

4

Teaching about Worship in the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 5–7)

The Beatitudes, Salt, and Light (Matt 5:1–16)

SEEING THE CROWDS, THE large crowds who have followed him (4:25), attracted by his preaching of repentance in preparation for living in the kingdom of heaven (4:17), Jesus “went up the mountain” (5:1a), a place close to the heavenly realm and associated with the giving of divine revelation. After the exodus event of the people of Israel God invited Moses to “come up to the mountain,” so that God could give him the law and commandments for how the people are to live (Exod 24:12, 13, 15). After Jesus “sat down,” the posture for authoritative teaching, his disciples came to him (5:1b), presumably including his first followers (4:18–22) as well as others who have become his disciples.

Jesus was teaching his disciples with the crowds listening, after “opening his mouth” (5:2). This otherwise redundant expression signals and sets the stage for a significant pronouncement to follow. It recalls how Jesus overcame the devil’s first temptation with the scriptural quotation (Deut 8:3) that a person will live by every word coming forth through the “mouth of God” (Matt 4:4). It prepares the audience to hear what will come through the mouth of Jesus as the word of “God with us” (1:23), teaching more fully and precisely what it means to repent in order to live in the kingdom of heaven, which includes how to properly and exclusively worship the Lord God (4:10) in response to the word of God.¹

1. “The portrayal of Jesus as seated with ‘disciples’ gathered around him casts him in the role of a rabbinic teacher; sitting was the posture for authoritative teaching (cf.

In the first set of four beatitudes (5:3–6) Jesus pronounced God’s blessing upon the unfortunate, and promised God’s reversal of their situation. Blessed are the “poor in spirit” (cf. Isa 61:1), those dispirited from their poverty as victims of social injustice, humbled before the world and God. Although lacking in earthly riches, to them belongs the kingdom of heaven (5:3). Blessed are they who mourn (cf. Isa 61:2–3) the death of loved ones due to injustice by humans (e.g., Matt 2:16–18), for they will be comforted (5:4) by God (divine passive). Blessed are the meek, those dispossessed of the earth’s resources, leaving them dependent upon God, for they will inherit the (heavenly) land (5:5; cf. Ps 37:11). Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the doing for the unfortunate of what is right and just in God’s salvific plan and thus amounts to ethical worship pleasing to God. Although they are not satisfied by humans, they will be satisfied by God (5:6).

In the second set of four beatitudes (5:7–10) Jesus pronounced God’s blessing upon those who help the unfortunate, especially the unfortunate exemplified in the first set of four beatitudes (5:3–6), and promised them God’s heavenly reward. Blessed are the merciful, those who exhibit compassion for the unfortunate as the ethical worship God desires (Hos 6:6), for they will be shown mercy by God (Matt 5:7). Blessed are “the clean of heart,” those who help the unfortunate with the honesty, sincerity, and integrity required to truly worship God (Ps 15; 24:3–6), for they will see God (Matt 5:8) as the goal of their worship (Ps 42:3). Blessed are the peacemakers, those who work for peace, an overall well-being with God and others, by working for justice for the unfortunate, for they will be called sons of God (Matt 5:9), with Jesus, the Son of God (2:15; 3:17), as their brother. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for what is right and just for the unfortunate, for to them, as to the poor in spirit whom they may ironically become in being persecuted (5:3), belongs the kingdom of heaven (5:10).

13:2; 24:3; 26:55), as also in the synagogue (23:2; Luke 4:20). . . . while ‘opened his mouth’ is a familiar OT idiom to introduce a significant pronouncement (Job 3:1; 33:2; Ps 78:2; Dan 10:16; cf. Matt 13:35; Acts 8:35; 10:34). Matthew thus sets up a model of the authoritative teacher with which the discourse will conclude (7:28–29)” (France, *Matthew*, 157–58). “Against the background of the widespread sacralization of mountains among ancient peoples, including the Jews, the mountain setting undoubtedly underlines the importance of the event taking place there. The mountain here is often taken more specifically as providing an allusion to the giving of the law at Mount Sinai (cf. 5:17). . . . The content of the coming address is appropriately identified as teaching rather than proclamation, but what Jesus is to say is to be thought of as grounded in his proclamation of the near approach of the kingdom of God and as clarifying what, for the disciple, lies beyond the repentance called for in 4:17” (Nolland, *Matthew*, 192–93).

After the third-person address of the first eight beatitudes (5:3–10) Jesus addressed the ninth directly to his audience: “Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute and speak every kind of evil against you for the sake of me” (5:11). Jesus thus identified himself with the righteousness “for the sake of” which those persecuted for helping the unfortunate are blessed (5:10). “You” are to rejoice and be glad, resonating with the joyful worship exemplified by the magi (2:10–11), “for your reward is great in heaven” (5:12a), indicating that their being persecuted for the sake of righteousness/Jesus amounts to the ethical worship God desires. That “thus they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (5:12b) places the disciples in the line of the prophets sent by God to speak the word of God, especially upholding righteous behavior and the true worship of the one and only God (cf. 2 Chr 36:11–16).²

As those willing to be persecuted for living in accord with the beatitudes, the disciples are the metaphorical “salt,” with a connotation of “wisdom,” for the earth, but if the salt/wisdom “loses its taste/becomes foolish [μωρανθῆ],” with what will it be seasoned? (Matt 5:13a). If the disciples fail to exhibit the righteousness indicated in the beatitudes, they will not demonstrate divine wisdom for the benefit of the people of the world (5:13b).³ As Jesus was identified with the light of the star (2:10–11) and represented a great “light” for those in the darkness of death (4:16), so the disciples are to be the “light” for the world (5:14a). They are to let their “light,” their good deeds done in accord with the beatitudes, shine before people (5:14b–16a), so that they may see the good deeds of their ethical worship and be inspired to doxological worship, and thus “they may glorify your Father, the one in heaven” (5:16b).⁴

Jesus’ New Teaching on the Mosaic Law (Matt 5:17–48)

Jesus assured his audience of followers that he has come not to abolish the scriptural Mosaic Law or the Prophets, but to bring them to their divinely

2. “The persecution of the prophets was an established feature of Jewish folk-memory, stated in general terms in 2 Chr 36:16 and Neh 9:26 and amply illustrated within the OT itself, notably in the case of Jeremiah (Jer 20:10; 26:10–19; 36–38, etc.) and his contemporaries” (France, *Matthew*, 173).

3. “Salt is thus a metaphor for one’s exercising a beneficial influence on the world” (Turner, *Matthew*, 155). “The verb [μωρανθῆ] which I translated ‘becomes tasteless’ more literally means ‘becomes foolish.’ The apparently inappropriate verb points to the metaphorical role of the salt here, to symbolize the wholesome flavor of wisdom which disciples are to contribute” (France, *Matthew*, 175).

4. On Matt 5:3–16, see Powell, *God With Us*, 119–44.

intended fulfillment (5:17). The Law to be brought to fulfillment by Jesus has an enduring value within God's plan (5:18). Doing and teaching the commandments of the Law as taught by Jesus makes one great in the kingdom of heaven (5:19). But unless the righteousness of the disciples abounds beyond that of the scribes and Pharisees, those who were experts in teaching and zealous in doing the commandments of the Law, they will not even enter into the kingdom of heaven (5:20). This sets the stage for Jesus to teach his followers how their more abundant righteousness, their doing and teaching of what is right and just in accord with God's Law, which thus pleases God as ethical worship, will enable them to enter into and become great in the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus came to bring to its fulfillment (5:17), deepening and extending, the commandment not to murder (5:21; cf. Exod 20:13; Deut 5:17) by teaching the avoidance of anger (5:22), which can often lead to murder. Jesus went on to teach the need not just to avoid anger, but, more positively, to reconcile oneself with one's fellow human being. If someone comes to offer in cultic worship a sacrificial gift at the altar, and then remembers that someone has something against him (5:23), he is to leave the gift at the altar, go first to reconcile himself with the person, and then return to offer the gift (5:24).⁵ Jesus indicated here the fundamental need for the ethical behavior, in this case, reconciliation, that is a precondition for and thus complements cultic worship. For cultic or liturgical worship to please God, it must be accompanied by the ethical behavior God desires ("I desire mercy and not [simply] sacrifice" [Hos 6:6; cf. Matt 9:13; 12:7]), so that the ethical behavior God desires amounts to what can be considered ethical worship.⁶

Continuing to bring the scriptural Law and Prophets to fulfillment (5:17), Jesus provided further examples of the ethical behavior that complements cultic worship: Avoid not only adultery (Exod 20:14, 17; Deut 5:18, 21) but thoughts desirous of adultery (Matt 5:27–30); avoid divorce (Deut 24:1–5), since it amounts to adultery (Matt 5:31–32); instead of taking oaths (Exod 20:7; Lev 19:12), which result in offending God, to verify what one does or says, be truthful in all relationships (Matt 5:33–37); go beyond merely limiting the vicious cycle of retaliation (Lev 24:20) by having the generosity to eliminate it altogether (Matt 5:38–42); love not only your neighbors and friends (Lev 19:18) but even your enemies (Matt 5:43–48) and include in your worship prayers for those who persecute you (5:44).

5. "It is not simply a matter of dealing with one's own feelings of anger, but of positively going out to recognize those of the aggrieved party and seeking to defuse them" (Byrne, *Lifting the Burden*, 59).

6. "Worship that is acceptable to God cannot take place against the background of a damaged human relationship which is being ignored" (Nolland, *Matthew*, 233).

If you love only those loving you, what reward or recompense will you have (5:46; cf. 5:12) with God in heaven?⁷ In other words, love of one's enemies is what God desires and rewards as ethical worship. Loving one's enemies exemplifies the righteousness that goes beyond that of the scribes and Pharisees (5:20, 47). It amounts to ethical worship pleasing to God, since it makes one "perfect" as the heavenly Father is "perfect" (5:48), in the sense of being complete or inclusive by extending love to all, just as the heavenly Father, as the Creator of all, extends loving care to all people (5:45).⁸

Almsgiving, Prayer, and Fasting (Matt 6:1–18)

Jesus taught his followers to beware not to do their righteousness, acts that are right and just according to God, before people in order to be seen by them. Otherwise, they will have no reward with their Father, the one in heaven (6:1), and thus such acts will not count as ethical worship pleasing to God.⁹ When they do almsgiving, giving to the poor as an act of ethical worship sometimes equated with sacrificial worship in the biblical tradition, they are not to draw attention to themselves, in order that "they may be glorified" (δοξασθῶσιν) by people (6:2), thus making themselves an object of false doxological worship.¹⁰ Indeed, this would contradict Jesus' previous teaching for his followers to let people see their good deeds, so that "they may glorify" (δοξάσωσιν) the heavenly Father (5:16) as an act of true doxological worship. If they perform their almsgiving privately and in a way that does not draw attention to themselves, it will amount to ethical worship pleasing to God, who will reward them accordingly (6:3–4).

7. "Reward" or "recompense" (μισθός) often means "recognition (mostly by God) for the moral quality of an action" (BDAG, 653).

8. "Perfect" (τέλειος) [is] . . . used often of a 'perfect' sacrifice ('without blemish,' often in Leviticus) and of the ethical uprightness or 'blamelessness' of God's people (Gen 6:9, 17:1; Deut 18:13; 2 Sam 22:24, 26), an absolute commitment and allegiance to God (Ps 15:2; 84:11)" (Osborne, *Matthew*, 214). "And this, finally (v. 48) is the true 'definition' of 'perfection': being perfect as one's heavenly Father is perfect, that is, acting toward others, including one's enemies, as the Creator acts toward all" (Byrne, *Lifting the Burden*, 62; emphasis original).

9. Eubank, "Storing Up Treasure with God," 77–92.

10. "Almsgiving was considered meritorious in the OT and Jewish theology; it was thought to result in the forgiveness of sins (Prov 11:4; Dan 4:24, etc.), was regarded as a condition of salvation (Isa 58:6–12), and was equated with sacrifice (Tob 11:4; Sir 32:5)" (Staudinger, "ἐλεημοσύνη," 429). "By the time of Jesus righteousness and almsgiving were virtually synonymous, and almsgiving was an important part of temple and synagogue services" (Osborne, *Matthew*, 219).

When the followers of Jesus pray, they are not to be like hypocritical Jews who love to pray while standing in synagogues and on street corners, so that they may be seen by people (6:5). Rather, when any one of them prays individually, he is to pray in private without drawing attention to himself, and his Father, who sees in private, will reward him (6:6). Neither are they to pray like pagans who think they will be heard by repeating a multitude of words (6:7), since their heavenly Father knows what they need before they ask him (6:8).

Jesus then provides the Matthean audience with a model prayer for their communal worship (6:9–13), a prayer that accents a disposition of humble submission to God, praying for the accomplishment of God's will, as the essence of authentic prayer.¹¹ After addressing God as "our Father," they are to pray that his name may be made holy (6:9), his kingdom may come, and his heavenly will may be done on earth (6:10). Having thus humbly submitted their own wills to God's will, they may then pray that God, who knows what they need (6:8), provide it for them (6:11), forgive their sins as they forgive those who sin against them (6:12), and deliver them from the evil one, the devil, so as not to be led into temptation (6:13; cf. 4:1–11). Finally, Jesus emphatically reaffirmed that they must forgive others in order to be forgiven by God (6:14–15).¹²

When the followers of Jesus fast as an act of ascetic worship (cf. 4:2), they are not to look gloomy like hypocritical Jews who neglect their appearance so that they may appear to people to be fasting. They have thus already received their reward on a human level (6:16). They have drawn attention to themselves rather than to God as the object of true worship. When disciples fast, they are to attend to their appearance (6:17), so that they do not appear to people to be fasting. Their heavenly Father, who sees what they are doing in private, will reward them (6:18), as then their fasting will be pleasing to him as an act of authentic worship.¹³

11. "It quickly became a liturgical prayer, prayed three times a day by mid-second century (*Did.* 8:3) . . . it is also intended more as a model for prayer as well as a statement of Christian priorities and a guide to a philosophy for living the Christian life (i.e., it is meant to be lived as well as prayed)" (Osborne, *Matthew*, 227). On the poetic devices in the prayer, see Martin, "Poetry of the Lord's Prayer," 347–72.

12. Mbabazi, *Significance of Interpersonal Forgiveness*, 117–47.

13. "Fasting, like almsgiving and prayer, must always be done not for the admiration of others but for the worship of God alone. Whenever fasting becomes a performance, it ceases to be righteous activity. Private communion with the Father is the true goal of fasting. Reward from God is predicated on the right attitude and motivation" (Osborne, *Matthew*, 237).

Worship Not Earthly Things But the Heavenly Father Alone (Matt 6:19–34)

Jesus warned his followers not to store up for themselves treasures on earth, which are transitory and susceptible to being lost (6:19). They should rather store up for themselves treasures in heaven, which are permanent and secure (6:20). Then one's focus will properly be on the priority of the heavenly treasure (6:21). And if one's focus is on heavenly treasure, then one will be filled with light (6:22), and thus enabled to be a light for the world (5:14) as one whose proper focus and good deeds inspire people to the doxological worship of glorifying the heavenly Father (5:16). But if one's focus is on earthly treasure, then one will be in great darkness, not having the proper priority for one's own life and unable to be light for others (6:23). No one can serve, love, or be completely devoted to two different masters simultaneously; you cannot totally serve and thus authentically worship God as well as earthly wealth (6:24). Jesus has thus reaffirmed for the audience his command to Satan: "The Lord your God shall you worship and him alone shall you serve" (4:10).¹⁴

Followers of Jesus are not to make the procurement of food and clothing for themselves the priority of their lives (6:25). Just as the heavenly Father feeds the birds, so he will assuredly feed human beings, who are much more important than animals (6:26). Worrying about what one needs will not extend the length of one's life (6:27). The God who splendidly clothes the flowers of the field (6:28–29) will most certainly clothe his human creatures, who have a much greater value, even if they are of little faith (6:30). Rather than worrying about the food and clothing (6:31) God knows they need (6:32), they are to have the great faith to seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, the doing of what is right and just as ethical worship pleasing to God, and then they will have all they need (6:33). They are thus to live for the present with the kingdom and worship of God as their priority and have the faith in the God they worship not to be overly concerned with the future, which is firmly in God's hands (6:34).¹⁵

14. "God is the only being one can 'serve' in the fullest sense and have freedom enhanced rather than restricted" (Byrne, *Lifting the Burden*, 67).

15. "We have already seen 'righteousness' used several times for living in the way God requires. In 5:10, 20 it represents the distinctive life-style of disciples. . . . The disciple's deepest wish and resolve must be to live in God's way" (France, *Matthew*, 271).

Pray for the Prudent Discernment Needed To Correct Faults (Matt 7:1–12)

Disciples of Jesus should not judge others, since they will ultimately be judged by God in the same way that they would judge others (7:1–2). One should first correct one's often greater own faults before trying to correct the faults of others (7:3–5). Prudent discernment is needed in offering to correct the faults of others to make sure such an offer will be received favorably. Otherwise, it will be like giving what is holy to wild dogs, who may turn and tear you to pieces, or like throwing your valuable pearls to indifferent swine, who may merely trample them underfoot (7:6). If disciples ask for such discernment in prayer, it will be given them by God, for everyone who asks will receive, just as one who seeks finds, and to one who knocks it will be opened (7:7–8). Just as parents do not give bad things to their children, so even more your heavenly Father will surely give good things to those who ask for them in prayer (7:9–11).¹⁶ Pray to correct the faults of others, just as you would want them to correct your faults; such love for one another in essence sums up the meaning of the Law and the Prophets (7:12; cf. 5:20).¹⁷

The Worship Needed To Enter into Life in the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt 7:13–29)

Jesus had exhorted his followers that unless their righteousness, their doing of what is right and just according to God so that it pleases God as ethical worship, abounds beyond that of the scribes and Pharisees, “you will not enter” into the kingdom of heaven (5:20). Having taught how they are to do this more abundant righteousness (5:21–7:12), Jesus urged them to “enter” through the “narrow gate” of doing this more abundant righteousness, for the gate is wide and the way broad that leads to destruction, the loss of life in the kingdom, and many are entering through it (7:13). How narrow the gate and constricted the way that leads to “the life” in the kingdom of heaven and few are “finding” it (7:14). That few are “finding” the way indicates the need for prayer to be able to do the more abundant righteousness and enter

16. “Matthew 7:7–11 is a sort of postscript to the model prayer in 6:9–13. The prayer teaches the right way to pray, and this passage inspires confidence that prayer will be answered” (Turner, *Matthew*, 210).

17. “The appeal to ‘the law and the prophets’ in fact echoes Jesus’ insistence, at the beginning of his interpretation (5:20), that he had not come to abolish but to fulfill them. The ‘inclusion’ thus formed implies that treating others as one would have them treat oneself goes to the heart of the interpretation of the Torah in the light of ‘the prophets’ (Hos 6:6) that Jesus has come to promote” (Byrne, *Lifting the Burden*, 69).

through the narrow gate into the kingdom, as it recalls Jesus' previous directive to pray (7:7), for everyone who asks in prayer receives, and the one who seeks "finds," and to the one who knocks it will be opened (7:8) by God (divine passive).

Disciples can discern who are the false prophets, the leaders who will mislead them, by their "fruits," the external deeds that are a product of their inner being (7:15–16). Every good tree/person produces good fruit, but a bad tree/person cannot produce good fruit (7:17–18). Repeating and thus reaffirming the warning of John the Baptist (3:10), Jesus warned that every tree/person that does not produce good fruit, the repentance needed to enter into the kingdom of heaven by doing the more abundant righteousness that pleases God as ethical worship, will be cut down and thrown into the fire at the final judgment (7:19). Disciples will know who are the false prophets to avoid by their fruits, their bad deeds (7:20). Disciples and thus the Matthean audience are thus implicitly called to be true prophets (cf. 5:12) by producing the good fruit of doing the more abundant righteousness that pleases God as ethical worship, in order to enter and to lead others to enter into the life of the kingdom of heaven.

Not everyone who cries out to Jesus as "Lord, Lord," an act of supplicatory worship, will enter into the kingdom of heaven at the final judgment, but only the one who does the will of his heavenly Father (7:21), as Jesus has revealed it in this discourse (5–7).¹⁸ Supplicatory worship alone will not suffice; it must be complemented by ethical worship. Despite the prophecies, exorcisms, and great deeds many may have done in the name of Jesus (7:22), he will confess to them that he never knew them and they will be dismissed as workers of lawlessness, those who failed to do God's will (7:23), the ethical worship pleasing to God. For disciples and thus the Matthean audience to make sure that they will be known by Jesus at the final judgment they must do the will of his heavenly Father by doing the more abundant righteousness (5:20) Jesus has revealed to them, doing what is right and just in accord with the will of God, which pleases God as ethical worship.¹⁹

It is absolutely necessary for the Matthean audience to be wise rather than foolish by basing their lives on doing the more abundant righteousness that amounts to ethical worship and that Jesus has taught in this sermon on the mount, in order for them to have the firm foundation they need to

18. "The message here is that mere confession is useless unless accompanied by action. One can make a profession, but without a changed life, such an affirmation is without merit" (Osborne, *Matthew*, 273).

19. "Enter the kingdom of heaven' echoes the language of 5:20 and thus guides the reader to equate the abundant righteousness of 5:20 with 'the will of my Father' here" (Nolland, *Matthew*, 340).

withstand all of life's difficulties and live in the kingdom of heaven (7:24–27). When Jesus finished the words of the sermon, the crowds (cf. 5:1) were astonished at his teaching (7:28). For he was teaching them as one having divine authority and not as their scribes, who taught merely human tradition (7:29).²⁰ This thus reaffirms for the audience Jesus' warning that unless their righteousness, their doing of what is right and just as ethical worship that pleases God, abounds beyond that of the scribes and Pharisees, they will not enter into the kingdom of heaven (5:20).

Summary on Matthew 5–7

In the second set of four beatitudes (5:7–10) Jesus pronounced God's blessing upon those who help the unfortunate, especially the unfortunate exemplified in the first set of four beatitudes (5:3–6), and promised them God's heavenly reward. Blessed are the merciful, those who exhibit compassion for the unfortunate as the ethical worship God desires (Hos 6:6), for they will be shown mercy by God (Matt 5:7). Blessed are "the clean of heart," those who help the unfortunate with the honesty, sincerity, and integrity required to truly worship God (Psalm 15; 24:3–6), for they will see God (Matt 5:8) as the goal of their worship (Ps 42:3). Blessed are the peacemakers, those who work for peace, an overall well-being with God and others, by working for justice for the unfortunate, for they will be called sons of God (Matt 5:9), with Jesus, the Son of God (2:15; 3:17), as their brother. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for what is right and just for the unfortunate, for to them, as to the poor in spirit whom they may ironically become in being persecuted (5:3), belongs the kingdom of heaven (5:10).

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20. "Unlike the scribes who had to rely upon their own tradition, appealing to Moses, Jesus has spoken as the authoritative interpreter of the Torah, able to challenge that tradition in the name of an interpretation valid for the time of the kingdom" (Byrne, *Lifting the Burden*, 72).

persecuted the prophets who were before you” (5:12b) places the disciples in the line of the prophets sent by God to speak the word of God, especially upholding righteous behavior and the true worship of the one and only God (cf. 2 Chr 36:11–16).

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Jesus came to bring to its fulfillment (5:17), deepening and extending, the commandment not to murder (5:21; cf. Exod 20:13; Deut 5:17) by teaching the avoidance of anger (5:22), which can often lead to murder. Jesus goes on to teach the need not just to avoid anger, but, more positively, to reconcile oneself with one’s fellow human being. If someone comes to offer in cultic worship a sacrificial gift at the altar, and then remembers that someone has something against him (5:23), he is to leave the gift at the altar, go first to reconcile himself with the person, and then return to offer the gift (5:24). Jesus indicated here the fundamental need for the ethical behavior, in this case, reconciliation, that is a precondition for and thus complements cultic worship. For cultic or liturgical worship to please God, it must be accompanied by the ethical behavior God desires (“I desire mercy and not [simply] sacrifice” [Hos 6:6; cf. Matt 9:13; 12:7]), so that the ethical behavior God desires amounts to what can be considered ethical worship.

If you love only those loving you, what reward or recompense will you have (5:46; cf. 5:12) with God in heaven? In other words, love of one’s enemies is what God desires and rewards as ethical worship. Loving one’s enemies exemplifies the righteousness that goes beyond that of the scribes and Pharisees (5:20, 47). It amounts to ethical worship pleasing to God, since it makes one “perfect” as the heavenly Father is “perfect” (5:48), in the sense of being complete or inclusive by extending love to all, just as the heavenly Father, as the Creator of all, extends loving care to all people (5:45).

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may be glorified” by people (6:2), thus making themselves an object of false doxological worship. Indeed, this would contradict Jesus’ previous teaching for his followers to let people see their good deeds, so that “they may glorify” the heavenly Father (5:16) as an act of true doxological worship. If they perform their almsgiving privately and in a way that does not draw attention to themselves, it will amount to ethical worship pleasing to God, who will reward them accordingly (6:3–4).

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When disciples fast, an act of ascetic worship, they are to attend to their appearance (6:17). They are not to appear to people to be fasting. Their heavenly Father, who sees what they are doing in private, will then reward them (6:18). Their fasting will be pleasing to him as an act of authentic worship.

Disciples should store up for themselves treasures in heaven, which are permanent and secure (6:20). Then one’s focus will properly be on the priority of the heavenly treasure (6:21). And if one’s focus is on heavenly treasure, then one will be filled with light (6:22), and thus enabled to be a light for the world (5:14) as one whose proper focus and good deeds inspire people to the doxological worship of glorifying the heavenly Father (5:16). No one can serve, love, or be completely devoted to two different masters simultaneously; you cannot totally serve and thus authentically worship God as well as earthly wealth (6:24). Jesus has thus reaffirmed for the audience his command to Satan: “The Lord your God shall you worship and him alone shall you serve” (4:10).

Rather than worrying about the food and clothing (6:31) God knows they need (6:32), the followers of Jesus are to have the great faith to seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, the doing of what is right and just as ethical worship pleasing to God. Then they will have all they need (6:33). They are thus to live for the present with the kingdom and worship of God as their priority and have the faith in the God they worship not to be overly concerned with the future, which is firmly in God’s hands (6:34).

One should first correct one's often greater own faults before trying to correct the faults of others (7:3-5). Prudent discernment is needed in offering to correct the faults of others to make sure such an offer will be received favorably (7:6). If they ask for such discernment in prayer, it will be given them by God, for everyone who asks will receive, just as one who seeks finds, and to one who knocks it will be opened (7:7-8). Just as parents do not give bad things to their children, so even more your heavenly Father will surely give good things to those who ask for them in prayer (7:9-11). Pray to correct the faults of others, just as you would want them to correct your faults; such love for one another in essence sums up the meaning of the Law and the Prophets (7:12; cf. 5:20).

Not everyone who cries out to Jesus as "Lord, Lord," an act of supplicatory worship, will enter into the kingdom of heaven at the final judgment, but only the one who does the will of his heavenly Father (7:21), as Jesus has revealed it in this sermon on the mount (5-7). Supplicatory worship alone will not suffice; it must be complemented by ethical worship. For disciples, and thus the Matthean audience, to make sure that they will be known by Jesus at the final judgment (7:22) they must do the will of his heavenly Father by doing the more abundant righteousness (5:20) Jesus has revealed to them, doing what is right and just in accord with the will of God, which pleases God as ethical worship.