

Introduction: Pg. 809 - Dismiss Kids...

**“E to F”
Matthew 5:1-6**

This morning we are going to begin our journey through what has been referred to as Jesus’ Magnum Opus... The Sermon on the Mount is his longest and most famous sermon recorded in the Bible.

As we encounter his words, we will hear him calling us into a New Normal...

New because Jesus invites into something totally new: a new life and new way of living.

Normal because Jesus’ radical instructions are meant for every moment— rejoice when you are persecuted on my account, lay aside anger, conduct yourself in complete sexual purity, go the extra mile, love your enemies, do good without desire for self-glory, praying (not my will be done, but) your kingdom come - your will be done, not to mention - don’t love money, don’t be anxious, don’t be judgmental, follow the narrow path, — these are the new normal of those who follow Jesus.

Verse 1 tells us that Jesus spoke these words to “his disciples.” If you follow Jesus, if you are “in Christ,” listen up! If you are not yet a fully devoted follower of Jesus, please listen as well, I believe you will be helped, and I believe you will be compelled by what you hear.

The Sermon on the Mount . . .

- . . . is a description of simple Christianity, what a person’s life look like when they live under the rule and reign of God.
- Kingdom: Matthew organizes his material strategically to help us see Jesus lays out what life is like in his kingdom. These words come on the heels of what he said to begin his public ministry by saying: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matthew 4:17)
- Jesus prescribes a counter-cultural lifestyle, not just to 21st century American culture, but every culture in every age, calling us to something much more than religious conformity but an internal revolution of the heart that manifests itself outwardly in distinct kingdom living.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones said: *“If every Christian in the Church today were living the Sermon on the Mount, the great revival for which we are praying and longing would already have started. Amazing and astounding things would happen; the world would be shocked, and men and women would be drawn and attracted to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”*

These opening words of Jesus teach us...

The Point: Come to God empty-handed to receive his fullness.

I. Blessing...

In verse 1, Matthew tells us that Jesus went up on the mountain and sat down... (a few things here).

- His sermon, while it can be read in no more than 15 minutes, likely was delivered over the course of hours, if not days.
- It says Jesus sat down, the customary way for a teacher to teach.
- But it also says that he went up on the mountain... Matthew is presenting Jesus as the true and greater Moses. **“The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from**

your brothers—it is to him you shall listen . . . And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.” (Deut 18:15-18)

He began by providing a series of statements on the “Blessed” life. These are known as the Beatitudes.

What does it mean to be blessed?

- We hear it in political speeches: “God bless you. God bless the United States of America.”
- We say “the blessing...” as a prayer before meals.

The word “blessed” can be translated “happy,” but these truths not prescriptions for how to feel good or happy. They run so much deeper. To be blessed is to have the favor of God resting upon you, and to experience the favor of God produces great joy (life as God intended... - blessing. Foretastes of what the coming kingdom will fully be like).

The Beatitudes:

- are “formally declarative but implicitly hortatory”
- They effectively serve as an encouragement on the one hand, because any person who has followed Jesus is displaying these characteristics in one degree or another. Think about what this says about Jesus... Jesus speaks words of blessing and favor over us. He wants us to feel his encouragement. He wants us to know his smile. (Aaronic Blessing?)
- On the other hand, these words are an invitation to continue growing in these characteristics: Be poor. Mourn. Be meek. Hunger. Show mercy. Be pure. Make peace. Endure persecution gladly.

T: These first four beatitudes expose our spiritual need before God.

“Blessed are the poor”:

- Life was difficult in that day. Many people in that day, like many people in our day, thought happiness came from our material possessions and the benefits wealth often brings: status, pleasures, creature comforts, but a trip around the world will quickly show us that a happy life is not dependent on accumulated wealth.
- Now, while Jesus displays a great concern for the physically poor and distressed, we should understand him in more of a theological than economic sense.
- Jesus is saying: you must be spiritually poor.
- The OT uses the term this way numerous times. Take David for example, as in King David, materially rich, but spiritually poor. In Psalm 40, 86, & 109, he says, “I am poor and needy.”
- It is acknowledging our spiritual bankruptcy before God.
- It is coming to God with empty hands, saying: “God, I am completely dependent on you!”
- We get the idea that we have to bring something to God in order to get on his good side, in order to be approved by him in order to be welcomed into heaven.
- Sox/Yankees (Game 5): If i took my wallet to Fenway for with zero dollars, how far would that get me?
- But when I do that with God, you know what happens? I get all the way in.

Why is this so important?

- We will not cry out for help until we see our need. We need God. Jesus says, those who possess the kingdom are those who have come to God and continue coming to God and say: “I need you. I am poor. You are rich!”
- Luke 18

- This is the only way to live, not simply enter, but live and experience blessing in the kingdom of God each and every day.
- I cannot emphasize this enough: These were first words from Jesus for a reason. Tone setting for the rest of the beatitudes and the rest of the Sermon on the Mount and the rest of our lives!

REWARD - "For theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

- "There is little doubt that here the kingdom sense is primarily future . . . But the present tense 'envelope' should not be written off as insignificant." - Carson
- The rewards of 4-9 are future, BUT the rewards of 3 and 10 are present.
- (Kingdom now... Kingdom then - "Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.")
- **(Now. THEN! We Pray: But God, more now until then! :))**
- It is a present possession to be fully realized later. No one can take what God gives you.

T; App: Have you seen your great need? You will never have your life realigned with God until you see that you are empty handed before God and in desperate need of his mercy and provision.

"Blessed are those who mourn..."

Here is another surprising statement! Why would Jesus say it's a blessing to mourn? And what does he mean by mourning?

- I believe Jesus says it is a blessing to mourn because the mourning heart reveals a heart aligned with the heart of God! We're seeing and responding to our world as he does.
 - As you look at our world: what breaks your heart?
 - What causes you pain?
 - When is the last time you shed tears over the brokenness of our world?
- Jesus was a man of sorrows... acquainted w grief.
 - He saw the gap between the way things were and the way things ought to be and it crushed him!

But there is one difference for us: Jesus wept over the sin of others and the resulting injustices. We should also weep over our own sin!

- Mourning is an aspect of true repentance, and repentance is a discipline we must practice until the day we die.
- In repentance, before we confess our sin, feel shame, and ultimately hate our sin, and turn from it, we must recognize it and mourn for it. We possess a godly sorrow.
- When is the last time you shed tears over your sin? When is the last time your sin drove you to your knees?
 - We have to see how holy he is... his radiance exposes our darkness... his excellencies expose our imperfections
 - Our sin cost the Son of God his life... all of my rebellion nailed Jesus to the cross.

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

- God wraps his arms around the brokenhearted. He points us to the hope of resurrection. Jesus speaks tender words of healing and comfort because of what he's accomplished through the cross.
- Just a few weeks ago, I was hanging with a friend who was becoming poor in spirit and mourning over his sin.

- As I was explaining forgiveness, I showed him what the Word says in Colossians 2:13-14: **“And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.”**
- It blew him away and caused tears to well up in his eyes when he began to receive the comfort God offers us through Christ’s cross.

T: Mourning for our sin before God will lead to meekness before others. And so Jesus continues by saying...

“Blessed are the meek”

- Meekness is the humility expressed outwardly toward others.
- Meekness conveys gentleness. The meek are unassuming and self-effacing, more concerned about others than themselves.
- The meek are not weak (had to say it!), but confident, strong people, who simply take greater delight in deferring to others.
- Consider the implications of meekness for your friendships and home and workplace.
 - Because the meek are humbly and living under God’s control, they can practice self-control.
 - They have an ability to defuse situations, to not get angry or speak unkind words, but lovingly serve others!
- Consider the implications of meekness for the advancement of Jesus kingdom.
 - The meek are those who are quick to serve.
 - The meek put others before themselves, so they are happy to wake up or show up a bit early to get everything ready.

And Jesus says, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”

- We can only begin to wrap our minds around our future inheritance. More than just a place in eternity with God (as if that were not enough), we will possess everything.
- “Whether... the world or life or death or the present or the future, [everything] is yours, and you are Christ’s.” (1 Cor. 3:22-23)

T: Do you see how counter-cultural this is? We are told, be strong, be rich, pursue power. Look down on the weak. Do whatever you need to do to get ahead. Jesus says: Be poor, mourn, be meek. And finally...

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”

- Some translations say: “Blessed are those... for they shall be filled.”
- Grant Osbourne, says the word for satisfied “when used [in the context] of hunger refers to total satisfaction, a stomach completely full.” (Osborne)
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- Do you see the progression? Jesus says emptiness leads to fullness.
 - Marsha & I have started a new tradition on Thursday afternoons. I arrange my weekly schedule, so that I can pick up the girls from school. We also do a ride share with the Agboola’s which means we not only snag the girls in Arlington Heights, but then drive another couple miles to get Mr. Michael Agboola from his preschool.
 - Here’s the new tradition.. 2 out of the last 3 weeks as I’m on the way to school, I just so happened to look down at the dashboard and see the little Orange light on by the gas gauge with the needle hovering just above the E.
 - That means I have at least 7.6 miles before I run out of gas and have to call Triple A, which means I will not only have my wife wondering where we are, but the Agboola’s as well.

- So I pull up Waze, find the nearest gas station so that we can move from E to F and have all the resources we need to make our destination.
- Jesus wants us to live an E to F kind of life, but in Christ's kingdom, we empty ourselves so that he can fill us up.
- When we come to God with empty hands, that's when we receive the filling of his Spirit.
- Those hungering and thirsting for righteousness live with an "intense longing," an emphatic desire for God and doing what is right (Morris).
- This is what we've been focused on this year as a church: "the fullness of God in us, overflowing through us."
- What keeps you from overflowing with the righteousness of God?
 - This all flows from relationship.
 - We must find and make time for God in our distracted age!
 - Don't let screens put your soul to sleep.
 - Pray. Seek God. Pick up this book. Keep living in community. Keep serving. Keep sharing. Keep fighting. Keep loving!

T: As you hunger and thirst, Jesus promises that God will fill you.

Conclusion:

As we consider how to increasingly realize these qualities in our lives, I don't want you to miss the most important aspect of the Sermon on the Mount.

When Jesus calls us to this new normal, he calls us not to a new set of behaviors but he calls us to himself!

To be poor and mourn and meek and hungry is to reflect the life of Christ. He was the perfect embodiment of depending on God, mourning over the sin and brokenness around him, the epitome of meekness who gently invited people to find rest in him, who lived with an absolute and perfect hunger for God and his ways.

This is who he is and this is what he lived and died and rose to bring.

These opening words echo the words of Isaiah 61, which speak of the coming Messiah.

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor . . . to bind up the brokenhearted . . . to comfort all who mourn . . ." (Isaiah 61:1-2)

This is what he offers those who come with empty hands to receive from him!

- Surrender.
- I got nothing.
- Not one hand open, the other closed
- Not half open.
- Nothing in our hands...
- Just open before God.

Invite the music Team up...

Intro Song: Lord I need You

Pray: