

Matthew in Biblical Perspective: Kingdom Living – The Sermon On The Mount

Matthew 5:1-12

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April 18, 2010 – Morning Sermon

We are studying Matthew 5 and this is our second study of Matthew 5 through 7 on the Sermon on the Mount. It the royal manifesto of the King concerning His Kingdom. We will look at two other passages in this study along with this one. Let's look at our text which is the Word of God. It's the Truth. Matthew 5:1-12 says

1 Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. 2 And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

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

5 "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. 7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

The grass withers. The flower fades. This is the Word of God. It abides forever and by His grace and mercy may it be preached for you.

Last week we began our study on the Sermon on the Mount from the King. Jesus has been doing His ministry. He has announced the Kingdom of heaven is at hand. Now comes this Sermon on the Mount. Actually the Sermon on the Mount refers to the place. If you were to label it in terms of its content it would be the Sermon of the Kingdom.

This is the sermon about the Kingdom of God. Now what does the Kingdom look

like and who is in the Kingdom? So Jesus now preaches this text. I want to back up just for a moment. Matthew is the first book of the New Testament and the 40th book of your Bible. After 400 years of silence it is this book that the Holy Spirit has placed at the beginning of the New Testament because it is this book that has been designed by the Holy Spirit to Matthew to affirm that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah. That is He is the Prophet, Priest and King. He is the Prophet where all the other prophets have pointed to. He is the Priest that fulfills all those things we need in a priest who intercedes for us including the offering. He is not only the Priest but He's the offering also for our sins and He's the King. He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. This One who is the Son of David from the tribe of Judah is Lord of David and Lord of all.

So what Matthew has done for four chapters beginning with the genealogy, the birth of Jesus, the virgin birth, going to Egypt, His childhood in Nazareth, His coming to be baptized, His temptation in the wilderness and then the beginning of His ministry as He preaches the Kingdom is at hand, Matthew takes great delight in pointing out to us very precisely ten prophecies from the Old Testament that Jesus fulfills in just those four chapters. Now the rest of the book of Matthew is designed to give us insight into the teaching ministry of the King and Prophet.

There are six sermons that Jesus gave that are recorded by the Holy Spirit in the Gospels. Five of the six are in Matthew. One is in John. The one that is in John is the Upper Room sermon called the Upper Room Discourse which is found in John 13 through 17. The first of the six is the Sermon on the Mount or the Sermon on the Kingdom in Matthew 5, 6, and 7. The next one is the sermon that ordained the Apostles to their ministries which is in Matthew 10. The next one is the sermon of the Kingdom in which Jesus gives seven Kingdom parables to tell us about the Kingdom of God and that is found in Matthew 13. Then comes the sermon of the community of the King that tells us how to live in the Kingdom and He begins this sermon by asking the question "Who is the greatest in the Kingdom?" This sermon is developed in Matthew 18, 19 and 20. Then when will be the close of the age and when will You come again? This sermon is called the Olivet Discourse which is given in Matthew 24 and 25.

The Sermon on the Mount is the first one and this is the one that the key to understand. It has seven sections to it. In this study we are just taking up the first section. This section is called the Beatitudes and is found in Matthew 5:3-12. The Beatitudes tell us what the citizens of the Kingdom of God look like, what it means to be an authentic Christian. It answers the question how do those who have been saved by the King live in the Kingdom? This description is given in the Beatitudes. Then He will tell us when we live this way He will give the influence and impact of the Kingdom of God through the believers in this world. He will tell us what it means to be salt and light. Before we get to our influence and impact you can't be salt if you're not salty and you can't be light if it's under a bushel. What does the Kingdom living look like? What does the life look like that knows the King as Lord and Savior and lives in the King and for the King? Jesus lays it

out for us in this section called the Beatitudes.

Here is what I want to do with this. Let me first make a confession. This has been rather traumatic for me in the last couple of months because when I look at the eight Beatitudes that are there honestly I'm having a crisis of conscience because each one deserves at least its own sermon. In fact each one could have its own series but I know we have to make progress. I know we need to keep moving. I'm actually going to do two sermons on the Beatitudes and I'm having pains of consciences over this. I want you to think of this as a pie. By the second sermon on Sundays I'm ready to eat. Think of this as a pie with eight slices. In the next study we will come back to this and we'll pull each slice out and at least take a bite out of it. We won't eat the whole thing but we'll take a little bite of it. In this study I just want you to see the pie. A man reminded me of this after the first sermon. Have you ever heard people tell you that Christianity is nothing but pie in the sky? I want that pie in the sky now.

In this study I want to look at the five essential dynamics of the Beatitudes in this first section. Of the five essentials we have we will see that the King has announced the Kingdom and now He is going to define who the citizens of the Kingdom are. He is going to draw this profile for us of what it looks like. So what are the five dynamics?

The first one is 8 – 3 – 1. What do you mean by this? There are eight beatitudes that draw this profile. You can see them listed beginning in Matthew 5:3 through 12. Each beatitude has three elements to it. Element number one will be the divine declaration/pronouncement. Element number two is the affirmed character trait. So then comes the affirmed trait that the divine pronouncement produces in our life and the third element is the promised blessing attached to that trait.

Let's just take the first beatitude and look at these three elements. Matthew 5:3 says, 3 *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* What is the divine pronouncement? It is 'blessed'. What is the affirmed trait? It is 'poor in spirit'. What is the promised blessing? It is 'theirs is the kingdom of heaven'. The divine declaration is blessed not bless-ed. I hear bless-ed all the time. It is blessed are the poor in spirit not bless-ed are the poor in spirit. Harry, why would you make that point? The problem we have here is our English language because it is hard to capture some of this. In our language it is very difficult for us to make these distinctions. So how do I use bless-ed and when do I use blessed? Blessed is when you're describing something that's been given to someone from one who has the power to bless. For instance, I am a blessed man. But I am not a bless-ed man. Bless-ed is the name of the Lord. Why would I say that? It is because the Lord has the power to bless. Bless-ed be the name of the Lord. Blessed is the one who has received the blessing from the one who is in authority and has the power to bless. Bless-ed be the name of the Lord and blessed are those in the Kingdom of God.

Some of you may have a translation that translates it as 'happy'. The Greek word for blessed here in this passage is *makarios*. *Makarios* is an interesting word. Can we translate the word happy? Yes we can but I believe we are short changing it. When it says God having blessed His people, the word blessed is not merely an assessment of one's present emotional well-being. It's more than that. It's more than just happiness in happenstance. The word blessed is the divine declaration of your status and relationship with Him. It's not simply a subjective word like happy are you. Some of the translations try to get around it by saying 'truly happy' trying to get us around the everyday thought of I'm happy. To maintain the word blessed it includes happy but it's a happy that's beyond an assessment of one's emotional well-being at the present time. It is a declaration by the Almighty of your status and relationship with Him for now and for eternity. Blessed are you.

Then, because of this divine favor and grace that God sovereignly declared and disposed upon you now comes a changed life and that changed life is described with eight traits of living. Jesus is saying, "This is the way My people live, those whom I have by grace blessed and brought into My Kingdom. I have taken them from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of Light, from death unto life, I have brought them to everlasting life in this Kingdom for every single one of those that I have blessed this is the result of My grace." In other words, the affirmed traits are the markings of God's grace that are upon us. Then those character traits lead to promised blessings. So let's walk back through this. Blessed is the divine declaration. What is the result of God blessing you? It is being poor in spirit. What is the promised blessing? It is theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:4 says 4 "*Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.* Blessed is the divine declaration. The affirmed character trait is those who mourn. The promised blessing is that they shall be comforted. Matthew 5:5 says 5 "*Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.* Blessed is the divine declaration. The affirmed character trait is they are meek. The promised blessing is they shall inherit the earth. Matthew 5:6 says 6 "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.* Blessed is the divine declaration. The affirmed character trait is they hunger and thirst for righteousness. The promised blessing is they shall be satisfied. Matthew 5:7 says 7 "*Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.* Blessed is the divine declaration. The affirmed character trait is they are merciful. The promised blessing is they shall receive mercy. Matthew 5:8 says 8 "*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.* Blessed is the divine declaration. The affirmed character trait is they are pure in heart. The promised blessing they shall see God. Matthew 5:9 says

9 "*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.* Blessed is the divine declaration. The affirmed character trait is they are peacemakers. The promised blessing is they shall be called the sons of God. Matthew 5:10 says 10

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed is the divine declaration. The affirmed character trait is those who are persecuted for righteousness sake. The promised blessing is theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.

Some are saying “Okay you have just listed eight beatitudes but there’s another blessed there.” You’ll notice that the blessed in Matthew 5:11 doesn’t have an affirmed trait nor a promised blessing. This one is a summation of those who are blessed and what your expectation is in life. If I am blessed of God and these character traits are developing in my life - poor in spirit, mourn, meek, hunger, thirst, peacemakers, pure in heart – God says “Here’s the promised blessing.” Did you notice how each promised blessing lines up with the trait? The pure in heart see God. Those who hunger and thirst are satisfied. Those who are merciful receive mercy. I want you to feel this and see this. It’s not if I’m merciful then God’s going to be merciful to me. No, I have been blessed. God’s grace and mercy has come upon me. What’s the result? I’m merciful. What is the promised blessing? Watch the mercy that God gives to those who are merciful. Why am I merciful? It is because God’s grace has changed and is at work in my heart.

Some of you may have noticed that one of those promised blessings is repeated twice. Matthew 5:3, 10 says, 3 *“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* 10 *“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* Why would He make one of the promised blessings repeated twice? That is what we call an inclusio. In other words what He is doing is wrapping the package. He is saying when I blessed you and brought you into My Kingdom watch the lifestyle of those people. Theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. When He gets to the last one He emphasizes that He has been describing to us those who are in the Kingdom of heaven. He has wrapped the package. In other words, He has announced the Kingdom and now through these eight statements He is telling you who is in the Kingdom, who owns the Kingdom and who those are whom the King owns.

What about that last part? Matthew 5:11, 12 says 11 *“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.* 12 *Rejoice...* This is not another beatitude. This is telling you that those in the Kingdom but here is your expectation in this world. If you live for the King the world will revile, mock, slander, and persecute you. What is your response? I’ll just get mad and pout. No, I’ll rejoice. They did the same thing to the prophets. They did this to my Savior. I will rejoice that I’m in the Kingdom and can serve the King. When the world reviles, falsely persecutes because of what You’re doing in my life I will not be angry when the world is the world. I will rejoice that I can live for the King and the King is living in me.

So what does the number 1 mean in 8 – 3 – 1? I put the number one there because as I mentioned one of these is repeated twice and it says for theirs is the Kingdom which leads me to my second dynamic. My second dynamic in this

beatitude is if these are the 8 beatitudes that have 3 elements and one of them is repeated twice then there seems to be a surprising but clearly intentional declaration in this. They are clearly arranged intentionally. If I am being invited by Christ to live a life where I'm going to be persecuted and reviled for I am living a life that is countercultural. I am living a life for Jesus Christ. It is a scandal to the world and the world's natural response is to revile, persecute, mock and slander then how can I get people to do this? I would probably put the carrot on the end of the stick and say, "If you do this really good then Jesus is going to love you." Or I would do it with a warning and say, "You better do this, cause I'll tell you what's going to happen if you don't do this" like we say to our kids sometimes. We have to learn how to do that like a daddy when he says, "You don't want me to come back there." That's a language you learn after a while on how to say those things.

Notice, Jesus does not begin the beatitudes with an admonition nor even an invitation with a carrot on the stick nor does He begin it with a malediction where He might say "Woe be unto you if you don't do these eight things!" He begins it with a benediction by saying "Blessed are you." He begins it with what He has done for you that then leads you to what you do because you love the King that then leads to the Kingdom blessings of serving the King which are the promised blessings. He doesn't put the blessings out there and then says, "If you do this really well then I'll bless you." No, He starts with the declaration "Blessed are you. I have already sovereignly secured your blessing in the King Himself." So He declares the blessing and what's the result of this blessing of My grace? It is a changed life. Here are eight features of this changed life. Then He says "let Me tell you what this is going to lead to."

This leads me to the third dynamic essential. If God has blessed me and the result of Him having blessed me by grace are these grace markings, these traits of life, and attached to those traits are promised blessings, is it now or later? That's the third dynamic. These promised blessings and this lifestyle change, are they now or later?

How many of you think the promised blessings are in the future? How many of you think the promised blessings are right now? How many of you think it's right now and in the future? Okay now you can raise your hand. The Kingdom blessings are like the Kingdom. The Kingdom is now but not yet in its fullness. Harry, how do you know its now? What did Jesus preach in Matthew 4:17? It says, "*Jesus began to preach saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'*" The Kingdom is here. Yours is the Kingdom of God. Then He says, "Rejoice for your reward in heaven is going to be great." There is something coming.

In fact, later on in this same sermon He is going to teach us how to pray. What do we call that prayer when He teaches us how to pray in the Sermon on the Mount? We call that The Lord's Prayer. It starts off, "Our Father who art in

heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come..." I thought it was here. It is but it hasn't come in its fullness and so are the traits of the Christian life. Is the Christian saved by grace and blessed changed? Yes, if any man be in Christ Jesus he is a new creation, the old has passed away and behold the new has come (2 Corinthians 5:17). But have I arrived where I need to be in my Christian life? Not yet. Has the Kingdom come? Yes. Has the Kingdom come in its fullness yet? No. Has God given me the promises of the Kingdom? Yes. Do I have them in fullness yet? No, the best is yet to come.

The fourth dynamic essential from the text is a question - is this profile a menu or a motivation? In other words here are the eight beatitudes. Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are those who mourn. Blessed are the merciful. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Is this something I'm supposed to go through and pick and choose what I think is best suited for me? Let's see blessed are the poor in spirit...okay I'll take that one. Blessed are those who mourn...no I don't want that one. Is this a menu I can go through and pick and choose the ones I like sort of like an a la carte menu? No, the eight beatitudes are for all believers and they are interdependent, instructive and integrated. We will look at this closer in the next study.

For example, do you know how to get to be merciful? It's by hungering and thirsting for righteousness. You hunger and thirst for righteousness when there is meekness in your life. Do you know when you're going to be meek? It will be when you mourn. Do you know where it's all going to start? It will be when you're poor in spirit instead of prideful. The eight are like stair steps. They are interdependent. They are instructive one to the other and they are inseparable. You cannot pick and choose them. By the way, this isn't eight things for the elite Christian like John Edwards, John Calvin, Jim Elliot and don't forget the missionaries. No, all of these are for all believers who are all citizens of the Kingdom of God.

The fifth dynamic essential is one startling observation. It is one obvious dynamic that is somewhat startling and that's this; none of these eight are valued by the world and none of them are natural to men and women. Meekness, no we'd rather post our awards. Merciful - yea as long as I get something back. Hunger and thirst for righteousness - I'm so grateful for the imputed righteousness of Jesus but do I have a hunger and thirst for a personal righteousness in my life? None of these are natural. They only come with the powerful, sovereign work of the Holy Spirit. They only come by God's grace and for His glory.

Harry, could unbelievers manifest this? Yes, but again it's only by God's grace. We will get to this thing of salt and light but as Christians live this out these things will show up even in the lives of unbelievers because of God's common grace but these things are not natural. These eight actually in the flesh revolt us. They are unbelievable convicting. If you don't believe it come and ask me. I have been living with them for three months and I am under so much conviction because I

don't want to move in this direction in myself. I find myself wanting to go the other way. I find myself wanting to re-modify, re-do and re-state them. No, these markings of God's grace are not natural. They are only produced by the Holy Spirit's convicting, empowering work when we love Christ and want to be like Him and live for Him.

That brings me to my one takeaway for this study and I have three applications to it. The takeaway is that by God's grace the Gospel blessed citizens of the Kingdom will live for the King because the King has given them life (Now this is important) and because the King is now their life. This Kingdom living will only be embraced if you know the King. If you know the King you want to live for the King and the King is your life. If the King is not your life you will never embrace these things. When the King is our life, the One who has given us life, then we will embrace this call.

This position of being blessed, is it something new? No and here's the first application of it. This blessed position with its changed life and its promised blessings is nothing new. It is God's design and desire from the very beginning for you and for me. When God created everything what did He do? What did God say when He created? He said a benediction, "It's good." He blessed it. When God called Noah what does the Scripture say? Noah found favor in God's eyes. Mary, the blessed virgin, found favor in the eyes of the Lord. Psalm 1:1, 2 says,

1 Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; 2 but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. To any of you who have not yet come to Christ, God's design and desire for you is not your judgment but blessing upon you. That is God's desire and design in creation and redemption.

I want to show you this in Scripture. It is found in Ephesians 1. First let me confess I grew up mischievous and I never grew up. It is in my heart and hopefully my mischievous nature has been sanctified to some degree but it has not been removed. I love to get on an elevator, particularly one that is going way up and most people when they get on an elevator don't want to talk. I will just kind of turn around and say, "Is this the one that fell last week?" That kind of gets conversation going. I can tell you a couple of others but one time I got a phone call and this lady said, "I was thinking of visiting Briarwood." I said, "Really?" She said, "Before I come, are you all a full Gospel church?" I said, "No ma'am, we're a half Gospel." You're wondering the same thing, "which half of the Gospel?" I had a great time to talk with her about what the Gospel is after that. It kind of opened the door. By the way, I do believe in a full Gospel but probably not in the way she meant.

Then a lady came up to me after a service one time and said, "Pastor thank you for that sermon." I said, "Thank you ma'am." She said, "Have you had the second

blessing?" I whispered back in her ear, "Yes ma'am, I did have the second blessing and I've also had the third blessing." She said, "The what? I haven't heard about that one!" I said, "Yes ma'am, and I've had the fourth blessing." She said, "You did not." I said, "Yes I did" and then I took her to this passage in Ephesians 1:3. Ephesians 1:3-6 says,

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

God's design and desire today is not your judgment. It is not malediction but benediction for you. God's design and desire is for you to be blessed and He is so committed to it that He gave His Son to die on a cross to purchase every spiritual blessing for those who are in Christ Jesus. That's how much He is committed to you. This isn't something new. This is something that God through His Son has reclaimed for you.

The second application of this commitment is what is first in my life? What happens first is don't seek happiness seek Jesus. I love the founding documents of my country. I love the fact that we're committed to the preservation of the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness but I would like to redefine this for us as Christians. Ours is not the pursuit of happiness. Ours is the pursuit of Jesus because there is happiness forever. It's not the pursuit of happiness. I don't know any of us that do not want to be happy, I mean really truly happy. I don't know any one that wakes up in the morning and asks God to be sad and depressed the rest of their life but I do know many of us are looking for happiness in the wrong place. It's the next technological toy that's going to make me happy, right? It's my iPod or my iPad. It's my husband. It's my vacation. It's my wife, my marriage or my children.

We can become absorbed in the very things that God has designed to be dynamic elements in our life to enjoy but we ruin them because we put them in His place. We put them before Him, above Him or beside Him. We think Jesus is going to give me joy as long as I have this or that. If I have that then I can know joy. The Bible says that in Christ there are pleasures ever more but the pleasures ever more are at His right hand. Lord, whom have I in heaven but You and nothing on earth do I desire but You. With our propensity to medicate ourselves with the things of this world, to intoxicate ourselves, to saturate ourselves and our appetites, with things like sex, sexual immorality emotionally and physically, or that next website I look at on the computer, sin will not only destroy but even the good things that God has made will become black holes of despair if they are before Christ or above Christ or beside Christ. Christ is all. In Him is joy ever

more. The amazing thing is that things like sex and its sacred use in the marriage bed, the appetites where we can eat and drink to the glory of God will bring joy because we seek first His Kingdom and our King. These things shall be added to you.

The third application to this commitment is there is an astounding, life changing fact in this sermon. Last week I told you how much this sermon meant to me. I love the fact that it's linear with seven sections. I love the way they build on each other. I am just so drawn to this Sermon on the Mount. I said in the last study that this was a three barrel sermon. I got over 700 emails that there really is a three barrel sermon so I can now firmly announce there is such thing as a three barreled rifle and it's called a drilling. Jesus' three barrel sermon aims at the believer to encourage them, equip them. Two He aims at the unbeliever to invite them to Christ and three He aims at those who are taking religion and ritual and clouding the reality of whether they have a relationship with Him or not.

There is one thing in this sermon I cannot identify with. When I married Cindy one of the jobs that I had was I followed in my daddy's footsteps. My daddy was a professional umpire. I followed in my daddy's career to put my wife through college. Man, she's such high maintenance. I promised her dad I would get her through school before I married her. One of the jobs I had was to umpire baseball games. I would sit down with my daddy to get my tutorial on umpiring and I remembered one thing my daddy said to me. This relates to preaching. He said, "Son, the best game you ever umpire is the one where they don't even know your there. Then you know you have umpired a good game." They don't even know you are there. That's the desire in preaching. I know I have to stand forth. I know the Word has to take hold of me and I know the Word has to come through me in preaching. That's part of what God has designed but my heart desire is that you walk away and only see Jesus. But in this sermon that we are studying the Preacher doesn't do that because the Preacher of this sermon is the object of the sermon – Jesus. That's who I want you to know.

When you know the King and the King is your life then this Kingdom life will be embraced and everything else in life that honors the King can be used for Him. Come follow the King. He will bless you with every spiritual blessing. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together. Thank You for the privilege to be in Your Word this Lord's Day morning. Thank You for the opportunity to study it. Now I pray that You would speak to our hearts. Those who know Jesus as Lord and Savior, He's your King, today before we get to the eight pieces of the pie, is the King your life? I know you are not where you want to be but is He your life now? Today, if you are seeking, looking, where is life? It is not in the people, experiences and the things of this world. Come to the King, Jesus. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Come simply and say, "King Jesus I

come to You because You have come for me.” I have great news for you today – the pursuit of happiness will ultimately lead to despair but the pursuit to Christ will lead to joy, now here’s my good news. He has come to pursue you today. Thank You Savior, in Jesus’ Name, Amen.

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