

Working With The Voice Transcript

WWTV Episode 017

Sermon on the Mount: Part 5: The Way Out

November 9, 2018

Hello listeners! This is Juliet Mee, your host for the Working With The Voice podcast. This is a course to learn to speak with the Holy Spirit, so it's best to listen to the episodes in order. We are going through the Sermon on the Mount. The last episode dealt specifically with the context of the environment that Jesus was teaching in. We had a history lesson that attempted to add a layer of understanding about the influences and concerns of the people that surrounded Jesus.

It's important to understand that these people who didn't follow Jesus were just like people today, they had reasons for doing everything they did. I see history repeating itself today in lots of the political fractures and ideologies that are creating conflicts between people. After the episode published, I got a couple questions from listeners requesting that I clarify why, if this is a course to learn to speak with the Holy Spirit, that we are going through an in depth study of the gospels instead of just working with the Daily Practice materials and learning to connect with the messages from the Holy Spirit.

Beware of anyone who says they have their own view of things in any formalized religion because no one has anything new to say about an ancient religion like Christianity. But I have my own view of things. Just kidding. Actually, there is a whole arena of Christianity called Pneumatology that is the study of the Holy Spirit, although I like the concept as a definition, I didn't find much that I felt was practical in its presentation, so I created my own podcast to get the information out that I think is important and relevant. My perspective is that there's not enough emphasis on the Holy Spirit. If there was, people would live better lives.

We're going to do a short review even though we went through this information in episodes 004 and 005. The model we are working with says that the creator is composed of three parts, God the Father, God the Son (who is Jesus), and God the Holy Spirit. Jesus was sent to earth by God the Father. He shows us exactly what a human life based upon what God wants, looks like. He encountered the exact same types of people and things all humans encounter. After his death and resurrection, the Holy Spirit was sent to all people. He's been here ever since. You can think of the Holy Spirit as a replacement for Jesus who can serve the exact same purpose of a teacher, a comforter, and a helper for everyday life as well as for creating massively good changes for all of humanity. Jesus was only able to communicate with people who were around him. There's no record of him speaking to people who weren't physically around him. There's no record of him being in two places at once. The Holy Spirit can communicate with every person, and he does. Most people can remember hearing this at least once in their life.

The voice of the Holy Spirit has been my teacher. I understand that many people profess to have been taught information by the Holy Spirit. I don't have a problem with the fact that they don't all say the same things unless what they say contradicts what Jesus taught. Jesus, God and the Holy Spirit align because they are all the same thing. In traditional Christianity people believe that the Holy Spirit only speaks to Christians who have accepted Jesus as the Messiah. That is not what I have found in my experience. The Holy Spirit was speaking to me long before I knew what it was. As soon as I found out that the voice that had been directing me was the Holy Spirit, the experience deepened and he began

to talk to me about Jesus. Prior to this, I professed that I was a Christian. I said that I believed that Jesus was the Messiah. I didn't really believe that or even know what it meant. I was aware of this fact and just said it to keep people from bugging me. I would have gotten angry at someone who called me out on it too. After encountering the voice of the Holy Spirit and studying the life of Jesus, I can tell you that I definitely believe that Jesus was and is the Messiah. Studying his life and teachings that are in the gospels provides an invaluable tool that helps us distinguish if what we are hearing is coming from the Holy Spirit or a different source. It's not the only tool, but it is the one you can use most often and most reliably. If Jesus would have never said something, like, "Kick 'em in the shins!" then the Holy Spirit won't say it either. If you don't study the scriptures you eliminate this tool. Also, there is a unique characteristic of the scriptures. If you have the help of the Holy Spirit, the scriptures become supernatural. I know, I know. If you read them, you will see what I mean. I can only give you analogies about what this is like, because it's something you have to experience on your own. When it happens, you will see what I mean. You won't miss it. While you are reading the text, all of a sudden you will see deeper hidden meanings that are specific to things you want to know. It's not random information. The information you will be shown will be specific to things that only you knew you were thinking about. You will read the words on the page and they will say something to you that you can't deny, and it will change your life through this supernatural effect that is the power of the Holy Spirit. The words will come back to you when you are in the situation that the concept applies to and you will know without a doubt what to do. There is a quality to the understanding that is palpable. It's as if you have looked into a kaleidoscope and thought the static picture was beautiful, then someone turned the tube and you saw a completely different picture that filled you with awe during the time it was changing. I have heard the argument that the bible is the most ambiguous spiritual material ever written and that's why it has lasted this long. You can take any sentence you find and apply it to anything you want. But that's not what I've found. You can say, "Light the torch" and it has many different meanings related to the subject matter being discussed even though it can apply to education, metal working or arson.

The content of the information that you receive from the Holy Spirit will match what has been written about how Jesus told us to act towards God, ourselves, and other people. The next part is that you have to follow the instructions, do what the material says, put it into action. This is how the Holy Spirit qualifies us to do the job that we were placed here to do. If you have ever managed people, you know that if you have a big project, you only want to work with people who will follow your instructions and then also add their own knowledge, skills, and abilities to the picture. Once you learn to act like a person that God wants to work with, and you can be trusted to do what he says without deviation, you will receive additional information about your purpose. It may blow your mind, because many times it is revealed all at once. You see the project finished and it won't be something that you know how it can be accomplished. For me, it was so different from what I imagined that I wasn't even sure that I wanted to do it. It took me several days for the information to sink in. As I became comfortable with the picture I had been shown, I realized it held all the components of what I wanted, just in a different format than I ever expected.

The scripture is a direct guide that you can understand by just reading as long as you have a recent version of the bible. It helps to have a commentary. This podcast uses the NIV, or New International Version combined with the Matthew Henry Commentary. I know that many people feel that there is beauty and poetry in the King James Version, but the "ye's, thees and thous" don't appeal to me. You will find that Jesus's teachings are absolutely relevant to today's world. It is helpful to understand the external circumstances present in the world that Jesus lived in. If you study history, you will find that people have always been the same. We don't stop having the same insides as we move through time.

People have the same desires, sufferings, and greed, as they always have had. There has always been a tendency to struggle to acquire material possessions, and then cling to them. Of course the outer things do change. Houses change, clothing changes, roads are different, and the methods of communication and travel change. Because of these outer changes, society, culture and what we call civilization changes. During all of this, there is **something underneath** that doesn't change, something that supports life and is the same, no matter where you look. If we are living **normal everyday lives** we can walk through life pretty much unconscious. We do the same things; say the same things, over and over. Life is **normal**, but that doesn't mean it's always fulfilling. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit you find the **extraordinary life**. That's the benefit of Christianity, pure and simple. Once you know what that really means, you need a lot of information at your fingertips because it will consume you. That consumption is what is called being "filled with the Holy Spirit" or "hungering and thirsting for knowledge".. When I had the experience, I tried to find the information quickly about the Holy Spirit and just couldn't find anyone to explain it clearly to me. I had to dig around far too much. It was hiding in plain sight, in the bible, which I was averse to because of my experience with people who misused the information to elevate themselves and push others down.

The Sermon on the Mount is a three chapter, practical guide. It's not intended to be a showy bunch of words, its intended to be an instruction guide on **how** to specifically live your life and **why**. The purpose of the Christian religion is to make people good. When you start to look at that simple concept it doesn't seem simple at all. What does it mean to be good? Things change, circumstances change, people want different things. The concept of "good" that is defined here is that **something underneath** that we talked about before. Good is also an action that requires a standard. Jesus is lining out to us what the standards are, and also that you can be assured that if you follow the standards to the best of your ability, there will be protection and reward. He addresses it all. "Good" in our relationship to other people, "good" in relation to ourselves, and "good" in our relationship to God.

In the life and teachings of Jesus, we can find a way out of the unending cycles of unhappiness, poverty, pain, wasted energy and anger. Although many of these same teachings are found in other religions, I find the example that Jesus taught and the consciousness that he embodied is the right one. I continue to believe that the more that I study and am taught by the Holy Spirit. Let's continue into the Sermon on the Mount, and we will find that in this sermon he has given us specific information about how to transform our lives and find the way out of the endless cycles of frustration, death, and decay.

Chapter 7

Judging Others

"Do not judge, or you too will be judged.

2For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

3"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?

4How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?

5You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

6"Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.

Jesus is specifically referencing how we are to act regarding the faults of others. If there is a standard, many times we can see when others don't meet it easier than we can see when we don't meet it. If we watch a professional athlete on TV from the comfort of the couch, it's easy to see where they didn't play a perfect game. We discussed the Dunning Krueger effect in Episode 003 with David McRaney, which makes it clear that studies show, people are usually very bad at judging their own faults and skill level in every aspect of life. This message from Jesus is directed to individuals, not people who are in the actual position of judging people through the laws that have been set up in the world. This is pure and simple. People are forbidden to judge other people. Specifically this means that we are not to speak badly about other people and although it will require work, we are not to even think it in our thoughts. We are not to judge a person for their actions. We are not to judge a person because of what their role is in relation to us, as in, she shouldn't do that because she's my mother, or my boss, or my friend. We are not to judge another person's intentions. God reserves the right of judgment for himself exclusively. No discussion on that point, but there is more information to the instruction. If you do choose to judge others, not only will other people judge you, God will judge you. When you take the blinders off of your eyes to the things you do, you know you don't want to be judged by God, who knows everything. This instruction says you will be judged as harshly as you judged the other person.

HOWEVER, from this next section, we learn that we are to judge ourselves and our own acts, and that we are to help one another afterwards. It says:

3"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?

4How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?

5You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

This section deals with the need to help one another if we feel that someone needs help. Everyone has faults and does things that they are aware is missing the mark, as well as things that they are not aware of. This is a bit tricky because judging is identified as something we are definitely forbidden to do, AND it is our duty to help others on their path, which requires making a decision about how they are doing what they are doing. Criticism or reprimands are not help. You can't disguise this by saying that you are just trying to help them see the error of their ways, or to do better. This scripture points directly to the fact that not every person who might want to help a person grow is fit to point out faults. Specifically, if we are guilty of the same faults that we accuse others of or worse we aren't likely to do any good. Doing this also holds the possibility of bringing shame upon ourselves in the process. Although I might not see that I do the same thing as I am criticizing, people on the outside will see that.

In this scripture Jesus calls the item in our eye a plank, and the item in the other person's eye a speck. In reality, he may have been speaking about the same item. Our own faults ought to appear greater to us than the same sins in others. You also can't say, "I have faults of my own so I can't help other people" otherwise you justify your own bad actions and intentions. It's common for the most sinful person to be blind to it and to feel the most free to judge others. Being severe about the faults of others is a mark of hypocrisy. Pride and stinginess are commonly the planks in the eyes of those people that pretend to be critical and nice in their criticism of others. The news is full of hypocritical

politicians, celebrities, and pastors who feel justified to publish and punish another person's secret. Many times we then find out that they hold the exact same secret!

Here is a good rule for those who are critical of others. You don't say, "Since I have the same problem I refuse to help them." You change yourself. Only then are you fit to help others. To be charitable is to help another person in need. Spiritual charity begins at home. The next section is a bit different than the others. It says:

6"Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.

"Whoa where did that come from?" You just told us not to judge, and then you throw in some name calling? This next section is hard to interpret because at first glance it doesn't fit. Should we judge who is a pig or a dog? Should we deny them what is holy? The illustration of the potential event is clear, giving an animal a pearl that he destroys, but who he is calling pigs and dogs is not. The subject isn't sin here. It's what is holy and how to deal with it where previously it had been about sin, the plank in your eye.

Pigs and dogs are both considered unclean animals in the Orthodox Judaism of the day, so you definitely wouldn't want to be one. There's a couple of ways this can be interpreted, and that always creates a bit of a problem. If you look deeply and realize that the Sermon on the Mount is a carefully worded and systematically ordered lesson, you can find the true meaning of the section. In Jesus's time, both gentiles, who were non-jews & uneducated in the ways of the Jewish people, as well as the people in the Roman empire as a whole were called **pigs and dogs**. If these are the people that Jesus is speaking about, the message is to not give in to the temptation to search for prestige, power, and wealth by being loyal to people who don't understand your ways. Loyalty is the holy object, and it belongs totally to God. Jesus often warns against the temptation of seeking prestige power and wealth within government and society while neglecting the weightier matters of justice, faithfulness, and mercy. Although this is true, this section is about judging and correcting the character of other people and that interpretation isn't logically consistent with the section.

What does fit is that just as Jesus identifies that **not every person** is fit to point out the faults of others, he turns around and says that **not every person** is worthy of your help. That doesn't mean that they aren't worthy of your love and prayers, but it identifies that there are some people who have decided that they despise instruction from others and do not appreciate your advice. We must use discretion and allow ourselves to be guided by the Holy Spirit before we give instructions, counseling, or even comfort to hardened people. They will only be irritated and enraged by us, no matter what our intentions are. This is the meaning that fits with this section. True help, instruction and counseling are holy things, pearls. Used as they are intended, they are the things God tells us to do. Who is a dog or swine? They are people who hate and despise instruction and will always disagree with you so that they are not possible to help. This is a tough realization, and these people fly in the face of the healers of the world, who, in kindness, show them that how they are living could be better and more enjoyable. Potentially, there were Jewish people who were attempting to help Gentiles and Romans but those people did not want their help, and that would make the previous explanation make sense. The kind helpers of the world truly offer the remedy, but it is only God who can heal and help those that will not be healed and helped by people. This is included as part of the Sermon on the Mount because Jesus is very clear that he cares about the safety of his people and does not want them to expose themselves to the fury of those that will turn against them. There are many times in the bible

where Jesus talks to the disciples in a way that identifies that he wants them to respect and obey the law of self-preservation.

This ends the middle section of the Sermon on the Mount which I now understand holds a unique message for us. I found the information in a document that I ran across called the "14 Triads of the Sermon on the Mount" by Glen H. Stassen. I have put a link to a copy of the article on the website. This information clarifies the simple and profound things involved in Jesus's teachings as well as in how they are arranged in the bible. Stassen says that this section gives us some very specific rules for extraordinary life that are all spelled out in a very careful, *three part* way. He has researched this thoroughly, and the light it shines on this part of the sermon makes the sermon much more important. Stassen's premise is that there are some who think Jesus's teachings are pointing us to a hard and unattainable ultra-religious life, but that if you look a bit further, there is a message of transformation because of the message of grace in the sermon. Jesus diagnoses properly that if we only followed the traditional teachings, we would find ourselves in situations of unhappiness that repeated endlessly. Stassen calls these "vicious cycles". We have all experienced them, situations where we find ourselves trying to get out of difficulty only to find ourselves right back in it, just with different players. Jesus's teaching diagnoses the problem and then says that there will be judgment for not stopping the cycle. Stassen identifies that the Sermon on the Mount clearly shows us 14 traditional ways of living, the specific cycles of unhappiness that these ways produce and are produced by, and then there is what he calls a "transforming initiative" or something that is a fresh strategy that actually changes the trajectory of the situation. These are not merely illustrations. They are a new way of deliverance. Jesus's real theme is that the course of life and how we relate to it is how we can participate in the reign of God. I believe that he has the most insightful way of looking at the parts of the sermon to emphasize. Seeing the sermon his way shows how Jesus's teachings deliver us from the difficulties of the world.

Here's the pattern; In the first part of the middle section of the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew Chapter 5 Verse 21, Jesus says that the traditional religious teaching is "Do not kill". He diagnoses the vicious cycle that this commandment comes from; the internal condition of anger and then insulting others because you think they are fools. For every person who intentionally kills, this cycle is in effect. The fresh strategy, the transforming initiative that Jesus is pointing us to that can allow us to participate in the kingdom of God, is to be reconciled to one another, or work to get along instead of directing your anger towards others. If we choose this strategy, we can find the way out of the vicious cycle.

If you look at the structure as 1 triad of 14 that are all structured exactly the same, first Jesus gives the traditional religious structure, then diagnoses the vicious cycle that leads to judgment, then identifies the transforming initiative.

The second triad's message is that it is traditionally taught, "Do not commit adultery". The vicious cycle is looking with lust at other people. The transforming initiative is to actively remove the cause of your temptation by whatever means are necessary. He says, "Cut off your hand and throw it away" which isn't taken literally, but he makes the point that you might need to take a radical action to do remove this temptation.

The third triad's message is interesting and requires a bit of looking to interpret it properly. It says that traditionally, you could get a divorce by drawing up the proper papers, but Jesus wants people to acknowledge that the only reason that Moses allowed divorces was because people were hard hearted

towards one another. Jesus says that there is a cycle of falling in love, marrying, falling out of love and then divorce, which then many times becomes a vicious cycle leading to another divorce, and greater unhappiness. The way you stop the vicious cycle is again to learn how to always work to be reconciled to one another, or to stop being hard hearted and find a way to get along.

The fourth triad identifies that you should not swear falsely or do anything to manipulate another person. The vicious cycle is that, in practice, oath making is more often a means of avoiding making good on the promise rather than performing the obligation. To escape the vicious cycle, he says let your yes be yes and your no be no, be truthful in every word.

The fifth triad involves the concept of justice delivered through taking an eye for an eye. Jesus says that this is obviously a vicious cycle that comes from revenge and fighting back to restore what we feel has been a wrong done to us. All this does is leads to more and more damage. The transforming initiative that takes you out of this cycle is to be a peacemaker, turn the other cheek, give more than you were asked, and to go the extra mile.

The sixth triad says that traditional religion says, " Love your neighbor". There is an implication that it is okay to hate your enemy. Jesus identifies that this requires no spiritual effort. Everyone does this, and it is a vicious cycle that doesn't lead to any good things. The new strategy, the way out is, love your enemies, pray for your persecutors, and to be all inclusive in this as your Father in heaven is.

The seventh triad says that traditionally it's important to give money to people who don't have as much, to be charitable. Many people give only when they will get recognition from people. Jesus says that drawing attention to yourself for your good deeds is a vicious cycle that leads to ***no good*** being received by you for this type of giving. The new strategy is to give in secret and then your father will reward you.

The eighth triad relates to prayer and says that traditionally when people pray many of them do it so that other people will see it. They make a show like the hypocrites. Jesus says the way out is to pray in secret and your father will reward you.

The ninth triad also relates to prayer. It says that traditionally when people pray they use a lot of words, thinking that God is impressed by the length of their prayers. Jesus gives us the Lord 's Prayer to show that the prayer should include certain things, and then to be short and sweet.

The tenth triad says that traditionally when people do a religious fast, they make sure that everyone knows how miserable they are. They hypocritically make themselves look sad and gloomy. Jesus says to dress yourself well, don't bring any attention to the fact that you are fasting and your Father will reward you.

The eleventh triad says that traditionally people feel that it is right and good to store up treasures. Jesus identifies that there is a natural vicious cycle inherent in every physical object that will destroy it, and also thieves will look for treasures to steal. Jesus says that the transforming initiative is to learn how to pile up treasures in heaven, with a focus on the generous, healthy eye and heart.

The twelfth triad says that no one can serve two masters. The vicious cycle is that you cannot serve both God and money. You can't be anxious about food and clothes and do the things that God wants

you to do. The fresh strategy that will transform the situation is to first have faith in God and know that you will be taken care of if you do.

The thirteenth triad says that traditionally people are told not to judge one another. This is a vicious cycle because if you judge, you will be judged by others and also by God. The fresh strategy that will transform the situation is to work on yourself, take the log out of your own eye first.

The fourteenth triad says that many people tend to want to help others indiscriminately and don't discern who they give holy things to. They give pearls of trust, loyalty, caring, and help to pigs and dogs and then are surprised when they trample the holy object and then turn to tear the person to pieces. This wastes the holy object and effort. The fresh strategy that will transform the vicious cycle is to discern who a person is, and then give your trust in prayer to your father in heaven for his instruction about what to do and to always keep yourself safe.

This episode has shown us that how we deal with others can be a tricky business but it is one that God wants to give us instructions about. Jesus's teachings are about our relationships, the relationship we have with others, the one we have with ourselves, and the one we have with God. Life is built on these foundations, and it always has been. If you do the right things, as identified in the sermon you can stop the vicious cycles that seem to run life and cause drama. Once those cycles are slowed, doing really great things in the world is within your grasp.

I hope you have learned something today that helps you put the message of Jesus into action and brings peace to your life. Look for the additional resources in the show notes on the website workingwiththevoice.com. Next episode we will finish the Sermon on the Mount. Thanks for listening and for sending me feedback on how this is working in your life! I'm Juliet Mee and this is Working With The Voice.