

**Matthew in Biblical Perspective:
A Royal Manifesto of the Kingdom from the King –
Kingdom Living – The Sermon On The Mount
Part Two**

Matthew 5:2-10

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April 25, 2010 – Morning Sermon

This is our third study on the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:1-12 and our thirteen study in the book of Matthew. So let's look at our text. 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 our God. It abides forever and by His grace and mercy may it be preached for you.

Confession time as I have said, we are in the Sermon on the Mount. We introduced it. We took an overview of it in the last study which was the sermon on the Kingdom. This is the first of six sermons recorded in your Bible in the Gospels that Jesus taught. Five of them are in Matthew and this is actually the sermon on the Mount which is the place but it's the sermon about the Kingdom. What does it mean to be in the Kingdom? What does it mean to follow the King?

What does the Kingdom look like? How is it going to function? How is it going to expand? That is what Matthew 5, 6, and 7 is teaching us. It is that we are following our Savior.

When I was a kid my father was in baseball. I have shared this before but because he was in minor leagues it meant a very unstable life in terms of location. It also meant in 12 years of education I went to 11 schools. The bad side I was the new guy every time I walked into the room. The good side was I had a lot of teachers and I still remember a number of them. One of them was my eighth grade civics teacher. Civics was the idea that this country was unique and in the providence of God exceptional so you needed to know how this country got into place, what makes it work, what your privileges, liberties, freedoms and responsibilities were as a citizen. Robert Woodburn was my civics teacher and he wore a blue blazer, khaki pants and the only difference between Winter, Spring or Fall was whether he wore a vest sweater or not. He was unbelievably well read. He challenged me, he was a great teacher and he was able to get me interested in so many things. He taught me about this nation.

What Jesus is doing in this text, is teaching us about the Kingdom. This is our civics class. Who is in the Kingdom? How do you live in the Kingdom? What are the blessings of the Kingdom? What are the responsibilities of the Kingdom? How do you follow the King? That is what Jesus is doing in this passage. We saw how Moses went up on a mountain and God came down to meet him. The Sermon on the Mount is very carefully done by our Lord where God has come down for us already and now God Himself, Jesus, the God Man, goes up on the Mountain and doesn't get the Law but tells us how the Law brings us to the Gospel and then how the Gospel uses the Law in our life.

He lays it out for us in Matthew 5, 6, and 7. It's an absolutely marvelous, wonderful text. We're not going to do it justice because I know I'm not doing this justice. We said there are seven sections to the Sermon on the Mount. The first section is on the character, lives and blessings of those who are in the Kingdom, those who have been brought into the Kingdom by the King, those who have been saved by His grace, transferred to the Kingdom of Light from the kingdom of darkness and how they live. So it is laid out before us. Each beatitude deserves its own series or at least its own sermon but what we did in the last study is take a march around it and now we're just going to divide the pie up into eight slices and at least take a bite out of it. I can't get to the depth I'd love to but we'll get into it some and maybe we can come back to it and take to another level on a Sunday night. I want you to remember three things first. The first thing is I want you to remember that this Sermon on the Mount begins with the beatitudes and the beatitudes begin with a benediction, not a malediction, not an admonition. When we get to Matthew 5:11, 12 it will say when you live for the King, follow Him and serve Him, here is what you'll get in this world; persecution. Now if I'm about to ask people to live a life that is unique, countercultural where you will be reviled and persecuted, don't you think I need to crack the whip a little

to get them to do it? But He doesn't start with a malediction saying, "Woe be unto you if you don't do these eight things." He doesn't even start with an admonition or an invitation but what He starts with is a benediction. This is not the life you lead to get blessed; this is the life the blessed lead. This is the life the blessed live for the King. This isn't what you do to get into the Kingdom. Blessed are you. By His sovereign grace He has taken you from death unto life, from the kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of Light. Blessed are you.

Now because you have been Gospel blessed what are the eight traits of Gospel blessing that He now affirms? So He affirms eight traits and then gives seven further Kingdom blessings to those eight traits. So each one starts with 'blessed' and the Gospel blessing brings you to the King which leads to a Gospel virtue/trait (8 of them), but then there are only seven further blessings because one is repeated. The first and the eighth are repeated. Matthew 5:3 and 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.* In other words, He is saying what I am describing to you is not what you do to get into the Kingdom but I am describing to you those who are in the Kingdom. He puts 'theirs is the Kingdom' on both sides of it.

Here is the second thing to remember. There are eight beatitudes and all eight are for all Christians. This is not a menu where you say, "I'll take hunger and thirst for righteousness, pure in heart and peace making but I'll leave the persecution to somebody else and the poor in spirit to someone else. I'd rather have the self esteem." This is not a menu where you pick and choose which of the eight you want. All eight are for all Christians. By the way, this isn't just for preachers or leaders or missionaries or people like John Calvin, John Wesley or George Whitfield. All eight virtues and all seven promised blessings are for all Christians. They are absolutely intertwined. They are inseparable. They are instructive. They are like stair steps. If you are poor in spirit guess what it will lead you to? It will lead you to mourn and that will lead you to meekness which will lead you to hungering and thirsting for righteousness. That will then lead you to being merciful which will lead you to being pure in heart. That will lead you to being a peacemaker and then that will lead you to persecution. They are instructive, integrated, inseparable and are absolutely interdependent upon each other.

The third thing to remember is they are now but not yet. It is just like the Kingdom of God is now but not yet its fullness. The Kingdom isn't something I'm waiting for. It's here. When the King came He preached Matthew 4:23 in which He said, "The Kingdom is at hand." The King has ascended with all authority which has been given unto Him and the power of the Kingdom is at work now. It is working within us and extending from us throughout the whole world but it is not yet in its fullness and it won't be until the King returns. It is now but not yet and so are the character traits of the Kingdom. All eight are at work within us now but not yet have we matured in them. So are the promised blessings; they are now but not

yet in their fullness as they yet will be.

That brings me to the eight beatitudes. We are going to talk about what they aren't and what they are. We will walk our way through them but honestly again, we are not going to do each one like we could or should but we'll at least get a feel for it. Here is the first one. Matthew 5:3 says, **3** *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* Who is in the Kingdom of heaven? It is those who are poor in spirit. What does it mean to be poor in spirit? To be poor in spirit is not speaking of financial poverty. If they were you would say poor in things, poor in money. Poverty in and of itself is not a virtue nor is riches in and of itself a virtue. Money or the lack there of is an amoral issue. It's how you get, what you do with it and does it have you.

Poor in spirit is also not poor spiritedness. We are not talking about timid people. Christians are to be courageous. It's not poor spiritedness. It's not poor in financial things. It's not a personality trait. We may look at someone who is highly introverted and say they are poor in spirit. No, you can be a very proud person and be introverted. You can be a very arrogant person and be withdrawn. It's not a personality or a financial assessment. It isn't timidity. It's poor in spirit. It means you have seen yourself and you realize the depth of your spiritual poverty. You are dead in your sins. There is no good thing that dwells within me. Without Him I can do nothing. I look at myself spiritually and I realize I am spiritually bankrupt. I don't need religion. I need a Savior. I don't need ritual. I need a Redeemer. I don't need a hand up but I need a new heart. I don't need assistance. I need to be born again. It is spiritual bankruptcy.

Here is the takeaway for this one. Without being poor in spirit, spiritual bankruptcy is absolutely essential for salvation, growth in grace and the ability to follow the King and expand the Kingdom. Notice I have said three things about spiritual bankruptcy. It is absolutely essential for salvation. If you are not poor in spirit you are not saved. You don't go to the Fountain until you realize that you have no other hope but Him. Being poor in spirit is not an upper class Christianity, it's the door to Christianity. You will never come to Christ until you come to an end of yourself. In the great hymn we sung this morning it says, *Nothing in my hand I bring, Simply to Thy cross I cling; Naked, come to Thee for dress; Helpless, look to Thee for grace; Foul, I to the fountain fly; Wash me, Savior, or I die.* Do we know how spiritually bankrupt we are yet? No, but you will never come to Christ as your Savior until you have come to an end of yourself. I'm a sinner. I'm under God's judgment and I cannot save myself.

That's where Peter got to. Do you remember when all the people started leaving Jesus and Jesus turned to the disciples and said to them, "Will you leave Me also?" Peter spoke up and this is what he said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You alone have the words of life." Spiritual bankruptcy is saying 'no' to the final counterfeit idol in your life. It's saying no to money, no to sex, no to it all but the real idol that we ultimately have to say no to is our self. I need a Savior. I can't

save myself. I don't need a religious assistance, ritual and rights but I need a Redeemer. I need to be born again. You won't grow in grace without spiritual bankruptcy. The key to amazing grace is coming to an end of our selves and I don't need Jesus to help me but I need Jesus to redeem me, to transform me, to change me and to grow me. I need Him.

Poor in spirit is a declaration of humility. Without Him I can do nothing but I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. There is my hope. It is in Christ. It is not me and Christ. It's Christ in me the hope of glory and I will never extend His Kingdom until I become poor in spirit. I have to say no to self reliance and self confidence. Shouldn't we have self confidence? No, let him who boasts, boast only in the Lord. Shouldn't I have self reliance? No. Shouldn't I be responsible? Yes, but I don't rely on myself. I want to rely completely on the Lord – in humble reliance on Divine grace and the work of the Holy Spirit. Lord, I have come to You and I rest in You. When I rest in You then I can extend Your Kingdom and win people to the Savior. Now I can extend the rule and reign of Christ in my life. This first one is the key and is crucial. Spiritual bankruptcy is absolutely essential first of all to come to the King for salvation. Secondly it is essential to grow in grace and follow the King and thirdly to extend His Kingdom.

So where does that lead us to? That will lead me to mourn. It's kind of saying happy are the unhappy. Happy is not a good translation of blessed because of how we have down graded the word happy. But truly happy, truly joyful, truly stable, truly secure, truly growing, truly vital are those who are poor in spirit and if you are poor in spirit then you are going to mourn. Happy are the unhappy. Do you know why most of us do not worship the Lord with joy? We are kind of dependent on someone to manipulate us from the platform. Do you know why we don't have joy in our heart? It's because we are not amazed at grace. Do you know why we are not amazed at grace? It's because we haven't seen our sin and our sinfulness. When you do see your sin and your sinfulness you'll mourn. You will mourn over the fact of your sin. You will mourn over the sinfulness of our sin. You will mourn over the consequences of our sin.

Isn't it interesting, when Peter denied Jesus the third time, what does the Scripture say? It says he wept bitterly. When Jesus said to Peter the third time, "Peter do you love Me more than these?" It says Peter was grieved. When Paul left the elders at Ephesus he said, "I am innocent of the blood of all men, for I have declared to you the whole counsel of God and I was with you publicly and from house to house with tears." The elders fell upon him weeping. Christianity brings tropical eyes. It is the weeping of joy for our deliverance that is preceded by the mourning over the sinfulness of our sin. Until we see that we won't see the amazing work of grace that's been done for us.

Does it not break your heart when you see the consequences of sin? Every time you hear "They're divorced" you know what happened. Somewhere there was sin. Either it was a sinful divorce or it was a Biblical divorce because of sin and

there's a broken marriage. And there are broken children and a broken home. Every time someone goes into sexual promiscuity there will be a broken heart, broken despair, a broken body and sexually transmitted diseases. Every time I stand in front of a grave, I know there would be no death without sin and it breaks my heart because I know some separation has taken place of people that love each other. It's not a weeping without joy because they know the ultimate truth that in Christ they'll be together forever but still there's a separation that's there. There are broken lives. All of the brokenness around us is because of sin. Will that not make us weep? Then laughter comes in the morning.

It's interesting how it never says in the Bible that Jesus laughed. Now do not say that Harry said that Jesus did not laugh. He was fully man and laughter is a Godly emotion. I don't think you can live with Peter for three years and not laugh but it never says He did and I think there is a reason why. It does tell us three times that He wept. He wept over Jerusalem, He wept over rejection of the Gospel and He wept at a grave side in front of Lazarus. Here is that weeping that comes that leads to the laughter in the mourning in redemption. So the takeaway for mourning is spiritual bankruptcy inevitably leads to mourning over the fact of sin, the sinfulness of sin and the consequences of sin.

This leads us to meekness. Meekness is not weakness. Meekness is not fearfulness or timidity. We know we have the strength of the Lord, the power of the Gospel, the *dunemas* of the Spirit which means the dynamite of the Holy Spirit which is at work within us. Praise the Lord God is working in and through our lives and we realize that. It's not that we are impotent but we have the power of God within us but there is a meekness because we know we are what we are by the grace of God. He has delivered us from the sinfulness of our sin, the penalty of our sin and He is delivering us from the practice of our sin. Therefore when we see others there is a meekness that's there.

The takeaway for meekness is the meek despise the arrogance of self reliance and self promotion. In other words, in our dependence upon the Lord there is a meekness. The Bible says Moses was the meekest man in all the earth (Numbers 12:3). It is seen in John the Baptist whom Jesus said, "There is no greater man that has been born" yet John the Baptist says, "He must increase and I must decrease." There is a meekness that says 'no' to self promotion, self reliance and self absorption and 'yes' to putting Christ before men and women upon our lives.

That leads us to hungering and thirsting for righteousness. We have all kinds of appetites in our life. The Bible says, "Whether you eat or drink or whatsoever you do, every appetite in your life, do all for the glory of God." How can I get there? God has given me the appetite for sex so how can I have sex to the glory of God? It is by maintaining its beautiful instrumentality in the covenant of marriage. The marriage bed is sacred and holy. Say 'no' to sex taking over to sexual promiscuity and sexual perversion. How can I say 'no' to food becoming an idol,

gluttony, drunkenness, knowledge which puffs up which are valid appetites that God has given to me yet I put them in place of God? How can those appetites come under self control so that God is glorified as I live this life using the things He has brought into my life? It is by putting the appetite of hungering and thirsting for righteousness first and foremost. When we hunger and thirst for righteousness then that will lead us to lives that have been disciplined by the Holy Spirit.

Here is a takeaway for hungering and thirsting for righteousness. When we have been made right with God, we will long to live right for God. Our righteousness does not get us to heaven. The righteousness that gets us to heaven is the righteousness of Christ that's imputed to us. This is a righteousness that is imparted to us. This is not a righteousness of merit. This is a righteousness of thanksgiving. Lord, Your righteousness has clothed me, it takes me to heaven. Now I want to hunger and thirst. You have made me right with God, King Jesus, now I want to live right for God as I follow King Jesus. I want to live right for God has a statement of love and thanksgiving to Him who has saved so I hunger and thirst for righteousness.

That leads us to the next one and we kind of make a shift here. What did the first four do? These first four guided us step by step. Poverty, spiritual bankruptcy to mourning over sin and its sinfulness that leads to meekness, gentleness and life with other people because we know we are what we are by the grace and mercy of God which then leads us to hunger and thirst for righteousness so that we have an appetite for God's Word to instruct our lives that we might live in a manner that brings pleasure to the Lord our God. Then what will that lead us to? Right living for God will lead to right relationships in the Lord.

That leads us to the next one which means we'll be merciful to sinners around us. We see people who have been broken by sin we don't do the "I told you so's". We don't have the arrogance of self righteousness. On the contrary we have the heart filled with righteousness as a gift of grace and therefore we reach out with mercy and love to those that are around us.

The takeaway for the merciful is the recipients of God's mercy will inevitably desire to become dispensers of God's mercy. When someone is hurting because of sin our response will be, we who have received mercy from God desire to be the instrument of His mercy to you. Mercy costs. Here's a personal pastoral note. I am overwhelmed at the mercy of this congregation. I wouldn't be preaching this if I didn't think we needed to grow beginning with me. I could give you many personal experiences of this. I remember when Cindy had an operation and you all took mercy on me and started bringing me food. I will never forget that. I had enough food for two years within a week. I just happened to make a comment from the pulpit saying, "Thank you for all your mercy and food, now what am I going to do with two years worth of groceries?" When I got home there was a freezer someone had brought to me and put in my garage. So I was tempted to

come back the next Sunday and say “You know my car is not doing real well.” I know what you have done in the past and I can’t wait to see what you will do in the future and I know you want to excel still more but here’s the deal. The reason you want to do this is because when you have tasted God’s mercy you long to be the instrument of God’s mercy even at personal cost, and it reveals those who have known the mercy of God. They are merciful.

That leads us to pure in heart. In other words, Christians have a hatred of being hypocrites in sear, less than authentic. We don’t want our Christian life to be a sham.

We want to live for Christ from the heart out. We don’t want to white wash the cup in the tomb. We don’t want to just clean the outside. Now that we know Christ and He has saved us by grace we want Him to work in our heart. Lord, give me a new heart. Now bring purity to that heart from the inside out, I want to serve You.

The takeaway for the pure in heart is they long to destroy every vestige of sham and hypocrisy and live for the King from the inside out. Lord, I don’t want to be a Pharisee. Remember the story Jesus told. They are in the temple and here is a Pharisee. The Pharisee praying to himself (why not he’s his own savior) says, “Oh God I thank Thee that I pay my tithes, don’t commit adultery, honor my father and mother and I’m not like that tax gatherer over there.” Then Jesus turns to the tax gatherer/publican and the publican wouldn’t even lift his eyes to heaven. He was poor in spirit, mourning and the publican cried out, “Lord, be merciful to me, *the sinner.*” There is no comparison going on here. Work in my heart, Lord. I don’t want sham. I don’t want hypocrisy. Work in my heart that I live from the inside out.

That will lead you to become a peacemaker. Peacemakers are those who have known the peace of Christ. Jesus said in John 16:33, “*I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.*” When you come to Christ and Christ has brought you into His Kingdom the Bible says you have two kinds of peace. You have peace with God and you have the peace of God. When you have peace with God you are now right with Him. We were once enemies and now we are His children and we belong to Him. We were once aliens and strangers. We’re now in His family. More than that, as you live life you have the peace of God as Jesus stands guard over your heart Himself.

What do those who have known the Prince of Peace, the Gospel of Peace desire? They desire to be peacemakers. Whether it’s the discipline of the church that is trying to reclaim a wayward sinner or prodigal or whether it’s the working with a marriage or whether it’s working with someone and a dispute or whether it’s just seeing people who don’t yet know Christ, we have the message and ministry of reconciliation. You can be right with God. When you are right with God

you can be right with one another. So the takeaway is for those who love the King, there will be inevitable passion for the peace and purity of the Kingdom.

What does that lead us to? Here is this unnatural, redeemed, Gospel blessed life. Where will that lead us? Poor in spirit, mourn, meek, hunger and thirst for righteousness, merciful, pure in heart, and peacemaker – where will that lead us in this world? It will lead us to persecution – sometimes more, sometimes less. Matthew 5:11 says, *Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.* Falsely is the key because we're not talking about our arrogance and obnoxiousness. We are talking about persecution out of the faithfulness and meekness of following Christ with humble hearts and yet with absolute confidence in God's grace. What can you expect?

The takeaway for this is, do not be surprised by the inevitable persecution of the world when you follow the King who now commands you to rejoice when it comes. 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 and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.* They did the same to the prophets and they did the same to your Savior. Great is your reward in heaven. When you are persecuted you don't have a pity party. You rejoice which is the command of Jesus. It is given in the imperative. Rejoice always, Paul says. Rejoice in the Lord always. So when the world responds with reviling, mocking, blaspheming, you lose your job, your made fun of, you don't get the spot on the team, that fraternity says no, that professor begins to ridicule you, don't have self pity or be surprised but rejoice. Rejoice in the Lord and with humble reliance upon Divine grace stand firm and press on.

I have one final thought from the text. You can take these eight beatitudes and wrap them up with two statements. When you have been blessed by the Gospel and brought into the Kingdom of God and the Gospel begins to develop these virtues in your life and these promises that you will receive mercy, filled and satisfied begin to happen there are two things that stand paramount to me. I can wrap up all eight of these by saying the Kingdom citizens, those who know the King as their Lord and Savior, have humility of self denial and the courage of Divine confidence. There is the humility of self denial. It is no longer I who live but Christ that lives in me. It's not about me. I don't rely upon myself. My confidence is not in me. It is not about me. I am a sheep to be slaughtered. I have died and Christ is my life. I can live, stand firm and rejoice because my courage comes from confidence in the Lord.

So I read this eight and by God's grace He has taken me from the kingdom of darkness and brought me to the Kingdom of Light. I am a blessed man. By God's grace some of these virtues the Lord is working in me and I want them to grow and how I so easily hide them. By God's grace I know I'll never be salt and light. I

can't expect my culture to be changed until this kind of reformation takes place in me. I am thankful that He took me out of darkness to light and out of death to life. I am thankful that He took me out of the kingdom of this world and brought me to the Kingdom of God.

When I read this I have one prayer that I leave here with today – Now, God drive out of my heart, the kingdom of me. Drive out of me the kingdom of me. Put the King in my heart and drive me out of my life. Assault everything in my life that exalts me.

Every time I gather for worship Lord use Your people, Your hymns and Your praise to drive out the kingdom of me. Every time the Word of God is preached may I see my Savior and drive out the kingdom of me. Father, would You be at work in my life to drive out the kingdom of me that I might follow my King who humbled Himself. He had everything and He humbled Himself. In meekness He came mourning over our sins that I might follow Him who is pure in heart that I might follow Him who has made peace that I might follow Him who was reviled and persecuted yet went to the cross that I might follow Him in which there are ten thousand joys unspeakable and unfathomable.

I am grateful that my constitution in this country, in this nation, says you have the right to pursue happiness but I'm glad for this sermon because its reminded me that I don't pursue happiness. I pursue Jesus where there is joy evermore. I have good news. This Jesus has already come to pursue you. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together this day. Thank You for the privilege to worship and praise Your Name. I would be absolutely remiss if I didn't invite you to this King of Kings and Lord of Lords and the blessings of this Kingdom that you might know the joy of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone.

Have you said, "I am undone. I am grieved over my sin."? Dear friends, come to Him who will give you life. King Jesus I come. Father, would You allow me first and foremost to know the joy of grace by grieving over my sin that I might never grieve Your Spirit, Lord, I ask this in Jesus' Name, Amen.

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