

WHAT DID JESUS SAY? THE SERMON ON THE MOUNTAIN – Matthew 5:3-12

What does it mean to be a disciple? ASK

Being a disciple of Christ calls for us to habitually be changing into His likeness. How do we do that?

What does it mean to be a follower of Christ? Well, some people try to make it complicated, but really it comes down to this:

1. You study the teachings and life of Christ.
2. You try to put what you found in practice.

This means that every person who is a Christian, a follower of Christ, a disciple, if you will, should be studying the Words of Christ. Sometimes in your Bible these are the red letter words. Sometimes not. Sometimes Jesus' words are hard to understand. Sometimes not. Sometimes Jesus' words are easy to understand, but hard to live out. Sometimes the words are easy to live out, but we just don't want to. Our flesh gets in the way!

Being a follower of Christ means that you need to know what Jesus said intimately. You need to know what Jesus said like you know your loved ones. You need to know what He said, so that you can put it into practice.

This is why we are starting a sermon series on what Jesus said.

Did you know that Jesus preached on something called a "mount"? A mount is a raised elevation, a small fat hill, or in Spanish a "Cerro Gordo"? Jesus preached on a Cerro Gordo! In our Bibles, we call it the Sermon on the Mount, which you will find beginning at Matthew 5:1. **TURN THERE WITH ME.**

At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus took His disciples to a mountain retreat and drilled them in the fundamentals of Christian belief and behavior. He began His ministry by teaching them the basics. He wanted them to know that if they are to follow Him, then they need to live for Him. There is one theme that runs consistently through this entire section—Christ-followers are to think and act differently than the world around them. Jesus called them to live lives of integrity and realness. They were to be so good that they would be an alternative society that made goodness attractive.

Most people consider the Sermon on the Mount the most important words ever written down in Christianity.

The Sermon on the Mount has been seen: as the Magna Carta of the kingdom, the compendium of Christ's doctrine, the ordination address to the twelve, Jesus' preventive medicine, Jesus' design for living in the new age, an inaugural address, the manifesto of the king, the most searching and powerful utterance we possess concerning moral life, the lifestyle all Christians are to follow, the messages Jesus' disciples are to bring to the world, the summary of Christian morality, the character of kingdom people, a serious call to righteousness and discipleship, a summary of the repentant lifestyle, the Christian charter, community living taken seriously, ways to build the kind of community God desires, the ethical goal of every Christian, the ideal Christian life, counter-cultural living, Holy-Spirit filled living, and a curriculum of Christlikeness.

In other words, if I want to be a disciple of Christ, beginning here would be the place. If I want to study the words of Christ so I can live them, then starting with the Sermon on the Mount is the best place to start.

So let's start. The Sermon on the Mount begins with blessings. No opening joke, no warm and fuzzy illustration, and no personal story. Jesus begins with blessings. Matthew 5:3-12 talk about the attitudes of the heart that God blesses. These short sayings are called the beatitudes; they are a right mindset for the believer. What is a blessing? What does it mean when someone sneezes and you say "God bless you." What do you wish for them?

- ◇ Blessed has to do with happiness. When you bless someone, you are wanting them to be happy.
- ◇ Blessed has to do with being fortunate. When you bless someone, you are wanting them to be privileged. You want them to be lucky.
- ◇ Ultimately though, blessing someone has more to do with happiness and luck. Blessing someone means you want that person to be in God's favor. You want God to watch over this person and provide for this person. You want them to prosper because God is there for them.

When we read this, you should understand that Jesus is not listing eight different categories of people. He's talking about qualities that should be present in every disciple. These virtues should build on each other and become increasingly evident as we mature in the faith.

READ 5:3

What does it mean to be "poor in the spirit"? Jesus said that you are blessed if you recognize that you are spiritually impoverished. In other words, blessings to the person who recognizes his spiritual bankruptcy, because he is open to the reign of God in his life.

1. The first step in coming to God is recognizing that you are spiritually broke.

2. As long as we are prideful we are out of God's favor. We need to be like the Psalmist who said:

Psalm 40:17 (NLT) - *As for me, I am poor and needy, but the Lord is thinking about me right now. You are my helper and my savior. Do not delay, O my God.*

3. The more you come to know Christ, the more you will realize that you don't have it together, that you are poor in the spirit without Christ working in you. When you quit relying on your own goodness and you turn to God, that's when you receive His promises.

The Bible never said, "God helps those who helps themselves." That was Ben Franklin. Jesus said that "God helps those who can't help themselves."

Only when we admit our need for God, can God's kingdom flood our souls.

READ Matthew 5:4

Some interpret this as meaning that if you mourn for the loss of a loved one you will be consoled and feel better. Although that may be true, people may never get over the loss of a loved one. God offers to comfort the brokenhearted, but some refuse to be comforted.

Jesus is talking about a different kind of mourning. I think Jesus was speaking of mourning for our sin.

It's not enough just to be aware of spiritual poverty. There has to be a deep pain of regret because of sin.

Psalm 119:136 (NLT) - *Rivers of tears gush from my eyes because people disobey your law.*

We're told over and over in Scripture to repent of sin.

James 4:8-10 (NLT) - *Draw close to God, and God will draw close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, you hypocrites. Let there be tears for the wrong things you have done. Let there be sorrow and deep grief. Let there be sadness instead of laughter, and gloom instead of joy. When you bow down before the Lord and admit your dependence on him, he will lift you up and give you honor.*

Mourning our personal sin can help us draw close to God and move toward peace with Him.

Mourning ultimately means we are on our knees. We are brought to our knees by tears. We are brought to our knees by pain. Jesus is saying that the Church can only go forward on her knees. She cannot stumble when she is on her knees.

READ Matthew 5:5

What do you think of when you think of a meek person? You probably think of someone who is insecure, unassertive, and timid. Although we don't like the word meek very much, meekness does not mean "wimpy" in the Bible.

One Bible college professor said that "Meek is not weak in the Greek." It is a word that was used to talk about a horse that had been broken. Now, instead of running wild and bucking, the horse can be led or ridden with safety because its power and strength are under control.

The Biblical word 'meekness' means strength under control.

Jesus was not commending the timid and weak-willed. He was commending those who had surrendered their strong self-will to the authority of God in their lives.

The meek are accountable to God for everything they do. They are people who have genuine humility and submission to God.

We think the assertive, self-promoting people will get ahead. Jesus promised that in His kingdom the meek will inherit the leadership of the earth.

READ Matthew 5:6

What are you hungry for? We all hunger for something. Jesus said that we're blessed when we hunger and thirst for righteousness. Jesus said, "Blessings to the person who is starved to death and parched of throat for God's standards, because that person will be stuffed like a fattened calf."

What is it for which Jesus wants us to starve for? Righteousness. Righteousness means living the way God wants you to live. It means to conform one's life to God's standards, not the worlds.

Recently I have been learning to live with someone who cries when she is hungry. She craves and then makes it known that she is hungry! There is only one thing that will satisfy her and she won't stop fussing until she gets it. We are to hunger for righteousness in the same way.

The Christian is hungry for right living, walking with Christ, abiding in Christ learning more about Christ

Psalm 42:1-2 (NLT) - *As the deer pants for streams of water, so I long for you, O God. I thirst for God, the living God. When can I come and stand before him?*

When you feed on the things of God, there is an inner satisfaction that is not available anyplace else.

READ Matthew 5:7

Jesus basically wants you to be His hands and feet to the world. He said, "Blessings to the person who puts hands and feet to his empathy. That person will receive the kindness of others and be welcomed into heaven by the tender mercies of God."

One of the best ways to influence the world for Christ is to show mercy to the hurting.

Many unbelievers reject our message as being irrelevant and they accuse Christians of being hypocrites.

But there's one virtue that impresses the world: deeds of mercy to those who are hurting.

It ought to be 2nd nature for individual Christians to be merciful because we have received so much mercy

Ephesians 4:32 (NLT) - *Be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.*

A mercy filled life will show the world that we are truly following Christ!

READ Matthew 5:8

Seeing God is no small thing. The prophet Isaiah saw God and thought for sure that he was a goner.

Isaiah 6:5 (NLT) - *Then I said, "My destruction is sealed, for I am a sinful man and a member of a sinful race. Yet I have seen the King, the Lord Almighty!"*

When he saw the holiness of God, he realized that he was not holy at all. Here was a godly man who declared, "I am a sinful man and a member of a sinful race!" He realized he was not clean enough to see God.

How clean do you have to be to see God? How pure do you have to be to be in His presence? Well, more clean than you think.

When you wipe a counter-top which is better: just wiping it with a towel from the sink, or spraying it with a bleach agent and then using the towel? One is clean, the other is really clean! To see God, you have to be really clean!

You have to have clean hands and pure heart to really see the King of Glory.

The promise here is that we will have clean enough eyes to gaze on the weighty presence and shining brilliance of God!

READ Matthew 5:9

A peacemaker is a person who works with two parties who are at odds with one another. They try to bring them together.

Jesus is not saying here to be a peace-keeper. A “peace-keeper” tries to never rock the boat, and tries to make sure nothing gets out of hand. Christians are called to be a peacemaker by taking a stand for Jesus!

When you take a stand, sometimes things get out of hand!

Jesus is saying that blessings are for people who see the two parties and brings them together. What two parties? The sinner and God!

What can bring a sinner and God together? The blood of Christ!

Colossians 1:19-20 – For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

This means that God blesses those who try to bring others to God by bridging the gap between them and their Maker.

Jesus is saying, “blessings on those who share Christ with others.” Jesus is saying, “Blessings upon the person who aggressively works for everyone’s peace with God, because that person will be marked as being in God’s family.”

READ Matthew 5:10-12

Sometimes we’re mistreated, not because we’re righteous but because we’re obnoxious, hypocritical or dishonest ourselves.

Jesus said, ‘blessed are you when you are persecuted because of righteousness.

Sometimes when you are salt and light, you can be the victim of intense opposition.

But Jesus said if you are persecuted, “Rejoice and be glad” (v12). Rejoice and be glad for three reasons:

1. You’re in good company, that’s the way God’s prophets were treated.
2. Your reward in heaven will be greater.
3. When the world sees us respond with joy instead of anger, they will be attracted to Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, “Blessings to the person who gets hunted down for living Jesus’ standards, because he is open to the reign of God in his life.”

In each of these beatitudes, do you see how radical Christ wants you to be? You are to be totally different as a Christian in attitude and spirit from the world.

1. The world says, “Blessed are the rich, the proud, the self confident; they will get ahead.” Jesus said, “Blessed are the poor in Spirit; theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”
2. The world says, “Blessed are the funny, the charismatic, the light-hearted, the positive thinkers; they will be popular.” Jesus says, “Blessed are those who are genuinely sorry for their sins; I will comfort them with grace and forgiveness.”
3. The world says, “Blessed are the self-confident, the assertive, those who gain respect from people; they will be powerful.” Jesus said, “Blessed are the meek; they will inherit the earth.”
4. The world says, “Blessed are those who are hungry for success, the discontented Type A personalities who are ambitious to make their mark in the world,” but Jesus said, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness; they will be filled.”
5. The world says, “Blessed are those who step on the little guy. It is a dog-eat-dog world, so make sure you are the top-dog!” Jesus said, “blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.”
6. The world says, “Blessed are those who fill their lusts and desires. Follow your own heart. Satisfaction is where it is at!” Jesus said, “blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”
7. The world says, “Blessed are those who keep their faith to themselves. You don’t want to be too pushy.” Jesus said, “blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.”
8. The worlds says, “Blessed are those who go along with the flow and give in to the what the world around them want.” Jesus said, “blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

We have to decide whether we desire the applause of people or the nod of God. The applause of this world dies quickly, but the nod of God lasts forever.

#516 – *Just As I Am*