**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

5:9 A maker of peace. We are not merely peaceful. We make peace. We create peace. This is probably the only “beatitude” that the world actually would applaud.

Maker of peace with people you have been in conflict with.

Maker of peace between people and groups who have been in conflict.

Q: How might we do this?

1. Who are you estranged from? What can you do about this?

Ex. Miguel, Me and SK

2. Who do you know who is in conflict?

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 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. You can be pure, you can mourn, but you cannot persecute yourself.

This one is a positive command. Rejoice and be fire up about this. “When people falsely say all kinds of things against you.

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. 10, like v. 3 theirs is the kingdom. These are kingdom people!

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. Leader in Amman 10 mo without contact.

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 things 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?

Q: Are you salty? Are you spicing things up? Are you the one who stirs things up for Jesus 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.

Think of the most depraved party you were at. Were the lights bright or dim? Imagine turning on the lights really bright!

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?

What we are doing here does not seem completely honest.

That seems divisive to me.

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).

And if you declare for Jesus, people are watching.

We are the salt and the light of this world.

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

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? Do not do your good deeds for show.

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 how the lives of Noe and Florene have been changed. Miracles!

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. Matt 11:11

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.

Summary:

Blessed are those who actively go about bringing others together—who bring reconciliation between individuals and groups.

Happy (theoretically) are those who are abused, talked against, intimidated and dealt with unfairly because they live according to the Sermon on the Mount.

Are you salt and are you light?

Are you actively helping people to be saved?

Are you willing to be different for the sake of Christ?

Are you regularly shedding light in dark places?

Then you will be comforted, you are a child of God, you are an honored citizen of the kingdom of God and you will see God!