**The Book of Matthew**

**Sermon III Kingdom Attitudes**

Theme of Matthew: Jesus the [Jewish] Messiah is the culmination of salvation history and brings salvation from sin to all people.

Theme verse Matthew 5:17 Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law of the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them.

We have covered a number of the prophecies fulfilled by Jesus in Matthew, showing that in Matthew Jesus is revealed through the way he fulfills prophecy and the messianic expectation as the son of Abraham, the second Moses and the son of David.

One more example before TSOTM

Matthew 4:12-17 Jesus begins his public ministry.

v. 13 Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which is by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali, fulfilling Isaiah 9:1-2 as this is the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali.

“In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan—

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

The coming of Jesus in his ministry is the revealing of the kingdom of God and the dawning of a great light to the people.

In case you were wondering why this is a Messianic prophecy and Matthew is not just taking it our of context: Isaiah 9:6 “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

As with all of these prophecies fulfilled, they tell us something about Jesus, which is that he is the dawning of a great light—the revealing of the Kingdom.

Skipping Matthew 4:18-22 (covered in Mark) and 23-25 (will cover in Luke)

**Matthew 5:1-7:29 The Sermon on the Mount.**

This is the heart of the book of Matthew. It is a sort of constitution of the Kingdom of God. It is the clearest and most complete description of Jesus’ teaching on how to live as a citizen in the Kingdom of God—as a disciple. Note: Seek first the Kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33) is not limited to being deeply involved in the Church!

This is a sermon about the life of a disciple in kingdom of God/heaven.

Matthew 5:1-2 Jesus sits to teach, as Rabbis always did. Note, he is speaking primarily to his disciples, not to the crowd (although 7:28 does mention the crowds). (my picture is of vast crowds at the Sermon in the Mount… joke: Monty Python—blessed are the cheesemakers)

This sermon is directed primarily toward those who already recognize Jesus as their teacher. To outsiders this stuff is nonsense!!!!

5:3-12 The Beatitudes. What leads to true happiness/satisfaction?

The world will never “get” the Beatitudes. This is utter nonsense to the world.

The world sees this as foolishness, but this is the way to true greatness in God’s kingdom.

“You’re serious. You actually believe this?”

But…. If you get this, then you get everything you need for godliness in the kingdom of God.

This is the meaning of the somewhat obscure passage Matthew 6:22-23.

These are kingdom attitudes

Greek: *makarios* Does not mean blessed, but more like “happy.”

In the world it is more like Sad are the rich, the impure…

As you look at these attitudes, notice that there is a sense in which Jesus is describing himself. Jesus is the most poor in spirit, mournful, meek, righteousness-seeking, merciful, single-hearted, peace-making person who ever lived and he, arguably is also the most persecuted person who ever lived.

Pay very careful attention that you understand these words. These are the keys to the kingdom of God.

5:3 Poor in spirit = not thinking oneself as great before God. Humility before God. Unassuming. Any blessing, any greatness, if I have it at all, is from God, not myself. I deserve nothing. I have earned nothing. If I am anything, it is all of God and none of me. All the glory goes to God.

I am so fortunate to be here at all.

Why me?

I am only an unworthy servant. Luke 17:10 “So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, “We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.”

Some of us: I am pretty awesome. The church is lucky to have me.

Q: Do you have this poor-in-spirit attitude? (I don’t, at least not as I ought. I like words of praise)

Q: Who among us has this attitude? Imitate that person.

“theirs is the kingdom” = this is the kind of people who dwell in God’s kingdom. They will not have much in this world, but they will have everything in the final Kingdom.

5:4 Mourn = not necessarily bereaved, as at a death, but it denotes a life which the world would consider to be missing that which would make us happy.

R. T. France: “Those who suffer for their loyalty to God.”

Happy are those who the world thinks are missing out on the pleasures of life for the sake of the kingdom.

Happy are those who do not have what everyone thinks makes you happy.

Ex: Paul who did not have a stable family, career, home.

Ex: Sisters in the church who have willingly accepted singleness rather than go out to the world to find a husband. (I feel for them, but God says, “happy”)

Ex: Disciples who choose to stay in Merced to seek a harvest for God, even though it is not the most awesome city to live in, and even though it might hurt their career in the long run.

Live on the “wrong” side of town in order to make a difference.

Q: How has God blessed you recently in giving you suffering and heartbreak?

Q: What have you willingly gone without that the world would thing you are crazy for doing so?

Ex: Go on one year challenge, give sacrificially to keep this ministry going.

If you do these things, your comfort will come from God. You will have real, deep, heart-felt consolation and a sense of having a life of value to God and to humanity.

5:5 Meek = humble Unassuming. Similar to poor in spirit. Poor in spirit is humility toward God, meek is humility toward fellow humans.

Willing to be pushed around if it will help the kingdom of God.

The world DEFINITELY does not value this character trait!!! (yet, who do they consider great? Mandela, Theresa, ML King, Ghandi, Schweitzer, Jesus)

Christians are NOT pushovers!!! They are not “doormats.”(Jesus calls Pharisees a brood of vipers) But they are willing to be pushed over for the sake of the kingdom!

Q: Are you humble? Would people describe you as meek? Are you willing to look foolish to the world?

Q: How has God blessed you recently in humbling you and causing you to rely on him?

This is the upside down Kingdom of God. The way up is down!!!

Result: If you rely on him for everything, you will have everything—you will inherit the earth. You will rule over those who pushed you out of the way.

They laughed a Noah, but not when it started raining! Abraham, Mary, Zacchaeus

5:6 Hunger and thirst for righteousness. (Matthew 6:33 seek first his righteousness) = a deep desire for a relationship of obedience and trust in God.

Righteousness in this context is not necessarily sinlessness but a life lived rightly—a life lived as God would have us live. To be aligned with God’s will. For things to be as they ought to be.

This is not sinlessness, but intense desire to be right with God. David.

The key word here is DESIRE. Do you deeply desire righteousness?

Willingness to give great energy toward overcoming sins and doing what is right.

Are you zealous for personal righteousness?

Q: How has God blessed you recently in your seeking after repentance?

Result: If you empty yourself, God will fill you up! The stuff you pour out will be of lesser value than what God pours in, but are you ready to do this?

God wants to pour blessings into your life, but you need to clean the house to enable this to happen

5:7 Merciful. Showing grace to others as it has been shown to you (Matthew 18:21-35 Parable of the unmerciful servant)

Q: How has God blessed you recently through your showing mercy to one who did not deserve it?

Matthew 9:13 I desire mercy, not sacrifice. “Sacrifice” is purity and doing things the right way. “Mercy is putting others before you.”

There is a place for calling people to live right. Jesus could be blistering at times, especially at religious hypocricy. Jesus did this, but his natural attitude was mercy. Grace. That is why Jonah was so angry at God. “Jonah became very angry. ‘Isn’t this what I said, Lord, when I was still at home? This is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity.

Q: Are you ever tempted to want God to send calamity on enemies and sinners?

They say “hate the sin, love the sinner”

Hate the sin = sacrifice

Love the sinner = mercy.

It is really hard to do this!!!! I say love the sinner and love the sinner (and, by the way, hate the sin)

Mercy is a posture.

Everything we do should have a redemptive quality. (Gregg M.)

Micah 6:8 He has shown you, O man, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you? To act justly (beatitude # 4) and to love mercy (beatitude #5) and to walk humbly (beatitude #1,3) with your God.

Hosea 6:6 For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.

As disciples, we need to uphold rightness and holiness and oppose sin in all of its aspects.

But… Our first, our primary posture needs to be mercy, not sacrifice.

When people get humble before God we need to be there to lift them up.

Example: Prodigal Son That is mercy, not sacrifice. Did they have a “conversation” later? I am sure they did.

5:8 Pure in heart = undivided heart: a heart loyal to God. An inner life which is consistent with the outward profession.

This is not principally about “purity” (ie sexual purity or pure thoughts)

Q: Do you have divided loyalty? Can God count on you all the time?

Hebrew: Hesed love, covenant loyalty.

Q: Who in our church is “always there?” Daisy, Andres (and others…)

Result: If we have an undivided heart—a clear God-focus then guess what!!

We will see him. (for they will see God)

5:9 A maker of peace. We are not merely peaceful. We make peace. We create peace.

Q: How might we do this?

When we see people in conflict, we do not rest until they have come to peace with one another.

Willing to go to unsafe places to bring the estranged back together.

Q: Are you a peacemaker? Or are you a conflict avoider?

If so, then you will be a child of God!!!

5:10-16 This is 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 is the result of how we live, it is not how we live.

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

Can anyone share their experience of persecution and whether they agree that this caused them to be blessed?

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 isasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.”

Example of sister and Mohann Nanjudan

Example of brothers in Tamil Nadu

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

Example of me being pulled aside by police at CSUB

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

Matthew 5:13-16 We are the 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.

2 Cor 2:15-17 We are the aroma of life or of death, depending on the one doing the smelling.

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

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

If time: 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.

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.

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

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?

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)

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 ourself 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 reasonable 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!