

Sermon on the Mount
Lesson #1 Part I
“The Character of Kingdom People”
Matthew 5:1-3

Scripture: Ephesians 3:14-19 *“For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.”*

Introduction:

For the purposes of those reading this instead of being present for the sermon given in person I will try to describe a physical display for introduction.

I have brought with me a large jar and have placed it on a table up front. It is completely full of water.

I ask someone to come up and I give them a pitcher of water. Then I instruct them to fill the jar.

They look puzzled for a minute and then declare that they can't do it. I ask them why not and they explain that it is already full of water.

Transitional Statement:

Church, with much conviction of heart and over a year of planning today we will begin to study the greatest of all sermons. One given by Jesus Himself. I have been praying that God would touch each of our hearts in regard to it.

In the weeks and even months to come as we work our way through this great text, I ask you to join me in faithful prayer and consideration of what Jesus is saying, because the first and foremost goal of every Christian should be to have a deep understanding of what our savior desires in our lives.

I. To begin with, I would like to remind us that there is a fundamental principle in studying the bible. First, we must begin with the whole picture before we begin to examine any single individual part.

A. This single neglect has lead countless people into religious heresy

1. And we might note that it is a constant threat to us as well.

B. Psalms 119:160 tells us that: *“The sum of Your word is truth...”*

1. In other words it is a package deal meant to be taken as a whole.

2. The word we use to communicate that same thing iscontext.

C. Paul tells Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:15 *“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”* KJV

D. In studying the Sermon on the Mount there are a lot of individual topics but we can't spend so much time on them, as will be my own temptation, that we loose sight of the greater collective purpose.

E. In school they taught us to remove the man made chapter and verse locations and try to place them where they should go from our own understanding.

1. Which in simple terms is merely outlining the text

F. So here is my outline as I have understood the text.

I. Kingdom Character 5:1-12

II. Kingdom Representatives 5:13-16

III. Kingdom Reality 5:17-19

IV. Kingdom High Standards 5:20-48

V. Kingdom Life in the Presence of God 6:1-34

VI. Kingdom Responsibilities. 7:1-28

G. It seems that there is one common dominator for sure, and it is the discussion of Kingdom Life.

1. So as we study through Jesus' sermon see if you make the same connection that I have.

II. As we begin the Sermon on the Mount, first we see Jesus gather His students into a class room setting.

Read Matthew 5:1-2 *“When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. 2 He opened His mouth and began to teach them,...”*

A. Here I stopped to think about the different kind of students that often make up a class room.

1. There is the Eager beaver...wanting to soak it all in and learn everything.
 - a. Talks about it after class
 - b. Incorporates it into his/her life
 - c. They are usually the most successful

2. Then there is the one prone to argument, always trying to prove how much they know.
 - a. They come to class with an arrogant heart thinking that God has given them the keys to the kingdom.

3. Then there is the student who is not excited but is motivated only by the grade
 - a. They are the ones that throw all the notes away at the end of class
 - b. At the end of each day they are relieved when class is over.
 - c. They have only attended class because they had too.
 - e. These folks are clock watchers

4. Then there is the student that really just would rather be somewhere else.
 - a. They don't really care at all
 - b. Perhaps moved by peer pressure or a feeling of obligation...they just follow the crowd.

5. Then there is the class clown that continually tries to redirect the focus of the class to themselves.

B. I would like all of us to understand one thing at the onset of this study. Jesus has called each of us to the same class for instruction.

1. So let me ask us a question...What kind of student will we be?

III. The Beatitudes as they have come to be called (verses 3-12) taken as a whole, point directly to Christian character so I don't want to call them the be-attitudes but I would like to call them the (Characteristics of Kingdom People)

A. What is character all about?

1. When we talk about the character of any one person, in general we are referring to their actions and attitudes which have been shaped by the culmination of all the things in their lives that have influenced who they are and how they think, reason and respond.

IV. The Characteristics of Kingdom People as a whole force us to some certain conclusions

A. These characteristics are meant for all Christians.

1. These characteristics are not for the upper crust of God's elect ...so-to-speak

- a. There is no division among God's people for the importance of these characteristics.
 - 2. No one is exemption
 - a. You can't pull up to these scriptures and whip our a handicap sign and put it up on your rear view mirror.
 - 3. If you see yourself as the lowest of the low and think that your contributions in the kingdom and insignificant ... these characteristics are even meant for you.
- B. Christians are meant to have each of these character traits.
 - 1. The Characteristics of Kingdom People are not a buffet
 - a. Jesus doesn't expect us to approach them with the mind set that I will be good at some and just have to work on the others.
 - b. As Christians Jesus expects us to excel in each of these characteristics
 - 2. They are not holy suggestions!
- C. None of these character traits are what we might call natural tendency
 - 1. They come as a result of a surrender to a Spirit lead life.
 - 2. Therefore the greatest depth of humility is a prerequisite to this study.

V. The Characteristics of Kingdom People should also remind us of the differences between Christians and non-Christians.

- A. Surely the church should have a clear understanding of this difference.
 - 1. In our times, the difference seems to be blurred....the world has come into the church and the church in some ways has become worldly.
- B. Many today have bought in the idea that we must make the church attractive to the non-Christian, by shaping the church to appeal to their lifestyles.
 - 1. We have somehow bought into the idea the difference is bad thing.
 - 2. Paul speaking to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 6:14 says:

“Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?”

- C. So God placed us here to be different

1. The world believes in self confidence, self expression and mastering life
 - a. Have you watched the news lately?
 - The world admires wealth and success
 - The world lives for today and all they can get out of it.
 - They feel the confidence of their own power.
2. Church the glory of the gospel of Christ is that when the church is absolutely different from the world, she invariably attracts it.
 - a. Our ambition should be to be like Christ
 - And therefore less like the world.

D. The truth is that the Christian and the non-Christian belong to two different realms

1. And church, we need to not only understand it but embrace it !

VI. The Kingdom is the first and last reminder of the Characteristics of Kingdom people

A. Verse 3 & 10 end with the Kingdom in mind.

1. First of all what is the Kingdom?
 - a. There is much disagreement about what the kingdom is.
 - b. Some folks think the kingdom hasn't come yet
 - c. Others think that the church is the kingdom
 - d. In regard to these things there is a since in which the kingdom has come, and there is a since in which it is here now, and in another since the kingdom is coming.
2. The Kingdom of God here has to due with His royal dominion, sovereign authority and is made up of those who faithfully submit to His rule and reign.

B. So one of the greatest consideration for the Christian should be what does it mean to be kingdom people?

1. In many ways I think the Sermon on the Mount is going to answer that for us.
2. Jesus will ultimately say that being in God's kingdom comes with great responsibility.

VII. So now let's consider the first words out of Jesus' mouth.

A. If Jesus Himself were to stand before us this morning and preach a lesson

1. Now you would recognize Him

- White robe
- Long hair
- Beard
- *I have seen the pictures... ☺

2. What would Jesus say first.

a. I love you?

-I like your new building

- b. Would He talk about the error of modern religion?
- c. Tell a joke?

B. What if He just simply said “*Blessed are the poor in spirit theirs is the kingdom of heaven*”

1. We might be inclined to say “*What?...!*”

a. The Jewish mind was definitely saying “*what?*”

-As they were looking for a great earthly kingdom

-But Jesus won't be talking about an earthly kingdom but a spiritual kingdom.

2. “Blessed” here on most occasions has been explained to meaning happy.

a. But the Greek word here is “*Makarios*” which means possessing the favor of God and being marked by fullness from God.

b. This definition seems to fit perfectly the discussion at hand as the fullness of Christian character is the context presented.

c. So when we hear blessed in these passages we need to be thinking about God's fullness should exist within us.

3. So now to being poor in spirit.

a. First, let's consider that the rest of the Kingdom Characteristics are filling in nature.

- Those who mourn will be filled with comfort.
- Those who hunger will be filled with satisfaction

b. Poor in spirit here seems to be talking about just the opposite

-An emptying

c. It seems not doubt that the first thing that Jesus tells all of us in regard to being filled with God is that we must empty ourselves.....so we can be filled.

-Can you imagine filling your car with gas and driving one block to another gas station and telling them to fill your tank. They would put the nozzle in and it would just click.....because you can fill what is already full.

d. The first words of Jesus is simply that in regard to Kingdom Character we must first get ourselves out of the way.

-We must give up all that has become important to us and follow Him

-Matthew 16:24

“If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.”

Conclusion:

Today the invitation by Jesus is simple....Will you empty yourself so I can fill you?