

Lesson 6: Review of Matthew 6 and 7: Sermon on the Mount, Part 2

The Sermon on the Mount has been called Jesus' Manifesto, meaning that this Sermon spelled out to His disciples exactly what the King of the Kingdom envisioned for those who would become citizens of that Kingdom.

The Sermon is not a demand to "do" everything covered in chapters 5-7, but rather to say that as a direct result of the excellencies of the King of the Kingdom the people of the Kingdom (followers of Jesus who have received Him as King through faith in His shed blood) would, by virtue of belonging to Him—that they would be "salt and light" in the world (5:13-16); that they would be the merciful (5:7), the peacemakers (5:9), the reconcilers in this dark world (5:23-24). These who are "born of God" through faith would be the "pure in heart" (5:8). These followers of Jesus would be the loving (5:43-48), the caring (6:1), the true worshipers of God (6:16-18), the unseen workers of good and the unheralded (6:3). They would become a people fixed on God and His holiness and His goodness and not on earth and its temporal nature.

With the coming of the Son of God the Kingdom of God was being established on earth as it is in the Heaven of God. God was initiating the colonization of earth as people were being transferred into the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ (Col. 1:13). So, here at the outset of His public ministry sows the Kingdom in seed form in the hearts of these close followers of Jesus.

Look at the issues raised in Matthew 6. Jesus asks the person who is following Jesus to make some observations.

First, He calls them to observe people who make a theatrical display of their "religious life" (6:1-18). He points out those who do their "acts of righteousness" (6:1-4), conduct the various spiritual disciplines—prayer, fasting, giving—for show, and are bankrupting themselves spiritually. He makes it clear that though people may be impressed by the show, God is not impressed. So, He contrasts the religious drama of "the hypocrites" with the quiet and humble attitudes and actions of people who are citizens of the Kingdom of God. These are the people who give secretly, pray secretly and fast secretly.

Second, He points out the futility of living a life geared toward accumulation of "all that the world has to offer" (6:19-34). He calls to His disciple's attention the person who spends their days storing up and banking on "stuff" of this world. In the end *that* "stuff" will pass away and come to nothing (6:19); the person will be bankrupt and as worthless in their soul as the junk that has corrupted (6:21). So, He cautions them to manage their allegiances: Be devoted to God.

What about a life consumed with "just getting by"? Matthew 6:25-34 is priceless. I don't think He's going after people that are obsessed with having more and more and more. I think He's calling His disciples to see that when it comes to priorities of life that God does indeed eclipse everything else. "Seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness and everything you need will be added to you." Prioritizing the Kingdom, Jesus indicates, means a life free of consuming worry and a life full of satisfaction in God.

Let's take a look at Matthew 7. Here He draws them to relationship—an intimate and close relationship with God, through Christ that is transformative, intimate, definite and substantial.

Transformative—Kingdom people are people who are enthralled with the love and forgiveness of God through Christ. Rather than judging and criticizing others they, instead are those who allow God to change them and grow them. Then if put in a place to help and counsel they will do so humbly and lovingly (7:4-5)

Intimate—Kingdom people will be a people who pray. Matthew 7:7-12 offers Jesus' vision for the prayers of His people. Jesus gives an open invitation to the disciples to simply pray (7:7-8)! He promises good from the Father in response to their prayers. Then He encourages them to love their others just as God has loved them (7:12). Why? Because Kingdom people reflect the generosity of the King of the Kingdom.

Definite—Jesus describes the permanency of the relationship. Kingdom people follow their King on a narrow but safe road. This narrow road is pin-point focused on the King of the Kingdom.

Substantial—A life built on and centered on Christ will be able to withstand the trials and tribulations of life. Kingdom people listen to the voice and "word" of their great King!

After He finished speaking the people were amazed because Jesus taught unlike any other teacher they had ever heard! No small wonder! This King was no ordinary King!

Questions for Matthew 8:1-17: "Of Sovereignty And Grace"

In Matthew 8:1-17 we see narrative stories of people who cast themselves upon the mercy of God. They saw Jesus, the Son of God, a man full of grace and truth. As you study this week consider what is your greatest spiritual need. Then, cast your cares, anxieties, longings, and needs upon Him and receive from Him grace and mercy!

1. From the notes on page 1, **A)** what impressed and/or helped you? **B)** Explain "A".

2. Read Matthew 8:1-4. **A)** What do you learn about the kind of life a person with leprosy might lead, from Leviticus 13:45? **B)** Do some research online, what are one or two things you learn about leprosy? **C)** Write down what you observe about the leprosy man from verse 2. What did he do? What did he say? What did he believe? **D)** What does his request of Jesus tell you about his assessment of his own situation? **E)** Jesus acknowledged the man. What did Jesus say? What did Jesus do? **F)** How complete was the man's healing? What did Jesus ask the man to do to confirm his healing? **G)** Give your thoughts on the following statement: The leprosy man's physical circumstance is a good illustration of our spiritual condition before God.

3. Read Matthew 8:5-13. By the way, a Roman Centurion, like the leper, is the epitome of despised people in Israel. He was Roman and a Gentile. **A)** What title does the Centurion ascribe to Jesus that indicates his humility before Jesus? (see 8:6) **B)** Look again at verse 6. What do you learn about the kind of man the centurion was based on his statement about his servant? **C)** Find the statement by the Centurion which indicates true faith in Jesus' ability to heal his servant. **D)** How does the Centurion's statement in 8:9 impress you? Why?

4. Read Matthew 8:14-17. We see Jesus heal Peter's mother-in-law and do wonderful works in the community of Capernaum. **A)** Who initiated the healing of Peter's mother-in-law? **B)** What qualities in Jesus do you think the villagers of Capernaum recognized that moved them to bring the sick to Him for healing? **C)** Reflect back on the events depicted in 8:1-17. Did Jesus actually heal the people we read about, or did He simply declare them "clean" and "healed"? **D)** Read 8:17. This is an important verse. How would you apply this verse to the "touching" and "healing" of the leper? How would you relate this to the healing of Peter's mother-in-law? How about the healing of the people from Capernaum? **E)** What inference can be made, then, when you think about Jesus dying on the cross for sinners? For you?