

Sovereign Grace Church

“Blessed Are...”

May 27, 2018

Matthew 5: 1-12

This morning we will start our series on Christ's Sermon on the Mount. We have considered the first four chapters of Matthew in order to get a broader context for Jesus' sermon. Matthew is seeking to demonstrate to a largely Jewish audience the truth of Jesus' claim to be the Messiah of Israel. Although Jesus most certainly did not meet the religious and political expectations of the day He did fulfill all the biblical expectations. Jesus' gospel was not a gospel of rebellion against Rome but a more internal gospel which would have the effect of turning Rome upside down!

We have seen that Jesus went around the area of Capernaum teaching and preaching His gospel, calling a few of His disciples and performing the works of healing and deliverance which His Kingdom anticipated. His healings and teaching attracted a large number of people and He took advantage of this to provide some teaching concerning what life would be like in His Kingdom.

The Sermon on the Mount certainly provides a very high level of ethical teaching. So high in fact that the main puzzle of the sermon has been what to do with it? Is it mandatory for today? Or do the standards reach so high no one could be expected to follow it without his sin nature being eradicated? Or perhaps it was never actually to be fulfilled by anyone except Jesus such that its main purpose is to shut everyone up to their sin and cast them for deliverance upon Christ alone? This sermon consists of simple words contained in only three chapters...but the books attempting to explain it would fill a large library! So, we may take more than a couple of weeks, but we will not begin to exhaust the depth of meaning contained in these words.

1. The Puzzlement of the Sermon

- **Literal?**
- **Or Not? Matt. 22: 37-40**

2. The Immediate Context v. 1 Matt 19: 16-22; Luke 6: 24-26

3. The Beatitudes vv. 3-12

Q. Are the Beatitudes describing Kingdom Virtues or Kingdom Invitations?

I Cor. 13: 3

- **Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Jms 2:2**

- **Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted. Job. 1: 21**
- **Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.**
- **Blessed are those who hunger & thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.**
- **Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.**
- **Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.**
- **Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.**
- **Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**
- **Blessed are you when they revile & persecute you, & say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice & be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.**

Questions for Reflection and Conversation

1. **Are you blessed? Do you feel blessed? Do you have to feel blessed to be blessed? When someone refers to someone being blessed, what comes to mind? How do you contrast being blessed with being holy or righteous?**
2. **If you were to “count your blessings” where would you begin? When you finished, would people say your standard was the world? Or Christ's Kingdom?**
3. **Do you think Jesus' beatitudes should be considered as character virtues of kingdom living or as invitations to the poor and downcast to enter His kingdom? Go through the beatitudes and attempt to interpret them in both senses. Which is more natural?**
4. **What sorts of things does the world count as blessings? Would the world consider you to be particularly blessed? How should the Christian receive the world's blessings? Is a recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize necessarily barred from the Lord's Kingdom? How would a resident of Christ's Kingdom receive a worldly honor?**