

## **I. The Significance of this Sermon**

- A. The Sermon on the Mount is the longest continuous discourse of Jesus found anywhere in scripture. It is the most well known and quoted (and miss quoted) set of passages in the entire bible. It includes well-known teachings such as “the Lord’s prayer” and the “beatitudes”.
  - 1. It has been said if you took all the wisdom and advice for how to live ever uttered by the greatest philosophers, psychiatrists and counselors, you would be left with a poor imitation of the beauty and wisdom Jesus taught us in this discourse.
- B. The most significant aspect of this sermon is the fact that it has long been held as the premier teaching of Jesus concerning the central tenets of Christian discipleship and lifestyle. This is most remarkable especially when one considers the myriad of splits and factions in modern day denominationalism within the church.

## **II. Overview SOTM (Mat. 5-7)**

- A. Cultivating Fruit in the Garden of our Heart - Eight aspects of the Heart of Jesus that are planted and growing in the garden of our hearts by the power of new birth through the indwelling Holy Spirit. (Mat. 5:1-20)
  - 1. Poor in Spirit (Dependence upon God)
  - 2. Mourning (Longing for the Kingdom)
  - 3. Meekness (Divine Power tempered by Gentleness)
  - 4. Hungering for Righteousness (Longing for Intimacy with God)
  - 5. Merciful (Walking in the degree of mercy that you have been shown)
  - 6. Pure in Heart (Transformational Obedience and Love)
  - 7. Peacemaker (Priestly calling as an Intercessor)
  - 8. Persecuted (A life laid down for Jesus in boldness and confidence)
- B. Weeding our Garden - Six Aspects of the Fallen Heart or Old Man that is being transformed/put to death in the garden of our heart. (Mat. 5:21-48)
  - 1. Murder (Hatred)
  - 2. Immorality (Lust)
  - 3. Divorce (Treachery)
  - 4. Lying (Manipulation)
  - 5. Revenge (Pride)
  - 6. Animosity (Unforgiveness)

- C. Watering our Garden - Four activities that position us to encounter Jesus and be transformed (Mat. 6:1-34)
  - 1. Charitable Deeds (Giving of yourself for the gain of others)
  - 2. Prayer (Meditation, Contemplation, Intercession and Dialogue)
  - 3. Fasting (Prioritizing Spiritual Comfort over Physical Comfort)
  - 4. Giving (Prioritizing our Spiritual Security over Physical Security)
  
- D. The Wise and Purposeful Gardner – Jesus addresses the challenges of pursuing the SOTM lifestyle and establishes us with truths of this wisdom that anchor us in our pursuit of intimacy with Him and the fullness of kingdom life in this age.
  - 1. Judging according to God not man.
  - 2. Relentless Dependence upon God.
  - 3. Embracing the difficulty of the counter cultural lifestyle.
  - 4. Intentional community with people in likeminded pursuit.
  - 5. Prioritizing of the SOTM above all other forms of discipleship and ministry.
  - 6. Assuring our hearts that this is lifestyle is the pinnacle of the wisdom of God.

### III. The Lens

- A. There have been many different lenses, or views, in which the church has answered the question of the relevance of this sermon to the 21<sup>st</sup> century believer. Before we start our study, it would be good for us to understand a few of these views and then lay out the view in which we will use during this series.
  - 1. Social Gospel - This view states that Jesus is giving us a blueprint for the reorganization of society through a code of ethics. Thus, this sermon is addressed to the world at large, and is a clarion call for human goodness, self-sacrifice, and humane treatment of men. If all men would simply live by the principals of the sermon on the mount then it would bring worldwide peace and harmony to humanity. This view was popular from the reformation period and into the early 1900s but after 2 world wars was nearly eliminated from the teaching of the church. This view is held by almost all liberal theological schools and churches in our day and by secular society at large.
    - a. This view is coming back upon the western evangelical scene with great influence and acceptance. This lens of the sermon on the mount fits hand in glove with modern secular humanism and the amillennial view of eschatology.

2. Commentary on the Mosaic Law – This view holds that Jesus is giving us an elaboration or an expository teaching on the Torah that was given to Moses in the wilderness. Jesus was correcting the common teachings in His day that were held by the Pharisees and scribes who were misinterpreting or adding to the Torah. Jesus was simply correcting their poor interpretations and giving the Torah higher or proper spiritual content and application. His main objective therefore was to uphold a meritorious salvation based upon your obedience to the requirements for entrance into the Kingdom. This is the predominate view of Roman Catholicism and the Messianic Movement.
3. Dispensational View – This view argues that this sermon is not gospel but pertains to life in the millennial kingdom subsequent to the second coming of Christ. So in other words, the sermon on the mount has no relevance to the believer today.
  - a. Lewis Sperry Chafer, founder and first president of Dallas Theological Seminary, wrote: “The Bible provides *three complete and wholly independent* rules for human conduct – one for the past age which is known as the Mosaic Law and is crystallized in the Decalogue; one for the future age of the kingdom which is crystallized in the Sermon on the Mount; and one for the present age which appears in the Gospel of John, the Acts, and the Epistles of the New Testament”
4. Kingdom Living (Now and Forever) – This evangelical approach is to recognize that the kingdom of God has come in the person and work of Jesus. It is fulfilled in him and by him, but will not be consummated until his second advent. The stipulations, standards, exhortations, warnings, and promises of the Sermon (properly interpreted, of course) are a model for how the citizens of God’s kingdom are to live *here and now* and in the future.
  - a. For this study series we will be looking at and teaching the Sermon on the Mount through the Kingdom Living lens which is the lens that is held by myself and our entire leadership team.

*“For the standards of the Sermon are neither readily attainable by every man, nor totally unattainable by any man. To put them beyond anybody’s reach is to ignore the purpose of Christ’s Sermon; to put them within everybody’s is to ignore the reality of man’s sin. They are attainable all right, but only by those who have experienced the new birth which Jesus told Nicodemus was the indispensable condition of seeing and entering God’s kingdom” - John Stott*

#### **IV. Beatitudes The Key to Context**

- A. Jesus starts this sermon with a section that has become known as the “Beatitudes”, these eight heart conditions are given as the purpose and context of the rest of the sermon. They are considered as the essential components of the spiritual life of the believer and an onramp to the culture of the Kingdom of God. It is essential that we understand the beatitudes are the foundation upon which everything else Jesus tells us in this discourse is built upon. (Salt and Light, You will know them by their Fruits, Narrow way to Life, Wise Builder etc...)
- B. The fact that the beatitudes are the foundational purpose and context of the SOTM carries with it some major implications that must be considered. These beatitudes are so much more than a good idea or idealistic poetry. They are the litmus test or the evidence of the transformation of the heart. From a personal or ministerial perspective we should be looking at the beatitudes as we measure or validate spiritual growth or ministry impact. According to God success is not determined by how many people you have influence over or how many you have led to the Lord, but rather are the beatitudes operating in your heart and does your influence on others result in the same?
- C. Unique Favor of God (Blessed) – They are called the Beatitudes (supremely blessed) because of the “Blessed are” phrase that is placed before each heart condition. The original word that Jesus used literally meant “Divinely Happy and Divinely Favored”. This is vastly different than the commonly understood conditions of blessedness in the secular world and the church today.
- D. As we looked at earlier in this session there are 4 main views of how the SOTM should be taught and applied to the believer today. All of them rise or fall upon on the application of the beatitudes. The only applicable place that you would call for poor in spirit, mourning, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, etc... is in the already but not yet kingdom of God reality that believers today live in. This is especially true when you consider that they all come with a reward to be given in the age to come when the kingdom is eternally established in fullness.
  - 1. Unique Intimacy – In our next session we will focus greatly upon the truth that the beatitudes are a declaration and revelation of the heart of our bridegroom God. He currently longs for and awaits the wedding day and the fullness of His eternal kingdom on the earth. We have only a brief moment of our eternal existence to fellowship with Him in the waiting. (Lk 22:15-18; 1 Cor. 11:24-26)