

The Gospel of Matthew

Title: The King's Message

Text: Matthew 5:1-2

INTRODUCTION: The sermon to be preached in these chapters were revolutionary truths to the hearers. And they have continued to explode in the minds of people for nearly two thousand years.

I. THE BIBLICAL CONTEXT

- a. His message was an affirmation of the OT message. The ending of the OT as found in Malachi 4:6 *"He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse."* The OT ends with a curse, the NT begins with a blessing.
- b. The OT demonstrates man's need for salvation and the NT offers it through the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus came to fulfill the law and began with a proper presentation of the OT law and shows man has no righteousness that can survive the scrutiny of God.
- c. Adam was given dominion over the earth, to subdue and rule it. He was the first king. But he fell soon after he began to rule. The NT begins with a sovereign King, who won't fall, who won't fail and will bring a blessing rather than a curse.

II. THE POLITICAL CONTEXT

- a. Most Jews expected the Messiah to be a military and political leader to subdue the Romans and establish a Jewish kingdom that would lead the world. Many wanted to make Jesus this king and in John 6:15 *"So Jesus, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone."*
- b. Jesus would address this with Pilate as well, John 18:36 *"My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."*
- c. The Sermon on the Mount is the work of internal not external, and spiritual not moral. We find no politics or social agenda in this text.
- d. The ideals and principles of the Sermon on the Mount are utterly in contrast to those of human societies and governments. In Christ's kingdom, the most exalted are the lowliest in the world's eyes. Weakness is strength. First is last. Jesus declared John the Baptist the greatest man to ever live until that time, Matthew 11:11 *"Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist!"* Yet, he had no possessions, no home, lived in the wilderness,

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dressed in a hair garment, and ate locust and wild honey. He wasn't a part of any religious system, had no financial means, military or political power. By the world's standards he was a failure. The world says, *"Avenge yourselves, be proud of yourself, elevate yourself, achieve all you can."*

III. THE RELIGIOUS CONTEXT

- a. The Pharisees - focused on divine laws and religious tradition.
- b. The Sadducees - religious liberals and discounted most things supernatural and modified by Scripture and tradition to fit their own philosophy.
- c. The Essenes - separatist, lived in obscure, remote barren areas.
- d. The Zealots - fanatical nationalist who thought the right religion centered in radical political activism.

The Pharisees said, "go back" the Sadducees said, "go ahead" the Essenes said, "go away" and the Zealots said, "go against." The message of the gospel to each:

- Pharisees, true spirituality is internal, not external
- Sadducees, God's way not man's
- Essenes, it's a matter of the heart, not the body
- Zealots, it's worship not revolution

The true message of the Sermon on the Mount is not about what one does in relation to tradition, ritual or philosophy. But it's a matter of the heart, how one behaves. Matthew 5:20 is vital to understanding the meaning of Christian behavior and a change of the heart, *"For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven."*

- e. The message of the Sermon on the Mount is that one must not find comfort in merely theology, separation or political activism, and certainly not in postmodern truth.
- f. External things flow from true internal changes. Reactions and behaviors that reflect a biblical view flow from a redeemed heart. 1 Samuel 16:7 *"But the Lord said to Samuel, Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."* Proverbs 4:23 *"Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life."* Cf. Luke 11:39-41

IV. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

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- a. It shows the absolute necessity of the new birth (one cannot keep God's standards alone, by himself).
- b. To drive the listener to Jesus Christ as man's only hope.
- c. The sermon gives God's pattern for true happiness and for true success. It reveals standards, objectives and motivations, that with God's help will fulfill what God has desired for you.
- d. The sermon provides the greatest resource for Christian testimony.
- e. The life obedient to the principals of this sermon is the only life that is pleasing to God.

V. THE PREACHER, THE STYLE AND THE CONTENT

- a. When He concluded people were amazed at His teaching, cf. Matthew 7:28-29.
- b. He quoted no sources, no ancient rabbis, no revered tradition, what He spoke He spoke of His own authority and that was unheard of as the Jews always spoke of other authorities.
- c. He sat down when He taught.
- d. He began to teach them, these characteristics should mark the life of a believer. Romans 12:2 "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

Conclusion: The Sermon on the Mount makes one things clear, internal changes bring external changes. When our attitude is right, it will bring about the actions that fall into place. Ephesians 2:10 "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."

The world's standards have often invaded and molded believers, they respond how the world would respond. It's infected the church. Christians are different, and our actions point to the one who delivers us from darkness and destruction.