

“The game-changing Sermon”
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INTRODUCTION

- Are you a Christian?
- Before responding quickly, perhaps it would be best to take a deep breath.
 - Because this question may seem simple,
 - But Jesus always finds a very particular way to complicate what we think is easy.
- His sermon at the mountain is a game-changing sermon:
 - Jesus calls us to a Christianity that goes beyond ideas,
 - a faith that transforms our choices, shapes our relationships, and guides our everyday behavior.
- Being a Christian doesn't mean being perfect.
 - Thank God for that;
 - If that were the case, the church would be empty, starting with the pulpit.
- To be a Christian is to follow Christ.
 - It is about trying, day after day, to live as He taught.
- Today, I invite you to go up the mountain to hear Jesus' sermon.
 - We will do this through a reflection game.
 - In each round, Jesus will present a teaching.

- Next, we'll talk about very real situations, the simple kind that could happen tomorrow morning.
- And then the question will come: what decision would you make?
- And then, we will let Jesus show us the "Kingdom way".
- This is not a game for pointing out other people's mistakes.
- It's a game to look at in the mirror.
 - And, please, look in the mirror with mercy.

Round 1 – PEACE (Matthew 5:9)

- Everyone wants peace.
- The thing is that, generally, we want peace in our own way.
 - Often, the peace we seek is only found when we win.
 - The peace we sometimes seek is the result of victory, not reconciliation.
- Now, imagine this situation: someone provokes you.
 - A pointed comment.
 - A post on social media.
 - Behavior that offends you.
- You have three options:
 1. Respond to it with smart irony (the kind that stings with class).
 2. Respond to it aggressively, "defending the truth".
 3. Or choose to contain the reaction and seek peace.
- Which one do you choose?

- Jesus calls children of God those who resemble the Father.
 - And the Father does not win through shouting, nor through violence.
 - Sometimes, as on the cross, he loses the battle.
 - And victory comes through loss.
- The peacemaker is consistent with the God who, in Christ, reconciled the world to himself.
- Following Jesus here means deciding that peace is worth more than being right.

Round 2 – ANGER and RECONCILIATION (Matthew 5:21–24)

- Jesus quotes the commandment "You shall not murder" and then shifts the focus to the heart.
- For Jesus, cultivated anger, contempt, and insult already shatter life.
- Let's be honest: who hasn't had a big fight with someone?
 - Family, church, work, friends.
 - Sometimes, for reasons so small that they are embarrassing afterwards.
 - Sometimes for serious and hurtful reasons.
- Now imagine another situation:
 - You are in worship, singing, giving offerings, everything is very beautiful.
 - And then, suddenly, the pastor talks about forgiveness.

- That was the last thing you wanted to hear that morning.
- Then you remember that you've broken up with someone.
 - An unresolved conflict.
 - A heavy atmosphere that has lingered for months or even years.
- What do you do?
 1. Pretend that nothing happened or that you didn't hear; a. "The pastor has a difficult accent; I couldn't understand what he said."
 2. Would you expect the other person to come and apologize?
 3. Or you take the first step towards reconciliation.
- Reconciliation precedes worship.
 - Not because God rejects worship,
 - but because worship without concrete love becomes incoherent.
- Following Christ involves healed relationships, more than well-done rituals.
- And here it is important to remember that:
 - If the wound is still open, if there is still no strength or courage to seek reconciliation,
 - This also needs to be brought to God's altar.
 - Even if it's Sunday after Sunday.
 - Even if it still hurts.

Round 3 – LOVE FOR ENEMIES (Matthew 5:38–45)

- Here Jesus confronts the logic of retribution:
 - "An eye for an eye."

- This is a law written in the Old Testament.
 - A logic that might seem fair, but never ends.
 - It only multiplies the wounds.
- Let's suppose someone has wronged you:
 - The person was unfair at work;
 - tried to harm your relationship;
 - or tried to take advantage of your generosity.
- What do you do:
 1. Get your revenge.
 2. Erase the person out of your life coldly.
 3. Love and pray for that person.
- Jesus proposes something completely contrary to our instincts:
 - love your enemy
 - and pray for those who persecute us.
- Let's agree:
 - This is not natural. ○ We are not born with it.
 - It is about spiritual formation.
 - It is a fruit of the Spirit.
 - It's our identity being transformed.
- Jesus teaches us that Christian identity is born from imitating the Father:
 - A God who makes the sun rise on both the good and the bad.
 - But not in Vancouver.
 - Loving like this doesn't make us weak; it makes us more like God.
- Following Christ means acting not from the wound,
 - but from the grace received.

Round 4 – JUDGMENT (Matthew 7:1–5)

- Just when we think we're doing well in the game, Jesus changes things.
- Imagine you see someone doing something that you consider wrong.
 - Perhaps arriving late to worship;
 - Getting distracted and crossing the street on a red light;
 - Gossiping with the neighbors.
- What do you do?
 - Say that the person is irresponsible.
 - Pursue the person in order to question them.
 - Consider that perhaps the person has their reasons
 - or that the person is simply not perfect.
- Jesus teaches us that judgment works like a spiritual boomerang:
 - What we throw at others doesn't vanish in the air, but returns to us.
- Judging may offer a fleeting sense of moral superiority,
 - the impression that we are "on the right side".
- But this path comes at a high price:
 - hardens the heart,
 - reduces the other to a label.
 - and it distances us from the grace that also sustains our own lives.
- Therefore, Jesus does not call us to moral blindness,
 - but to a discernment marked by humility,
 - where before pointing out the other person's mistake,

- We allow God's light to examine our own hearts first.

CONCLUSION (Matthew 7:12)

- Jesus starts his conclusion with a word that encapsulates all the faith experienced:
- In this word, the life of the Kingdom becomes everyday practice.
- And then Jesus takes us back to the heart of the Gospel:
 - If we wish to receive God's forgiveness,
 - We are called to allow this forgiveness to permeate our lives and reach others.
 - If we want to be heard in our pain and hope,
 - We are invited to learn to listen with attention and compassion.
 - If we live by the grace that sustains us, restores us, and allows us to start again,
 - This grace cannot be kept as a privilege, but must be offered as a path.
- This is the Gospel in action. ○ This is living Christianity.
- Being a Christian is not about achieving perfection.
 - but to decide, every day, to put Christ at the center.
 - and allow his teachings to shape
 - our choices,
 - our relationships
 - and our testimony.
- Are you a Christian?
 - So don't make perfection your focus.
 - Make Christ your path.