

Pursuing a Kingdom Lifestyle (Mt. 5-7)

I. SERMON ON THE MOUNT: CORE VALUES OF THE KINGDOM

- A. The Sermon on the Mount is the constitution of God’s kingdom. It is Jesus’ most comprehensive statement on a believer’s role in cooperating with the grace of God and is the “litmus test” to measure our spiritual development and ministry impact. In this sermon, Jesus calls His people to perfect obedience and to make this their primary goal in life. We do this by seeking to walk in all the light that the Spirit gives us. Pursuing obedience is not the same as attaining it.
- ⁴⁸***You shall be perfect [walk in all the light you receive] as your Father...is perfect. (Mt. 5:48)***
- B. Jesus calls us to live out the eight beatitudes (5:3-12) as we pursue 100-fold obedience (5:48). ***The 8 beatitudes*** are being poor in spirit, spiritual mourning, walking in meekness, hungering for righteousness, showing mercy, embracing purity, being a peacemaker, and enduring persecution.
- ³***Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. ⁵Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. ⁶Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. ⁷Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. ⁸Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. ⁹Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. ¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Mt. 5:3-10)***
- C. ***Overview:*** In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus calls us to live out the ***8 beatitudes*** (5:3-12) as we pursue ***100-fold obedience*** (5:48), as we ***resist 6 temptations*** (5:21-48), and ***pursue 5 kingdom activities*** (6:1-18) that position our hearts to freely receive more grace. We do all this with confidence in His ***rewards*** (eternal/temporal 6:19-24) and His ***provision*** (6:24-33). We do this ***without criticism*** of others who pursue God with less intensity or who oppose us (7:1-6) while we ***seek Jesus to intervene*** in our relationships (7:7-12), yet without drawing back from our ***wholehearted pursuit*** of God (7:13-14) as we ***discern*** false grace messages (7:15-20). We do all of this knowing that our obedience will be ***tested*** (7:21-27). By walking in these truths, Jesus said that we will impact society (5:13-16) and will be great in His eyes (5:19), receive treasures in heaven (6:19-20) and will live in this age with our hearts exhilarated in His grace (6:22-23).
- D. The Beatitudes are like 8 beautiful flowers in the “garden in our heart” that God wants to fully blossom. They define love, godliness, and spiritual maturity and describe the kingdom lifestyle. Implied in all of God’s commands is the promise of the enabling to walk out the command.
- E. These 8 flowers must be cultivated as we “weed our garden” by ***resisting 6 temptations*** related to our natural lusts (5:21-48) and as we “water our garden” by ***pursuing 5 activities*** (6:1-18).
1. ***The 6 temptations:*** anger, immorality, disregarding the marriage covenant, making false commitments, demanding personal rights, and living with a spirit of retaliation (5:21-48).
 2. ***The 5 kingdom activities:*** prayer, fasting, giving, serving, and blessing enemies (6:1-18) are spiritual disciplines that position our heart before God to freely receive more grace.

II. THE EIGHT BEATITUDES: BRIEF DEFINITIONS (MT. 5:3-12)

- A. ***Being poor in spirit*** (“theirs is the kingdom of heaven,” Mt. 5:3) is to acknowledge that we are in great need of help to sustain our wholeheartedness. We are to understand that we are in a serious dilemma and need a breakthrough in our heart and ministry and in the Church and society.
- B. ***Mourning for breakthrough*** (“for they shall be comforted,” Mt. 5:4) is to be desperate enough to be extreme in pursuing a breakthrough for our heart, ministry, church, or for justice in society.
- C. ***Walking in meekness*** (“shall inherit the earth,” Mt. 5:5) is to walk in the fasted lifestyle, or to have a servant spirit in the use of our natural strengths or resources (time, money, reputation, etc.). Meekness or humility speaks of using our resources or authority with a servant spirit in serving others without regard for receiving any gain from them.
- D. ***Hungering and thirsting for righteousness*** (“for they shall be filled,” Mt. 5:6) is to have sustained faithfulness in seeking God with a whole heart for the breakthrough of His kingdom in our lives and in others. It speaks of being consistent through the changing seasons, without drawing back in disappointment or in being offended at the way people treat us or respond to us.
- E. ***Relating to others with mercy*** (“for they shall obtain mercy,” Mt. 5:7) is to treat others with a tender spirit when they fail spiritually or attack, resist, or disappoint us. We are to show them mercy, just as we receive God’s mercy in our many shortcomings (Ps. 130:3-4). It also speaks of being compassionate and seeking to help people who suffer injustice.
- F. ***Being pure in heart*** (“they shall see God,” Mt. 5:8) is to seek to walk in purity in our thoughts (no bitterness or immorality, etc.) and in our motives (helping people truly for their benefit).
- G. ***Becoming a peacemaker*** (“called sons of God,” Mt. 5:9) speaks of the grace to bring peace or healing to broken relationships in the home, marketplace, Church, or in society, etc.
- H. ***Enduring persecution*** (“theirs is the kingdom,” Mt. 5:10-12) is to bear the counterattack for plundering Satan’s kingdom because we operate in power and/or stand for righteousness.
- I. Jesus invites “whoever,” i.e. everyone, to be great in His kingdom by walking in the Beatitudes.
¹⁹Whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments...shall be called least in the kingdom...whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom. (Mt. 5:19)
- J. Anyone with a good eye will have a vibrant heart that is full of light. The lamp of the body, that brings light to our inner man, is the eye of our heart. “The body” means our whole person.
²²The lamp [source of light] of the body is the eye [of the heart]. If your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. ²³But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! (Mt. 6:22-23)