

Bookends of the Gospels: Matthew 5 and John 4

Searching for Christianity

Matthews bookend

I just bookended Matthew 5 last time so what gives? Matthew 5 is a special chapter. I probably can use it all over the Bible. There is a lot there. With that said, Jesus is making a point in Matthew 5. As a people, if we thirst for God, then peace, humbleness, and many other great attributes will fall into place. It's just common sense. If you feel good, then you will work harder. If you do right, then more often than not, good will come of it. I guess it's spiritual equivalency exchange. Follow a good God and you will gain goodness.

It's just a theory, yet, we will see this played out in John 4. Sometimes we say that we are holy, religious, or Christian. That does not mean anything. Remember that when Jesus mentioned these beatitudes, it appears to be just to the disciples. Yet, all over this story there are people and religious rulers questioning the things he said. I think many heard Jesus teachings. Read Matthew 5 carefully. It's all about how we relate to others. Salt and light. Yes and no. Peace and lust. How are we doing as a person?

So, Jesus mentions many things in this chapter. Thousands of books have been written on Matthew 5 alone. I say it's rather odd that Jesus mentions this one statement in Matthew 5:6 "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*" In previous verses he teaches us to be outward towards others. He asks us to give, make peace, and be salt and light. Yet, here he is asking us to be filled. To satisfy our hunger and thirst.

What's it all mean?

So, what does that verse Matthew 5:6 mean? On this bookend, it means we are to read Matthew 6:33 "*But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*" To be thirsty and hungry is to seek food and water. It's to head to the fridge or McDonalds. The young rich man asked Jesus what he must do to enter heaven. We are to read Matthew 7 and ask, seek, and knock. Do you see the trend?

On this bookend we have the searcher. Jesus is telling us about all the things that make up a great Christian in the sermon on the mount. They are not commands as some think. If we seek, thirst, hunger, and knock those things will come. We will become the very things Jesus preached about. So many people think that if we do those things we will be good. The real answer is if we hunger for God then he will hunger for us. In that exchange is God's goodness flowing to us like living water.

John 4 is a great illustration of the other side. A failed existence that starves for living water. The woman at the well needs a pick me up. Her life has been stagnant through five failed relationships. In Matthew we are told to thirst. In John we are offered to end that thirst. These are two great bookends. I am even more firmly convinced that John and Matthew talked a lot. I bet they had similar views. This whole series is a compliment to their friendship. It's also a compliment to Jesus. They got him.