

# Authentic Christians

Lesson 1 – Matthew 5:1-12

1. “Thank you” to Duane Anderson for filling in these last 6-weeks (*What a humble servant of the Lord!*)
2. We will be diving into the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5-7) over these next few weeks – why?
  - We have the essence of our Christian life (the divine standard of righteousness) explained by Christ in the SOTM
  - We will deal with some very practical applications of biblical truth (bad attitudes, heart issues, worry, divorce, prayer, dealing with enemies, materialism, etc.)
  - We will discover those attitudes and actions that God favors or “blesses”
  - We will (hopefully) become better husbands, wives, parents, employees, employers, church members, people
3. What do you know about the SOTM? (*Some possible suggestions ...*)
  - Preached/taught on a mountain – mountain is unknown, but probably in Galilee around Capernaum (Mt. 4:23, Luke 6:17)
  - Preached to a multitude of followers – Luke says Jesus had just chosen his 12 disciples and then came to the place of the sermon when he spoke (Luke 6:12-19); Jesus had left Judea for Galilee and had been teaching and healing many
  - Recorded in Luke 6 as well – Luke fills in a few more details (6:20-38)
  - Theme is the “kingdom of heaven” – the first section (5:3-12) until the last section (7:21-27) is about the kingdom Christ was offering (See Mt. 4:23); more about that later
  - Contains some of the most well-known portions of Scripture – Beatitudes (5:3-12), believers as salt & light (5:13-16), turn the other cheek (5:39), love your enemies (5:44), Lord’s Prayer (6:9-13), lay up treasure in heaven (6:19-21), don’t worry (6:25), don’t judge (7:1), ask/seek/knock (7:8), broad & narrow gate (7:13-14), “I never knew you” (7:21-23), and the house on the rock (7:24-25).
  - Speaks of both internal spirituality and external behavior – the “heart” (5:8, 5:28, 6:21) is the motivator of the “hand”(5:21-30)
  - Sermon directed toward disciples (believers), not unbelievers – the teaching is not meant to outline the means to eternal life/salvation, but to reveal the nature and behavior of those who are truly and genuinely saved (a disciple of Christ)
4. Initial Observations:
  - **Kingdom of Heaven**
    - 33 occurrences in the NT (all in Matthew)

*Ask for volunteers to read these verses: 3:2, 8:11, 18:1-3, 19:23, and 23:13*

- *“This is an expression unique to Matthew’s gospel. Matthew uses the word “heaven” as a euphem-*

*ism for God's name—to accommodate his Jewish readers' sensitivities (cf. 23:22). Throughout the rest of Scripture, the kingdom is called "the kingdom of God." Both expressions refer to the sphere of God's dominion over those who belong to Him. The kingdom is now manifest in heaven's spiritual rule over the hearts of believers (Lk 17:21); and one day it will be established in a literal earthly kingdom (Rev 20:4–6)." (John MacArthur, NASB Study Bible, Mt. 3:2)*

- 71 occurrences of "kingdom of God" in the NT (5 in Matthew, 15 in Mark, 33 in Luke, 2 in John – both used in interview with Nicodemus)

*Ask for volunteers to read these verses: Mt. 6:33, Lk. 13:18-19, John 3:3-5, 1 Cor. 6:9-11, and Rev. 12:10*

- The idea behind "kingdom of heaven" is *dominion* or *reign*; although there will be a real, physical kingdom of God in the future for Israel and all true believers, this dispensation of grace is allowed to "taste" the dominion of God or the reign of God in the heart of believers.
- Beatitudes (5:3-12)
  - The word "beatitude" comes from the Latin word *beatus*, which roughly translated means "filled with blessedness" or "supremely blessed".

*"Happy" is a poor substitute for "blessed" – why?*

- The word "blessed" has the idea of **divine approval** and because of that divine approval, the person is content, happy, satisfied. (See Psalm 1)
- The structure begins (vs. 3) and ends (vs. 10) with the present tense (the kingdom is present **NOW**), but the middle six (5:4-9) use a future tense (the kingdom is **FUTURE**).
- The beatitudes use a literary form called *inclusio* (used for entire SOTM) which forms the bookends to the section – the beginning and end speaks of the kingdom God is (and will be) establishing, thus everything between the two bookends support the same theme.

## 5. The First Two Beatitudes

- **"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (5:3)**
  - Other versions: "God blesses those people who depend only on him. They belong to the kingdom of heaven!" (CEV) or "God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs." (NLT) ... *not exactly the point* ...
  - "Poor" is one who is *destitute* or *poverty stricken*; the complete absence of wealth (as measured by one's surroundings – wealth in one country is different than wealth in another).

*Luke only uses the word “poor” (not the phrase “poor in spirit”) which has caused some to equate material poverty with spiritual piety; what are the spiritual risks of both financial poverty and financial prosperity? Why do you think some see poverty as a greater spiritual blessing?*

- Someone “poor in spirit” is one who is completely and utterly bankrupt spiritually; it is illustrated by the tax collector who said “God, be merciful to me, a sinner!” (Lk. 18:13)

*What’s the difference between self-hatred or low self-esteem and being “poor in spirit”?*

*“It is not a man’s confession that he is ontologically insignificant, or personally without value, for such would be untrue; it is, rather, a confession that he is sinful and rebellious and utterly without moral virtues adequate to commend him to God ... poverty of spirit becomes a general confession of a man’s need for God, a humble admission of impotence without him.” (D. A. Carson, Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, pg. 18)*

*What are the implications of this beatitude on evangelism? ( ... the kingdom of heaven is composed exclusively of those who admit their spiritual bankruptcy)*

*What are the implications of this beatitude on our own discipleship? ( ... the kingdom of heaven is composed exclusively of those who depend fully on God’s grace)*

- **“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.” (5:4)**

- This verse follows naturally from spiritual poverty – recognition of spiritual impotence and bankruptcy leads to spiritual grief. (See James 4:9)
- The best illustrations are Isaiah when he faced the holiness of God (Isa. 6:1-5) and Paul when confronted with his inability to eliminate sin from his thoughts and behavior (Rom. 7:14-24).

*There is a connection between the first two beatitudes and Isa. 61:1-3 – what is the connection, and why didn’t Jesus finish his quotation of this passage in Lk. 4:16-21?*

*What can be done to help us develop a mournful attitude toward sin? Anything?*

*What is the opposite of mourning over sin? What does a lack of mourning signify?*

*A mournful attitude toward sin is a true characteristic of repentance (2 Cor. 7:9-10); since it is, what can be done to increase our own sorrow over sin and the sorrow over sin we strive to produce in our children?*

- The focus of this beatitude is on the hope provided (“they shall be comforted”) – in essence, we

- are free to mourn over spiritual bankruptcy because (“for”) comfort will come in the future.
- In essence, the mourners are “blessed” (fully satisfied because God approves of them, happy) due to their confidence that comfort WILL come in the future.

*For whom does God provide/promise spiritual comfort? (See John 14:23-27 and Rom. 8 – comfort could come through a sanctified heart that is evidenced in godly obedience)*

*What comfort is sufficient and available for those who mourns over their spiritual bankruptcy? (comfort will also come through contemplating the cross, the Gospel, God’s grace, heaven)*

- See Philippians 1:6 & 2:13 – God works to rectify our sinful heart, thus providing comfort to the believer who mourns over his/her sin.

*No harvest is final until death ... comforting thought!*