. The fifth beatitude relates to mercy, and mercy is a very interesting thing. There are some special places where we are told that God treats us like we treat other people. Mercy is one. The meaning of mercy starts out with understanding the position of the person who is being called upon to be merciful. If you are in the position to show another person mercy, it means that you are in the position of power in relation to them. They either owe you something or you are in your rights to harm or punish them, they owe you something. And if you are merciful to them, it means you don't do that. You either have compassion for them in some way or you forgive them. This concept has been a big deal for me. I have been talking a lot about how grandiose we are, how grandiose I am, and a lot of it deals with this concept of mercy. See, I am the kind of person who doesn't always see my own faults. I can clearly see other people's faults. But when I really take seriously what I plan to do, have said I would do, and have agreed to do, if it was possible to have a totally unbiased person follow me around all day and then report on every time I did something that wasn't in agreement with those professed goals and aspirations, or when I didn't do something that would further those goals, it would be a mess. God doesn't see us as his employees, but follow me on this example. If I was looking at myself as an employee of God, I would not be ranked nearly as highly as I pretend. I say pretend, because having been an employer most of my adult working life, I can tell you that employees pretend to be busy a lot of the time but at the end of the day, no one checks in and says, "Hey, I didn't get anything done today except surfing the internet, making snacks and checking my social media. Well I did play about 15 games of Sudoku, but I didn't really enjoy it." I use the term pretending, and pretending is deception, not ignorance or denial. I think we would all agree that if in theory, if a person pretended to do something or pretending they don't know they were supposed to do something, and then if they have a manager, that manager would be in their rights to correct that behavior, potentially to punish them. I do and say things that are intended to deceive other people and I act like there isn't a manager. It's a slippery slope, because I'm pretty good at forgiving myself because I decide that my actions and inactions are no big

deal. These things I am talking about are the things I am aware of, but does anyone remember the cartoon character of Mr Magoo? Mr Magoo is a near sighted rich old man who refuses to admit he has a problem. He gets himself into situations that leave other people in the lurch but he always ends up okay. The classic episode is him driving his car and causing all sorts of wrecks behind him, but he never even knows. We have to admit sooner or later that we all have a little Mr Magoo in us. Do you want to know if you have been doing this? If you ask him to help you open your eyes, the Holy Spirit will show you many things you are currently doing and also things you have done in the past that you have received mercy for. Some you knew about, some you didn't. Sometimes you received mercy from another person, sometimes you received mercy from God. I do not believe that we can ever understand the magnitude of this problem. So the teaching here is that if we want to be blessed, and if we want to be given mercy, it will require us being merciful. Compassion and forgiveness are the big skills here. And it is harder than it looks on the surface. There are many teachings and parables that show that if we are judgmental, we will be judged. If we forgive, we will be forgiven, if we want mercy, we have to be merciful. Only a complete and total fool would ever agree to sacrifice God's mercy so that we could maintain the ability to punish someone else. But apparently we are fools.

Sixth, Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. To be pure in heart means that you have searched out every place that needs to be cleaned up inside of you and you have only one desire, and that is to be who God wants us to be. Your heart can only be known by you and God. The heart contains your secret thoughts and feelings. Outward appearances may point to what is in a person's heart, but you cannot ever really know by looking at outward appearances. The health and state of the heart is critical to Jesus' mission. A pure heart is one that is transparent, that has no dark places or deceit in it. It is a heart that understands the concept of a hidden agenda and avoids it at all costs. A hidden agenda is a secret or ulterior motive and usually, if you question a person's motive, they will double down on their claim to sincerity and won't admit the offense. It's important to learn how to search out these places in ourselves and part of that is understanding how hidden they are to us and asking the Holy Spirit to show them to us. This is tough, because he will. He will show us the places we are being hypocritical, the places where we are looking for riches or admiration, the places we are humble bragging, the places where we are phonies. It is really painful to receive this information and to go about cleaning it up. I have many times just started laughing uncomfortably when the Holy Spirit shows me something in me that is not pure in heart because its asinine that I would think I could have hidden that from other people, much less than from myself. And the next thing after its shown to me is that I can't do it any more. Being pure in heart means to stop justifying and manipulating and to let the full force of God to come into your life. The job will never be done. A person who strives to be pure in heart will always have work to do, but that doesn't mean its not worth the attempt. Seeing God means that you will experience the numinous, the ideal, the nod from the divine head of the Holy Spirit, and this seeing God, the direct communication, the recognition from the Holy Spirit, is the biggest high you can imagine.

Seventh, Blessed are the peacemakers because they will be called sons of God. What does it mean to be a peace maker? Does it mean that you overlook everyone's faults and become a people pleaser? Does it mean that you work to calm everyone down and just get them all to get along? That's not it as far as I can tell. The word used for "peacemaker" is only used here and one other place in the bible. In that case, it refers to the peace that Jesus came and made between humans and God. It means to be reconciled and to lead other people towards reconciliation. Reconciliation means that there was a relationship that was broken, and that it is now restored. Our relationship to God had been broken, and Jesus came to restore us to God, and God to us. Think of how many "broken relationships" you know of, both in your own life and the lives of people around you. To be a peacemaker first means to help to reconcile other people to God through understanding the message of Jesus. It also means to help create

peace through the true reconciliation of human relationships with one another. I think I live in a pretty normal family, not perfect or ideal, but normal. And in my family, we have experienced many instances of broken relationships as well as beautiful reconciliations. These broken relationships were many times fueled by misunderstandings and simple differences of opinions, but many times they were obviously products of our individual grandiosity. Sometimes they were egged on by honestly well-meaning people who did not understand that it was far more important to find the common issues that the people could agree on than to point out the gas soaked logs of the differences that were present in the discussion. When we employ the process of peacemaking, we need to look at reconciliation. Regaining our relationship to God and to other people means saying, come back to the family, it doesn't mean driving a wedge. In this way, we are blessed by being called sons of God, the ones who are recognized as capable to lead people back into the family of God.

The eighth Beatitude, Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven, says simply, take on this moral code even if no one agrees with you, because it will lead to the kingdom of heaven. This beatitude acknowledges that a big reason people don't stand strong in what they believe is because other people will subject you to hostility and ill treatment. Its hard to hold steady in the face of people not agreeing with you, but if you have worked with the Holy Spirit's guidance, and searched yourself to do the right thing, it will work out for you. The next section relates to this final blessing and details it further.

"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.

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

The beatitudes identify a way of living that isn't easy at first but ends in giving you all the things that are truly valuable. And ultimately, it says that every person no matter how great, who followed these rules was spoken negatively about due to the human tendency to be critical and judgmental, to lack compassion and be grandiose. However, you don't get to be grandiose, pat yourself on the back, and think highly of yourself for doing these things. These things are hard and they require humility and help. They are deep processes that have tripped people up since the beginning of time. But this is the message, if you do these things, you are promised to be blessed.

Jesus's first teaching is held in the beatitudes. He told us that repentance is the work we must do, and that means to rethink who you are and how you are thinking and behaving. We are children of God and our spiritual journey to paradise, the kingdom of God, the Kingdom of heaven, is one that requires the beginner's mind, and also the help of the Holy Spirit to achieve anything lasting and real. Know that you may have deep sadness over what has occurred in your life and the lives of others that you love, but you will receive the comfort you require to continue on in pursuit of true life. You have no need for envy of others and the things they have because if you will just cultivate a spirit of patience, waiting in the full faith that God will not forget you or fail to provide every good thing for you, then you will have the desires of your heart. Be sincere in looking for what is the right way, the path you are called to, the road less taken for it will lead you to the refreshing great spring of knowledge and depth of experience. Remember that to receive any mercy, you must be merciful to others and know that we have been forgiven many things that we rightfully could have been required to pay for. Know that anything that cannot stand the light of day, anything negative and hidden within us is good to get rid of. It is holding you back from seeing God in your life. Know that we all need reconciliation to God and one another and really work to stop driving wedges between people and their understanding of the great good that is

available to them. Understand that within us and all around us is a hostility to God, and that experiencing other people's meannesses, insults, and lies just goes with the territory of standing for what you feel is right. The greatest work we can do is to acknowledge our own part in this whole mess and to stop doing it, stop our own meanness, stop our own insults, stop our own lies, stop our own hidden agendas, stop driving wedges, and begin to understand that we have all told our self so many stories of hostility and blamed it on God or other people or the world that we have lost our connection to the divine. The reality is that we are children of God, beneath him, standing shoulder to shoulder with everyone in the family of humans, and that we have work to do that will take us all to paradise.

Again, thank you for listening to this podcast. Next time on Working With the Vocie, we will go further into the Sermon on the Mount and see what God thinks we are and more about what we are to do while we are here.