

## **Session 01 – Introduction & Overview (Mt. 5-7)**

### **I. INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT**

A. It is important as we study this Sermon that we understand the context into which Jesus was speaking. This was given about a year and a half into His public ministry, occurring near the end of summer of AD 28, right after He had chosen his 12 disciples.

B. Jesus' fame had been spreading all throughout Israel and the surrounding regions. *Every* sick person brought to Him was healed, and His message continued John's, "**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand**"(v.17) and expanded it, "**preaching the gospel of the kingdom.**" (v.24) The last few verses of Matthew 4 summarize the early days of Jesus' ministry, and set the context for His message:

***"23And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. 24Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them. 25Great multitudes followed Him- from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan."* (Matthew 4:23-25)**

C. Jesus' fame explodes across the nation and beyond. Delegations from Jerusalem were also sent, like they were to John the Baptist to scout out the one who John claimed was the Messiah. People from the Decapolis (ten cities outside Israel) came to him as his fame was not just contained to just the nation of Israel.

D. Many people came to him to be healed of their physical ailments, and His beautiful, compassionate heart healed "*all sick people*". Many others came to listen to His teaching, and to hear about this "kingdom" he proclaimed was coming, hoping that He would be the revolutionary leader who would overthrow the oppression of Rome. The religious leaders came to see what kind of doctrine this rabbi held to that empowered Him to teach and act with such authority. Luke's gospel tells us "***the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed them all***" (Luke 6:19) and also that "***all... came to hear Him and be healed of their diseases***" (v. 18).

E. The Great Physician came to heal bodies, and much more to heal souls. With the multitudes thronging to Him, He finds a wide open space to sit down on the side of a hill overlooking the Sea of Galilee, with its grassy slope that acted as a natural amphitheater, and gives to all who sought relief from their physical pain the remedy for their spiritual healing also.

F. "*The first advent of our Lord was for the purpose of establishing an empire among and over men, by laying the foundations of that empire **within individual souls**. His second coming will be for the purpose of setting up that empire in glory. It is therefore vitally important that we understand what the character of the subjects in that Kingdom is, so that we may know whether we belong to the Kingdom ourselves, and whether its privileges, immunities, and future rewards are a part of our present and future inheritance.*" – A.W. Pink

## II. THE CONSTITUTION OF THE KINGDOM

*‘And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying...’ (Matthew 5:1)*

- A. Jesus opened His mouth as He spoke the Sermon on the Mount and revealed how citizens of this ‘kingdom of God’ were to live. This message of Jesus is the most practical teaching for how we are to love God. In this sermon, we learn how to interact with His grace and enter into a righteousness that is beyond just an outward appearance – it is heart righteousness and is necessary to have in order to be apart of His kingdom.
- B. Without a doubt, this message of Jesus would have been one of his core messages, likely taught in many of the places he traveled to, giving the “constitution” of what the kingdom He was bringing would be like. To enter this kingdom of Messiah would require its citizens to live in this manner.
- C. In both the Old and the New Testament, loving God is defined by our walking out obedience to His commandments (Deut. 11:13; John 15:10). Living out this message that Jesus presents is the most practical way we can demonstrate our love to God. This message is Jesus’ definition of living a life that is well-pleasing to God, and when we seek to live according to what He taught in the Sermon on the Mount, we are loving Him *“with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.”* (Mt. 22:37)

## III. BEATITUDES: CORE VALUES OF THE KINGDOM

- A. Jesus begins His message by calling us to live out **8 Beatitudes**. *“Beatitude”* coming from the Latin *beatus* meaning “blessed”. To be “blessed” fundamentally means to be or find approval. When God blesses man, he is approving of him. If the greatest “blessing” in our lives is to have the approval of God then these Beatitudes should become very personal to us.
- B. The Beatitudes are: being poor in spirit, spiritual mourning, walking in meekness, hungering for righteousness, showing mercy, embracing purity, being a peacemaker, and enduring persecution (Mt. 5:3-12). The Beatitudes are what bring a true definition to what love is, what it looks like for us to grow into spiritual maturity, and how we can be living out the kingdom lifestyle. Insinuated in all of Jesus’ commands is the promise to supply the help needed to live out these commands.
- C. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus called us to be perfect – a goal we will only achieve by walking in all that’s available to us by the Holy Spirit, by embracing the Beatitudes and helping others to do the same (Mt. 5:19, 48). **This is to be the primary goal of our lives: to be like our heavenly Father.** This statement summarizes Jesus’ sermon and is the pinnacle of His message.

*“You shall be perfect [walk in all the light you receive] as your Father...is perfect.” (Mt. 5:48)*

- D. *The Sermon on the Mount is not a list of rules and regulations but it is a description of the life we live when the Holy Spirit is having His way with us.* -Oswald Chambers

## IV. SALT AND LIGHT

- A. Jesus spoke of two metaphors: salt and light. Salt brings flavor and preservation, whereas light brings direction and life. Everyone seeking to live a kingdom lifestyle, and pursue the 8 beatitudes will have the impact of salt and light on the people around them. This is the affect that individual believers and the body of Christ corporately are to have upon society.

***13You are the salt of the earth...14You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand...16Let your light so shine before men, that they may see...and glorify your Father. (Mt. 5:13-16)***

- B. Regarding God’s purposes, promises, and moral commandments that we see in the Old Testament Law and Prophets, Jesus said that He did not come to destroy or nullify these, but rather He came so that the fullness of what God has intended and promised would be expressed in and through the lives of His people (Mt. 5:17-18). There will be a day when the whole earth will be filled with the glory of the Lord and all the nations will love Him and walk out His commandments.

***17Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets...but to fulfill it...18I say to you...one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. (Mt. 5:17-18)***

- C. Jesus invites all who desire to be great in His kingdom to live out the 8 Beatitudes. The Father designed us with a desire to be great, and He defines in this sermon the way to fulfill that desire. His focus of “greatness” is related to the development of our heart in love, humility, purity, and being like our Father. For all who pursue this, He promises great *outward* reward and fulfillment in the age to come.

***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)***

***8Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. (Mt. 5:8)***

## **V. RESISTING 6 TEMPATIONS (MT. 5:21- 48)**

- A. Jesus highlighted six areas of sin for us to make war against in our hearts:

1. Anger (spirit of murder) ***Mt. 5:21-26***
2. Adultery (spirit of immorality) ***Mt. 5:27-30***
3. Disregarding the sanctity of marriage (disloyalty in relationships) ***Mt. 5:31-32***
4. False commitments (manipulation and self-promotion) ***Mt. 5:33-37***
5. Retaliation against personal wrongdoings (spirit of revenge) ***Mt. 5:38-42***
6. Refusing active love (inactivity when mistreated) ***Mt. 5:43-47***

- B. These principles are practical ways to show God’s love and be salt and light. We will grow in our understanding walking in light and true freedom by resisting these six temptations.

- C. This section ends with Jesus’ call to be perfect or mature in our obedience to God.

*48Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect. (Mt. 5:48)*

## VI. PURSUING 5 KINGDOM ACTIVITIES (MT. 6:1-20)

A. Jesus describes 5 activities or spiritual disciplines that position our hearts to receive more of His grace and strength:

1. Serve (charitable deeds) *Mt. 6:1-4, 19-21*
2. Give (service/money) *Mt. 6:1-4, 19-21*
3. Pray *Mt. 6:5-13*
4. Blessing our adversaries (forgiveness) *Mt. 6:14-15; 5:44*
5. Fast *Mt. 6:16-18*

*4That your charitable deed [giving service or money] may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly...6Pray to your Father...and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly...14Forgive men their trespasses...17When you fast... wash your face, 18so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. 19Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth...20Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven... (Mt. 6:4-20)*

B. Godly activities don't earn us God's love or approval, but they position *our* hearts to be receptive to more of Him. He releases more to us, and expands our capacity for more of Him, but His faithful love doesn't change toward us when we embrace these activities. He gives **more** grace as we pursue these disciplines (Jas. 4:6)

*6He gives more grace...God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. (Jas. 4:6)*

C. These activities are *practical* ways for us to walk out the First and Second Great Commandments (Mt. 22:38-39) They take our time, money, energy, and reputation and invest them into serving other people for the sake of loving God. As we do this, we are entrusting God with our 'natural strengths' and believing Him to turn it around in such a way that would enrich our lives and transform us with humility and meekness.

*9My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness [voluntary weakness]...I boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest on me. (2 Cor. 12:9)*

## VII. CONFIDENCE IN OUR FATHER'S PROVISION (MT. 6:20-34)

A. Jesus wants us to be assured that He sees our pursuit for wholehearted love and obedience. We are to have confidence, especially in our finances and possessions, that He rewards (eternal and temporal; 6:20-24), and He provides (6:24-34).

***4Your Father who sees [charitable deeds] in secret will Himself reward you openly...6Your Father who sees [you praying] in secret will reward you openly...18Your Father who sees [you fasting]...will reward you openly. 19Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth...20but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven...24No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other...You cannot serve God and mammon. (Mt. 6:4-24)***

- B. We must remember WHO God is as we pursue loving Him wholeheartedly, and we must remember that HE REMEMBERS and REWARDS those who seek Him.

***6Without faith [confidence in God] it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (Heb. 11:6)***

- C. How we pursue Jesus in relation to our finances is vital in sustaining grace to walk out the Beatitudes. God's provision for us is necessary. Jesus wants us to escape slavery to the fear of not having enough. Fear hinders our growth in walking out the Beatitudes.

***25Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink...31Do not worry, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?"...32Your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. (Mt. 6:25-33)***

- D. God promises that anyone with a good eye will have a heart that is alive in Him and full of light. Having a good eye means that our pursuit in life is to live and teach the 8 Beatitudes, refuse the six temptations (Mt. 5:21-48) and pursue the five kingdom activities (Mt. 6:1-20). The lamp that brings light to our heart is the "eye of our heart" and the body is 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)***

## VIII. LOVING JESUS IN THE MIDST OF RELATIONAL CHALLENGES (7:1-20)

- A. While we pursue living the Sermon on the Mount, there will be relational challenges that arise, both positive and negative. How we relate to people is critical, as it is a reflection of our love for God (Mt. 22:39) and a measurement of how we are doing in our spiritual growth.
- B. We must not look down on other people who pursue God with less intensity (7:1-5) or who oppose us (7:6). We want to seek for Jesus to intervene in our relationships (7:7-12), without drawing back from our wholehearted pursuit of God (7:13-14) as we discern false grace messages (7:15-20).

***1Judge not, that you be not judged. 2For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you...5First remove the plank from your own eye and then you will see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother's eye. 6Do not...cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them...tear you in pieces. (Mt. 7:1-6)***

- C. Jesus tells us to “ask, seek, and knock” in the context of asking God to be apart of our relationships (7:7-12), to give us wisdom, to minister to the hearts of those we relate to, and to bring redemption into various circumstances. Jesus leads us to the place of prayer when people do not treat us as we want (v11-12).

***7Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you...11How much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! 12Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them... (Mt. 7:7-12)***

- D. It is vital that we don’t withdraw from pursuing the Lord wholeheartedly when conflicts arise (7:13-14), and also that we are aware of false prophets and messages of false grace (7:15-20).

***13Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction ...14Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life...15Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing...16You will know them by their fruits... (Mt. 7:13-16)***

## **IX. THE TEST OF LOVE AND OBEDIENCE (MT. 7:21-27)**

- A. Our love and obedience will be tested so that it may be proved genuine under pressure (7:21-27). Will we persevere even when things get tough? Trials (1 Pt. 4:12), end-time dynamics, (2 Thes. 2:3-4), and the final judgment (1 Cor. 3:10-15) will show what is true in our lives.

***“The rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.” (Mt. 7:25)***

***“Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you.” (1 Pt. 4:12)***

***“Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, 4who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” (2 Thes. 2:3-4)***

***“13 each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is.” (1 Cor. 3:13)***

- B. Jesus ends His message with the charge to “hear and do” the things He teaches. The wise man will be justified the day the storms of life and trials come because His foundation will be firm and unshakeable. Wisdom, and the fear of the Lord, is to put into action that which He commands of us.

***“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments.” (Ps. 111:10)***