

An Introduction to the Beatitudes

Matthew 5:3

SERMON ON THE MOUNT – POP QUIZ

- Who preached the Sermon on the Mount? The King of Kings
- What book of the Bible does the Sermon on the Mount appear in? Matthew's Gospel
- What chapters make up the Sermon on the Mount? Matthew 5-7
- What chapter and verses comprise the Beatitudes? Matthew 5:3-11
- Who was the original audience of the Sermon on the Mount? The Disciples and the multitudes
- What is the theme of the Sermon on the Mount? The Kingdom of God
- In what chapter does Jesus teach about worry and fear? 6:12-34
- In what chapter does the Golden rule appear? 6:12
- In what chapter does Jesus teach about loving your enemies? 5:43-48
- In what chapter does Jesus say, "Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord will enter the Kingdom of heaven? 7:21-23
- In what chapter does the Lord's prayer appear? 6:5-14
- In what chapter does Jesus teach about lying up treasures in heaven? 6:19-24
- In what chapter does Jesus teach about being salt and light to the world? 5:13-16
- In what chapter does Jesus teach about building your house on the rock of His Word? 7:24-27

OUTLINE OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

A. THE "CITIZENS" OF THE KINGDOM

1. The Christians character - Matthew 5:3-12
2. The Christians relation to the world - Matthew 5:13-16

B. THE "RIGHTEOUSNESS" OF THE KINGDOM

1. In contrast to the "traditional interpretations and applications" of the Law - Matthew 5:17-48
2. With respect to man's relation to God - Matthew 6:1-33
3. With respect to man's relation to man - Matthew 7:1-12

C. THE "EXHORTATION TO ENTER" THE KINGDOM

1. The "beginning" of the way - Matthew 7:13-14
Enter by the narrow gate...
2. The "progress" along the way - Matthew 7:15-20
Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down... thus you will recognize them by their fruit.
3. The "end" of the way - Matthew 7:21-27

a. Distinction of "sayers" and "doers" 21-23

Not everyone who says to me Lord, Lord...but the one who does the will of my Father.

b. Distinction of "hearers" and "doers" 24-27

Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them (wise man)... everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them (foolish man).

WRONG VIEWS OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

1. RESTORATION VIEW – If we can just get everyone to apply the Sermon on the Mount, we can produce the Kingdom of God on earth. Wars will end, peace will reign, and we will see renewal in our communities.
2. ELABORATION OF THE MOSAIC LAW – The Pharisees were misrepresenting the law, so Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount simply explains the Mosaic law, giving it a higher spiritual content. The Sermon on the Mount does explain the law at certain points, but it also goes beyond it, penetrating to the heart with the Beatitudes.
3. NOT FOR ME VIEW – Some conclude that the Sermon on the Mount has nothing to do with modern Christians. They say that Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount to the Jews to inaugurate the Kingdom, but the Jews didn't believe His message. They hold that Jesus will reintroduce the Sermon on the Mount during the Millennium where it will serve as the rule for the Kingdom age. The problem with this view is that every teaching found in the Sermon on the Mount is also found in later books of the New Testament, especially the epistles. If the Sermon on the Mount is not for us, then we must question if much of the rest of the New Testament is for us. We are the intended recipients of this glorious teaching!

WHY SHOULD WE STUDY THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

1. Jesus died to enable us to live the Sermon on the Mount.

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. Titus 2:11–14

2. Nothing shows me my absolute need to be born again, and of the Holy Spirits work within as the Sermon on the Mount. The Beatitudes crush every particle of self-righteousness. They reveal our utter helplessness apart from the grace of God. Martyn Lloyd Jones says, "There is nothing that so leads to the gospel and its grace as the Sermon on the Mount."

3. The more we seek, by God's grace, to live and practice the Sermon on the Mount the more we will experience its blessing. Blessed are the poor in Spirit, blessed are those who mourn, blessed are the meek, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.
4. It is one of the best means of evangelism. The world is looking for and desperately needs true Christians who embody this teaching by the power of the Holy Spirit. Jones says, "What the church needs to do is not to organize evangelistic campaigns to attract outside people, but to begin herself to live the Christian life."

GENERAL LESSONS TO BE DRAWN FROM THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

1. All Christians are to be like this.
 - Description of what every Christian is to be, not a description of some exceptional Christians.
 - We are all meant to exemplify everything that is contained in these Beatitudes.
2. All Christians are meant to manifest all of these characteristics.
 - It is not that some are to manifest one characteristic and other to manifest another.
 - Every Christian is meant to be growing and exemplifying every character quality in the Sermon.
 - These are not like spiritual gifts where you are given one and I a different one.
 - Each character quality in the Sermon on the Mount implies the other.
 - You cannot be "poor in spirit" without "mourning" and you can't "mourn" without "hungering and thirsting for righteousness".
 - Though their relative proportions may vary, they are all meant to be present at the same time.
3. None of these descriptions refer to natural tendencies.
 - Each of these is produced by grace alone and the through the Spirit's operation in us.
 - No man naturally conforms to the character described in the Sermon on the Mount.
 - Nobody by birth or by nature is like this.

I know a person who does not claim to be a Christian, never goes to [church], never reads the Bible, never prays, and frankly tells us he is not interested in these things at all. But, you know, I have a feeling that he is more of a Christian than many people who do go to [church] and who do pray. He is always nice and polite, never says harsh words or expresses an unkind judgment, and is always doing good.

- This is the difference between common grace and a changed heart.
- Not only are we meant to be like these characteristics, but we can be!
- That is the central glory of the gospel – a proud man can become a man who is poor in spirit.

4. These character qualities indicate the utter difference between a Christian and non-Christian.
 - The real point is to show the difference between a person saved by grace and a lost person.
 - It should not be our ambition to be as much like everybody else as we can, though we happen to be a Christian, but rather to be as different from the world as possible. Our ambition should be to be like Christ.
 - The glory of the gospel is that when the church is absolutely different from the world, she invariably attracts it.
 - The Christian and the non-Christian are different in what they:
 - A. Admire
 - B. Seek (Matt. 5:6)
 - C. Do (1 Pt. 2:11-12)
 - D. Belief of what they can do.

5. The Christian and the non-Christian live in two totally different realms.
 - The first and the last Beatitude promise the same reward – the Kingdom of heaven.
 - The Christian must realize that he belongs to a different Kingdom.
 - You are in this world but not of this world.
 - The Kingdom of Heaven vs. The Kingdom of God.
 - Matthews audience were primarily Jewish and thought that the Kingdom was something material - political and militaristic.

WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

1. It is Christ's rule or the sphere and realm in which he is reigning.
 - When Jesus was here in the flesh he often said that the Kingdom was present or at hand.
 - Wherever He was present and exercising authority, the Kingdom of God was there.
 - Cf. Matthew 12:28 – If I cast out devils by the spirit of God, the Kingdom of God is come unto you.

2. The Kingdom of God is present at this moment in all who are true believers.
 - The Catholic Church has called the church the Kingdom, but that cannot be the case because the church is a mixed multitude.
 - The Kingdom is only present in the Church in those who are truly believers.

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Colossians 1:12–14

3. There is a sense in which the Kingdom is yet to come.
 - A day will come when the rule and reign of Christ will be established over the whole world in both a physical and spiritual sense. Everything will come under Christ's dominion and sway.
 - Evil and Satan will be entirely removed. At the name of Jesus every knee will bow.
 - Kingdom of God: has come, is coming, is yet to come.

THE WORD “KINGDOM” APPEARS 9 TIMES IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Matthew 5:3 - The Kingdom belongs to the poor in spirit.

Matthew 5:10 - The Kingdom belongs to those who are persecuted for righteousness sake.

Matthew 5:19 - Honoring God’s Word brings reward in the Kingdom.

Matthew 5:20 - No one enters the Kingdom based on his own merit.

Matthew 6:10 - We should pray that God’s Kingdom would come to earth.

Matthew 6:13 - The Kingdom belongs to God along with power and glory forever. (Not in early mss)

Matthew 6:33 - We are to seek God’s Kingdom above every earthly need.

Matthew 7:21 - Not every one who says they are in the Kingdom really belongs to the Kingdom.

THE KEY CHARACTERISTIC OF CHRIST’S KINGDOM IS RIGHTEOUSNESS

Matthew 5:6 - Kingdom people hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Matthew 5:10 - Kingdom people are persecuted for their righteousness. Cf. John 15:20

Matthew 5:20 - Kingdom people rely on the righteousness of Christ and not their own.

Matthew 6:1 - Kingdom people are concerned with pleasing God singularly.

If you please God it matters not who you displease.

If you displease God it matters not who you please.

Matthew 6:33 – Kingdom people seek God’s righteousness above all things.

CLOSING QUESTIONS:

1. Do we belong to this Kingdom?
2. Are we ruled by Christ?
3. Is He our King and Lord?
4. Are we manifesting the qualities found in the Beatitudes in our daily lives?
5. Is it our ambition to do so?
6. Do we see that this is what we are meant to be?
7. Are we truly blessed?
8. Are we really happy?
9. Have we been filled?
10. Do we have peace?

The Sermon on the Mount points us to our Great High Priest who graciously offers admittance into His Kingdom and there satisfies the human heart with His grace and presence until He returns and calls us to His eternal Kingdom forevermore!