

Lesson 4 – 22 August 2010

Instructions of the King

Lesson Scope: [Matthew 4:23 to 5:16](#).

Lesson Focus

The Sermon on the Mount records Christ's teaching to His disciples near the beginning of His public ministry in Galilee. This sermon was preached shortly after Herod had imprisoned John the Baptist. Matthew 4:17 indicates that the tone of Christ's preaching was very similar to John's.

The Sermon on the Mount embodies the essence of New Testament commandment much as the Ten Commandments of Mount Sinai embodied the essence of Old Testament Law. Jesus prepared His disciples to minister to the multitudes by sharing these foundational Gospel truths. The Beatitudes of today's lesson enumerate the beautiful characteristics of the citizen of Christ's kingdom and the ensuing blessings. There are many foundational principles for the Christian life in this lesson. Make these truths practical by showing that the true Christian is called to a life of self-denial and discipleship.

These practical areas distinguish the true Christian from those who say, "Lord, Lord," but do not obey His Word. This should challenge us to be sure we are among those who are doing the will of the Father and also emphasize the thought that it is possible to live the Sermon on the Mount when Christ is King of our lives.

Fulfillment in life comes through complete obedience to the commandments of God.

"Happy is that people, that is, in such a case: Yea, happy is that people, whose God is the LORD."

Lesson Aim: To see characteristics of the citizens of the heavenly kingdom.

Theme Verse: [Joshua 1:8](#). This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

Lesson Text

The Needs of the Multitude

Matthew 4:23-25

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. ²⁴And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them. ²⁵And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judaea, and from beyond Jordan.

Matthew 5:1

And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

The Nature of His Message

Matthew 5:2-12

And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, ³Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. ⁵Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. ⁶Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after 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 the children of God. ¹⁰Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. ¹²Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

The Influence of His Citizens

Matthew 5:13-16

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. ¹⁴Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in

the house. ¹⁶Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Questions for Study

The Needs of the Multitude

1. What do we understand from Jesus' ministering to physical needs as well as spiritual needs?
2. How should God's people keep their ministering to physical and spiritual needs balanced?

The Nature of His Message

3. What does it mean to be poor in spirit?
4. List some indications of a hunger and thirst for righteousness.
5. What attitudes are necessary to be merciful to our fellow men?
6. List some practical areas of peacemaking.

The Influence of His Citizens

7. List several results of Christians losing their saltiness.
8. What are some ways we should be letting our lights shine?

Analyzing the Passage

Jesus' ministry attracted many needy people. He desired to supply their spiritual need, but He also ministered to their physical needs. This helps us understand His compassion and His concern about all of life.

Blessed carries the idea of happy or fully satisfied. The noble characteristics of this passage are not optional. The citizens of Christ's kingdom possess all of these traits and, by God's grace, continue to grow in them. They are experienced as a package, similar to the fruit of the Spirit.

Principles and Applications

The Needs of the Multitude

1. Citizens of the kingdom pattern after Jesus, their leader, who ministered compassionately to all the needs of mankind (Matthew 4:23-25; 5: 1). Jesus, who had all power given unto Him, could minister perfectly to every need.

In our limited way, we also should try to be alert to the needs of those about us and to point them to the One who can meet every need.

The Nature of His Message

2. Those who acknowledge their need and receive salvation through Christ

gain entrance into God's kingdom (Matthew 5:3). Even though Christ died to save all mankind, His work is effective only for those who willingly open their lives to His work. Jesus knocks on the heart's door of all, but only those who willingly open the door can have fellowship with Him (Revelation 3:20).

3. Those who are truly, sorry for their sins receive the comfort of forgiveness (Matthew 5:4). True repentance includes this sorrow, as well as a turning, away from sin. A repentant attitude characterizes the Christian throughout life. We should never glory in our sinful past life. We should instead glory in the mercy of God that saved us from our sins. We need His continuing mercy to forgive us for our human weakness and shortcomings.

4. God's people humbly submit to Him and His plan for their lives (Matthew 5:5). Meekness indicates true wisdom. The meek person has ceased trying to control his own life. Even in the face of difficulty, Opposition, or persecution, the meek person says, "Not my will, but thine, be done."

The promise to the meek to inherit the earth begins in this life. As we surrender our lives to the Lord, we experience contentment and satisfaction.

5. God amply satisfies those who hunger and thirst after righteousness (Matthew 5:6). How is my desire for righteousness? Do I desire the teaching of the Word in my personal devotions and the preaching of the Word? Am I able to freely discuss the Word with my brethren? How do I apply the Word in my life? Am I really open to obey and not only to hear? How I answer these questions indicates how I desire righteousness.

6. God extends mercy to His children as they are merciful to their fellow men (Matthew 5:7). Our attitude toward those who may mistreat or offend us says much about our appreciation for God's forgiveness to us. "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" (Matthew 6:12). If we really want and appreciate God's forgiveness, we will readily forgive those who wrong us. If we are truly merciful to our fellow men in the church or otherwise, interpersonal relationships will improve.

7. Those who maintain pure hearts have a clear vision of God and will dwell with Him eternally (Matthew 5:8). Purity of heart refers to a heart where good is unmixed with evil. It is a heart that is single-minded in following what is right. One with a pure heart has motives only to please the Lord, not to secure the praise or approval of men.

8. God's children can be effective peacemakers because they have the

peace of God in their hearts (Matthew 5:9). Peacemaking may include the possibility of being misunderstood or rebuffed. "A soft answer turneth away wrath" (Proverbs 15:1). Whatever the situation, a peacemaker must truly be a child of God with the love of God and a desire for the welfare of others reigning in his heart.

9. Great eternal reward is promised to those who endure persecution for Christ's sake (Matthew 5:10-12). Second Timothy 3:12 indicates that all who are godly will suffer persecution. Even though that persecution may not include physical abuse, the true Christian will sometimes be opposed or contradicted. Giving a word of testimony, rebuking unbecoming language, or simply appearing in a consistent way before the world may incite such opposition. Am I willing to gladly endure such opposition?

The Influence of His Citizens

10. Christians are the preserving element of society (Matthew 5:13). As conservative, Bible-practicing Christians, we fill a very important place in our society. One of the reasons for the continuing decline in our society is the loss of conscience due to the apostasy and decline of many churches. May we never lose sight of our calling to point men to truth. As others observe and relate to us, they should be made God-conscious.

11. Heavenly citizens are ambassadors for Christ in this dark world (Matthew 5: 14-10). Christians do not really fit in this world, but are just passing through. However, while here, we have a very important role to fill. May we be faithful in pointing others to the light, that they may glorify God.

Important Teachings

1. Citizens of the kingdom pattern after Jesus, their leader, who ministered compassionately to all the needs of mankind (Matthew 4:23-25; 5:1).

2. Those who acknowledge their need and receive salvation through Christ gain entrance into God's kingdom (Matthew 5:3).

3. Those who are truly sorry for their sins receive the comfort of forgiveness (Matthew 5:4).

4. God's people humbly submit to Him and His plan for their lives (Matthew 5:5).

5. God amply satisfies those who hunger and thirst after righteousness (Matthew 5:6).

6. God extends mercy to his children as they are merciful to their fellow

men (Matthew 5:7).

7. Those who maintain pure hearts have a clear vision of God and will dwell with Him eternally (Matthew 5:8).

8. God's children can be effective peacemakers because they have the peace of God in their hearts (Matthew 5:9).

9. Great eternal reward is promised to those who endure persecution for Christ's sake (Matthew 5:10-12).

10. Christians are the preserving element of society (Matthew 5:13).

11. Heavenly citizens are ambassadors for Christ in this dark world (Matthew 5:14-16).

Answers to Questions

1. What do we understand from Jesus' ministering to physical needs as well as spiritual needs?

Jesus is concerned about all of life. He did not stop with the physical needs, but presented the answers to man's eternal, spiritual needs.

2. How should God's people keep the ministering to physical and spiritual needs balanced?

The primary ministry of God's people to the world is spiritual. We are called to preach the Gospel. The Gospel does have social implications, especially within the brotherhood (Galatians 6:10). There is certainly some place to do material good to others, especially when we see needs close to us.

3. What does it mean to be poor in spirit?

Those who are poor in spirit humbly recognize their need of salvation. They acknowledge their own inability to supply their needs. They continually come to the Lord and humbly ask for His direction in life with all readiness to follow Him.

4. List some indications of a hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Desire for the Word in personal devotions and preaching, seeking to know how to apply the Word and a readiness to make it practical in one's life, openness to the brotherly address, and a sincere desire to think through current issues facing the church indicate a hunger and thirst for righteousness.

5. What attitudes are necessary to be merciful to our fellow men?

Humility—low opinion of ourselves, thinking better of others than of ourselves.

Longsuffering—untiring effort.

Patience—forbearing.

Gentleness—being kindly disposed toward others.

6. List some practical areas of peacemaking.

Not reacting adversely to another driver's mistake on the highway, calmly helping quarreling children to relate properly, and giving a soft answer when someone is angry are practical areas of peacemaking.

7. List several results of Christians losing their saltiness.

They will lose their own salvation. The testimony they should be giving will be lost. They will give occasion for the enemies of God to blaspheme. Society will degenerate even further.

8. What are some ways we should be letting our lights shine?

Our lives should manifest a testimony consistent with truth. We should be ready to testify of what the Lord has done for us and what He can do for others. We should rebuke evident sin, reminding people of their personal accountability.

Summarizing the Lesson

I am a stranger here, within a foreign land;
My home is far away, upon a golden strand,
Ambassador to be of realms beyond the sea,
I'm here on business for my King.
My home is brighter far than Sharon's rosy plain,
Eternal life and joy throughout its vast domain;
My Sovereign bids me tell how mortals there may dwell,
And that's my business for my King.
—E. Taylor Cassel

Research Guide

1. Using a concordance, locate all the blessed's of the Book of Psalms, and observe how they relate to this lesson.

2. Read the "Beatitude Series" in the Eastern Mennonite Testimony (July 2008 to February 2009).