

Summary

In this sermon from the Sermon on the Mount series called "The Good Life," Pastor Steve explores what true righteousness looks like according to Jesus in Matthew 5. Rather than measuring goodness by the lines we haven't crossed, Jesus pushes beneath the surface to ask what is happening in our hearts. Through examples of anger, lust, divorce, reconciliation, and honesty, Jesus consistently challenges the crowd to stop asking "how far is too far?" and start asking "who am I becoming?" The sermon highlights three key principles: righteousness is a matter of the heart, reconciliation precedes ritual, and reliability needs no reinforcement. Jesus did not come simply to help us look better on the outside. He came to transform us from the inside out. The good life is not about staying on the right side of a line but about orienting our whole lives toward Jesus, becoming more like Him, and letting that transformation shape how we treat others and how we speak.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for bringing us together today. As we open Your Word and discuss what it means to live the good life You have designed for us, we ask that You would quiet our minds and soften our hearts. We do not want to simply go through the motions of a discussion. We want You to meet us here. Reveal the areas of our lives where You are calling us to go deeper, to move beyond the surface and let You do the transforming work only You can do. Give us the courage to be honest with one another and the grace to receive what You want to show us today. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Ice Breaker

What is one small habit or routine in your life that others might not know about but that says a lot about who you are as a person?

Key Verses

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| • Matthew 5:20 | Matthew 5:21-22 | Matthew 5:27-28 |
| • Matthew 5:23-24 | Matthew 5:37 | Romans 12:18 |

Questions

- Pastor Steve opened by asking, "Am I a good person?" How do you typically measure your own goodness, and how does Jesus' standard in this passage challenge that measurement?
- Jesus connects anger and contempt to the same root as murder. Have you ever found yourself holding contempt toward someone, even if you never acted on it? What did that reveal about your heart?
- The sermon used the example of scrolling past something on social media or lingering on a scene in a show. How do you personally navigate the line between something simply appearing in front of you and choosing to feed a desire?
- Jesus says in Matthew 5:23-24 that reconciliation should come before worship. Is there a relationship in your life right now where you know something needs to be made right? What has been holding you back from taking that step?
- Pastor Steve said, "Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do isn't sing another song, but to go and have a conversation you've been avoiding." Do you agree with that? Why or why not?
- The sermon introduced the idea that "reliability needs no reinforcement," meaning your character should speak before your words do. In what areas of your life do your words and actions consistently match, and where do they fall short?
- Pastor Steve described the difference between asking "where is the line?" and asking "who am I becoming?" Which question do you find yourself asking more often, and what does that reveal about where you are in your walk with Jesus?
- The sermon closed with an invitation to pray, "Jesus, what is happening in me that You want to transform?" If you were to honestly answer that question right now, what would you say?

Life Application

This week, identify one specific area from the sermon where Jesus is calling you to go deeper than the surface. It might be an unresolved conflict where you need to take the first step toward reconciliation, a habit or pattern that is feeding something in your heart that should not be fed, or an area where your words and your actions are not lining up. Choose one concrete action you will take before your group meets again, whether that is sending a text, deleting an app, having a conversation, or simply spending time in honest prayer asking Jesus to transform that area of your heart. Come back next time ready to share what happened.

Key Takeaways

- Righteousness is a matter of the heart. Jesus is not simply concerned with the actions we avoid. He is concerned with who we are becoming on the inside, because our actions grow from the soil of our hearts.
- Reconciliation precedes ritual. Our relationship with God cannot be fully separated from our relationships with others. If there is something broken between us and another person, Jesus calls us to go and make it right before we continue in worship.
- Reliability needs no reinforcement. A person of integrity does not need extra words or promises to be believed. Their character, built over time through consistent honesty and follow-through, speaks for itself.
- The good life is not about staying on the right side of a line. It is about orienting your whole life toward Jesus and allowing Him to transform you from the inside out as you learn to be with Him, become like Him, and do what He did.
- Jesus did not come simply to confront sin. He came to transform sinners. Whatever your past holds, it does not disqualify you from the life He is inviting you into.

Ending Prayer

Lord, thank You for this time together and for the truth of Your Word that does not let us stay comfortable on the surface. We confess that we are often more concerned with where the line is than with who we are becoming. Forgive us for that. We ask that You would do the deep work in each of us that only You can do. Where there is anger, bring healing. Where there is lust, bring purity. Where there are broken relationships, give us the courage to pursue reconciliation. Where our words have not matched our actions, make us people of integrity. We cannot transform our

own hearts, but we trust that as we stay close to You,
increasingly pointed toward You. In Jesus' name, Amen.



You will change us from the inside out. May our lives be