

“THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT”

Matthew 5:1-2

Introduction:

Two thousand years ago Jesus—the Son of God—stepped out of eternity and into human history. At the age of 30, He launched His ministry by proclaiming...

Matthew 4:17... From that time Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

After a 3-year ministry punctuated with fabulous teaching, unbelievable miracles, and magnificent wisdom, the Lord Jesus was crucified. Then 3 days later, in the most amazing display of power ever witnessed, Jesus was raised from the dead. As a result of His resurrection and ascension, the kingdom of God became a vibrant and relevant reality in the world.

Turn in your Bible to Matthew 5. Tonight, we will begin to study one of Jesus’ most famous sermons—*The Sermon on the Mount*. This is one of five major sections that highlight the teaching of Jesus in the gospel of Matthew (Matt. 5–7; 10:1–11:1; 13:1–53; 18:1–19:1; 23:1–26:2). In this sermon, Jesus emphasized the centrality of the kingdom of God. It is imperative that we come to grips with our Lord’s powerful and challenging words because He is staking His claim over our lives as believers.

As disciples of our Lord, we should never get our cue for how to live from politicians, scientists, musical stars, actors and actresses, athletes, or the educational establishment. We follow Jesus. He directs our lives and shapes our character and choices! Upon reading the words of this sermon, your heart will sense some tension. **(READ THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT)**

You can’t escape the fact that our King has some high expectations for all who put their faith in Him and follow Him as a true disciple. Stanley Hauerwas captured this tension when he wrote these words...

“It’s hard to remember that Jesus did not come to make us safe, but rather to make us disciples, citizens of God’s new age, a kingdom of surprise.”

The Sermon on the Mount shows us what life looks like in the kingdom of God. We must first receive Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord before we try to live up to these words. As our King, He has the authority and power to make us what He teaches us we should be. So, to begin with, I want you to understand that the Sermon on the Mount was addressed to the disciples of our Lord. To expect unbelievers to live like this is absurd.

Matthew 5:1–2... When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. **2** He opened His mouth and *began* to teach them, saying...

Why were so many people congregating around the Lord Jesus? Back up into the last part of chapter 4 and you will find the answer...

Matthew 4:23–25... Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people. **24** The news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them. **25** Large crowds followed Him from Galilee and *the* Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and *from* beyond the Jordan.

The Jewish people had a long history of being oppressed. They were under the iron heel of Roman domination during the lifetime of Jesus. People were longing for the Messiah to come and to deliver them. No wonder people were drawn to Him like a colony of ants to an open jar of honey!

Notice that as His disciples came to Him Jesus **“*sat down*”** to teach them. That was normal for a Rabbi in the first century. Evidently, the disciples stood while the Rabbi sat to teach.

Although the crowds and the disciples are both present, Jesus' words are addressed primarily to the "***disciples***." This is the first use of the word "disciple" in the gospels.

There is a reason this Sermon has attracted so much attention over the years. No one ever taught like Jesus!

He taught with authority.

Other teachers had sat and taught before. But none of them ever spoke like Jesus.

Matthew 7:28–29... When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching; **29** for He was teaching them as *one* having authority, and not as their scribes.

He spoke directly to the heart.

Jesus' words carry layers and depths of meaning below the surface. Every time you come back to them you find something new. The first part of the Sermon on the Mount involved several short, pithy statements that have been labeled *BEATITUDES*. They are packed with meaning!

The purpose of the Beatitudes is to explain what it means to be a disciple. The emphasis is on the heart, not some form of external righteousness based on keeping the Law. The 10 Commandments focused on what you shouldn't do, whereas the Beatitudes focus on what you should do.

Zero in on the word "**blessed**."

- **Some form of this word is used 516 times in the Bible.**
- **The Greek word refers to an ideal happiness that cannot be affected by outward circumstances.**
- **It means to be approved of God. God wants to bless us.**

■ **The blessing of God is something real and tangible.**

So, what does it mean to be “*blessed or happy?*” I think we can safely say that the world-at-large has one view and the Lord Jesus has another one and they are diametrically opposed to each other! D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones observed...

The whole world is longing for happiness, and it is tragic to observe the ways in which people are seeking it. The vast majority, alas, are doing so in a way that is bound to produce misery. Anything which, by evading the difficulties, merely makes people happy for the time being, is ultimately going to add to their misery and problems. That is where the utter deceitfulness of sin comes in; it is always offering happiness, and it always leads to unhappiness and to final misery and wretchedness.

The Beatitudes reveal the Lord’s expectation for each believer. All nine of the beatitudes apply to all believers. This is not a buffet line where you can choose what you like and ignore what you don’t like. These Beatitudes describe Christian character.

The Beatitudes are produced in us by grace through the Holy Spirit’s ministry. These are not natural qualities; nobody by birth and by nature is like this.

The Beatitudes reveal the essential difference between the Christian and the non-Christian. The Christian should be fundamentally different from the unbeliever. Martyn Lloyd-Jones said...

It should not be our ambition to be as much like everybody else as we can, though we happen to be Christian, but rather to be as different from everybody who is not a Christian as we can possibly be. Our ambition should be to be like Christ, the more like Him the better, and the more like Him we become, the more we shall be unlike everybody who is not a Christian.

The Christian and the non-Christian are absolutely different in what they admire, what they seek, and what they do. Again, Lloyd-Jones said...

The truth is that the Christian and the non-Christian belong to two entirely different realms. You will notice the first Beatitude and the eighth Beatitude promise the same reward, 'for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' What does this mean? Our Lord starts and ends with it because it is His way of saying that the first thing you have to realize about yourself is that you belong to a different kingdom. You are not only different in essence; you are living in two absolutely different worlds. You are in this world; but you are not of it. You are among those other people, yes; but you are citizens of another kingdom.

This is certainly illustrated throughout the New Testament. Here are two examples...

Colossians 1:13–14... For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, **14** in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Philippians 3:20–21... For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; **21** who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.