

Collide – Breaking Torah by Keeping It

Matthew Vander Els • 2018-08-13 • foundedintruth.com

MAIN VERSES

[Matthew 5](#) • [Matthew 6](#) • [Matthew 6:1](#) • [Matthew 6:1-4](#) • [Matthew 6:3](#) • [Matthew 6:5](#) • [Matthew 6:16](#) • [Leviticus 19](#) • [Romans 2:28-29](#)

Do you ever find yourself searching for something bigger than you? For a community to be a part of? A place founded on truth and love. A place to worship the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and the Son of God. Welcome to Founded in Truth, where we're more than just a fellowship. We're a family. So welcome home.

The Sermon on the Mount Shows the Reality

Sermon on the Mount's hard. Sermon on the Mount's hard because the Sermon on the Mount shows the reality of what Yeshua is expecting from us. The people of this new covenant, this new relationship that God is making, where God is going to forgive the transgressions and the iniquities. He's going to remember them no more. And on this basis, a new relationship, a strong relationship is going to be birthed into his good creation. And he says that this is going to produce a people that his laws and his Torah will be written and inscribed on their hearts. And this people would keep Torah in a way that's not simply as frontlets between their eyes and as a sign in their hands. They would keep it in a way that is truly produced from the heart to fulfill its ultimate function, which is show the world who God is and what he looks like. To be the tool in which an image bearer is formed.

And Yeshua comes announcing this new kingdom, this kingdom of God that has been pushed away from his good creation for such a long time. And he's announcing that it's here and it's now. And he's announcing that this new creation is being birthed right here, right now through him. And he goes up this mountain and he begins to preach. And he doesn't say that the Torah is done away with. And he doesn't say we're not going to do that stuff anymore. And he doesn't even say, like, I have a new Torah to give you. What he says is he says, I'm going to show you how to actually fulfill the Torah. I'm going to show you how to actually, what a person of this

new kingdom, what a person of the kingdom of God looks like when they keep Torah. And he goes through and he gives his authoritative interpretation on how to fulfill Torah.

And he takes commandments that we typically check off our list because it's really easy to check off these commandments on our list and make ourselves feel righteous. Like, do not murder. Oh, I didn't stab anyone in the back today. I'm a righteous person. So we check it off our list and we're like, boom, one down, right? Ooh, adultery. I haven't slept around with my wife, so I'm right. Check. Yes, I'm doing very well here. This is great, you know? And I love my neighbor and I'm doing good.

The Deeper Interpretation of the Commandments

And Yeshua says, well, that's all great, but that's your interpretation of the Torah and that's your interpretation of what those commandments look like. And I'm saying that's wrong. That's incomplete. Because if you harbor anger in your heart, then that is a heart that does not thrive to produce the kingdom of God because it's a heart that breaks Torah. So you are guilty of murder if you even harbor anger in your heart because you've killed your brother in your heart. He's saying that this is actually what that commandment means. What? You're sure you're crazy. That's too radical.

Oh, and I know you haven't physically slept around with another woman, but if you even look at a woman with lust in your heart, then it means that your heart is one that objectifies people and strips their identity away from them to be abused in the most secret places in your life. And that's not a heart that produces the image of God. And if you've done that, if this is your heart, then you've broken the commandment of adultery. You're an adulterer. Yeah, but I thought I had that one checked.

And you do love your neighbor. Yes, got one, according to who you think your neighbor is. But Yeshua says that [Leviticus 19](#) talks about you loving your neighbors and you loving your kinsmen and you loving fellow Israelites. But then later on in the chapter, he says, well, there's also those immigrants that come in and they're looking for a better life and they're crossing into your country and you need to love them as if they are your blood lineage ancestor, your kin. You need to look at them and treat them as if they are your family. Therefore, you need to love them too. These pagan descent people coming in.

And, you know what? The love of God that's described in [Leviticus 19](#) is one that's without boundaries. It's one that doesn't stop with just immigrants that want to come in and live peacefully among Israelites. And it doesn't stop between who you define as your fellow

kinsmen. Yeshua goes on and says, yeah, it's your enemy too. You're not loving your neighbor if you're even hating those who want to hate you. And why does he say this? He references the weather. He says, well, it makes perfect sense because we look outside and we see God sends rain to the righteous and the wicked, and he sends sunshine to the righteous and the wicked. So therefore, we need to emulate God, and we need to send God's love to both the righteous and the wicked. It makes perfect sense. Why can't you guys get this?

And we're all over here, who is this no-name rabbi from Nazareth? It's too radical. He lost so many followers pushing this interpretation of Torah. This is the message that got him killed, and this is the message that's been getting his followers killed for the past 2,000 years. This is the message that started a revolution.

And so we're going to continue on through the Sermon on the Mount, and you can turn with me to Matthew chapter 6. And Yeshua doesn't let up with explaining the reality of what a kingdom people looks like when they keep God's Torah. And so if you turn with me, we're just going to read a couple verses here. Well, we'll just read. So Matthew chapter 6, verse 1, everyone up to speed. We're good? I know we took a week off last week.

Practicing Righteousness Before Others

He's starting off and he's continuing his train of thought and he says, Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father in his kingdom or who is in heaven. Thus when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they might be praised by others. Truly I say to you, they've received their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

When you pray, you must not be like the who, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners that they may be seen by others. Truly I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. For your Father knows in secret, who sees you in secret will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans. For they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them. For your Father knows what you need before you even ask.

And when you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces and they show others that they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But

when you fast, put oil in your hair and wash your face so that it won't be obvious to others that you're fasting, but only to your Father who is unseen and your Father who sees what is done in secret, and He will reward you.

Okay, that's a lot. And we're actually going to be going over prayer next week. And if you notice, I skipped over the Lord's Prayer because I want to focus on that next week and prayer next week. But I want to give you the situation of how he's continuing the sermon. And so it's a situation when they're doing something right. He's talking about his followers when they're doing the right thing. But imagine that after you do the right thing, you push to gain the glory for doing that right thing. You save someone. You save someone's life. And then you go about telling everyone how much of a hero you are because you saved their life.

Does this give weight to the act of saving life or does it diminish it? Does it not mean as much anymore because you're going around spouting how much of a hero you are?

There's a movie that was released one or two years ago. It's a secular movie. It's called Moana. Anybody heard of this film? It's a Disney movie, cartoon movie, right? Moana. And it's actually a neat little production. It's a history of the native Maui people in New Zealand and their culture and their myths and stuff.

And there's this one character, Maui, in the movie. He's played by The Rock, I think, and he sings a lot. And he has this one song. He's talking to this girl in the movie, and he's telling her how much he's done for their culture and their community. And look at all the blessings I've given to you, and I stopped these disasters from happening to you, and you have a good life because of me. And you know what? Don't even worry about saying thank you, because what can I say? You're welcome. What can I say except welcome? And there's a whole song of him dedicated to his conceited arrogance, his self-righteousness to everyone else. And he's just so full of himself. And it's amazing. I love it.

See, he's talking about doing a good thing. And when we do good things, it's supposed to be able to show forth God's image through our actions.

Playing Religion

It's supposed to go and show forth God's kingdom through our actions. But when those things get perverted, this good thing creates a vacuum on itself. When this good thing is only gaining you a reward, or Maui in the movie, then it's not about the actual thing that was done anymore. It's about you. And that's what Yeshua is calling out. In this section, Yeshua is saying that doing right things is not always the truly authentic right thing.

When you play religion, anyone know how to play religion? I'll raise my hand—I know how to play religion. You can play it like a game. And when you show off, for our circumstance, let's say, is keeping Sabbath a good thing? When you show off that you keep the Sabbath, or when you show off that you keep the feast, or when you show off that you didn't mow the lawn on Saturday, or when you show off that you're set apart, you're not. You're no better than some pagan character on a Disney movie that's talking about himself and showing off the good things that he does.

And why this section of scripture hits home is because we do it all the time. We show forth an act of righteousness, but then we feel like we deserve an applause or recognition when we do it. And we want that self-gratification. We want to truly know that we've been needed in this world. We want to know that we're wanted. It's part of who we are as human beings. But when we allow those desires to manipulate God's love and how others see it, it's wrong. It's wrong.

Yeshua's Heart: The Foundation

And here Yeshua is still preaching on the mountain, and he's still kicking down doors, unveiling what this kingdom looks like. And in chapter 5, the last few weeks, what is Yeshua most concerned about when he looks at you? What is his number one thing that he's concerned about? The number one thing that he wants to see a difference in. The number one thing that he says is the foundation for everything else. It's your heart. That's the number one thing that he's worried about. Before everything, before your actions, before your identity, before you even talk about keeping Torah, he wants to know what your heart looks like and what your heart's pursuit is.

And he's still very much in that mindset here. He's not concerned about your actions. Giving to the poor, as we just read, is that a good thing? It's a trap. I can't answer. I don't know. Is praying a good thing or a bad thing? It's a good thing. Fasting is a pretty good thing, typically. Well, Yeshua disagrees with that blanket assertion. Here this rabbi says that the indicator for if these things even qualify as good starts with their intention, starts with the heart that is doing them.

Three Disciplines

And Yeshua makes this radical assertion in this section of Scripture that you can do good things and not contribute to the kingdom of God. That you can do these things and you can actually push back the kingdom of God from making itself manifest on earth. And Yeshua is identifying three outward disciplines or three outward displays of a believer's life.

The first one is, of course, generosity—specifically, giving money. Money is the culmination of your time and energy. It is the result of what you put your life into. And he's speaking about what that looks like when, not if, when you spend money, you give money away to people that are in need. He talks about prayer and how you engage with God as a means to lube the gears of this kingdom machine that's making itself manifest on this earth. And he speaks about fasting, what it means for a believer to give up what is entitled for them to have in order to fill that void with God.

And these are the three areas that Yeshua specifically addresses. These are areas that he already expects us to be very familiar with. He expects us as his followers to be familiar with the feeling of sacrificially giving away our finances. He expects us as his followers to be familiar with that feeling of taking a chunk out of your day and ceasing everything else and spending time talking to God, spending time with Yeshua. He expects his followers to be familiar with that aching pain in their stomach, void of food, and to say, you know what? I'm going to take that section of my being that I want to fill so much with this, and I'm going to devote it to him.

The Weight and God's Grace

This is what Yeshua expects. Wow. I'm already done for. Yeshua is doing what he does best and showing the reality of what the kingdom actually looks like. No games, no masks, no sugarcoating. This is what he expects. And most of us hate it. Most of us hate this section of scripture because we don't want to take it seriously.

And Yeshua is taking time here to remind us of the grace that God has given to us, the mercy, the love, the forgiveness, that we have access to even demonstrate his goodness through these things. He's reminding us that we were brought in because someone else sacrificially gave everything so that we could be brought in. Someone else sacrificially gave everything so that we could be made rich. And the expectation is that we should reciprocate that in any way possible. He says I'm giving you a way to practice Torah, a way that actually fulfills it. And he's reminding us here to be careful when you practice Torah. Be careful. Not if, when. Be careful.

Because when you practice righteousness, you don't do it in a way that is fed and fueled by your own desire to be recognized and to be wanted. And Yeshua's pointing to this hard reality of Torah that we often miss is that you can keep Torah in a way that damages the Torah. That you can keep Torah in a way that pushes God away from the world instead of making his presence manifest. You can keep Torah in a way where the result is that you actually break it. So be

careful. Don't kid yourself. Be careful how you handle God's invitation to do these acts of righteousness that represent him.

Legalism: The Distance Creates Desperation

And when our connection with Yeshua is sometimes disrupted by our egocentric motivations, our self-centeredness that tends to come with the human condition that we all live in, we tend to justify our salvation to ourselves through our works. You guys ever realize that? We tend to want to justify our salvation. We tend to try to fill that void. Has anyone ever gone through a valley in their faith? Sometimes we go through a valley and Yeshua seems so distant. He seems so distant away from us.

Do you guys know where legalism stems from? Legalism stems from the distance between you and Yeshua. When you feel like you have to somehow justify your salvation because you don't have that intimacy with Yeshua in that moment in your life. And so what do you do? You say, I have to prove to myself that I am loved by God. I have to prove to myself that God does care about me. I have to prove to myself that God has forgiven me. I have to prove to myself that God wants me and he wants his arms around me.

So what do we do? You read the Bible in such a way where you make a checklist of things that Jesus would do. And we try to check off this checklist to make ourselves feel like, okay, I'm pretty close to Jesus' status right now because I've done all these things exactly as the most orthodox standard possible, just checking these things off and yeah, proving to ourselves that God must love us if we do these things. When the reality is, guys, that's not the issue, and nor is that what Torah was ever made to do. The reality is a lack and a distance from Yeshua.

And Yeshua is inviting you to take a look at your heart, to say, why am I not near to you? Why am I not near to you? Why do you not feel my love? And if that's you today, I just have a message for you. God loves you. God loves you. Yeshua loves you. God wants you. God is proud of you. Step closer. Step closer. And embrace that first and foremost, because that is what our hearts should be fueled by.

The Kingdom Revolves Around Relationships

Yeshua's big point in the Sermon on the Mount revolves around relationships, not just relationships between you and God. The main thrust of Yeshua, of course, is introducing God's kingdom on earth, and the kingdom is filled with a lot of people. And if you notice, he's most concerned about the kingdom of God living out fully human-loving relationships with each

other. That's what the whole Sermon on the Mount is based off of. So he's saying the kingdom of God revolves around fellowship and communion with like-minded believers. And don't allow anger to destroy the relationships around you. Don't allow lust to overtake your heart and objectify and tear down the relationships around you. Divorce, don't allow the breaking of covenantal status to disrupt relationships around you. Deceit and manipulation, don't spin your identity around to affect the relationships around you. Don't allow your anger and wanting for retaliation to affect the relationships around you.

Instead, love your enemy. And these are the three disciplines in this section that give us that connection to allow us to live in this kingdom devotion, fully committed to loving relationships with others. And it stems from the heart and then to our actions, not vice versa.

Hypocrites: Actors on Stage

So everyone good? That was my soapbox moment of what Yeshua was trying to say here. And interesting, so what was that word? Do not be like the hypocrites. In Greek, it's hypocrites. And it means to be an actor, bluntly. It means to act. It's piggybacking off the Greek idea of theater, where someone gets on stage, and the spotlights are on them, and they do something, and all eyes are on them, and they get an applause afterwards.

Don't Be Like the Actors

It's an actor. It's an actor. Don't be like the actors when you give money. Don't be like the actors when you pray. Don't be like the actors when you fast. Why? Why? Because their goal is to be seen by others. Their goal is doing the things of God's kingdom and of the Torah to simply be seen. The pursuit's not about God. And it's not about connecting heaven to earth. It's not about creating little pockets of heaven on earth that are filled with hellfire. When these actors do these good deeds of Torah, it's about establishing a different kingdom on earth. It's about establishing your kingdom on earth.

When they go around sounding the trumpet before them. And in the past, I know we've discussed how there were temple chests, trumpet chests in the temple that would make noise when you threw money in them. And it's always neat to go into the details and context about little areas of the Bible. I don't want the details of today to distract us from what Yeshua's point is. The point is the same. They walk around announcing how much they're giving away because they want applause, because they want their kingdom to be edified. And the moment that you sound a trumpet, that you did something religious, that is the moment that you actually make

God's kingdom about yours. Or that's the moment that you set up your own kingdom and market it as God's.

The Danger of Hyper-Literalism

And the biggest mistake we tend to make when we're reading this section of Scripture is we get lost in something I call hyper-literalism. It's when we read the Bible in such a literal way because we're looking at what it says, and we take it out of context of the entirety of the story of the Bible. We as believers tend to do this a lot because of our passion for the Scriptures, and we tend to make the Bible contradict itself. And so if we take this section of Scripture hyper-literally, it would mean that Yeshua doesn't want us to do anything in public. Yeshua expects us to not give money in any way that it can be traced back to us. When we pray, no one can see us pray. And when we fast, no one can see us fast or know about it.

And to be honest, if we take that approach, we're contradicting the Bible because in the same sermon in chapter 5, Yeshua says, "I want you to be a light of the world and I want everyone to see the good deeds that you do because of the father's presence in you." Right? So Yeshua is not saying we shouldn't do things publicly. I make note of this because there's a way to use biblical exegesis which produces a rich and deep and meaningful application of the Bible in our lives, and then there's eisegesis where we assert our own opinion in context, and we do that with many different scriptures sometimes, and we bastardize the text of the Bible and it's not good. The point is not that we literally shouldn't be seen by someone. That's not what Yeshua is saying here.

The Hidden Work

Yeshua is not saying that your works of righteousness should be hidden completely. And this is what he's warning about. You see, Yeshua is trying to get you to see your heart. And in Matthew chapter 6, verse 3, we have this scripture that's taken out of context. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Secret. Then your father who sees you or sees what is done in secret will reward you.

And I believe Yeshua is using a play on words here because the Greek word here is crypto. Crypto. Cryptography. Encryption. Oh yeah, that means like to be safe, right? Safe and behind something and kind of hidden away. Well, Paul likes to use this word too and he uses the same word in [Romans 2](#), 28 through 29. You're familiar with the scripture. He says, "A person is not a Jew who is one only outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outwardly and physical. No, a person

is a Jew or a Judean who is one inwardly, and circumcision is circumcision of the heart and by the spirit, not by the written code, not by just the text, not by just the shell, but what's within it. Such a person's praise is not from other people, but from God."

So that word inwardly, he is a Judean. Inwardly is the Greek word *crypto*. This is how Paul uses the word. Yeah, but that doesn't mean not to be seen. That means to be rooted deeply within your heart—your identity of the people of God is not simply a blood lineage issue. It's not simply about an identity because you wear a tallit or because you read Hebrew. It's what your heart reflects in the loyalty to God. This is what makes a people of God. This is what makes a Judean. So that your giving will be with the right intentions from your heart, not out in the open like the actors, with the right motivations.

A Narcissistic Culture

Our nation and our culture in the West is very different. You know, when we travel to other countries, when I went to Costa Rica, it was very, very different. We are very selfish people in our culture. We're taught to have it our way. We're taught that it's all about us. The military for a while actually used this as a marketing strategy to encourage us to the Army of One. Is the Army really an army of one? Is the Army a collective group of brothers and sisters that are fighting alongside each other? It's not about one person. But they know that you're already indoctrinated to think about yourself and that the world revolves around you anyway.

So an Army of One—you could be that one if you sign up today. It was smooth. I applaud them. It was genius. They did it. "Be all you can be." It's genius. And this is how we're marketed to because this is who we are and this is how our society has taught us to be. Our society teaches us to pursue schooling and to pursue college so that we can get a degree for the sole purpose that we can get a good job. And why do we want a good job? For the sole purpose to make more money. And why do we want to make more money? So that we can have more stuff. Why do you want more stuff? Because that's what life is about. That's how we live life. And then you die. We don't talk about that. That's not a concept that we're familiar with in the West. We don't like to talk about that. This is what we're taught.

And I was talking to my sister about a week and a half ago. She's a major in criminal psychology. And I was speaking to her the other day about narcissism, right? Clinical narcissism is when someone is so wrapped up in their world that they truly believe everything revolves around them. It's like their worldview is everything that exists to them. I was just speaking to her about different concepts because this is a word that has gained much popularity, especially on social

media in the last five years. I was on Facebook the other day, as I do sometimes, and I saw someone—one of my friends—share a link about "Five Signs That You're a Narcissist" or "Five Signs of a Narcissist." And so I want to know if I'm a narcissist.

And so I click it. God help me, I am a narcissist. And so is every single person that I know. I saw every one of your faces. I ran into Jenny and Benjamin. Right? And the article was really not backed by any clinical data or medical data. It's my frustration with my sister, asking, "What is this? Is this narcissism?" And the reason why—it's clickbait. It's clickbait articles. And the reason why is because they're so vague. They're so vague that when a conceited culture like ourselves that typically only thinks about ourselves reads it, the lines get blurred very quickly. And that's who we are. That's who we are. It's not just being self-centered at that point. It's this identity.

The World Is Not About You

And here's the teaching: the world that Yeshua is saying is not about you. This is what Yeshua is teaching. The world's not about you. You may think it is. You're wrong. Whether you're a narcissist or whether you're just selfish, self-centered, you're wrong. You're wrong. You're wrong. God's mission is not about you. Your religion is not about you. It's about God and it's about his kingdom.

Now something Yeshua does here that may mess with us is that when he's speaking, he's not advocating for altruism—he's not expecting you to do stuff just out of the loving kindness of your heart. Yeshua actually brings up rewards. He's like, nah man, do it for the rewards. Do this for a prize. He's talking about getting rewards from God, which is one of those, "Well, no, we're supposed to do it from the heart." Yeshua's like, no, do it for the reward. Do it. You want this. It's great, right? And the value of this reward is what he's asking us to redefine in our hearts because he already knows we're doing it for some type of reward.

Redefining Reward

And he's asking us to take a look at rewards and redefine that. And he calls us out on why some of us do these good things for ourselves to begin with, to be seen, to be glorified, to let your kingdom be established, right? To be known and have this self-gratification just stroked. And Yeshua says here, if the motivations and intent are right from the heart going out, you will get your reward.

And the reward—what is it? It has something to do with being able to live within that kingdom that you yourself are contributing to. It has something to do with experiencing the joy that comes along with entering into the world to come now. It's the same blessing that Yeshua promises in the beginning of chapter 5: the peacemakers, those who are humble. Blessed be you. Blessed be you.

And this is a huge warning from Yeshua because he wants us to give money and he wants us to pray and he wants us to fast. But if we're doing it just to get applause, then we're setting ourselves up for failure. Let me ask you if this sounds familiar. Let's just jump in.

The Gift That Went Unrecognized

So let's say that you give a donation to a fellowship, a community that you're a part of, or maybe a ministry to a family in need. And you give it, and it's significant. Anyone ever given a significant donation? Why are you nodding your head? Shh, give it a second. It's significant. At least you feel it's significant.

So you give it, and you're excited because you got to participate in helping out with something or someone. This is good. And then you don't get a thank you letter, and you don't get the email, and you don't get that personal thank you from the people in the ministry that you gave the money to. Or maybe you did get a thank you, but it did not match the weight of what you gave.

You didn't get the reward that you wanted. So you stopped giving. So you stopped. Because it's not worth it to you. So you don't help out next time. So you don't support your local community or the families that are in need or the York County foster care system. Because you did not get the reward you were looking for.

Let's say your prayer is based on what you see and your prayer is based on what you can get. And when you pray for someone and you're wanting that positive feedback afterwards because you really belted it out like it was good, but you don't see the results, but you don't get the feedback, but you don't receive that pat on the back saying, man, I really appreciate you praying, or that was a nice prayer, or you don't see it answered in the way that you wanted it answered.

So your brain is conflicted because you know you need to pray because that's what good Christians do. But what's the point if you don't get that reward? So you stop praying. So you stop praying. Anyone ever got that one?

The Fasting Performance

Fasting. And I already know that everyone's like, oh, that's a safe one. You can't get me with fasting. It's good. It's fasting. So what's funny about fasting is I know most of us don't fast throughout the year. But I read your Facebook statuses before, on, and after Yom Kippur. I am so hungry. I can't wait to pig out at sundown. Oh, man. Yom Kippur is starting tonight. I got to go out and have a big meal to get myself set for tomorrow because, man, it's going to be a long day because I'm fasting for God. He said to afflict my soul. I am going to do that post. I see it. I see it. You didn't see that coming? Yeshua's calling that out. Yeshua's calling it out. I'm guilty. Guilty. Me too. Me too.

This has been one of the hardest series to talk about because I've known this, but when I'm actually presenting it, it's like I don't feel qualified. This is his sermon. This is Yeshua's sermon. And Yeshua's calling us out. You got your reward when people liked your status. Gave it a little heart or a thumbs up. You got your reward when you got to brag about fasting that one year from both food and water. Wow, they're so righteous. You got your stage applause for the actor that you were. You got the applause that you deserved, but the reward that God wanted you to have is far from you now. In fact, all of that energy that you put into those works—all that hunger pain, all that money—it contributed to a kingdom that is opposed to God's kingdom. You broke Torah by keeping Torah for another king. You have received your reward in full.

And it's so easy to do. We do it. We don't even do it intentionally. We don't even know sometimes. We're just like, yeah, this is what I'm doing.

The Alpha Prayer

So let me tell you, this is a real situation that happened to me within the past year. So I got called. I wasn't here. I got called up to help pray for someone. And it was a person that was going through some struggles. And so myself and three other leaders, we got up beside him and he was really struggling with certain aspects of his faith and certain things that were going on in his life and his home life. So we prayed over him, laid hands, prayed over him, did what we're supposed to be doing.

And the first guy, his leadership here at the event I was at, he starts off and, man, he just has that alpha prayer. You know what I'm talking about? Like that alpha—in the name of Yeshua, "Pray that this negativity leaves your heart and that the supreme peace of God will come upon you." Like that alpha. Like, yes! Yes! Right? And it's just this strong-willed prayer. It's amazing.

And then the second guy starts praying, and he goes the poetic route, very beautiful and soft-spoken, but then he starts hitting the one-liners, like the all-familiar hedge of protection. You guys know what I'm talking about, right? Like just a good, potent, edifying prayer that was pretty long, but it was good, right?

So the third guy begins to start praying, and then I'm over here like, wait, I'm going to be next. How am I going to compete with that? How do I compete with that? And so I start building these canned text prayers in my mind. Like, okay, he hit the hedge of protection stuff. So I can do just repetition, which always works. God, just. Father, just be with him and just bring your peace. Like that's always a solid model for prayer, right? You guys know exactly what I'm talking about, right?

And I'm building that. Why? Why? Why? Not focused on him and his need anymore. I'm not focused on petitioning for his sake before God. I'm focused on me. I'm focused on them looking down on me. Because my prayer is like, well, God, we just pray for Joe Schmo here, and we ask that all these things come upon him, that Your peace would be upon him, in the name of Yeshua, amen. That was only 10 seconds. Now I gotta add like 45 more seconds to that. Anyone ever been in that situation? Yeah, yeah.

Representing the Right Kingdom

This is what Yeshua is calling out. He's saying you need to be focused on whose kingdom you're representing and the function of what you're doing. And the moment that you begin to focus on yourself is the moment that you begin to build up your own kingdom, and it is an opposition to God. And you're using God's Torah to fuel your kingdom. And it's funny, but it's not.

Because God's looking for a sincere heart to talk to him when we go into prayer. And I want to encourage you today: Talk to God. Talk to God. Talk to him. If you get asked to pray at men's Bible study Tuesday night, don't worry about what other people. Don't worry if you're going to slip up on a word. Don't worry if you're going to say just too many times. Don't worry if you're going to go, oh, too much. God, his ears are open and he's excited that you're finally talking to him. Talk to God. Talk to God.

The Secret Offering

And then Yeshua gives an alternative observance here when it comes to giving to the needy. He says, when you give to the needy, right? So don't do it like the actors. When you give to the needy, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing so that your giving may be in

secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. He will give you a reward. But when you give because you're expected to—it's fascinating.

So I keep hitting the chronology of giving, prayer, and fasting. And Yeshua starts out with giving. He starts out addressing the main foundational discipline that he expects his followers to have: generosity. Why is that? Why can't it be about relationship and prayer and stuff? Because the foundation and the definition of the gospel is generosity, because that's how God showed his love for you. And I found that fascinating because that hits me too. I won't be generous all the time. Yeshua is expecting this. Don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.

And here Yeshua goes again into this cryptic language. Like, what are you talking about? Like, do they know each other? Like, do I have to hold a Rubik's Cube behind my back to where I give a 20 to the box or to someone? And Martin Luther's commentary on the Sermon on the Mount, I think really says this best. He states that it has to do with the singleness of heart, not the conflicting of wills. And he says this: So Yeshua is looking for a heart that reflects God's kingdom. And Yeshua is looking for a heart that reflects God's image.

This is not a fickle heart. This is not a heart that goes back and forth. This is not a heart that goes to the right hand or the left hand, and I don't know if I'm going to do this or that. This is a heart that is directly intentional about everything that it does, every beat that it has, and producing an environment that's recognized as God's dwelling place on earth. And worship team, we can conclude. It's not ours to take.

Righteousness That Can Be More Dangerous Than Sin

This is not ours to take. And the Pharisees' good behavior, guys, the Pharisees' good behavior is more dangerous than the sin of the tax collectors and prostitutes. At least one group knew that they needed Yeshua. At least one group knew that they needed God. Our righteousness can be more deadly than our sin, because righteousness conserves the most dangerous of all human lust, and that's self-glorification.

So we have a job to do. We were meant to be truly human beings and engage with one another in loving, full relationships, being transparent with who we are and our identity in Yeshua to one another. And Yeshua says this can be done through and within the kingdom of God. But you have to check your heart. And the question is, is your heart loyal to God? Has your heart pledged its allegiance to the Father? Is your heart loyal to the mission of bringing heaven to

earth? If it isn't, then keeping the commandments is not keeping Torah. That is the message of Yeshua. And Yeshua calls us to audit our hearts, and our loyalty to Him.

I don't know what you're going through this week. But my hope is that these words of Yeshua wouldn't just be condemning, but that they would be an encouragement — that Yeshua has allowed you to access a kingdom, that you are equipped to do these things, and that you can experience the rewards of His righteousness. And all you have to do is follow Him and put yourself aside.

Let's stay focused on the reward that God wants us to have. And that is the joy, and that is the peace, that is within us.

I heard from one pastor — it was Spurgeon — he states that pursuing our own pursuits for the attention and the applause and the self-gratification is like a child playing in the mud and satisfied with building mud castles, but having no conscious realization that a trip to the sea on a boat, a vacation to the Bahamas, is being offered to him. He doesn't even know what that is. "I like my mud pies. I like my mud castles. This is great." But the reward over here is so amazing. This would be amazing. Why don't you go for that reward? "No, I like this one, because this is what I want. This is what I'm focused on." And that's available to you today. That reward of experiencing the peace and the satisfaction and the contentment of God's love in His kingdom.

Don't Settle for a Mud Pile

As I've said before, eternal life starts the day that you pledge your allegiance to this kingdom. You can live in it now. You can represent the new creation of God now. And you can show the world what that looks like. That's being offered to you. Don't settle for a mud pile. Don't settle for a mud pot.

So please stand as we conclude services with worship, the same way that we entered into worship. Guys, we have a prayer team off to the sides. If you have a need this week — I don't know what you're going through. It could be that the Father is speaking to you today in your heart and telling you things that you need to lay down. Maybe the pride. Maybe the self-centeredness in any situation. Maybe there's another situation that you're going through in your life today. We have a prayer team that can pray with you, that will support you, and that will encourage you. And I invite you to take advantage of that, because this is something that we have the blessing of community. We have this blessing with us today.

Avinu Malkeinu, our Father, our King, Father, we thank You for this time together. We thank You for this opportunity to go through Your word, to learn about the fulfillment of Your Torah

through us and what that looks like. Father, I ask that Your Spirit would be upon us this day and this week, and that when we look at these situations around us, we would not say, "Ooh, I want to be on stage." We would not say, "I want the applause." We would say, "I get to represent God's kingdom today." And that would be truly from our heart and manifested in our actions. In the name of Yeshua we pray. Amen. Shalom.

I'm Matthew Vander Els, and I hope you enjoyed this message. Founded in Truth exists to cultivate a fellowship of image bearers that live the redeemed life only Yeshua can give. If this ministry has been a blessing to you, we would love to hear from you. Send us an email through the contact form on our website and tell us how God has used this ministry to edify your faith and relationship with Him. If you'd like to see more messages like this one, subscribe to our YouTube channel by clicking [here](#). If you'd like to donate to this ministry and be a part of what God is doing through it, you can donate through our online giving portal [here](#). We thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to next time. Shalom.

Watch or listen: foundedintruth.com/bible-teachings/collide-breaking-torah-by-keeping-it/

This automated transcript has been lightly edited for readability; scripture quotations appear as spoken. For the authoritative teaching, watch the video. • Founded in Truth Fellowship, Rock Hill SC • Saturdays 11:00 AM • Your giving keeps every teaching free: foundedintruth.com/give