

# Sermon on the Mount #1

## Overview of the Sermon on the Mount

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

- A. The Sermon on the Mount is like the “Constitution of God’s Kingdom.” It is the “litmus test” to measure spiritual development and ministry impact. We measure our ministry impact by how much people seek to walk out the Sermon on the Mount values (not by the size of our ministry). These values are to be the themes that we are to emphasize most in our ministries.
- B. Better to have a house church with 5 or 10 believers going after “loving Jesus with all their heart” and “the sermon on the mount lifestyle” than to have a multimillion dollar complex and organization filled with spectators in a hurry to be done with a Sunday tradition in order to get on with their culturally consumed lifestyle. In contrast to these false standards we must embrace God’s standards for evaluating our success.
- C. The foundational call in the Sermon on the Mount is to live out the 8 beatitudes (Mt. 5:3-12). The beatitudes are like 8 beautiful flowers in the “garden in our heart” which God wants to fully blossom in us. They define the love, godliness and spiritual maturity that pleases God. They describe the lifestyle that is the core reality of God’s Kingdom. They are the values that Jesus walked out while on earth completely fulfilling the law of God (Mt. 5:17).
- D. Mt. 5-7 describes the process that allows the 8 beatitudes to come to maturity. In this passage, Jesus is not rebuking His people but helping them by giving insight that leads to freedom for the heart. He did not intend to give comprehensive teaching on the path to freedom. Rather, He focused on the need to make quality decisions to resist lust and nurture our heart in grace.
- E. As we pursue 100-fold obedience (i.e. the “Overwhelming Objective” in Mt. 5:48; the “Gateway to Glory” in 6:22; and the “The First thing that is First” in Mt 6:33) we are driven to the place of repentance and total dependence for the reality of the new heart (8 beatitudes Mt 5:3-12). When we embrace these three goals of wholeheartedness we are providing the necessary conflict that compels us to and through the process of the 8 beatitudes blossoming in the garden of our heart.
1. **The Overwhelming Objective:** Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect. Matthew 5:48
  2. **The Gateway to Glory:** "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, (single KJV) your whole body will be full of light. Matthew 6:22
  3. **The First Thing that is First:** But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Matthew 6:33
- F. These 8 flowers (Mt. 5:3-12) need to be carefully and continually cultivated as we “weed our garden” by resisting the 6 negative influences (toxins/poisons) related to our natural lusts (Mt. 5:21-48) and as we “water our garden” by pursuing the 5 positive nutrients Mt. 6:1-18). This process positions us to receive a greater impartation of enabling grace and the 8 flowers grow and begin to flourish .
1. **Weeding the Garden of our Heart** – The 6 Negative Poisons in Mt 5:21-48.
    - a. Jesus gave six practical areas in which we must wage war against **lust** (1 Pet. 2:11); **anger** (spirit of murder, Mt. 5:21-26), **adultery** (spirit of immorality, Mt. 5:27-30), **disregarding the sanctity of marriage** (spirit of treachery, Mal. 2:13-17 or disloyalty that disregards the sanctity of marriage, Mt. 5:31-32), **false commitments** (spirit of manipulation that seeks to promote ourselves, Mt. 5:33-37). To use “spin” to present ourselves in a false way about our commitments in the past and the present (by lack of follow through), **demanding personal justice** (spirit of pride or bitterness that insists on our personal rights, Mt. 5:38-41) and **refusing to retaliate** (spirit of revenge or animosity in relationships, Mt. 5:42-47).
  2. **Watering the Garden of our Heart** – The 5 Positive Nutrients in Mt 5: 42 - 6:18.

- a. Jesus describes 5 things that are regarded as “weak” by human standards and exhorts us to take them up in our pursuit of the goal of 100% obedience. Pursuing His heart through the voluntary weakness of these will position our heart to receive grace. (*prayer, fasting, giving, serving others and blessing enemies*)
- b. Jesus describes five “grace-releasing activities” in our devotional life that position our heart to receive more strength in the grace of God. Our heart receives more grace as we consistently and secretly **serve and give** (charitable deeds: giving service and/or money (6:1–4, 19–21), **pray** (6:5–13), **bless adversaries** (forgiving, 6:14–15; 5:44) and **fast** (6:16–18).
- c. These five areas are expressions of “voluntary weakness” because we invest our natural strengths (time, money, energy, reputation, etc.) into Kingdom purposes. The normal use of our strengths is to increase our personal comfort, wealth and honor. In other words, by the fasted lifestyle we bring our natural strengths to God as we trust Him to “return” our strength back to us in a way that enriches our personal spheres of responsibility and transforms us with meekness.
- d. Spiritual disciplines (prayer, fasting, meditation on the Word, etc) are ordained by God as a necessary way to posture our heart to freely receive more grace. These activities do not earn us God’s favor. The power is in the “bonfire of God’s presence” not in the cold flesh positioned in front of it. Spiritual disciplines do not earn us God’s favor but give us the opportunity to show our value of the relationship. God gives to our heart on the basis of how much we hunger for relationship with Him. God sees our hunger for Him as our love for Him. God honors how much we value the relationship by giving us more according to our hunger. God gives more to our heart but does not love us more when we live in spiritual disciplines.

- G. Grace gives us confidence that God enjoys us and will bless us (after we stumble and repent) and that He will discipline us in His zeal (if we do not repent). There are three different mindsets in the Church today. First, some teach high standards of holiness yet with an impatient and intolerant God (mean God). Second, some teach low standards of holiness with a very gracious all accepting God (kind God). Finally, the Scripture exhorts us to teach high standards of holiness that war against sin in our relationship with a very kind God.
- H. One of the pressures in the Church comes from false teachers (see 2 Peter 2 and Jude). The most common area of false teaching is that which perverts the understanding of the grace of God. This happens by reducing its message to receiving forgiveness without repentance and seeking to make people comfortable with God while continuing in their sin. Grace is commonly presented today as an insurance policy for people who want to continue in their sin.  
**<sup>4</sup> For certain men (false teachers) have crept in unnoticed...ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny...our Lord Jesus Christ. (Jude 4)**
- I. The true grace message inspires us to deny lust and gives us power to walk godly. The true teaching on grace is the only way that we can experience God’s power in our spirit.  
**<sup>11</sup> The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared...<sup>12</sup> teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live...godly in the present age... (Titus 2:11-12)**
- J. Much “grace teaching” is not according to truth. It empowers compromise and gives people false confidence in their relationship with God instead of equipping them to be great in God.  
**<sup>19</sup> Whoever breaks...the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom...whoever does and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom. (Mt. 5:19)**
- K. What are false teachings? They are ones that do not hold to the main doctrines of Scripture. For example, they deny that Jesus provides the ONLY way of salvation or teachings that omit calling people to live holy (as defined by the 8 beatitudes). False teachings are not only given by those involved in false religions but can also be given by teachers who are born again believers.
- L. Some popular ministries are led by false teachers. Do not be seduced by how outwardly “successful” a ministry is.

<sup>1</sup> ***There will be false teachers among you, who will secretly (subtly) bring in destructive heresies...2 Many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed (ridiculed). 3 By covetousness they will exploit you (manipulate) with deceptive words...13 They are...carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you...14 They have a heart trained (experts in greed) in covetous practices...20 For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of...Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. 21 It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment... (2 Pet. 2:1-3, 13-21)***

M. A wise man builds his personal life and ministry on the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount.

<sup>24</sup> ***Whoever hears these sayings of Mine (Sermon on the Mount), and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 and 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. 26 Everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: 27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall. (Mt. 7:24-27)***

N. There is a 3-fold application of the winds that will test our personal and ministry foundations. First, are winds that every ministry experiences periodically throughout decades of ministry. Second, are eschatological winds at the end of the age. Third, is the evaluation we receive for our individual life and the quality of our ministry at the Judgment Seat of Christ (1 Cor. 3:11-15).

<sup>26</sup> ***He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven." 27 Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken...that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Therefore...let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. (Heb. 12:26-28)***

O. The Scripture prophesies of spiritual compromise in the Church in the End-Times.

<sup>1</sup> ***Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons... (1 Tim. 4:1)***

<sup>3</sup> ***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 (Antichrist) is revealed, the son of perdition... (2 Thes. 2:3)***

<sup>3</sup> ***For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears (eagerly seek to be satisfied), they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth... (2 Tim. 4:3-4)***

## II. PRIMARY FOCUS & GOAL: CALL TO PURSUE 100-FOLD OBEDIENCE (MT. 5:48)

A. The sermon on the mount is the longest discourse recorded in scripture and is written to believers. It could easily be a source of condemnation to unbelievers. Remember that every directive (command) of scripture is in itself a promise that God has grace (divine enablement) to give to attain to that goal if we are hungry for it in order to please Him.

B. The 8 beatitudes describe the character of Jesus, a new beginning of christlikeness in us. These characteristics are what the Holy Spirit desires to reproduce in us with our co-operation. The rest of the sermon of the mount describes the conduct that flows out of these character traits and the goals of the one that would pursue them.

C. Jesus' called us to pursue a lifestyle of obedience that seeks to be perfect (mature in obedience). Walking mature in our obedience is relative in this age and absolute in the age-to-come. In this age, we never attain to perfection in the absolute sense. We are to walk in the fullness of the light that we receive from the Spirit. This includes declaring war on all our lust that the Spirit reveals.

<sup>48</sup> ***You shall be perfect (walk in all the light you receive) as your Father...is perfect. (Mt. 5:48)***

- D. The pursuit of 100-fold obedience includes making a covenant with our eyes (Ps. 101:3; Job 31:1), bridling our speech (Jas 3:2; Eph. 4:29-5:4), managing our time (for service and prayer with the Word, (Eph. 5:15-16) and money to increase the Kingdom beyond our personal comfort and honor (Mt. 6:19-21) as we engage in communing prayer with the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14).

### III. BEATITUDES: BRIEF DEFINITIONS (MT. 5:3–12)

- A. True spiritual reality is defined by the 8 beatitudes. This is the character of Jesus, true christlikeness! These describe what pleases God and what Jesus has in mind for creation and will duplicate in the nations through His ministry as King.
- B. Implied in all of God's commands is the promise of the enabling grace to walk out the command. Thus, all eight beatitudes are a part of our inheritance. God will bless the pursuit and progressive attainment of these 8 expressions of grace in the heart.
- C. ***Being poor in spirit*** (theirs is the kingdom of heaven, Mt. 5:3) – to acknowledge that we are in great need of help to sustain wholeheartedness. This is to understand, that we are in a serious dilemma in needing a breakthrough (insight/power) in our heart for godliness.
- D. ***Mourning for breakthrough*** (for they shall be comforted, Mt. 5:4) – to be desperate enough to be "extreme" in pursuit of a progressive breakthrough (insight/power) in our heart and ministry.
- E. ***Walking in meekness*** (shall inherit the earth, Mt. 5:5) – to walk in the fasted lifestyle or to have a servant spirit in the use of our natural strengths (time, money, energy, reputation, authority, etc.). Humility or meekness speaks of using our resources with a servant spirit, as we lay down personal rights in serving without regard for receiving the reward (honor, money) from people.
- F. ***Hungering for righteousness*** (for they shall be filled, Mt. 5:6) – sustained faithfulness in seeking God with wholeheartedness through changing circumstances and seasons of our life.
- G. ***Relating to others with mercy*** (for they shall obtain mercy, Mt. 5:7) – having a tender spirit in how we treat others in light of receiving God's mercy in our many failures (Ps. 18:35; 130:3-4).
- H. ***Being pure in heart*** (they shall see God, Mt. 5:8) – breakthrough of purity in our thoughts (bitterness, immorality) and motives (helping people for their benefit without any personal gain).
- I. ***Becoming an anointed peacemaker*** (called sons of God, Mt. 5:9) – anointing to bring peace (reconciliation) to that which is out of God's will (restoring relationships, bodies, legislation).
- J. ***Enduring persecution*** (theirs is the kingdom, Mt. 5:10-12) – bearing the counterattack for plundering Satan's Kingdom because we operate in the power of grace and stand for righteousness.
- K. In Mt. 5:3-5, we begin the process of transformation as the first three beatitudes (poverty of spirit, mourning and meekness) relate to "perceiving ourselves" differently. Mt. 5:6 points to "sustained zeal" as we break through in mercy (Mt. 5-7), purity (Mt. 5:8), anointed service (Mt. 5:9) that brings persecution that requires endurance (Mt. 5:10-12). The way to awaken a sense of being poor in spirit and desperately mourning for a breakthrough is to set our heart to walk out the Sermon on the Mount lifestyle in a literal and consistent way, especially in determining to be perfect (Mt. 5:48) or have a good or single eye (Mt. 6:22-23), and to seek the kingdom breakthrough in us first (Mt.6:33)..