
Session Two

Overview of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5 – 7)

A. Review

1. The Sermon on the Mount is the “constitution of God’s Kingdom”.
 - a. It is the clearest and most comprehensive teaching on what it means to be a Kingdom people and on how we can live and walk out the true Kingdom lifestyle.
 - b. It is a “roadmap” to cooperating with God to receive His grace and become Kingdom people.
2. It is the **litmus test** to measure spiritual development and ministry impact.
 - a. We measure our ministry impact by how much the people we minister to seek to walk out the Sermon on the Mount values, and not by the size of our ministry.
 - b. These values are what we are to emphasize most in our ministries.

B. The Beatitudes – the Eight Fruits of the Kingdom of God (Matt. 5:3 – 10)

1. **The foundational call** in the Sermon on the Mount is to live out the eight beatitudes described in Matthew 5:3 – 10.
2. The beatitudes are like the eight fruits in the “garden of our heart” that God wants to fully mature. They define the love, godliness and spiritual maturity that please God. They describe the lifestyle that is the core reality of God’s Kingdom.
3. These eight fruits need to be carefully and continually cultivated. Matthew 5 – 7 describes the process that allows the eight beatitudes to mature.
4. A brief description of the Beatitudes:
 - a. Being poor in spirit – theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5:3)
We have to acknowledge that we are in great need of help to sustain wholeheartedness, and to understand our serious dilemma in needing a breakthrough of godliness in our hearts and ministries.
 - b. Mourning for breakthrough – they shall be comforted (Matt. 5:4)
We have to be desperate enough to be “extreme” in the pursuit of progressive and consistent breakthroughs in our hearts and ministries.

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- c. Walking in meekness – they shall inherit the earth (Matt. 5:5)
 - i. We have to live a fasted lifestyle and have a servant spirit as we use what has been given to us (i.e. time, money, energy, reputation, authority, etc.).
 - ii. Humility or meekness speaks of using our resources with a servant spirit, and laying down our personal rights as we serve without regard for reward, honor, money, etc. from people.
 - d. Hungering for righteousness – they shall be filled (Matt. 5:6)
This refers to a sustained faithfulness in seeking God wholeheartedly through the changing circumstances and seasons of our lives.
 - e. Relating to others with mercy – they shall obtain mercy (Matt. 5:7)
This refers to having a tender spirit in our treatment of others in light of having received God’s mercy in our many failures. (Ps. 18:35; 130:3 – 4)
 - f. Being pure in heart – they shall see God (Matt. 5:8)
This refers to breakthroughs of purity in our hearts, thoughts and motives.
 - g. Becoming an anointed peacemaker – they are called sons of God (Matt. 5:9)
This refers to an anointing to bring peace and reconciliation to that which is outside of God’s will.
 - h. Enduring persecution – theirs is the kingdom (Matt. 5:10 – 12)
This refers to bearing the “counterattack” for plundering Satan’s Kingdom as we operate in power and/or stand for righteousness.
- 3. In Matt. 5:3 – 5, we begin the process of transformation through the realization of who we really are. The first three beatitudes – poverty of spirit, mourning and meekness – relate to perceiving ourselves differently.
 - 4. Matt. 5:6 points to “sustained zeal” in the search for breakthrough. This is the heart’s response unto God after realizing who we really are.
 - 5. As a result of our sustained pursuit for breakthrough, we will experience mercy, purity and anointed service (Matt. 5:7 – 9), which brings persecution that requires endurance (Matt. 5:10 – 12).

C. The Three-Fold Result of being True Kingdom People (Matt. 5:11 – 20)

- 1. We can expect persecution from the world. (Matt. 5:11 – 12)
- 2. We will impact society. (Matt. 5:13 – 16)
 - a. Jesus emphasized the impact that God’s people will have on individuals and society. He used two metaphors to illustrate this: salt (which is for flavoring and preservation) and light (which is to give direction and life).

b. This impact is dependent upon us walking out the beatitudes in a consistent and corporate way.

3. We will be great in the sight of God. (Matt. 5:17 – 20)

Jesus is inviting “whosoever” or everyone to be great in His Kingdom. God invites us to greatness without regard for our outward achievements or the size of our ministries. It is based on the development of our hearts.

D. Six hindrances to growing the fruits of the Beatitudes – an exhortation to resist the toxins of sin (Matt. 5:21 – 48)

1. Jesus came not to destroy the moral law, but to make a way for God’s original intention in the Old Testament – the full expression of God’s righteousness.

2. Jesus commands us to wage war in these six practical areas:

a. Anger – spirit of murder (Matt. 5:21 – 26)

b. Adultery – spirit of immorality (Matt. 5:27 – 30)

c. Disregard for the sanctity of marriage – spirit of treachery (Mal. 2:13 – 17) and disloyalty in any relationship. (Matt. 5:31 – 32)

d. False commitments – spirit of manipulation. This refers to using “spin” to misrepresent our past works and present commitments (most often seen in a lack of follow-through) (Matt. 5:33 – 37)

e. Demand for justice – spirit of pride or bitterness that insists upon our personal rights (Matt. 5:38 – 41)

f. Passive love (Matt. 5:42 – 47)

3. Jesus ends this section with a call to be perfect or mature in our obedience to God (Matt. 5:48).

E. Five Kingdom-activities to position our hearts to receive grace to grow the fruits of the Beatitudes (Matt. 6:1 – 18)

1. Jesus describes five “grace-releasing activities” in our devotional life that position our hearts to receive more strength in the grace of God. Our hearts receive more grace as we:

a. Consistently and secretly serve and do charitable deeds: serve and/or sow financially (Matt. 6:1 – 4, 19 – 21)

b. Pray (Matt. 6:5 – 13)

c. Bless adversaries and forgive (Matt. 6:14 – 15)

d. Fast (Matt. 6:16 – 18)

2. These five areas are expressions of “voluntary weakness” because we invest what has been given to us (i.e. time, money, energy, reputation, etc.) into Kingdom purposes.
 - a. We usually use of our gifts(?)to increase our personal comfort, wealth and honor.
 - b. However, living the fasted lifestyle means bringing our natural gifts to God as we trust Him to “give back” to us in a way that enriches our personal spheres of responsibility and transforms us with meekness (2 Cor. 12:9).
3. Our devotional lives are the means to appropriate free grace and not to earn it.
 - a. We position our “cold hearts” in these five ways before the “bonfire of God’s enabling grace” in order to receive the Spirit’s empowering.
 - b. We must not allow these “means of grace” to be reduced to mechanics that we use in a hypocritical show of devotion to seek superiority over others.
4. Spiritual disciplines (i.e. prayer, fasting, meditation on the Word, etc) are ordained by God as necessary to posture our hearts to freely receive more grace.
 - a. Spiritual disciplines do not earn us God’s favor but give us the opportunity to show how much we value our relationship with Him.
 - b. God sees our hunger for Him as part of our love for Him. God honors the extent to which we value the relationship by giving us more according to our hunger.

F. Pursuing our destiny without fear or anxiety (Matt. 6:19 – 21, 24 – 34)

1. Jesus teaches us how we can pursue our destiny without fear or anxiety by addressing one of the most important areas in life: our finances and material possessions. Obeying Him is vital to sustain the grace needed to walk out the beatitudes.
 2. Faith in God’s provision is a vital dimension of our spiritual life. We are not only to be different in our devotional lives, but also in the way we view and use our money and possessions as we pursue our destiny.
 3. Jesus calls us to escape the slavery of covetousness that is fueled by the fear of not having enough. We are naturally preoccupied with our pursuit of food, drink, clothing and housing. Fear or anxiety rises up in us to resist our progress in walking out the beatitudes.
 4. Jesus gives three exhortations regarding money:
 - a. He exhorts all to live with an eternal perspective by using money now in a way that lays up treasures for us in heaven (Matt. 6:19 – 21).
 - b. He declares the impossibility of loving both God and money. (Matt. 6:24)
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- c. Jesus addresses the fear of being in lack. We must love God while we believe Him for the release of the covenant blessing of prosperity (Matt. 6:25 – 34).
 5. In Matthew 6:22 – 23, Jesus calls us to be single-minded in pursuing the Kingdom lifestyle. God promises that anyone with a good eye will have a vibrant heart that is full of light. Having a good eye means that our primary life vision is to pursue the eight Beatitudes.

G. Walking out the Beatitudes (Matt. 7:1 – 20)

1. Seeking to walk out this Kingdom lifestyle will result in many complex dynamics in our relationships that are both positive and negative. Many relationships will change as we walk out Kingdom values. New relationships will be established as old ones change.
2. We must not judge as we seek to walk in a Kingdom lifestyle (Matt. 7:1 – 5). We are not to judge the hearts and intentions of people in the areas of spirituality mentioned in Matt. 6:1 – 33. In the case of seeking to help a brother with a non-scandalous issue in his life, Jesus exhorts them not to give advice about truth to those who are unreceptive. This is very different from the scriptural responsibility to bring scandalous sin into the light through due process. (Matt. 18:15 – 18; 1 Tim. 5:19 – 20; 1 Cor. 5:1 – 13; 2 Thes. 3:10 – 15; Rev. 2:2 – 3, 14 – 15, 20)
3. Some will reject our pearls (Matt. 7:6). The “pearls” refer to the Kingdom values laid out in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus states that some in the Church will be unreceptive to these values.
4. We must not trust our natural strengths to war against sin. We must be careful not to neglect prayer knowing that the spirit of prayer is our best, though not our only tool (Matt. 7:7 – 12).
5. We will face false prophets and messages that will seek to hinder us from entering by the narrow gate and the difficult way (Matt. 7:13 – 20).
 - a. There are two ways to approach our faith and life. One will lead us to life and the other to the path of “destruction” (Matt. 7:13 – 14).
 - b. We must discern counterfeit messengers and messages as they will be part of adversarial elements that we encounter. (Matt. 7:15 – 20)

H. Manifesting the Kingdom reality in our lives and the test of our faith (Matt. 7:21 – 27)

1. These eight fruits of the Beatitudes will be fully tested. It is not enough to proclaim them as a reality. The essential issue is whether we can walk them out under pressure.

2. The eight fruits of the Beatitudes are the true measure of our faith. God will use them as a “benchmark” to judge us at the end of our lives (Matt. 7:21 – 23).
3. “Storms” will test the reality of our foundation. There are 3 kinds of “storms”:
 - a. The storms of personal pressures (rain)
 - b. The eschatological storm (flood) (2 Thes. 2:3 – 4)
 - c. The final judgment (wind) (1 Cor. 3:10 – 15)
4. “Storms” will reveal which of the two approaches we have chosen to build our lives and ministries (Matt. 7:24 – 27).