

Matthew 5-7: The Sermon on the Mount

Attention

1. No greater sermon has ever been preached than the one recorded in Matthew 5-7: the Sermon on the Mount.
 - a. There are several parallels between this text and Luke 6; parallels in topic if not necessarily in time.
 - b. *Matthew* records several of Jesus' sermons; this is the longest and most complete of those discourses.
 2. A chronological arrangement of Jesus' life would suggest this sermon was preached later in His ministry.
 - a. Why did the Spirit place it here? Perhaps because it captures the essence of Jesus' message. **Mt. 4:23**
 - b. Jesus was not just restoring OT law; He was initiating a new kingdom, a kingdom in contrast to the world.
- [Proposition] *Disciples of Christ must be conformed to the kingdom's values instead of the world they live in.*

I. Matthew 5: Kingdom RIGHTEOUSNESS

A. *Paradoxical Righteousness (1-12)*

1. The word *blessed* (*makarios*) means *happy* or *fortunate*.
 - a) The Beatitudes demonstrate that God measures true blessedness differently than man.
 - b) Man sees pleasure, power, and possessions as keys to good fortune; God sees divine favor.
2. The eight beatitudes do not describe eight disciples but rather eight qualities of every disciple.
 - a) **POOR IN SPIRIT** – They know their dependence on God and absence of personal good/value.
 - b) **MOURNFUL** – They mourn their sin with godly sorrow that begets repentance and salvation.
 - c) **MEEK** – They submit their strength of spirit to God; passive for self, but passionate for God.
 - d) **HUNGRY** – They long for sanctification; their greatest desire is to *be right* and to *do right*.
 - e) **MERCIFUL** – They turn compassion into action; they replicate the mercy found in God.
 - f) **PURE IN HEART** – They are inwardly sincere, untainted by sin, and undistracted in purpose.
 - g) **PEACEMAKERS** – They have peace with God and seek to live in peace with men.
 - h) **PERSECUTED** – They gladly embrace suffering for the One who suffered and died for them.
3. Are these qualities evident in me? Do the Beatitudes characterize my life and yours?

B. *Distinctive Righteousness (13-16)*

1. True disciples cannot be hidden; Christianity is not covert; it is counter-cultural, not sub-cultural.
 - a) Too many believers are content to blend in with the world around them.
 - b) Like Laodicea, they are neither hot nor cold; they believe, but they do not boldly confess.
2. Jesus used two metaphors to characterize the distinctive righteousness of the kingdom.
 - a) Believers *are* salt; salt is a preservative; disciples preserve righteousness on the earth.
 - b) Believers *are* light; light exposes what is real; disciples reflect God's light in the world.
3. Would our righteousness spare this city? Do others glorify God because of what they see in us?

C. *Excellent Righteousness (17-48)*

1. Jesus did not work at cross-purposes to the OT law; He came as the fulfillment of that law.
 - a) The fullest anticipation of the OT was Christ and His kingdom; Jesus came to fully satisfy it.
 - b) Once fulfilled, the law is powerless to condemn; Jesus has accomplished what it could not.
2. The world measures itself by itself; Jesus calls for a superior standard, righteousness that excels.
 - a) Jesus contrasts the superior intent of the kingdom with a limited reading of the OT law.
 - b) Jesus demonstrated that kingdom righteousness goes the extra mile.
3. God seeks perfection, not adequate obedience or a righteousness that is "good enough."
 - a) The law said, "Do not murder." Jesus said, "Don't be angry without cause. Don't lash out."
 - b) The law said, "Don't commit adultery." Jesus said, "Don't look at a woman to lust."
 - c) The law said, "Honor legalities in divorce." Jesus said, "Divorce is sin except for infidelity."
 - d) The law said, "Do not swear falsely." Jesus said, "Don't swear at all. Always tell the truth."
 - e) The law said, "Demand justice." Jesus said, "Accept mistreatment. Yield your rights."
 - f) The law said, "Love your neighbor." Jesus said, "Love your enemies too."
4. Are we measuring ourselves by the world, by our brethren, or by God? He is our standard. **44-48**

II. Matthew 6: Kingdom FOCUS

A. *Focus in the Spiritual Life (1-18)*

1. In each of these examples, Jesus warns us against practicing religion “to be seen by men.”
 - a) There is a difference between righteousness *that is seen* and righteousness done *to be seen*.
 - b) It is not wrong for others to discover or hear what you do; it is wrong to do it for that reason.
2. It is easy to congratulate ourselves on our generosity, eloquence, and/or piety.
 - a) We may find ourselves mentioning our devotion to others, always in a self-deprecating way.
 - b) But Jesus says not to seek attention, but rather to avoid it entirely, if possible. **3-4, 6, 17-18**
3. Jesus takes for granted that kingdom citizens will practice all three of these disciplines.
 - a) True disciples give; true disciples pray; true disciples fast. They do so without being told to.
 - b) But true disciples do these things simply and quietly, without fanfare, for God not for glory.
4. The spiritual life of a disciple is characterized by a God-toward focus than shuns earthly praise.
 - a) This is not to say we should not commend others whose devotion we observe and admire.
 - b) But we should never seek such accolades ourselves and should endeavor not to want them.

B. *Focus in the Physical Life (19-34)*

1. The second half of the chapter deals with physical necessities and our focus in regard to them.
 - a) The disciple’s life is not sub-divided into the physical and spiritual; it is all the same.
 - b) The same spiritual focus that governs religious activity must govern our daily lives as well.
2. Whatever we value will hold the attention and affection of our hearts. What do we treasure? **21**
 - a) Our behavior must not only conform to God’s law, our hearts must conform to His.
 - b) We must learn to value what the King values, to love what He loves, in order to focus right.
3. If our eye is set on things above, our whole body will be full of light, and we will please God.
 - a) But if we try to straddle the fence and serve both God and the world, we will fail.
 - b) No one can serve two masters; we must not value material goods; we must forsake all.
4. Only by releasing concern for the material and seeking the spiritual can we live without worry.
 - a) God knows what we need; He cares for His creation; He will care for us if we seek Him.
 - b) Do we walk by faith or by sight? Are you driven by faith or by fear? Where are our eyes?

III. Matthew 7: Kingdom JUDGMENT

A. *Judgments of Others (1-6)*

1. Jesus is strongly critical of hypocritical judging. Continuing in sin precludes our judging others.
 - a) Jesus is not condemning moral judgments; He is condemning hypocrisy. **6, 15-20**
 - b) But let’s not empty the passage of power by defending our right to judge; listen to the text!
2. Righteous judgment begins by judging ourselves; we must look honestly at our own lives.
 - a) Our own faults should always appear larger than our brother’s. Evaluate him with humility.
 - b) It is easier to see faults in others than in ourselves; repentance demands we look within first.

B. *Judgments of the Way (7-20)*

1. Discernment is also necessary in pursuing eternal life; many dangers threaten to deter us.
 - a) Jesus gives three exhortations: seek God, enter the narrow gate, beware of false prophets.
 - b) No one will be saved without diligence; many will seek to enter, but will not be able.
2. We cannot take eternal life for granted; we must not be complacent; ask, seek, knock, strive, test.

C. *Judgments of the Soul (21-29)*

1. One day God will judge our souls; religious profession and activity will not be enough to save.
 - a) If there is another word that summarizes chapter seven besides *Judgment* it is *Obedience*.
 - b) We cannot merely call Jesus ‘Lord’ and be accepted; we must accept His authority *as* Lord.
2. Obedience is the ultimate test of our discipleship; it proves our faith is genuine, or not.
 - a) Whoever listens to Jesus’ words and obeys them is building his house on a firm foundation.
 - b) Whoever listens to Jesus’ words but does not obey is a fool; are we obeying what He says?

Action

1. Jesus’ sermon shows us the kingdom is about character, not just what we do or don’t do on Sundays.
2. You may have been baptized and religiously active, but are you pursuing the demands of this sermon?