**The Book of Matthew**

**Sermon IV Life in the Kingdom of God**

Last Matthew Sermon: Kingdom Attitudes

In the Kingdom of God, the attitudes God expects are:

Poor in spirit

Mourn

Humble

Hunger and thirst for righteousness

Merciful

Pure in heart

Maker of peace

5:10-16 The upside-down Kingdom of God.

Here he is definitely addressing the disciples, not the crowd!

5:10-12 Arguably, this is not one of the beatitudes.

This one is different. The others tell you that you will be blessed/happy if you act in this way.

This one is you will be blessed if this happens to you.

This one is a positive command. Rejoice and be fire up about this.

Q: Is this realistic? Yes. In the early church, when persecutions broke out, disciples flocked to that city for the privilege of being persecuted.

Q: Why are the persecuted blessed? (v 12 because their reward is great in heaven).

1 Pet 4:12-13 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.” (2 Tim 3:12 In fact, all those who seek to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted)

Example of sister and Mohann Nanjudan

Example of brothers in Tamil Nadu.

Brother in Bagdadh 40 mo. In prison.

Example of a guy swinging a club at me in the dorm.

Example of me being pulled aside by police at CSUB

On the other hand, I can remember hiding my Bible. I can remember times when I was a hidden Christian—when a group that should have known I was a disciple of Jesus did not.

I remember a time when a student of mine came to church and said, “Oh, I thought Christians share their faith!”

This is a heart issue. Coll 1:24 I fill up in myself the suffering of Christ.

Q: Be honest with yourself. Are you capable of feeling happy if you are insulted or slandered because you are a Christian?

Why? Because in this you identify with Christ. You become like him.

Are you truly grateful for what he has done? Really?

Matthew 5:13-16 We are the difference-makers.

The reason we are persecuted (if we are) is that we are difference-makers

5:13 We are the salt (both the one that gives flavor to and the preservative that saves from spoiling) [aside: some have tried to show that the Bible is in error scientifically here as salt, technically, cannot lose its saltiness, but this is clearly a metaphor]

What we can lose is our distinctiveness. Are you distinctive?

Last week I was eating some guacamole. To Jan: did you add lemon?

Your friend: did you add Christ?

Q: Are you salty? Are you spicing things up? Are you the one who livens things up at work? Are your actions causing others to be preserved?

This is related to the previous verse. To the extent we are distinct, to that extent we are likely to be persecuted.

2 Cor 2:14-17 We are the aroma of life or of death, depending on the one doing the smelling.

Q: Have you been stinking it up at work, in your neighborhood, in your class (to the extent that you can during Covid-19).

Jesus: As his followers, we need to be distinctive. We need to be different. We need to add spiritual “flavor” to the lives of those around us.

Our differentness is not the food we eat, the language we speak (mostly) or the clothes we wear (mostly). Our differentness is found in our poorness of spirit, our mourning over sin, our humility, our mercifulness, our purity of heart…

Q: How is it going for you?

Matthew 5:14-16 We are the light (the one who illuminates, makes distinctions clear, both **revealing sinfulness**, but also **pointing the way to God**)

Again: Distinctive.

John 3:19-21 Light makes things clear so that people know where they are at, spiritually. Many will hate the light you throw on them. There is a time for exposing the evil done at work, in your home, in your neighborhood.

Example of the guy in the copy shop.

I would appreciate it if you would not use profanity.

Pointing out when gossip is happening

Is this appropriate, what we are doing here?

This does not seem completely honest.

Leo V. is a great example in this area.

Some of us: I do not want to rock the boat.

Wait, isn’t Jesus the light of the world? (John 8:12) Yes, but he is no longer here.

As you walk around (fill in the blank…) do you realize that, to the extent God will preserve these people and to the extent that these people will see God, it will be because you were in their lives. Life in the kingdom is life in a glass house. As Christians, our lives are on display (or they ought to be)

Q: Is this you? Is this how you view yourself in stores, in lines, in classes, on line, etc….?

But I am a shy person. Moses was a very shy person.

Aspect #2 v. 16 Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

There are people out there, maybe only 10%, who are looking for the kingdom of God. Like moths and a street light.

Q: Why does this not contradict Matthew 6:1-8?

Q: In what sense is it good for us to let people “see” our good deeds and in what sense is it sinful and warned against?

We talk about our life in Christ, explain why we have changed, but we do it so as to draw attention to Christ, not to ourselves.

Talk about what your church has been doing to change lives.

Talk about what Nora or Estella have been doing.

Talk about the amazing relationships in your church.

Matthew 5:17-20. The key to the sermon and, to some extent, the key to Matthew.

Jesus is the completion/fulfillment of the Old Testament in the four ways mentioned above.

a. In that he, unlike any other human before him, literally fulfilled all the requirements of the Law of Moses.

b. In that through his actions he satisfied the penalty for all of us who did not fully obey the Law of Moses.

c. Everything the OT anticipated finds its fulfillment in Jesus (prophecies, foreshadows and prefigures, etc.)

d. Jesus completes/explains more fully what was only implied by the Law of Moses.

Q: Why, then, must our righteousness exceed that of the Pharisees? (because of what we have that they did not). We are taking the kingdom of God to a new level. Jesus: the least in the kingdom is greater than John the Baptist.

This is the real thing. The kingdom of God is at hand. It has arrived. What was good enough before no longer is.

We are talking about life in the kingdom of God.

These are the new, Kingdom expectations for practical living. Matt 5:3-10 Kingdom attitudes. Matthew 5:21-48 Practical living in the Kingdom of God.

Matt 5:21-48 Jesus spiritualizes the Law of Moses. “It was said to you of old….”

These are practical principles for life in the Kingdom of God. Jesus moves from the actions to the thoughts.

-don’t use fighting words

-don’t entertain lust

-let your yes be yes

-love your enemy

Q: How literally should we take Matthew 5:38-42 in light of Matthew 10:16

Should we be something like a door mat?

Ex: Acts 23:1-7 Paul: “God will strike you, you whitewashed wall!” Later Paul defends himself by invoking his Roman citizenship.

John 18:19-23 Jesus: If I spoke the truth, why do you strike me?

When does wise as a serpent come in and when does harmless as a dove come in?

Suggestion:

1. First of all, probably we need to grow more in letting ourselves be abused rather than learning when to defend ourselves.

2. Always “go the extra mile (beyond that required by the “law”) even if you do defend yourself.

3. Generally defend the rights of others and give up your own rights.

4. Go the extra mile and turn the other cheek if it will

Lead to peace

If the hurt to you is relatively small (not in the hospital, not going bankrupt)

If doing so does not bring harm to others

If we can reasonably predict that more good than harm will be done in the big picture.

If doing so is not “foolish” even in the eyes of a reasonable Christian.

Summary 5:48 Be perfect, complete, mature. Teleon. A high calling!

We need to continually strive for growth in all of these areas. Are you making progress?

Matthew 6:1-18 The point: If you serve the church or the poor, pray, fast with “mixed motives” then there will be no blessing to you.

Q: In your service and worship, do you have “mixed motives” Is it about being seen for you? Do you seek the praise of people?

Matthew 6:15 an important passage, but see Matthew 18:21-35

Matthew 6:19-34 Kingdom values.

v. 20 store up treasure in heaven. Q: What does that mean to you?

Let your motivation be with regard to things which cannot be seen.

If you can buy it, then you should not store it up.

Things you can buy Things you cannot buy

Medicine health

Books knowledge of God, wisdom

Position favor with God

Attention love

Matthew 6:24 Jesus makes it quite black and white.

Matthew 6:25 The key passage in this section. Literally “Do not give a thought to your life.” This is an incredibly high standard.

This is what it means to seek the kingdom first (Matt 6:34)—to not give a thought to your life.

This is the meaning of Matthew 6:22-23. It took me 35 years to “get” this passage.

Jesus is saying that if you get this principle, you get everything, but if you do not get this principle, you get nothing. This concept is very similar to Matthew 22:36-40 “the greatest commandment.”

So, what do you worry about?

Matt 7:1-5 Do not judge

Matthew 7:6 But do make wise judgments.

I am not judging this person, but wisdom says to be careful.

When we study with people… This is a heart issue for us.

Matthew 7:12 The Golden Rule.

(aside: In marriage, apply the Platinum Rule: Do to others what they would want you to do to them)

Matthew 7:13-27 How to get into the kingdom vs. how to live in the kingdom (5:1-7:12)

Small is the gate, and narrow the road. Q: How do you feel about this?

7:15-20

Who is the false prophet? He whose message, if accepted, would keep you from entering the kingdom of Heaven.

How can we know?

1. by their fruit. v. 16-20

2. whether they are doing God’swill. v. 21-23 many will be shocked.

Matthew 7:24-27 Final thoughts.

Q: What is the rock?

Take-home lesson: Do these things!!!!!!

What in Matthew 5:3-7:12 do you need to put into practice?