

Dr. Bill Mounce, Sermon on the Mount, Session 6, Matthew 5:21ff, Greater Righteousness, Part 1 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Mounce, Sermon on the Mount, Session 6, Matthew 5:21ff, Greater Righteousness, Part 1, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Mounce's lecture explores Jesus's teachings in Matthew 5:21 and following, specifically focusing on achieving a "greater righteousness" than the scribes and Pharisees. He emphasizes that this righteousness stems from **deep obedience originating in the heart, rather than mere external actions**. The lecture uses the example of anger to illustrate how inner attitudes violate God's commands, not just outward deeds like murder. **Mounce highlights the importance of reconciliation and addressing the root causes of anger, emphasizing the need for a transformed inner being**. He also touches on the **supremacy of Christ and the distinction between the letter and the spirit of the law** as key themes in understanding this higher standard of righteousness.

**2. 20 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Mounce, Sermon on the Mount, Session 6 – Double click
icon to play in Windows media player or go to the
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link
there (New Testament → Gospels → Sermon on the Mount).**



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3. Briefing Document: Mounce, Sermon on the Mount, Session 6, Matthew 5:21ff, Greater Righteousness, Part 1

Briefing Document: Dr. Bill Mounce on Matthew 5:21 and Following - Acts of Greater Righteousness, Part 1

Subject: Analysis of Dr. Mounce's lecture on Matthew 5:21-26, focusing on the concept of "exceeding righteousness" and its initial illustration through the prohibition of murder and the issue of anger.

Main Themes:

This lecture by Dr. Bill Mounce delves into the profound meaning of Jesus' statement in Matthew 5:20: "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." Mounce argues that this verse is a key to understanding the entirety of the Sermon on the Mount, underlining all subsequent teachings. The lecture introduces the central concept of "deep obedience" as the characteristic of this exceeding righteousness and begins to illustrate it through Jesus' teaching on anger.

Key Themes Include:

- **The Necessity of Exceeding Righteousness:** Jesus demands a righteousness that goes beyond the external adherence to the law practiced by the scribes and Pharisees. This isn't just about doing the right things outwardly but stems from an inward purity of heart.
- *"verse 20 and this exceeding righteousness is certainly a key to all the chapter, and it's lying under actually the rest of the sermon..."*
- *"Jesus is saying if you want to live a life of righteousness, if you want to move towards God's righteousness, it has nothing to do with what you're seeing in your seminary professors and in the most committed laymen in your church, right?"*
- **Critique of Scribes and Pharisees:** The scribes (teachers of the law) and Pharisees, considered the religious authorities of their time, exemplified an external righteousness focused on outward actions and appearances, often lacking genuine internal purity.
- *"Their righteousness, described by the Pharisees, was an external righteousness, right? Everything was for show; that's what Chapter 6 is all about."*

- *"These are people who think that all God wants is clean outside, and the inside doesn't matter, and Jesus reserves his harshest criticism for these hypocrites."*
- **Introduction of "Deep Obedience":** Mounce, drawing on Stott, introduces the idea of "deep obedience" as the hallmark of exceeding righteousness. This obedience originates from the heart, focusing on inner motives and being rather than merely outward actions.
- *"A deep obedience, and by that, he means it's obedience that comes from the heart. A religiosity that is from the inside, that deals with a pure heart and lets the actions flow out of it."*
- *"Not more and more obedience, God says, but deeper and deeper obedience."*
- **Supremacy of Christ:** Underlying Jesus' teachings is the claim of his supremacy. His pronouncements of "But I say to you" assert his authority, even beyond the traditional interpretations of the Old Testament law.
- *"You know, you have heard it said, but I say to you is either incredible egotism or Christ is supreme."*
- **The Spirit vs. the Letter of the Law:** Jesus emphasizes the spirit or intent behind the law, contrasting it with the Pharisees' focus on the literal interpretation, which often led to legalistic loopholes and a neglect of the heart's condition.
- *"The Pharisees held to the letter of the law, at least their understanding of it, and Jesus wanted them to hold to the spirit of the law, the intent of what's the deep principle behind things."*
- *"Thou shalt not commit adultery. Okay, that only refers to having sex with another person. They narrow it down. Jesus says, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. We're going to talk about lust because that's the issue of the heart."*
- **The Illustration of Anger (Matthew 5:21-26):** Jesus uses the commandment against murder to illustrate deep obedience. He asserts that not only the act of murder but also the underlying attitude of anger violates the spirit of the commandment. He further elaborates on this by discussing different levels of verbal contempt ("Raka" and "Fool/More"), suggesting they carry increasing degrees of judgment.
- *"The Old Testament says that if you murder, you're going to be liable to judgment. Even if you never shed blood, anger still makes you guilty enough to be judged."*

- *"Raka is just an Aramaic term for contempt...if, in your anger, you say idiot, numbskull, blockhead, birdbrain, nitwit...Even though you have not shed blood, you're still liable to judgment for your actions."*
- *"Fool translates another Aramaic term of insult, more. And if there's a distinction between raka and more, raka attacks the head, more attacks the heart and the character."*
- **The Importance of Instant Reconciliation:** As a practical implication of dealing with anger, Jesus emphasizes the necessity of immediate reconciliation when there is conflict in relationships within the covenant community.
- *"The key to anger is instant reconciliation. The verse we've quoted, referring to, is Ephesians 4, 26. Do not let the sun go down in your anger."*
- *"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar, and still remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First, go and be reconciled to them, and then offer your gift."*

Most Important Ideas and Facts:

- **Exceeding Righteousness is Foundational:** The call to a righteousness surpassing that of the religious leaders is not merely one teaching among many but the underlying principle for the entire Sermon on the Mount.
- **External Actions vs. Internal Heart:** God's primary focus is on the condition of the heart and its motivations, not just outward conformity to rules. True righteousness flows from a pure heart.
- **"Deep Obedience" is Key:** This concept signifies an obedience that is rooted in the inner being and character, influencing actions rather than being solely defined by them.
- **Anger as a Violation:** Jesus equates unresolved anger with a violation of the commandment against murder, highlighting that the attitude of the heart can be as significant as the outward act.
- **Levels of Verbal Contempt:** The distinctions made between "Raka" and "Fool/More" suggest that even verbal expressions of contempt and attacks on character are serious and subject to judgment.
- **Prioritizing Reconciliation over Worship:** Jesus instructs believers to interrupt acts of worship to pursue reconciliation with those they have offended or who

have something against them, underscoring the paramount importance of relational harmony.

- *"That's how important reconciliation is to God and that we don't go through the external motions of worship when there's relational conflict in our lives."*
- **The Limitation of Reconciliation:** While believers are called to initiate reconciliation, it is acknowledged that not all broken relationships can be restored. The responsibility lies in doing all that depends on oneself to seek peace.
- *"As far as it depends upon you, be at peace with all people." (referencing Romans 12:18)*
- **Anger as an Indicator:** While destructive if left unmanaged, initial feelings of anger can serve as an indicator of underlying hurt, danger, or fear. The key is to address it constructively and promptly.

Quotes for Emphasis:

- On the definition of righteousness: *"Right is defined as by whatever conforms to God's character, right? So righteousness is what God is, righteousness is what God does, His moral perfections in all things, behavior, and character..."*
- On the nature of the Pharisees' righteousness: *"Their righteousness, described by the Pharisees, was an external righteousness, right? Everything was for show..."*
- On the essence of deep obedience: *"But the primary focus, the primary intention, is on our heart. It's on our motives more than our actions. It's on our being more than our doing. That's the deep obedience."*
- On the connection between anger and murder: *"Even if you never shed blood, anger still makes you guilty enough to be judged."*
- On the priority of reconciliation: *"First, go and be reconciled to them, and then offer your gift."*

Conclusion:

Dr. Mounce's lecture provides a crucial foundation for understanding the "acts of greater righteousness" presented in the Sermon on the Mount. He establishes that Jesus' standard of righteousness transcends mere outward compliance with the law, demanding a deep, heart-level obedience that reflects God's own character. The initial illustration through the teaching on anger powerfully demonstrates this principle, revealing that even internal attitudes and verbal expressions can violate the spirit of God's commandments. The emphasis on instant reconciliation further highlights the practical implications of this deeper righteousness in the lives of believers. This lecture sets the stage for exploring subsequent examples where Jesus contrasts the traditional understanding of the law with his own more profound and demanding interpretation.

4. Study Guide: Mounce, Sermon on the Mount, Session 6, Matthew 5:21ff, Greater Righteousness, Part 1

Study Guide: Matthew 5:21 and Following - Acts of Greater Righteousness, Part 1

Quiz

Instructions: Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each, based on the provided lecture excerpt.

1. According to Dr. Mounce, what are some of the different meanings of the Greek word "pleirao" (to fulfill)?
2. Why is verse 20 of Matthew 5 ("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") considered a key verse for the Sermon on the Mount?
3. What was the primary difference between the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees and the "deep obedience" that Jesus calls for?
4. Explain Stott's concept of "deep obedience" as it relates to surpassing the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.
5. What are the two main themes that Dr. Mounce identifies as running through the rest of Matthew chapter 5 after verse 20?
6. How does Dr. Mounce illustrate the difference between the "letter of the law" and the "spirit of the law" using the examples provided?
7. According to Dr. Mounce, how does Jesus broaden the understanding of the sixth commandment, "You shall not murder"?
8. What is the significance of the Aramaic terms "raka" and "more" in the context of Jesus' teaching on anger?
9. What does Dr. Mounce suggest is the key to dealing with anger and achieving reconciliation, based on verses 23-24 of Matthew 5?
10. According to Dr. Mounce, what qualifier does Romans 12:18 ("If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone") add to Jesus' teaching on reconciliation?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Dr. Mounce explains that "pleirao" can mean to make full or complete (like filling a house with perfume or finishing prophecy), to complete a period of time, to bring to completion something already begun, and to bring something to a designated end (like fulfilling prophecy). The word has a wide flexibility beyond simply fulfilling overt prophecies.
2. Verse 20 is a key verse because it introduces the central idea of the chapter and underlies the rest of the Sermon on the Mount. It emphasizes that a righteousness exceeding that of the highly religious leaders of the day (scribes and Pharisees) is necessary for entering the kingdom of heaven.
3. The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was primarily external, focused on outward actions and appearances, often done for show. In contrast, "deep obedience" is an internal righteousness that comes from the heart, emphasizing purity of heart and motives over just outward actions.
4. Stott's "deep obedience" refers to a religiosity that originates from the inside, dealing with a pure heart from which actions naturally flow. It means placing the primary emphasis on the state of one's heart and motives rather than solely on outward appearances and actions.
5. The two main themes are the supremacy of Christ, as seen in his authoritative statements "But I say to you," which even move beyond the Old Testament, and the difference between the letter and the spirit of the law, where Jesus emphasizes the underlying intent and principle behind the commandments.
6. Dr. Mounce illustrates this with the daughter defining acceptable sexual activity by a physical boundary and the pastor who believed vulgar language was acceptable but swearing was not. These examples show the human tendency to draw lines to get as close to sin as possible rather than understanding the deeper principle of purity.
7. Jesus expands the understanding of the sixth commandment by teaching that it is not only violated by the act of murder but also by the attitude of anger in one's heart that can lead to murder. The commandment addresses not just the outward action but also the internal disposition.
8. "Raka" is an Aramaic term for contempt, attacking a person's intelligence (like calling someone an idiot or numbskull). "More" is another Aramaic term of insult that attacks the heart and character, implying godlessness or immorality (like calling someone a fool or a loser).

9. The key to dealing with anger, according to Dr. Mounce, is instant reconciliation. If you realize someone has something against you, or if you have wronged someone, you should immediately seek reconciliation before engaging in acts of worship or other activities.
10. Romans 12:18 adds the important qualifier that while we should strive for peace and reconciliation, it depends on us. There will be instances where, despite our best efforts, the other person is unwilling to reconcile, and in such cases, we have done all that we can.

Essay Format Questions

1. Discuss the significance of Jesus' statement that our righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees in the context of the Sermon on the Mount. How does Dr. Mounce explain this concept, and what are its implications for Christian living?
2. Explain the difference between the "letter of the law" and the "spirit of the law" as presented by Dr. Mounce. Use his illustrations to elaborate on this distinction and discuss why Jesus emphasized the latter.
3. Analyze Dr. Mounce's explanation of Jesus' teaching on anger in Matthew 5:21-26. How does Jesus connect anger to the commandment against murder, and what does this reveal about the nature of true righteousness?
4. Discuss the importance of reconciliation in Christian life based on Dr. Mounce's lecture. Explain the steps involved in seeking reconciliation and the qualifier provided by Romans 12:18.
5. Explore the concept of "deep obedience" as a key to understanding the Sermon on the Mount, according to Dr. Mounce and Stott. How does this differ from external religiosity, and what are the practical implications of pursuing deep obedience?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Plerao (πληρώω):** Greek word meaning "to make full," "to fill," "to fulfill," "to complete," or "to bring to an end." It has a flexible range of meanings and doesn't solely refer to fulfilling overt prophecies.
- **Scribes:** In Jesus's day, these were the teachers of the law, often highly academic and formally trained religious leaders, similar to seminary professors.

- **Pharisees:** Laymen in Jesus's time who were committed to meticulously following all 613 commandments of the Old Testament, often going to extremes in their religious observance.
- **External Righteousness:** A focus on outward actions and appearances as the measure of righteousness, often done for show without genuine purity of heart. This characterized the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.
- **Deep Obedience:** A concept emphasizing obedience that comes from the heart, focusing on inner purity, motives, and character rather than just external actions. It's a religiosity that originates from within.
- **Letter of the Law:** A narrow, literal interpretation of commandments, often focusing on the minimum required and seeking to define sin precisely to get as close to the line as possible without crossing it.
- **Spirit of the Law:** Understanding the deeper intent, principle, and purpose behind the commandments, focusing on the heart attitude and the broader implications of God's will.
- **Raka (ῥακά):** An Aramaic term of contempt or scorn, often used to attack someone's intelligence or worthlessness (e.g., idiot, numbskull).
- **More (μωρέ):** Another Aramaic term of strong insult, often implying moral deficiency, godlessness, or foolishness in a deeper sense, attacking a person's character (e.g., fool, loser).
- **Instant Reconciliation:** The act of immediately seeking to restore broken relationships as soon as one becomes aware of a conflict, whether one has caused offense or been offended.
- **Divine Passive:** A grammatical construction where the subject of the verb receives the action, and the agent (the one performing the action) is implied to be God.
- **Beatitudes:** The opening verses of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:3-12) that describe the characteristics of those who are blessed in God's kingdom. Dr. Mounce suggests they are key to understanding the rest of chapter 5.

5. FAQs on Mounce, Sermon on the Mount, Session 6, Matthew 5:21ff, Greater Righteousness, Part 1, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on Matthew 5:21 and Following

1. What is the central theme of Matthew 5:20 and how does it relate to the rest of the Sermon on the Mount?

Matthew 5:20, which speaks of the necessity of a righteousness that exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, is a foundational verse for the entire Sermon on the Mount. Just as poverty of spirit is key to understanding the Beatitudes, this concept of exceeding righteousness underlies all the subsequent teachings, including acts of piety, serving God versus money, prayer, judgment of others, and more. Jesus emphasizes that true righteousness, which aligns with God's character, goes far beyond the external observances and traditions of the religious leaders of the day.

2. Who were the scribes and Pharisees, and why does Jesus use them as a contrast to true righteousness?

The scribes (or teachers of the law) were the educated, academic leaders of their time, akin to seminary professors. The Pharisees, on the other hand, were lay individuals known for their meticulous and often excessive adherence to all 613 commandments of the Old Testament. Jesus uses these two groups, considered the religious giants of their day, to illustrate that the righteousness God desires is fundamentally different from their outward displays of religiosity. Their righteousness was primarily external, focused on appearances and actions without a corresponding purity of heart or motive.

3. What is meant by "deep obedience" and how does it differ from the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees?

"Deep obedience," a term emphasized in the source, refers to an obedience that originates from the heart and is driven by inner purity and motives rather than merely outward actions. It's about *being* righteous at the core, which then naturally leads to righteous *doing*. This contrasts sharply with the scribes and Pharisees, whose righteousness was characterized by an external focus, prioritizing how they appeared to others and adhering to the letter of the law without necessarily embracing its spirit or intent. Deep obedience places primary emphasis on the condition of one's heart and intentions.

4. How does Jesus' teaching on anger in Matthew 5:21-26 illustrate the concept of exceeding righteousness and deep obedience?

Jesus uses the commandment against murder to illustrate that deep obedience extends beyond outward actions to the attitudes of the heart. He teaches that even being angry with a brother or sister, using contemptuous language ("Raka"), or denouncing them as a fool ("More") violates the spirit of the commandment. While these actions may not be subject to earthly legal judgment in the same way as murder, Jesus indicates that they fall under God's judgment as they stem from a heart issue that can lead to more severe transgressions. This emphasizes that true righteousness addresses the root causes of sin in the heart.

5. What is the significance of the two illustrations following Jesus' teaching on anger (offering a gift at the altar and settling with an adversary)?

Both illustrations emphasize the importance of immediate reconciliation in interpersonal relationships as a manifestation of deep obedience. The first illustration highlights that even an act of worship should be postponed if one remembers that a brother or sister has something against them, stressing the priority of reconciliation before religious practice. The second illustration encourages prompt settlement with an adversary outside of court, implying that acknowledging one's wrong and seeking resolution demonstrates a heart of righteousness that values peace and restoration.

6. Is the high standard of righteousness presented in the Sermon on the Mount achievable for Christians in this lifetime?

The source suggests that the Christian ethic presented in the Sermon on the Mount is an achievable ethic in the sense that believers are continually growing and moving towards it throughout their lives. Perfection is not fully attainable in this present age, but spiritual maturity involves a decreasing struggle with sin and a deeper understanding of God's character. The joy is found in the journey of growth and the increasing measure of obedience, with the full realization of this righteousness expected in the new heavens and the new earth.

7. When is anger considered sinful according to the teachings discussed, and is there a place for righteous anger?

The source differentiates between anger as a natural emotion that can indicate pain, danger, or fear, and the kind of seething, unresolved anger that leads to contemptuous words and harmful attitudes. The latter, which violates the spirit of the commandment against murder, is considered sinful. While the Bible does not explicitly state that Jesus was angry at individuals, the source acknowledges that there might be situations that evoke anger in response to evil. However, it cautions against allowing anger to fester and emphasizes the need to address it quickly through reconciliation and constructive action rather than letting it control one's thoughts and behaviors.

8. What role does forgiveness play in achieving this exceeding righteousness and dealing with broken relationships?

Forgiveness is presented as a crucial aspect of dealing with anger and striving for exceeding righteousness. It is described as a selfish act in that it releases the one who forgives from the burden of resentment and the desire for vengeance. While forgiveness should be extended, reconciliation requires repentance and the rebuilding of trust. In situations where repentance is absent, establishing boundaries becomes necessary for self-protection. The inability of others to reconcile does not negate one's responsibility to pursue peace as far as it depends on them.