

Matthew 5:1-16 – Chapter Study

INTRODUCTION

Outline of Matthew

I. JESUS' EARLY YEARS	1-2
II. JESUS' GALILEAN MINISTRY	3-18
III. JESUS' JUDEAN MINISTRY	19-20
IV. JESUS' LAST WEEK	21-27
V. THE RESURRECTION	28
<hr/>	
II. JESUS' GALILEAN MINISTRY	3-18
E. The Sermon on the Mount	5-7

Matthew 5-7 is what is known as the *Sermon on the Mount* because of what we read in v. 1 . . .

Matthew 5

1. The Beatitudes • 5:1-12

¹And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him.

Ch. 4 ends with great multitudes following Him as He traveled around Galilee.

He went from city to village to town, teaching as an itinerate rabbi in their synagogues.

But what separated Jesus from the other numerous traveling teachers who were common at that time, was the authority with which He spoke and the way His message was validated by the miracles He performed.

Look at the last 2 verses of the Sermon in ch. 7 –

²⁸And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, ²⁹for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

It was the common method for Jewish teachers of that time to *quote* one another; rarely did someone say something new or innovative.

A rabbi was considered a good teacher if he could recite from memory what half a dozen different religious authorities had said on a given subject.

For instance, when teaching on marriage, a rabbi would say something like, “As the esteemed Hillel of Damascus taught us . . . and as the godly Joshua ben Joshua was fond of saying . . .”

It was rare when a teacher would dare to say something based on his own authority.

This was what was so unusual about the form of Jesus' teaching.

He didn't quote, except to say something like, “You have heard that it was said . . . but I SAY to you . . . !”

Instead of relying on previous authorities, He refutes them and establishes His own authority.

And then, once He'd spoken with such amazing authority, He would turn to the seek and needy and heal them with a word, a touch.

And the healings were undeniable; they weren't like so many of the *shyster* healings that are staged at some of the big religious shows staged today.

Don't get me wrong – God still heals; miracles still take place.

But a lot of what you see on religious TV is nothing but a crass merchandising of the things of God.

The miracles Jesus performed left no doubt about whether or not a person was being truly healed.

When a lame man everyone has known in their village for 20 years stands and walks, and starts jumping up and down for joy – that's a miracle.

When your aunt Elizabeth whose been living in the city dump as a leper for the last 6 years

suddenly has skin like a baby's, well, that's a miracle you cannot gainsay.
When the man born blind can see, when a foot suddenly is where there was no foot, and people who were certifiably insane through demon possession are clothed and in their right mind, well, that gives pretty strong evidence to the fact that Jesus operated in a realm of spiritual authority and power that was totally unlike anything they had ever seen or heard of before. So, vast multitudes followed Him around, because He said and did really cool stuff. But Jesus wasn't interested in just staging an exciting religious event. He'd come to inaugurate the Kingdom, the *rule* of God.
Remember what ch. 4:17 tells us was Jesus' theme? → The Kingdom of heaven!

Now, some people like to get all excited about the *difference* between the Kingdom of heaven and the Kingdom of God.

You can find studies, articles, and even booklets in which some self-professed *expert* will say the Kingdom of heaven refers to *this*, while the Kingdom of God refers to *that*; and they go on to make exacting & details descriptions of each.

This is a classic example of reading something *into the text*.

[Eisegesis vs. Exegesis]

What they don't do is to interpret the text as it ought to be – asking “What did the Kingdom of heaven mean to the original audience Matthew wrote to?”

Remember, who did Matthew aim this gospel at? The Jews, to prove that Jesus was the Messiah and the fulfillment of the OT prophecies.

Well, among the Jews of that time, and even of this – there's a strong reluctance to say or even mention the word “God.”

Jews of that time, would simply quietly intone, “Ha-shem” (The name).

Even today, orthodox Jews will write the letters “G-d” in order to avoid writing it out.

When Matthew writes “Kingdom of heaven” he's merely using the euphemism for the Kingdom of God that was in vogue at that time.

There is no distinction between the two kingdoms; they refer to the same thing; the rule, the dominion of God.

What we find in the Sermon on the Mount is *what* Jesus taught about the Kingdom of God as He traveled throughout Galilee preaching in the synagogues and where ever people gathered to listen to Him.

It's reasonable to conclude that since they had no printing press, no tapes or CD's, no print media at all, that what Jesus said in one place, He repeated in another, saying the same thing time and again so that the disciples who followed Him heard the same truths again and again and committed them to memory – which would be crucial, since when Jesus finished His mission in 3 years, they would be able to carry on.

So what we find in the Sermon on the Mount, constitutes the central essence of what Jesus taught about what it means to be in the Kingdom.

You see, it was crucial Jesus re-educate the people because they'd been led to believe some really goofy stuff about what the Kingdom of God was all about.

They'd been taught that the Kingdom of God was all about God's flaming judgment coming down on their enemies and their being set up as the rulers of the world.

In their scenario, the Jews would just replace the Romans and Rome would fall at the feet of Jerusalem.

The Messiah would be the One who would make all this happen.

In this coming kingdom, it would be those who'd shown the greatest devotion to the Law who would find the highest positions.

But devotion to the Law was reduced to nothing more than an exacting set of rules and regulations that governed one's external piety.

Motives meant little while exacting obedience meant everything.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus nukes this false view of righteousness and shows that character is *everything*.

V. 20 is the key to unlocking the Sermon on the Mount.

20For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds *the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.*

This would have caused those who heard Him to reel – no one was as righteous as the scribes & Pharisees; these guys were the absolute holy-men of the day and everyone expected that when the Messiah came, they would be His chief lieutenants.

Jesus said that you won't even *enter* the Kingdom unless your righteousness exceeds that of the supposed holy-men.

His point was that their righteousness was a sham; and the kingdom of God is about a righteousness that goes beyond the exterior to our very hearts.

So, Jesus goes up on a hillside, sits down, which was the posture a teacher would take when he began teaching, and when the disciples had gathered around them, He began to teach them . . .

2Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:

3 **“Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

4 **Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.**

5 **Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.**

6 **Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.**

7 **Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.**

8 **Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.**

9 **Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.**

10 **Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

11 **“Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. ¹²Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.**

Each of these deserves their own study and message, but we'll just summarize them tonight.

As you know, they're called the *beatitudes*, from the Latin word for *blessed*.

This word Jesus used, “blessed,” was a *powerful* word to those who heard Him that day.

To them it meant “divine joy & perfect happiness.” [\[1\]](#)

The word was rarely used to describe the human condition or what was possible for a mortal to enjoy.

It described the kind of joy experienced only by the gods or those who had passed beyond the trials and troubles of this life and had entered Paradise.

To be “blessed” meant to enjoy an inner satisfaction and sufficiency that did not depend on outward circumstances for *happiness*.

And this is why I don't like the way some of the modern English translations render this word as “*happy*.”

Blessedness far outstrips happiness; it's a joyous settled confidence that cannot be shaken.

And this is what the Lord offers those who trust Him in the beatitudes!

There are three basic mind-sets revealed here:

- 1) toward ourselves
- 2) toward God
- 3) toward the world

First, there's the way we see ourselves in vs. 3-5.

We begin by realizing that left to ourselves there is absolutely nothing to commend ourselves to God; we are spiritually bankrupt and bring nothing to Him except our NEED of Him.

Then, we experience sorrow and grief over the fact that we are broken & needy. We don't try to put a good face on our wretchedness or hide it behind a façade of self-righteousness – we simply admit our need with a sense of desperation.

Then, we humbly wait on the Lord to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves.
Second, there's the way we see God in vs. 6-8.

We realize He is the answer to our poverty, desperation, and weakness and begin to yearn for Him. He becomes the source of the mercy we need, and as we receive it, it begins to flow through us, washing us thoroughly of all of that which is impure.

Third, is the way we see and relate to the world in vs. 9-12

Finding ourselves at peace with God because of His abundant mercy, we become the agents of mercy and so work for peace among those still in need.

But the world doesn't like being shown it's true spiritual condition – its poverty before God, and will usually *grow hostile* toward those who've admitted their need and come to find the answer to that need IN the mercy of God.

It's interesting that all the rewards Jesus promised in vs. 3-12 are the things the scribes & Pharisees believed were going to be theirs when the Messiah came, by virtue of their outward piety alone. Jesus said these rewards are really the fruit of *inner righteousness*, of a character that isn't *self-righteous*, but simply sees its need and finds that need met by what *God* does, not what *we* do.

2. Salt & Light • 5:13-16

13“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

14“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. **15** Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are in the house*. **16** Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

These words reveal what happens to those who've entered into the Kingdom of God, those who've come under His dominion; they become like spiritual salt and light.

We use salt mostly as a condiment. But in the ancient world it was a precious commodity because besides being a flavoring, it was used as a *preservative*.

By salting food, they could remove the water from it and so reduce the rate of decay, Salt also acts as a natural anti-bacterial.

Since the process of making salt was so expensive, unscrupulous merchants would sometimes mix a cheap, flavorless white powder with it, diluting it and making it worthless.

Such compromised salt was good for nothing but to throw on the dirt path to act as a kind of weed retardant.

Jesus says that *His* followers, the one's whose lives are characterized by the blessedness identified in the beatitudes, are going to be like salt in this world.

They will act as a preservative that will resist the moral and spiritual decay of sin.

They will also add spice and color to life, showing to the world what true life really looks like.

But Jesus issues a warning – the salt can lose its flavor and effectiveness; it loses its power when it's *diluted*, when it's mixed with impure substances.

In the same way, His followers must be sure they don't compromise with the world, or they will end up being good for nothing.

Many good believers, people with incredible potential to make a dramatic impact for God, end up being put aside because of compromise, because instead of staying pure and true to the Lord, ended up yielding to some sin, some fleshly indulgence that ruined their effectiveness for the Lord.

Then Jesus likens His followers to light. It's the nature of light to shine. You don't light a lamp then hide it! The purpose of light is to *illuminate*.

Jesus says that God has set His people in this world to be spiritual light, showing the world what true life is all about and how to discover it for themselves.

Therefore, we must not hide away from the very thing we are here to do – *shine!*

We must not hide by surrendering our light to the darkness of evil.

And, when we shine, we must do so in a way that people are drawn to the real source of light, not the vessel it's coming through.

This is a Mag-Lite.

I love these flashlights. They are so shiny and solid and they just say, "Manly!"

But the whole purpose of this light is to provide *light*; really, if it doesn't do that, what's the point of it?

"This" is the way some religious people are – they *look* good, and they like to advertise their piety – the attention is on them!

The whole aim of the Christian ought to be on the *light*, on shining the light, on focusing the beam on Jesus, so that people see Him!

[Jesus]

[\[1\]](#) Wiersbe, Warren *Be Loyal*