LOTH WED EVE class 4 HANDOUT
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Jesus the Sage and the PRISM of Wisdom
(The PRISM of wisdom in the life of Jesus the Sage)

The acronym PRISM is a handy memory aid for the 5 wisdom norms: peaceableness; relations; insight; skill, mutuality. (See previous class for their individual biblical meanings.)

Norms are a particular kind of "law" of God, but they are unlike inescapable laws such as the laws of gravity and motion – which if you disobey them you'll suffer the consequences immediately – think of the person jumping off a 20-story building on to the pavement below.

Norms as just as inescapable but they are the kind of God-given "laws" whereby if you break one you'll likely suffer the consequences later, when your sin finds you out – and sometimes much later. The 10Commandments illustrate this.

The PRISM of wisdom informed Jesus' life, relationships, teaching, and ministry. He gave us his example to follow.

Recall from the previous class our working definition of wisdom as the Bible sees it: "wisdom is a way of seeing life and living in it according to how you see it."

Biblical wisdom is not an abstract paradigm up in the sky somewhere. Is a very practical wisdom. Phronesis is the NT Greek word for this practical wisdom.

It is intensely personal and relational. If we can understand what our wisdom is, we'll see the connection between our ideas and our actions, our beliefs and our behaviors.

Phronesis is somewhat different than the more common NT Greek word for wisdom, which is sophia, which is the Greek equivalent of Hebrew word hokmah, the word for wisdom in the OT.

Both kinds of wisdom are significant for understanding Jesus our Sage as: *the wisdom of God, from God, and in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid* [his!]. See – 1 Cor. 1:24; 1 Cor. 1:30; and Col. 2:3. We therefore look to Jesus as the archetype of wisdom, the one that gives true meaning to Christian wisdom.

"Citizens of heaven" refers to our ultimate citizenship. See – Phil. 3:20; Eph. 2:19; and Phil. 1:27 in the NLT. The Sermon on the Mount (SOTM) as the constitution that citizens of heaven follow to govern their lives, under the government of the Prine of Peace (Isa. 9:6-7). Followers of Jesus have "responsibilities" to fulfill their citizen-of-heaven responsibilities here on earth. – as they challenge our hearts.

Our constitutional responsibilities to the governance of Jesus begin in the heart and move out

from there to inform our wisdom, our way of seeing life and living in it.

Jesus makes this clear in the SOTM.

Matt. 5:20: six couplets to illustrate what Jesus means by "the righteousness that surpasses."

In the first half of each couplet he calls his listeners to think about various external behaviors and actions. In the second half of each couplet – to get their minds off of outer behaviors – he gets to the nitty gritty – challenging them to think about what is going in their hearts. He is draws from the OT, the Law, to do this.

See Matt. 5:21-22; Exod. 20:13. Matt. 5:27-28; Exod. 20:14. Matt. 5:31-32; Deut. 24:1. Matt.5:33-37; Deut 23:21. Matt. 5:38-42; Deut. 19:21. Matt. 5:43-46; Lev. 19:18.

Jesus first address outer behaviors and then inner conditions of the heart. He identifies various actions that some people feel justified to take – *with the support of the Law behind them*.

But then come the imperatives – "But I tell you . . ." In a sense he is saying, "Search your hearts, people."

"Heart" in the Bible is typically used as metaphor for "the center of thought, belief, knowledge, will, and feeling" (the Christian philosopher Roy Clouser in *The Myth of Religious Neutrality*).

In the poetic language of Prov. 4:23, the heart is that from which flows the wellspring of life.

The human heart is the place, so to speak, where the governance, the rule, of God begins in our lives and move out to give direction to w hat we do.

By the six couplets, Jesus provides a perfect illustration of our working definition of wisdom as a way of seeing life and living in it according to how you see it.

Fulfilling these constitutional responsibilities is not optional for citizens of heaven.

See two stories: Luke 9:46-50 & 51-56

As the righteousness in us becomes more like the greater righteousness – the righteousness that surpasses – our hearts become more consistently faithful to the heart of Jesus our Lord and our wisdom.

The heart being revealed to us in the SOTM. It is the heart of the Father, for Jesus and the Father are one.

Elaine Storkey (British theologian and author) describes the ongoing radical transformation of life that fulfilling the greater righteousness brings forth in how we think, talk, and act toward others. Through that, the direction of our lives changes.

Jesus is: “redefining what it really means to fulfill the Law’s demands; it emanates from the heart. Harbouring evil thoughts in your heart is the same as doing the acts. Nursing anger is akin to murder, lusting is akin to adultery.” . . . We “begin to see how murder, adultery, temptation, or retaliation reach deeply into our lives. In these six commands [couplets], Jesus illustrates where the righteousness of Christ-followers has to exceed that of the religious rule-enforcers. They must replace lust with purity, infidelity with faithfulness, dishonesty with honesty, revenge with reconciliation.”

Forgiveness and judgmentalism are also addressed by Jesus in the SOTM.

See Matt. Matt. 5:23-24; 6:14-15; Matt 7:3-5.

Jesus entered the Twelve into a process of discipleship, as he does with us today, to learn from him that the church, Christ’s *ekklēsia*, although she is comprised of different kinds of people, is being made one in Christ and with one another through fulfilling their responsibilities to live according to a gospel-shaped wisdom for life.

Col. 2:8-9 – developing a *philosophia* a “love of wisdom” based on Christ.