

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW; YOUR KINGDOM COME...ON EARTH

Week 7 – Proclamation of the King: The Sermon on the Mount

Oct. 26, 2021

Matt. 4:23-25 - *And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. ²⁴ Then His fame went throughout all Syria and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them. ²⁵ Great multitudes followed Him—from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.*

Matt. 5:1-2 - *And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. ² Then He opened His mouth and taught them*

Are we understanding that as Jesus broadcasted the gospel of the kingdom...as He presented Himself as King and performed Messianic miracles, Jesus moved closer to the cross?! II Cor. 8:8-9 - *...though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor that you, through His poverty might become rich.*

Jesus presented Himself as the promised/prophesied King. And, the kingdom He offered is the promised/prophesied kingdom that we read of in the Hebrew Scriptures (Dan. 2; Dan. 9:24-27; Isa. 2:1-4; Isa. 11; Isa. 60, 61, 62, 63; Jer. 31:31-34; Eze. 36:24-27; Eze. 40-48; Zech. 12, 13, 14; Mal. 3...and in between – cross reference!) The NT doesn't reinterpret the OT.

The Sermon on the Mount has been hailed as the greatest sermon ever preached as it is the theology of the Messiah.

In understanding the Sermon on the Mount we need to know what was occurring in Israel in Jesus' day?

Rome ruled and oppressed the Jewish people. The Jews wanted deliverance. And, in that desire for deliverance...

- There were those who wanted the Messiah to come and overthrow Rome and physically deliver them.
- There were others who, through the Messiah, believed that they would receive the material blessings in the Kingdom of God. To these people the Messiah was a means to the end. The “end” equated to material blessings.
- There were others who were fearful of the stirrings the Messiah would create that might lead to the loss of their status and their power.
- AND, there were those Jewish people who believed in God's PROMISES of the Messiah...the Redeemer Who would pay the price for their redemption. In Scripture the “remnant” were Jewish believers - OT saints.

The spiritual aspect was not focused upon even by the Jewish religious leadership. The religious leadership depended on their Jewish heritage to provide eternal life, not on God. The religious leadership depended on their own righteousness, not God's righteousness.

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The religious leadership added manmade commandments to the 613 commandments that God gave to the children of Israel. The rabbis taught how the Jewish people were to live out the 1,000's of manmade commandments. The Jewish people were under a tremendous burden of requirements they could not meet. Rabbis differed from one another. The rabbis became the authority, not God.

What was taught by the rabbis was the letter of the law, not the spirit of the Law. The spirit of the law highlights God's intent in giving the law. The rabbis did not focus on God's heart. The spiritual aspect of the law was not taught. But Jesus taught the spirit of the law. Jesus spoke that spiritual priority to Nicodemus...John 3:3 - *Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again (born from above, transformed by GOD...not by themselves, by their own thinking, in their own strength), he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

Consider a big picture observation: approximately three months following their physical deliverance from Egypt, God, from the mountain top, gave the children of Israel the Mosaic law – the 613 commandments – and established Israel as a nation (Ex. 19:16-20). What do we think about the law?

We need to know what GOD declares about the law...Psalm 19:7 – *the law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul.* In Hebrew “perfect” means to be completed, to be finished. The law is good. The law is holy because it reflects Who God is!

We must remember that Scripture teaches the law can only condemn (Lev. 19:2 – *Be holy for I am holy.*) Mankind is not holy in and of ourselves. The law cannot save. Rom. 3:20 – *Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified (declared righteous) in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

How is the law good/perfect? The law shows us our sin. The law shows us our need of a Savior. Gal. 3:24 - . . . *the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.* AND SO...

Matt. 5:1-2 - *And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. 2 Then He opened His mouth and taught them....*

It is thought that on a mountain, on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee overlooking Capernaum, this is where Jesus presented the “spirit of the law” that God had given the children of Israel on Mt. Sinai. Jesus did not give a new law through this sermon. Nor did Jesus modify what God had given the Jewish people on Mt. Sinai. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus explained the true significance of the law and of the entire

OT. The law was given to the people because of sin – to teach them about the HOLINESS of God – to teach them how to live.

Jesus spoke of God's desire re: the inner state/condition of mind and heart that the OT did indeed teach. Dt. 6:5 – *You shall love the LORD your God with all your HEART, with all your soul, and with all your strength.* Dt. 30:6 – God told the Jewish people that He would write the law on their hearts.

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Matt. 5:3-11 - *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. ⁵Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. ⁶Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. ⁷Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. ⁸Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. ⁹Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. ¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. ¹²Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

The Greek word translated “blessed” means “happy, blissful” or, literally, “to be enlarged.” Psa. 118:5 - *I called on the LORD in distress; the LORD answered me and set me in a broad place.* In the Hebrew “broad place” means large, spacious, roomy, expansive. Root meaning of to enlarge/broad place: to grow wide, to expand with JOY!

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus used the word *blessed* to refer to more than a superficial happiness; in this context, *blessed* refers to a state of spiritual well-being and prosperity. The happiness is a deep joy of the soul - salvation.

We know Jesus declarations of blessedness as the Beatitudes.

The Sermon on the Mount presents a radically different agenda than what the nation of Israel expected from the Messiah. This was revolutionary to the Jewish people. The spirit of the law was unexpected but it was nothing new! Hab. 2:4 – *the just shall live by faith!* (Gen. 15:6; Dt. 30:6...). The people had been living under the religious rule of the Pharisees who were fixated on the letter of the law with no mercy attached and so no mercy was extended to the Jewish population. Jesus set forth a quality of life that is the product of GRACE ALONE! He described a lifestyle which no human being could live in his/her own power. The life described by Jesus in this sermon is a life of grace and glory which comes from God ALONE.

The people to whom Jesus spoke were beaten down, intimidated, and made to feel hopeless. On the mountain, when Jesus sat and taught, He took the customary posture of teaching as a rabbi – sitting...which displayed authority. And, it was a signal, according to the custom of the day, that the very first statement out of this rabbi's mouth should be

memorized! Jesus' disciples came to Him (Matt. 5:1). Jesus' words were directed toward the disciples AND, it appears to the multitudes that gathered. Matt. 7:28 - *And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that **the people** were astonished at His teaching,*

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught righteousness. Jesus proclaimed that only the righteous could enter the Kingdom of God. What type of righteousness? Jesus explained that true righteousness comes from God alone. God's righteousness is the righteousness required for entering the Kingdom. God's righteousness given to us is our "being" in Him. "Doing" will not gain us an entrance into the Kingdom of God!

Matt. 5:20 - *I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of*

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heaven. The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was external – it wasn't from God – it didn't transform their hearts – it was self-righteousness. Jesus called the people to a deeper holiness – a holiness which involved an internal conformity to the spirit of the law – to God's heart.

Matt. 5:3 - *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* When Jesus declared that it's not the religious self-righteous but rather the "poor in spirit" who will inherit the kingdom of heaven. The "poor in spirit" are blessed? That was radical! What does it mean to be spiritually poor? "Poor" speaks of abject poverty...being reduced to begging, destitute of any wealth, influence, position, lacking anything! The root word for "poor" pictures falling down – falling prostrate – and rendering homage or worship to another. To be "poor in spirit" is to recognize our utter spiritual bankruptcy before God. It is understanding that we have absolutely nothing of worth to offer God for our salvation. Jesus is stating that, no matter ones status in life, we must recognize our spiritual poverty before we can come to God in faith to receive the salvation He offers.

Can you imagine how this must have lifted the hearts of the people? Jesus essentially told them...the law has done its work. If it has shown you that you're broken...the law has done its job.

When you're poor in spirit – when you have nothing left in and of yourself – and you realize that...you are blessed because God's blessings can come upon you because you trust in Him alone...you're not trusting in yourself! Oh, the burden of trusting in ourselves!

Matt. 5:4 - *Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.* Have you noticed that Jesus calls people "blessed" who appear to be quite the opposite? Those who are blessed are those who realize they are spiritually bankrupt and now we're looking at people who "mourn" – as being blessed!

Throughout these Beatitudes, Jesus is contrasting the world's idea of happiness with true blessedness—spiritual well-being – a well-being of the soul – deep joy of the

soul – and prospering/thriving/flourishing according to God’s will. When we surrender to God, He places us in a right relationship with Him.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

The term *mourn* means “to experience deep grief.” In keeping with His theme of spiritual blessedness, Jesus seems to indicate that this mourning flows from grief over sin.

The kind of "mourning" that leads to repentance is truly blessed. 2 Corinthians 7:10 - *For godly sorrow (our grieving over offending God) produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world (perhaps wounded pride) produces death.*

The people who agree with God about their sin can be BLESSED due to the comfort they receive from communion with the Holy Spirit. Jesus called the Holy Spirit the Comforter (John 14:16, 26; John 15:26). The Holy Spirit comforts those who are honest about their own sin and humble enough to ask for forgiveness.

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The people who gathered on the mountain listening to Jesus knew about the Pharisees and their focus on self-righteousness (Luke 18:9-14 - *...I thank you, God, that I am not like other people – cheaters, sinners, adulterers....*). While what the Pharisees did believe and taught was not according to Scripture, we do read of Pharisees who came to faith in Jesus – Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, the Apostle Paul. HOW? GOD!

Acts 15:5 – Luke wrote of believers in Jesus from among the Pharisees.

Matt. 5:5 - *Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.*

The Greek word translated “meek” refers to mildness, gentleness of spirit, or humility. Meekness is not weakness. Meekness is supreme self-control empowered by the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:23)

There are two men in Scripture who are noted as characterized by meekness: Moses (Num. 12:3 ASV) *Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth.* Paul (II Cor. 10:1 NASV) - *I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—I who am meek when face to face with you, but bold toward you when absent!* God used both Moses and Paul as instruments to mightily proclaim His message.

Meekness recognizes God’s authority and submits itself to God’s authority. Meekness is having the *right* or the *power* to do something...but refraining to do so. Meekness is power or strength under control. Meekness models the humility of Jesus. Jesus, as God, had the right to do whatever He wanted, but, for our sake, He submitted to “death on a cross.” That is the ultimate in meekness.

The unrighteous are characterized by a self-assertive pride that leads them to refuse to submit to God...refused to submit to Jesus.

Matt. 5:6 - *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.* Mankind hungers and thirsts.

Eccl. 3:11 – Scripture tells us that *God has put eternity in our hearts....* God has given us a longing for and awareness of eternity. And God has given us a desire to be satisfied! AND, God has created us for Him.

Col. 1:16b - ...*All things were created through Him and for Him.* It has been said, “God has made us for Himself and our hearts are restless until they can find peace in you.” Jesus is offering HIMSELF as our SATISFACTION!

In the account of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32), he took the inheritance his father had given him, left home, and went to a far-off country where he squandered his inheritance money on riotous living, on things that would not satisfy. When his money was gone, this Jewish son worked with pigs and ate what these unclean animals ate. When the prodigal son was hungry he went to feed upon husks, but when he was starving, he turned to his father. His father who ran to his son!

In Matt. 5:6 Jesus is not speaking about mere hunger...Jesus is speaking about starving after righteousness.

Jesus is speaking of possessing God’s righteousness and being satisfied! Only Jesus satisfies! He has taken our sin when we confess our sin, and He gives us His righteousness. And, we are placed in a right relationship with God!

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To hunger and thirst for righteousness is longing for God!

Can we say with the Psalmist...Psa. 42:1-2 - *As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. ² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.*

When shall I come and appear before God? When can I go and meet with God?

Hungering and thirsting in this life are continual. Is our hungering and thirsting for righteousness continual?

The servant who hungers and thirsts for righteousness is the same as the one who fervently seeks after God and His righteousness before and above everything else (Matt. 6:33). This servant is blessed because he or she experiences a satisfied heart. This servant can say, “It is well with my soul.”

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Are we continually filled/satisfied? As believers we need to hunger and thirst continually and yearn for that unceasing satisfaction. The satisfaction that comes from God satisfies us and keeps us longing for more – yearning for HIM!

And in that LONGING, the fellowship with Jesus is...

QUESTIONS:

What impacted you?

How did you understand the Sermon on the Mount in the past?

How do you understand the Sermon on the Mount now?

How might this affect your life?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK:

Reread Week 7 with the Bible references.

Share what you've learned with at least one person this week.

Read Week 8's handout when you receive it.