

## NEW CITY DAILY DEVOTIONAL FOR WEEK OF 6/29/2020-7/3/2020

The following content is based on the message on 6/28/20 at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. It is not meant to be a full synopsis, but rather a resource to help you analyze and apply the main ideas. To use this devotional effectively, please listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

### MONDAY // BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION

**Read Matthew 5:17-20.** Jesus continues His sermon on the mount. Last week, we saw that Jesus did not come to bring behavior modification. He wanted to bring heart transformation. Jesus said that in order to enter the kingdom, someone had to be better than the scribes and the Pharisees. These scribes and Pharisees were religious men who dedicated their life to keeping the Law of God. They were experts at behavior modification. They were as close to perfect as you could imagine. Yet, Jesus said that it wasn't enough. In fact, over and over through the Gospels, Jesus condemned the religious leaders. Despite how well they kept the law, their hearts were proud and self-righteous.

#### Successful behavior modification can lead to self-righteousness.

- *Reflect on a time when you were successful in modifying your behavior. How did that success make you feel?*
- *It's okay to feel good about making changes, however in relation to righteousness, why would Jesus condemn the religious leaders who are self-righteousness?*

### TUESDAY // WHO WILL BE FAITHFUL?

Before sin entered the world, God and humanity experienced perfect relationship. You could say that God created humanity and said, "I love you. And I want to be in a forever relationship with you." God looked around at the perfect state in Genesis 1:31 and God saw everything that he had made, and "behold, it was very good." All was good and at perfect rest. But it didn't stay that way. **Read Genesis 3:1-7 and 3:22-24.** Adam and Eve stepped away from God. They were unfaithful to Him. Unfortunately, things just continued to get worse afterwards. It got so bad that God had to start over with Noah and his family. However, the fate of humanity proved to be the same.

#### We are left asking: "Who will be faithful to God?"

- *Describe how tragic the scene is in Genesis 3. If you were God, how would you respond?*
- *How does God show mercy to humanity despite their unfaithfulness? How does that mercy encourage you?*

### WEDNESDAY // MORE OF THE SAME

**Read Genesis 12:1-3.** God chose Abraham out of a sinful humanity to restart again. But this major restart is going to be different. Rather than having it all hinge on one

person, God is going to build something bigger. This time, God used Abraham's family — which will grow into the nation of Israel. God lays out what exactly it would look like for the nation of Israel to be a representation of what a relationship with Him should look like. **Read Exodus 19:3-8.** As you might expect, Israel's subsequent history just continued to prove humanity's inability to stay faithful to God. This history must show us today that our names could easily replace the names of the people of Israel.

#### Humanity cannot stay faithful to God.

- *What did Israel need to do in order to be a representation of faithfulness to God? How does this show you that you would not have stayed faithful either?*
- *Before we look at the good news, why is it necessary for us to reflect on the hopelessness of our ability to meet God's standard?*
- *Set a timer for five minutes. Reflect on your inability to ultimately be faithful to God.*

### THURSDAY // WE NEED SOMETHING NEW

Apparently, humanity cannot fulfill God's standards. Humanity cannot stay faithful to God. But yet, the standard has to be met. Something needs to change. Something new needs to be done. And that's exactly what God plans to do. **Read Jeremiah 31:31-34.** This passage gives us some hope of what God wants to do. Rather than waiting around to see who could stay faithful, God planned to forgive sin. But on account of His holy character, the way that God has to forgive sin still required faithfulness. How humanity meets God's standard of faithfulness is special because God Himself steps in on our behalf.

- *Which one of these promises in this passage speaks to you most? Why?*
- *What does it say about God that He ultimately wanted to forgive humanity? Reflect on the forgiveness that you've received.*

### FRIDAY // JESUS IS FAITHFUL

In Matthew 5:17, Jesus told us that He didn't come to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it. This is incredible news for us. Clearly, humanity has been unable to be faithful to God's perfect standard. Jesus comes to earth and fulfills the righteous standard that we've needed. Rather than making us try harder to please God, Jesus offers us forgiveness instead. The apostle Paul tells us how we receive that forgiveness. **Read Ephesians 2:8-10.**

#### Only Jesus could so perfectly say that you aren't good enough, yet you are worth everything.

- *What does it say about God that He was willing to be faithful on our behalf?*
- *Set a timer for five minutes. Reflect on some blessings you receive when you place your faith in the work of Jesus rather than your own work.*
- *How does Jesus' forgiveness motivate you to live differently?*