

THE BOOK OF MATTHEW

Lesson 14, Chapter 5 Continued 2

We have now completed studying 7 of the Beatitudes. It is usually said that there are 8 of them, but some Bible commentators say there are 9, and others say 10. My position is that the separating away of the first several verses of Matthew chapter 5 and giving it a title.... the Beatitudes..... is artificial in the first place. The downside of doing this is that it can give us the impression that this decoupling of them from the rest of His Sermon on the Mount was Christ's intent. It certainly was not. Essentially Jesus was looking out at His enormous crowd and directly addressing them by offering a blessing that described the group in general and in some cases referring to certain segments of it.... the poor, in spirit (the Essenes) for example. So we won't get into a debate on just how many of the so-called Beatitudes there are, because it's unimportant for studying Yeshua's seminal speech. Yet, for the sake of continuity and to make it easier for us to study and not confuse matters, we'll follow the traditional Christian outline of the opening verses.

Open your Bibles to Matthew chapter 5.

READ MATTHEW CHAPTER 5:10 - 16

The 8th Beatitude is contained in verse 10. Nothing like this is contained in Luke's Sermon on the Plain, which further points to the two sermons being different speeches spoken at different times and different places.

^{CJB} Matthew 5:10 ¹⁰ "How blessed are those who are persecuted because they pursue righteousness! for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

The word "persecuted" is rather standard in English Bibles and it is used regularly in the New Testament; and it isn't wrongly translated. However in modern times we view the term "persecution" as nearly synonymous with strenuous oppression, often involving violence. That is, persecution is something quite severe in which one's life is either greatly hindered or even put in danger. The Greek word is **dioko**. If the various Greek lexicons are consulted we'll find a rather long definition for the word because it carries quite a range of meaning. So in our time a better word is probably "harassed". Perhaps even "made fun of" or "ridiculed" also captures another aspect of it. It is not that this term **dioko** (persecution) can't at some point rise to a meaning of true, virulent oppression and harm, but that is the far end of the scale of the word's intention. And that meaning is not something that most Believers in Christ's day faced, nor do the majority of Believers face today (while fully acknowledging that there are parts of the world, especially where there are Muslim majorities, in which life as Believers is under daily threat).

So to help us better understand what Yeshua is telling us, I'll repeat the verse using a word that history would show us is closer to what He meant to communicate to the crowd. ***"How blessed are those who are harassed because they pursue righteousness! For the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs."***

Regardless of precisely how to transmit the idea of persecution in modern terms, the point of the verse is that there is cost to pursuing righteousness. But the next question is: what form or display of righteousness is this referring to? Every Jew in that era would tell you that they were pursuing righteousness; it was but part of their unique culture. By observing the Torah, the Sabbaths and the Feasts, praying and (in the last couple of centuries) the following of Traditions and going to Synagogue along with generally being a good person, this would have represented the popular Jewish understanding of pursuing righteousness. To put a finer point to it; righteous was wrapped up in behavior. Complicating the matter was that there were several distinct and competing sects of Jews who had formed varying interpretations of the Torah and so each sect acted out Jewish Tradition and God's commandments somewhat differently from one another. In fact these differences in doctrine sometimes led to serious confrontations. So if Yeshua's final few words of this Beatitude had not been spoken, no doubt it would have been somewhat difficult for the listeners to take the concept of the pursuit of righteousness any other way than precisely how one behaved in every day life and in how fastidiously they observed Torah rituals and commands. When Yeshua completed His statement with: "For the Kingdom of Heaven is

theirs", it changed the focus and the source of that righteousness from earth to Heaven..... that is, from humans to God... even if a goodly part of the crowd didn't understand the implication.

Our human righteousness is indeed based on rules-following and behavior. But that is not a kind of righteousness that can save us, even though righteous behavior and rules-following is certainly an ongoing expectation that God has of His worshippers. Human based righteousness is of a kind that our own devotion, focus and determination can achieve; but it does not, because it cannot, join us to the Kingdom of Heaven. On the other hand, God's perfect righteousness is part of His substance. It has at its center His will, His plan, and His unique ability to save and to restore. God's righteousness cannot be duplicated or replicated by humans; it can only be given to each of us as a free gift of the Father's love for us. The agent that brings this divine gift of loving salvation to mankind is God's Son, the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth.

For those of us living today who were born in the mid to early part of the 20th century and living in the West, it is hard to accept that now, in the early part of the 21st century, being a Believer is starting to bear a tangible cost, which we could have never anticipated. Being a Believer is no longer an accepted cultural norm nor is it as widely popular. When I was younger man, professing to be a Christian (whether you really were or not) was the expected. In fact, the terms American and Christian were very nearly organically linked. One of the first questions a person might be asked when meeting someone in the local community was "what Church do you go to?" The answer would only rarely be "I don't go to Church" or "I don't believe in God". Today asking such a question is fraught with negative social implications. Being a Believer in Christ is openly criticized in our education system, ridiculed by the mainstream media, and outright rejected and slandered by some of our top level political leadership. It is even called a threat to peace and tolerance by global interests. The general expectation upon Judeo-Christianity has become more of an insistence that our faith is to be compartmentalized, unspoken, unrealized in public, and manifested only while we're in Church or Synagogue, or within the privacy of our homes. As a result our beliefs in the God of Israel and in Our Savior Yeshua are something we have become prone to being silent about; we keep it to ourselves for fear of confrontation or finding ourselves on the wrong side of the flow and political correctness of our society.

I tell you this so that you see how this 8th Beatitude can be applied to us in our

time, but also the similarity to how it was for those who heard Christ speaking first hand. From the **P'shat** interpretation sense, Yeshua was telling His 1st century listeners that the harassment they would receive for pursuing God's saving righteousness would be rewarded in their membership to the Kingdom of Heaven. What those listeners didn't yet understand was that this pursuit that would begin with repenting of sins, would then involve turning to God by means of trusting Yeshua as Savior and Lord. Although after a couple more statements Jesus would heavily imply that following Him was the key. Once the Jewish folks did that, it was automatic that they would be ridiculed and harassed by both the Temple and the Synagogue leadership, and the bulk of Jewish society. After some years passed the harassment of Yeshua followers would indeed escalate into oppression and violence against them. In fact, Yeshua prophesied that this would happen and who would be the first to threaten and advocate harm to the Messianic Believers.

CJB Matthew 23:29-34 ²⁹ ***"Woe to you hypocritical Torah-teachers and P'rushim! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the tzaddikim,*** ³⁰ ***and you say, 'Had we lived when our fathers did, we would never have taken part in killing the prophets.'*** ³¹ ***In this you testify against yourselves that you are worthy descendants of those who murdered the prophets.*** ³² ***Go ahead then, finish what your fathers started!*** ³³ ***"You snakes! Sons of snakes! How can you escape being condemned to Gei-Hinnom?"*** ³⁴ ***Therefore I am sending you prophets and sages and Torah-teachers- some of them you will kill, indeed, you will have them executed on stakes as criminals; some you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town.***

Yeshua says that it will be the religious leadership of the Synagogue that will lead the way in slandering and mistreating His Jewish followers.

In the **Remez** interpretation sense, however, Yeshua's words in the 8th Beatitude are referring to the End Times when Believers will be hunted down and severely oppressed, on a worldwide basis. That is, persecution for pursuing righteousness in Christ moves from mere harassment and ridicule (as is now happening in the West) to persecution more as we think of the term; being hated, harmed and murdered. In fact, as we know from Daniel, Jeremiah, Isaiah and Revelation, being a Believer will eventually (in the End Times) be officially considered as making us an enemy of the State.... of global humanity. For now, in the West, the cost of pursuing righteousness is primarily ridicule mostly being incited by the

cultural elite. Later the cost may well be our jobs, our personal freedom, and then our lives. I wonder: if so many of us are already reluctant to reveal our faith and instead keeping silent merely to avoid being called out at work or excluded from our desired social circles, what might we do when an admission of faith could bring community exclusion, jail or worse?

For those who say there is a 9th or even 10th Beatitude, these are contained in verses 11 and 12. The commentators who claim 9 Beatitudes wrap verses 11 and 12 together as one Beatitude. The relatively few commentators who claim 10 Beatitudes make verse 11 the 9th and verse 12 the 10th Beatitude. Verse 11 seems to be saying nearly the same thing as verse 10 (Blessed are those who are persecuted).

CJB Matthew 5:11 ¹¹ "How blessed you are when people insult you and persecute you and tell all kinds of vicious lies about you because you follow me!

The Greek word translated to persecuted is the same in both verses. So as I explained earlier, **dioko** has a range of meanings from something as mild as being ridiculed, to being followed and harassed, all the way up to being violently assaulted or killed. I think the sense we are to take its meaning in verse 10 is a bit different than in verse 11. So while verse 10 is primarily speaking about a kind of mid point along the persecution scale, verse 11 is a bit lower in its intensity and is not about serious threats or physical actions taken against the Believer. Rather this is pointing to slanderous things that are said to discredit them (the leadership and the people hurl insults and tell lies about Believers..... Jewish Believers at the time of the Sermon on the Mount). For the first time, in the final words of verse 11, Yeshua now ties together these various forms and means of persecution as being the consequence of following Him. He says: "Because you follow Me". And since Beatitudes 4 and 8 both speak of some form of persecution that is the result of pursuing the kind of saving righteousness that Jesus is speaking about, then clearly He is saying that the pursuit of Him IS the pursuit of a saving righteousness! That, my friends, is a bold and enormous claim that no doubt brought a wide range of emotion and reaction in that huge crowd. From elation to anger, and from fear to disappointment or even befuddlement, this Yeshua fellow was either a liar, a madman, or someone very special that needed to be heard and accepted even if the folks couldn't absorb the meaning of all He was saying.

Doubling down on His incomparable promise, He goes so far as to say that all who will surely suffer from following Him will be rewarded in Heaven. And why should they find that odd or suspect? After all, says Christ, the prophets of old that God sent to Israel at various times throughout their history suffered the same and worse for hearing and believing the divine truth (a truth that few, especially Israel's leaders, wanted to hear). Thus rejoicing is the proper response for those who trust Yeshua and act upon that trust. Rejoicing is the proper mental attitude to maintain when knowing and speaking the truth, which likely reduces our popularity and causes us to be excluded from some of our friends, family, and perhaps from our congregation fellowship. It may well be that our rejoicing will be muted in the here and now due to suffering; but at the same time there is the greatest hope and a promise for a future in God's Kingdom that is nothing but joy.

It's a bit challenging to ascertain what, exactly, the audience thought Yeshua was meaning about they're being rewarded in Heaven if they followed Him. Our modern Christian thoughts instantly run towards what happens to our souls after we die, and this due to a combination of Church Tradition and some of the words of the New Testament. Generally the Christian thought is that there is for sure an afterlife that begins upon our death. If we are saved in Christ, then our souls will either immediately or eventually go to Heaven and dwell with God. But that was not the thought of Jews in Christ's era. What happened after death was a frightening mystery to them and to their religious leaders. Death was not a welcomed thing; it was not a case of going "home" or "going to a better place". Earnestly mourning the dead was the normal mode; it was certainly not having a "celebration of life" as we often have at Believers' funerals today. In the minds of the ancient Jews, the best condition for a person was to be among the living because there was nothing good about being dead.

So I surmise that the thoughts of the attendees at the Sermon on the Mount was that Messiah was talking about Heaven (God in Heaven, really) blessing them in some undefined way during their lives as a reward for following Yeshua..... even if life likely would include being ridiculed and harassed by their fellow Jews.

Verse 13 moves us beyond the opening series of blessings that Yeshua pronounced upon the various groups of people who came to hear Him speak. There we read:

CJB Matthew 5:13 ¹³ ***"You are salt for the Land. But if salt becomes tasteless,***

how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything except being thrown out for people to trample on.

There is more here than meets the eye. Some Bible commentators and scholars would classify this statement as a parable. I do not agree and in later lessons I will speak extensively about the nature of parables, which will explain why I cannot accept this verse as one. Rather, since this statement revolves around the object of salt, then salt is a metaphor or it is symbolic of something larger, or it's both.

First; recall that the opening 10 verses of the Sermon on the Mount were spoken to address the presence of the thousands who came to hear Yeshua speak. Each of those statements were made either to describe and give recognition to the entire crowd in general or more often to call out and recognize specific groups of people within it. Verse 13 is another instance of this and it is a general statement to the crowd at large. Remembering who Jesus is speaking to is critical throughout the Sermon; it is to Jews. Certainly there were small smatterings of curious gentiles and those of mixed blood and religious loyalties present; but overall we have a Jewish Jesus speaking to a thoroughly Jewish audience. Therefore we must take His words in a Jewish religious and cultural context. As a result we must also be prepared to understand the meaning of His statements in both the ***P'shat*** and the ***Remez*** interpretation senses.

Let's begin by dealing with a key word in the first part of the verse. In the CJB and in the YLT (and a few other versions) we'll find that the general reference to those sitting before Yeshua is that they are salt for the **Land** (meaning, ***eretz Israel***.... the Land of Israel). The vast majority of Bible versions, however, choose it to mean that his audience is salt for "the earth".... that is, the entire planet. As Bible commentators tend to do, they demand that one interpretation is correct and the other is wrong, and so debate incessantly about it. This is modern Western Greek thinking at work and it has nothing to do with ancient Eastern Jewish thinking. Thus we must consider the speaker, the audience, and the setting when deciding what the words mean. Let's lay that aside for the moment.

The next matter is what the meaning of salt was to Christ and to His Jewish audience. It can be surprising that "salt" in the Bible is an enormous subject; this is partly because as so much does over time, the use of the term can evolve. So while it is not that there is no connection to what "salt" meant in Abraham's time to what it meant in Moses' time to what it meant in Yeshua's time, what it meant

to the contemporary people Jesus was speaking to carries the most weight for what it needs to mean to us.

Salt was, as a practical matter, very valuable and central to life itself in Abraham's and Moses' time. Unfortunately it was not readily available or easily accessible to most people. It carried as much value as we apply today for precious metals like gold; so it was used as a medium of currency in some cultures. It was a necessary ingredient in body chemistry to sustain life. It was a desired ingredient to flavor otherwise bland food. It was a preservative for meat in their food supply. It was used for healing wounds and for skin conditions. Therefore it took on symbolic meaning and so salt would even be given or exchanged as part of a covenant ceremony.

Biblically one of the attributes of salt was its use for purification. Levitical law requires that all sacrifices of meat have to be salted. Even grain and produce sacrifices that are to be burnt up on the Altar have to be salted. Why? It is not directly addressed in the Torah. Very probably it had to do with both the matter of practicing the precise sacrificial ritual in obedience to the Covenant with Moses (remembering that it was an ancient tradition to exchange salt as part of the ceremony), but also because salt was seen as an element of purification and so by salting the sacrifices they were further purified. Some Bible scholars say it was because salt was so important in the meals of the Israelites that it naturally would be included in the offering of food to God. I find that incredulous because while pagans thought that their sacrifices were meant as food for their gods (who would starve to death if they weren't provided with food) the Hebrews never thought they were feeding God. In fact, it was the Priests who were able to keep the bulk of the sacrificed meat and produce to provide for themselves and their families, and this was ordained in the Torah.

In Christ's day, in the Holy Land region, salt was readily available, relatively cheap, and used by the ton for Temple sacrificial rituals. The largest use of salt at the Temple in terms of amount was for rubbing it on the meat that was to be sacrificed. It was utilized as an absorbent in obedience to the law that required removing the blood from a meat offering. A batch of salt used in this way could only be used one time; and then the bloody salt was thrown out. But, there was a wonderful use for the tons and tons of now ritually impure salt; it was spread on the many roads and pathways as a vegetation killer to keep these roads well maintained. So the final part of this verse where Yeshua says of salt that once it loses its taste ***"it is no longer good for anything except being thrown out for***

people to trample on" is literally the way that waste salt was used in that era.

Now let's back up a bit. The first words of verse 13 are: "**You are the salt of the Land (meaning the Holy Land)**". The next words are: "**But if salt becomes tasteless....**" Christ is not speaking to several thousand Torah scholars; He is speaking to throngs of common folk. Thus He is using an illustration that every day people would understand. And by Yeshua's day the primary use of salt for those Jews NOT associated with the Temple operations, it was to season and preserve food, and for medical purposes. Interestingly, a curious Greek word is used to describe what happens to salt to make it no longer usable. The word is **moraino**. Literally it means to become foolish. So if we to more literally translate the first part of verse 13 it would be: "**You are salt for the Land. But if salt becomes foolish.....**" So to translate **moraino** to mean "tasteless" is dubious to me unless it was a known expression in that era, and I have found no evidence of that among Jewish or gentile scholarship. Having Jesus say "tasteless" has to be an educated guess from the translators. It seems to me that a better way of understanding it (in our modern terms) is about what happens to salt that has become adulterated or contaminated in some way. So whether salt is used in every day life to season and thus flavor food, or used in food as a meat preservative, or whether it is used for Temple sacrifices, the broad idea is to explain what happens to salt that, for whatever the reason, loses its ability to do what it was meant to do because it has become impure, adulterated, or contaminated.

Bottom line: salt was a good, desired, and needed thing for a number of common uses in Yeshua's time. And Yeshua says to the crowd of Jews who are coming for the purpose of healing and for hearing this man's wisdom, that they are the ones who provide the good flavor to influence the people in a positive way, the good preservation of the land and the people in their God ordained purpose as His set apart people and land, and if they become contaminated with the false ways of some of their religious leaders or they are corrupted by the dazzling and advanced culture and beliefs of their Roman occupiers, then they will lose their purpose and they won't gain it back. If that happens, then they are suitable only to be thrown upon the ground and trampled into the dust, for the purpose of poisoning the soil so that nothing can grow. Everything I've just explained to you is to interpret this passage in the **P'shat** sense.

But in the **Remez**, it transforms. It speaks of a larger purpose and scope. Since the Hebrew word **eretz** (which is what the Greek word **ge** is translating) can

mean earth or land, then while in the **P'shat** sense it means the Land of Israel, in the **Remez** sense it expands to mean the earth... the entire planet. Thus the salt of the Jewish people rises from being salt ONLY for the Jewish people in the Holy Land, to salt for the gentile world as well. And in such a larger capacity, if these Jews become adulterated in their ways and thinking, how can they bring the purity and truth that God gave to them to the world? So in the **Remez** sense this is sort of a warning from Christ that in time, the Jews will have the opportunity to be salt for the world; but if they become contaminated in their ways and thinking they will lose that opportunity and become useless in God's hand. And when we are useless in God's hand, we pay an earthly price for it. For 18 or 19 centuries that has generally been the outcome for the Jewish people. However (praise God), we are seeing a growing segment of Jewish society called Messianic Jews (Believing Jews) realizing what has happened to their people and actively working to regain their saltiness and to reclaim their God-given purpose to lead all humanity back to the Lord.

Therefore back to the question I asked at the beginning of examining this important verse. Is this speaking of the Jews being salt only to the Holy Land or to the entire world? I said that Bible commentators say one answer is correct and the other incorrect. I hope to have shown you that when we adopt the Eastern way of interpreting the Bible..... which was produced from an Eastern thinking people.... that in fact both answers are correct when placed in their proper historical setting.

Verses 14 through 16 provide a complementary statement to the previous one. It uses the illustration of light to represent God's intended purpose for Yeshua's Jewish audience.

CJB Matthew 5:14-16 ¹⁴ ***"You are light for the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Likewise, when people light a lamp, they don't cover it with a bowl but put it on a lampstand, so that it shines for everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before people, so that they may see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven.***

Here Yeshua's statement clearly swells the hoped-for Jewish influence to the world, and not just the Holy Land. No doubt He is basing this thought upon the prophet Isaiah because this is nearly precisely the same message that Isaiah brought from the Lord 7 centuries earlier.

^{CJB} Isaiah 49:1 *Coastlands, listen to me; listen, you peoples far away: ADONAI called me from the womb; before I was born, he had spoken my name. ² He has made my mouth like a sharp sword while hiding me in the shadow of his hand; he has made me like a sharpened arrow while concealing me in his quiver. ³ He said to me, "You are my servant, Isra'el, through whom I will show my glory." ⁴ But I said, "I have toiled in vain, spent my strength for nothing, futility." Yet my cause is with ADONAI, my reward is with my God. ⁵ So now ADONAI says- he formed me in the womb to be his servant, to bring Ya'akov back to him, to have Isra'el gathered to him, so that I will be honored in the sight of ADONAI, my God having become my strength- ⁶ he has said, "It is not enough that you are merely my servant to raise up the tribes of Ya'akov and restore the offspring of Isra'el. I will also make you a light to the nations, so my salvation can spread to the ends of the earth."*

Therefore the future time that God will make it Israel's task to be a light to the nations, an event that Isaiah prophesied, has arrived according to Christ. Folks, in its plain sense (***P'shat***) or in its literal sense but with a hint at a deeper meaning (***Remez***) this is a call to action. The goal is that other people..... gentiles..... will come to faith in the God of Israel. But in God's plan it is Israel (the Jews) that cannot be passive but rather the light that God gave to them must be put before people. Look at the final words of verse 16. There it says: "***so that they may see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven***". This is the truest evangelism. It is the most effective spreading of the Good News. How does Jesus say it should be done? By letting people see our good deeds; by letting others see how we praise the Father in Heaven. In other words, it is not by speaking words but by actively living out our faith. Only doing it inside the walls of our Church or Synagogue, or our home, is not sufficient. In this age when our faith is not as popular or admired as it once was, and in fact we can find ourselves under verbal attack for it, that is not to discourage us from outwardly displaying it by doing good deeds and publicly praising God. This is not to say, of course, that speaking the Gospel is not to be done; it must be and it is a necessary ingredient to effective evangelism. But words can be cheapened when there is no evidence of their truth in action to back it up. We have an English word to describe people or institutions that do this: hypocrites. I can't think of a word more used by those outside of Christianity to describe us than hypocrites; sometimes unjustly, sometimes quite justifiably. Why? Because we have not always displayed the truth in action; we've settled for advocating for it in words.

Yeshua likens the way that His listeners should be a light to world by saying it should be as if they were set in a city on a mountain. He stays with the thoughts of Isaiah when he says this.

^{CJB} **Isaiah 2:1** *This is the word that Yesha'yahu the son of Amotz saw concerning Y'hudah and Yerushalayim: ² In the acharit-hayamim (the end of days) the mountain of ADONAI's house will be established as the most important mountain. It will be regarded more highly than the other hills, and all the Goyim will stream there. ³ Many peoples will go and say, "Come, let's go up to the mountain of ADONAI, to the house of the God of Ya'akov! He will teach us about his ways, and we will walk in his paths." For out of Tziyon will go forth Torah, the word of ADONAI from Yerushalayim. ⁴ He will judge between the nations and arbitrate for many peoples. Then they will hammer their swords into plow-blades and their spears into pruning-knives; nations will not raise swords at each other, and they will no longer learn war. ⁵ Descendants of Ya'akov, come! Let's live in the light of ADONAI!*

The Torah envisions the gentiles (all the nations) making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in order to learn God's Word. Thus we must understand that in the Jewish mind, light carries a dual meaning (as it often does in the Western gentile mind). There is a type of light that represents truth, knowledge and revelation; in English we call it enlightenment. Then there is a type of light that fills a darkened space with visible light so that we can read, walk, work, eat, etc. The light on a hill in the **P'shat** sense is speaking of something like a torch that is held up on a high place so it can be seen in all directions and for a long distance; like a signal fire. In the **Remez** sense this is speaking of God's enlightenment; His truth. The hill is Mt. Zion in Jerusalem. And those who hold up the torch and who bring the divine truth to the world are to be the descendants of Jacob..... the Israelites.

After telling the Jews to be a light Yeshua cautions: what good does putting that light on a hill and then covering it over so that it can reach no one? What good does it do to hold a firm faith in the Father and His Son, and then keep it quiet and private because you encounter opposition? And what does it say to have such a faith and have it bear no fruit in the form of good works and deeds?

The Early Church Father Chrysostom says this:

"You are the light of the world.... not of a single nation nor of twenty cities,

but of the entire inhabited earth. You are a like a light to the mind, far better than any particular sunbeam. Similarly, you are spiritual salt. First you are salt. Then you are light. The metaphors of salt and light drive home the great benefit of these stinging words and the profit of this rigorous discipline; how it binds and does not permit us to be dissolute in our behavior."

Having greeted His great audience, and having prepared them with blessing after blessing, and having encouraged them in faith and divine purpose, Christ is about to present them.... all of us.... with the fulcrum, the balance point, of His entire message. If any misses this, or in some way disturbs it, or intentionally dismisses it, or changes its plain meaning in order to create or support a false doctrine, or bypasses it in order to slander Yeshua or His people or God's Torah, then all the words of the Sermon on the Mount that came before it and will come after it become tainted and out of context. That person who approaches this passage becomes like the salt that absorbs contamination and so becomes fit for nothing but to be thrown upon the ground and trampled under foot.

If you think those are harsh or severe words, then just wait until next week when we open with the 17th verse of the Sermon on the Mount.