

Sermon on the Mount Part II

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[0 : 0 0] chapter 5, where we are just getting underway with the Sermon on the Mount. And you will forgive me, I trust, but I do not recall whether I told you two weeks ago when I was last here in the pulpit that we would open with a Q&A; regarding the subject of the Kingdom of Heaven.

I don't remember whether I said that or not. Did I? You don't know either, do you? Did I?

I did. Okay. Well, I don't want to renege on that, but I don't know whether you are prepared with any questions. And none were dropped in the offering box, to my knowledge, that were passed on to me.

So if there are questions, and we're going to be on this subject for several weeks, but if there are questions that could use some clarification, I would be happy to attempt to provide it now.

So if there is, do we have a roving mic back there? There may be.

[1 : 0 8] Are there any questions in connection with what we taught a couple of weeks ago? Remember, it was some pretty heavy stuff. I do recall that.

Okay. Well, I'll do my best to try to allow some time for Q&A; at the end of this session, but I haven't been very good at that. But my former wife, to whom I was married for almost 50 years, had instructions that I haven't given Marie, so I'm going to give them to you now, Marie.

Okay. And that is, and Barb would sit right back there about where Lynette is now, and when I was nearing the end of my message, or should have been nearing it, Her Majesty would go.

And I would get the message. So, Marie, my dear wife of these, what, five months? You have my permission to give me the, when it's time for Q&A;, okay?

But don't let Betty tell you when it's time is. That's okay. All right. All right. I do seriously want to allow, because we're dealing with a very controversial and frequently misunderstood subject of the Sermon on the Mount.

[2 : 3 7] And it has everything to do with the subject of the kingdom of heaven. That is the burden of the whole message. In fact, I have already labeled the subject of the kingdom of heaven is the reasons for everything, or where the world is going.

We are not living in a circular world or existence. We are living in a linear one. That means there was a point of beginning, and there will be a point of conclusion.

The world is going somewhere. We are now in transit. We are also on a detour. And this detour involves the times of the Gentiles and the dispensation of the grace of God.

The detour involves the insertion of the body of Christ, the church, which is Christ's body, that is not a subject of prophecy at all, is not found in the Old Testament.

Nobody would have ever thought of it. And it just seemingly came out of nowhere. So that's what we are dealing with, and it is a very complex issue. But it is one that is understandable, and we are doing our best to get a handle on it.

[3 : 51] We noted the three primary meanings of the term the kingdom of heaven. And I would just say, first of all, we are equating the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God and declaring them to be synonymous.

They are both referred to many, many times, and they are both used in the same kind of setting where it is undeniable that they are one and the same. Sometimes in the Bible, the word heaven is used as a synonym for the name of God.

And this goes all the way back to the early Hebrews, who lost the pronunciation for the name of Yahweh or Jehovah or Lord, as it is translated in the Old Testament.

And the reason they did was because in the commandments they are told, of course, not to use the name of the Lord their God in vain. And it came to be a problem with ancient Jewry, who were so exercised and so concerned that they might use the name of God in a way that would be in vain, that they decided to stop using it at all.

And if you never use the name, you can't use it in vain. So this they did as a kind of protective hedge to keep them from saying something that they shouldn't say.

[5 : 11] And that gave rise to their actually losing the way of pronouncing the name of deity. It is the tetragrammaton or the four letters that without vowels, because Hebrew has no vowels in it, and without vowels and working only with consonants, it's a very difficult name to pronounce.

But as close as we can come as Yahweh, and it would be spelled Y-A-H-W-E-H, Yahweh or Yahweh. And that's probably close, but we don't know exactly how that name is pronounced.

So sometimes the Jews would use the name heaven instead of using the name for God. Remember when the prodigal returned from the pigsty, he came home and he said, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight.

And that's what he means. He means God, but he wouldn't say the word. And even today, when we say things like heaven only knows, we're actually talking about God.

So the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven are really one and the same. And if you compare the places where they're used in the Gospels, I think it becomes very apparent. And in our message of a few weeks ago, we told you that the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God is literally what everything is all about.

[6 : 35] And that's where we're going. Because as Peter made it very clear in Acts chapter 2 and in Acts chapter 3 again, that Christ has returned. Christ has ascended to heaven.

And he says, Whom heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things or the restoration of all things. So Christ is now in heaven waiting for that time when it is designated that he will return.

And when he returns, he will set in motion those things that will result in the establishment of the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God come to earth.

Part of the confusion has to do with calling the term kingdom of heaven and heaven the abode of God. The words are the same.

And a lot of people think that the kingdom of heaven means the place where God dwells. The throne room of the almighty, if you will, in the heaven of the heavens removed.

[7 : 44] But it's not so. There is a heaven where God dwells, where God's throne is. The apostle Paul said he was caught up into the third heaven, apparently being the residential place of God almighty.

But the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God is the rule and reign of God in heaven brought to earth. And this isn't it.

We are not now living in it. When that kingdom is established on the earth, then, then the earth will be restored to its original pristine beauty and war will be known no more.

Injustice will be known no more. All the things that are wrong with this present fallen world, all of the evil and disease and injustice and heartache and adversity, all of those things will be done away.

But we all know that's not the reality now. Yet, that is what Jesus Christ came to provide. And John the baptizer, who was the second cousin of Jesus, made that his principal message.

[8 : 59] And he began preaching, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And what that meant was, folks, that which God promised 4,000 years ago, when everything got messed up by our first parents, whose first child turned out to be a murderer, all of these wrongs are going to be fixed.

And when John came on the scene, John the baptizer came on the scene and preached that message, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

John was saying, in effect, folks, this is it. It is right around the corner. We are so close to that time of restitution and restoration being realized here on earth.

We are so close. The kingdom of heaven is at hand. It means it's very near. He didn't say the kingdom of heaven is here. This is it. He never said that. Don't try to read that into it.

He said it's close by. It is at hand. It is next. It is the upcoming thing. But it never happened.

[10 : 16] It never was realized. Now, please don't make the mistake of thinking that God wasn't big enough or wise enough to fulfill his game plan.

But God, in his grace and in his mercy and in his wisdom, has chosen to use human instrumentality to bring about his ultimate plan.

He uses people. This goes all the way back to Adam, goes all the way back to Noah, goes all the way back to Abraham. God uses people. God has never been in a position where he needed to use people.

But God is in a position where he chooses to use people. He graciously involves people in his plan and program. Not out of necessity. Not out of, who can I get to do this for me?

God can do anything he wants to. In fact, he doesn't even have to snap his fingers. He just wills it. And it can be done. But we read so often that he is pleased to use fallen human beings to accomplish his end.

[11 : 18] And he's chosen to use Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their seed through whom he is going to realize this ultimate kingdom of heaven.

And it is all going to come through that line. It's called the Messianic line. You go to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And they are sons and grandsons and grandfathers. And then with Jacob, the twelve tribes.

And then on down through. Go another thousand years. And then in the tribe of Judah, you come to a man by the name of David. He is the king.

First king of Israel. The first king in the line of Judah of Israel succeeded Benjamin. Saul from the tribe of Benjamin. And then you go another thousand years and you arrive at Yeshua HaMashiach.

Jesus the Messiah. And he is the one in whom God has vested everything. It's all wrapped up in him. He is going to be the one who will usher in the kingdom.

[12 : 25] And that's what John is talking about. John says, Repent. The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Everybody, get ready. And repent of your sin and be baptized.

And they were going to be baptized as a nation of priests because John wasn't asking anybody. Although John was a Levite. And his mother and father were Levites. They were from the priestly tribe.

John never said, Well, I can't baptize you if you're not from the tribe of Levi. Didn't make any difference because God had already made clear back in Exodus 19 that he was going to make the whole nation of Israel a nation of priests.

And they were to fulfill priestly functions for all the other nations of the world. So, long story short, God is going to rectify sin and evil and all of the things that need to be fixed.

And he is going to do it through the nation of Israel and one man of that one nation of Israel, Jesus Christ. When that kingdom is established, everything will be as it ought to be.

[13 : 29] And it isn't now. So, you can see, if you understand this, why these people of Israel were so elated and excited. They were jumping for joy.

And they came from miles and miles around to be baptized of John, signifying their belief in the soon coming of that kingdom and their preparation for it. They were getting ready for God to do his thing.

And God was going to do his thing through his chosen servant, Jesus. Jesus, the Messiah, the Anointed One. So, why didn't it happen?

Why did he end up on a cross? Again, long story short, two things have to happen before the kingdom of God can be established. Two things have to happen.

And as far as I know, only two. And the first is, there has to be a balancing of the divine scales of heaven.

[14 : 35] Because when sin entered, everything got thrown out of kilter. Everything became dispossessed.

Everything became upset. Everything became ruined. It's called the fall. And there had to be some way of balancing the divine scales of justice so as to allow God to remove the curse that he put on the earth because of sin.

You see, all actions have consequences. Good or bad. And the fall had bad consequences. There has to be something done to right the ship.

To straighten things out. God cannot just look the other way and say, well, people will be people. Cut them some slack. No, no, no. You wouldn't allow an earthly judge to do that.

And you can't allow the judge of all to do that. God requires justice. The scales must be balanced. And when Jesus Christ died on that cross, that's exactly what he did.

[15 : 49] He balanced the scales. He was the innocent dying in the stead of the guilty. And he was the qualified one to do it. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.

Wow! That's who Jesus Christ is. So, God has done his part.

And Peter as much as told the Jews that in Acts chapter 3, the things which God has promised through the hand of his Messiah, Jesus, he has thus fulfilled.

In other words, Peter is telling the nation of Israel, God did his part. His Messiah died on that cross. Now it's up to you to do your part. And what was Israel's part?

You need to repent of your sin. That means you reverse yourself, you change your mind because of the information you've been given. You admit that you were wrong in crucifying the Savior, Savior, and you embrace him as your Savior, and you be baptized in his name to identify with him.

[17 : 00] And if you do that, this is all in Acts 3, if you do that, God will send him back and resume this business with the kingdom. Israel didn't do it. They rejected.

They rejected Christ before he was crucified. They rejected him after he was crucified. And in case you're not aware of it, Israel rejects him today.

They are in a mode of rejection. So, you've got to keep all of these things about the kingdom of heaven in mind when you come to this text called the Sermon on the Mount.

So, let's open it up here. Matthew chapter 5, and I must begin with chapter 4 and verse 23 to lead into it.

So, let's do that. Let's go first, Matthew 4 and verse 23. Jesus was going about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom.

[18 : 00] Same thing that John the Baptist preached. And healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people. And why was he doing that? Because these conditions, sickness, disease, all of this stuff, that's not going to exist in the kingdom.

It's going to be eliminated. It's very much with us now. But it's going to be eliminated then. So, when Jesus Christ came and was presented by John as the Messiah, the long awaited promised one, God's fix-it man, who's going to reverse the curse and bring the kingdom of heaven to earth, where it's going to be peace and joy and life and light forevermore, if that's who he is, he better have some way of proving it.

And that's what the miracles are all about. The miracles that Christ performed were all designed to be his credentials. They were his way of proving that he was who he said he was and that he was who John the Baptist said he was.

Because in the kingdom, these conditions are not going to exist. And you read Isaiah and we read that the desert will blossom like a rose and that the lame man will leap like a deer and that the deaf will have their ears opened and the blind will see and the lame will walk.

That's going to be utopia. That's going to be paradise. Yes, it is. And if Jesus is really the king and the Messiah, he ought to be able to do something like that.

[19 : 40] That's what he did. Everywhere he went, he took the kingdom of heaven with him in miniature. And he produced kingdom conditions. And when he was out on that ship with his disciples and that tremendous storm came up, in fact, that storm was so bad that these seasoned fishermen who were used to spending hours on that lake because that was their livelihood, they were scared.

And all our Lord did was say, peace, be still. And the wind and the waves obey him. And Peter looked at him and said, what manner of man is this?

Who is this with us here in this boat? You just don't do those things. Say, peace, be still, and the wind stops and the waves stop and everything is calm.

What is this? that was the Messiah in action. Now we deal with hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes.

I read just yesterday, today, this huge sinkhole in Florida just gave way, and this man in his bedroom is swallowed up by this thing, just like that.

[21 : 04] All at once, the ground is gone, and he was buried alive. And these are possibilities, and it's not the first time it's occurred, it's all overflow, all kinds of things. We call them natural phenomena, some call them acts of God, that's what your insurance company calls it.

By the way, it's not covered in the fine print. wasn't it Mark Twain used to say, the fine print is never good news, and it isn't.

All these natural, we call them natural disasters, there aren't going to be any natural disasters when the kingdom of heaven has come. There won't be any devastating tornadoes or earthquakes, because they will all be in cooperation.

They will all be serving man. Today, they can be devastating. So, Christ exercised power over the elements, he exercised power over disease, he even exercised power over death itself.

Wow. No one ever liked this man. So, he was gathering quite a crowd, and can you not understand, you know, we have people today who claim to have the gift of healing.

[22 : 25] And they have big crowds, all huge crowds, and they have piles of crutches and wheelchairs at her side. People get all frenzied and involved and encouraged, and they bring their loved ones who've got cancer, and he puts his hands on them and slays them, and they fall back, and all the rest of it.

It's a bunch of baloney. But desperate people eat it up. When the doctor says, you've got six months, and there's nothing we can do, you figure, what's the harm?

Might as well try, you know. And that's the way these people traffic. Can you imagine what would happen? Okay, here's your pastor.

I've got the gift of healing. So, Betty, you've had some real problems with your foot, haven't you? I can just come down there and touch that. You'd feel this warm sensation go through your foot. And then you'd stand up and do it.

You know, one of Betty's favorite things on the many cruises she's taking is dancing. She's got dancing feet. You know what? Not so much anymore.

[23 : 36] Not at all. But if I could fix that, and then anybody else got a problem? I'll feel you put hands on it. And if I went around doing, can you imagine the crowd I would draw in pretty short order?

Doesn't everybody have some kind of an ache, a pain, a joint, a condition, and boy, I've got my own. I'd start with me and my oncoming arthritis.

It's not at all welcome, but is here. You know, it's probably going to get worse as time goes on. Can you imagine the crowd that I would gather? I mean, it would be legitimate. First thing I'd do is head for the hospital.

I'd just empty that place. I'd just go from room to room and get up out of here and forget about the discharge paper, just leave, go on and get in the car and drive home. Wouldn't that be something? You say, well, that is really far-fetched.

Well, of course it's far-fetched. It's supernatural. That's what it is. I don't do that. So, the news about him went through all Syria and they brought to him all who were ill, taken with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics, and he healed them.

[24 : 51] And there's no indication that Jesus ever went to heal somebody who was deaf or lame, and he says, boy, I hope this works.

There was never any of that. He just did it. He just did it. He was in complete, absolute control of everything. Great multitudes followed him from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan.

And when he saw the multitudes, we're in chapter 5 now, when he saw the multitudes, he went up on the mountain and after he sat down, his disciples came to him.

Now, I don't want to be guilty of reading something into the white spaces that isn't here, but I think the text is suggesting or the context is suggesting that when he saw the multitudes, he apparently was trying to get away, to gain some distance, some relief, because wherever he went, people were constantly tugging on him, asking for this and asking for that.

and he was so gracious in accommodating him, but you know, in his humanity, he had to rest. On more than one occasion, he told his apostles, let us come aside and rest a while, because in his humanity, he needed reinvigorated, he needed some seclusion, he needed some time alone, he needed some space.

[26 : 34] So, he went up on the mountain, perhaps thinking that they won't come up here. But after he sat down, his disciples came to him.

Now, who are the disciples? The word disciple in the Greek simply means a learner or a follower. And although we always associate the term with something religious, it doesn't necessarily have to be, because the word disciple was around long before Jesus ever came on the scene.

Moses had disciples, Adolf Hitler had disciples. Karl Marx had disciples. It doesn't mean anything good or bad, it just means one who follows another or is a learner after another.

So, different philosophers, Aristotle had disciples, Plato had disciples. All it means is somebody who signs on with them wants to learn from them and benefit from their wisdom.

Disciples, some of his disciples are later going to be elevated by our Lord to the position of apostle. So, while all apostles were disciples, not all disciples were apostles.

[27 : 40] Now, his disciples came to him. These are people who are already on board. They are already committed to Jesus as to who he is, and they've thrown in their lot to following him.

Many of these people who are constituting these great crowds have questions about him. They're not sure. They don't know whether he's the Messiah. They're seeking more information.

But these who are disciples are those who are already with him. And note, if you will, that his disciples came to him. Now, that kind of limits the crowd. But if you keep that in mind and then come over to the end of the Sermon on the Mount, which is Matthew chapter 7, just a little bit, a couple of pages away, we read at the conclusion of it, verse 28, the result was that when Jesus finished these words, what words?

The words in chapters 5, 6, and 7, the Sermon on the Mount. When Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were amazed at his teaching.

Now, the only thing that we can conclude is that there were huge multitudes pressing pressing upon him, and he went up some distance on this mountain to get away from the throng of people.

[29 : 00] And as he did, his disciples came with him, and they are the only ones there when he begins teaching this content that we call the Sermon on the Mount.

But, when we read at the conclusion of the sermon that there is a great multitude there, the only thing we can conclude is that as Jesus was speaking, the crowd was growing, and more and more people were coming, making their way up that hill.

Boy, I don't blame them. You'd be crazy not to try to take that in. And they are coming up the hill, so that when he finishes the sermon, instead of just his disciples being there, there's a huge throng of people.

Now, I don't know if the place that we visited thereby the Lake of Galilee was the actual place or not, but it seems to fit the description because it is a kind of a mountain, but as you go halfway up this mountain, there is a large plateau like that just is more level and inviting, and it could very well be that may have been the very spot that would accommodate a huge number of people there on a kind of a semi-mesa for the mountain that they were on.

So, the text concludes then in verse 29 saying, for Jesus he was teaching them as one having authority and not as their scribes.

[30 : 30] Now, you know, it's very easy to read over that and not see what's involved at all, but this is a tremendous statement, very significant. As the scribes taught, about all they ever did was quote, the other rabbis and the other authorities who had left writings behind and had gone on before.

Jesus didn't do that. The only thing he quoted was the scriptures, the Old Testament. And when it says that he taught as one having authority, that too outstripped anything that the scribes and elders were teaching because they always cited others as their authority.

and they would very often say, Rabbi so and so wrote or said or thus and so. You know what Jesus said? Jesus said, you have heard that it hath been said, but I say unto you, well, who are you?

That was the key. That's what struck these people as so different. He spoke with himself being the authority.

Nobody taught that way. But he did. Because he was the authority. And more and more of them were recognizing that. And this is one of the things, of course, that really got him in hot water with the religious establishment.

[32 : 04] Because he spoke, he commanded authority, listening, respect. And they were jealous of him. And they were threatened by him.

Because he spoke raw, pure truth. He exposed hypocrisy. He exposed their evil.

He exposed all of these things. And they made them very, very uncomfortable. He was teaching them as one having authority and not as their scribes. Now, let's come back to chapter 5.

We'll get in at least a few verses. Here, in this Sermon on the Mount, Christ is addressing his disciples, referred to in 5.1.

The number will have increased considerably by the time it closes. And we'll just read a few of them to kind of establish the flavor. All right, let's just begin with verse 3.

[33 : 03] Jesus said, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. There's that term. You see that? Kingdom of heaven? Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Are these things that he was telling his disciples to strive for? No. He's not telling them to strive for these things.

He is acknowledging that this is what they are. They are these things. And the reason they are these things is because they are his disciples.

They are simply reflecting the character and quality of our Lord himself in his daily activities, in his attitude, in his demeanor. They had signed on. They are with him.

[34 : 03] And they are reflecting these characteristics. So when he says in verse 3, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

The poor in spirit are those who are impoverished in their real person and they know it. The difference for most people is, you know, everybody tends to be impoverished in their spirit.

But not all of them know it. And those who know it are well-advantaged. That's what the word blessed here means. It's makarios in the Greek and it means fortunate.

Fortunate or happy or well-advantaged. In other words, if you are blessed in the context of the Sermon on the Mount, you've got a lot going for you.

And he is acknowledging that for his disciples. These people are the salt of the earth. Christ is going to call them that. He's going to call them the light of the world because they were.

[35 : 16] And the reason they were was because they were his disciples. And being his disciples, they wanted to be like him because there's nothing that a student wants more than to be like his teacher.

Assuming he respects and admires his teacher. And if he doesn't, you've got to find another teacher. And when Jesus says, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven, he means they own it.

That's going to be theirs. Theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Now, I want you to notice something, and it's very subtle. he says, theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

But in all of those that follow, it's shall. And that's speaking the future. And there is a real distinction here. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Those who are poor in spirit are simply those who know they are spiritually deficient. They are impoverished. I feel that way all the time.

[36 : 26] I don't know about you. But I sense a real lack, a real longing in my spirit, in the inner person, where the real Marv lives.

There is a quest, a search, a desire for more. a feeling of inadequacy, insufficiency.

And I consider that to be blessed. Because you know why? Only when you sense that will you do something about it. The people who are the worst off of all are those who are not poor in spirit and they don't even know it.

They don't even know it. Truth be told, we are all severely lacking. Can you honestly acknowledge that?

Or do you somehow think you are it? It? We are all so much less than we think we are.

[37 : 42] We are all so much less worthy than we think we are. more. But if you sense that, if you know that, then it will point you in the right direction.

But if we are coming from a spirit of self sufficiency and adequacy and I don't need anything or anybody and all of this kind of nonsense, we are of all people most miserable.

Happy is the man. Blessed is the man who is poor in spirit and knows it. It's in a position to do something about it. Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

And by the way, where is this kingdom that he is talking about here? It's still at hand. It's near. He isn't saying this is the kingdom and they're living in it.

He's not saying that. And he's going to go on later in this same sermon on the mount and he's going to tell them, when you pray, pray this way.

[38 : 40] Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come. That is a prayer for the kingdom of heaven to come to earth.

It is a prayer that has never yet been answered. This is a 2,000 year old prayer. You see, God has a timetable. It's always different from ours.

How many times have I been forced to tell you that God has never done anything as quickly as I wanted him to? Now we've been waiting 2,000 years for him to return. He promised that he would come back.

We've been waiting 2,000 years and he hasn't come yet. But when God promised the Messiah for the first time, they waited 4,000 years for him to come.

And finally he did. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. You see that shall? That's future. When will they be comforted?

[39 : 42] They will be comforted when everything is fixed. When everything is the way it ought to be. They will be comforted. They will be consoled because wrongs will have been right.

Blessed are the gentle for they shall inherit the earth. I think some of your translations, maybe the King James refers to as meek.

Blessed are the meek. And the word meek and meekness has gotten a bad rap. Too many people associate meekness with weakness and it isn't that at all.

It's the very opposite. Moses is referred to as the meekest man in all the earth. Biblical expression of meekness means great strength under great control.

It is not strength that is running amok. It is not strength that is out of control. It is not unbridled power. It is great strength, great power, great energy under control.

[41 : 01] Best illustration I've ever heard of that was by Eddie Arcaro, famous jockey that won Kentucky Derbies in so many hundreds and maybe even thousands of races.

And he had taken this particular horse out for a trial run and was getting ready for the Derby and whatnot. And it may have even been a horse that won their triple crown. I don't know which. Maybe it was Secretariat or some horse like that.

That's beside the point. But at any rate, they ask him, what did you think of the horse? Do you think he's got a chance? And Arcaro said, this is the meekest horse I have ever ridden.

And that was a huge compliment to the horse because that meant this horse had great energy, great power, great ability, but it was totally under control of the jockey.

And boy, there's no limit to what a horse can do that way. Meekness is a blessed virtue and one that everybody ought to cultivate.

[42 : 04] And there's nothing weak about it. We could use a lot more meek people. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Do you see that too is future? They shall be satisfied. And I think that all of this is in anticipation of that kingdom being established.

But it had not been at the time Christ was talking about it. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Wow. These Jews who constituted the crowd to whom Jesus was speaking, were persecuted people. They were living at the time under the boot of Rome.

[43 : 15] And Rome had invaded Israel and had its troops garrisoned all over the place, was exacting taxes from the people of Israel. Could be very harsh and brutal in their treatment.

And yet, Jesus referred to them as those who were persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when men cast insults at you and persecute you, and the Jews were on the receiving end of this a lot, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of me.

And that's really significant, and that's where we must leave off for now. So we will resume chapter five and work our way on through the Sermon on the Mount in the sessions that lie ahead.

And have you questioned or comment? I have gotten the signal. We've got about five or six minutes. Anybody?

[44 : 17] In the back, Roger has a comment or question. How did the scribes and Pharisees see the miracles of Jesus and not recognize who he was?

Well, how did the scribes and Pharisees see the miracles of Jesus and not recognize who he was? I have only one answer that I can give to that, and it's a very significant thing.

I can attribute this to nothing more than spiritual blindness. And someone has said, there's none so blind as those who will not see.

And Peter talks about people who are willingly ignorant. And the only conclusion that I can reach, and this is a real subject in itself that deserves more time than we can give it.

But these miracles that Christ performed, as I've already indicated, I don't think he performed them out of compassion or sympathy for the people who had these problems.

[45 : 34] Although, there's no question that he was very compassionate, and there's no question that he did sympathize with these people who had those problems. But the main reason was to present these miracles as credentials for the claims that he was the Messiah.

And how could someone actually stand there and see someone whom you knew? have been blind all his life, blind as long as you've known him.

Like the man at the temple gate beautiful in Acts 3, who had been lame from his mother's womb, had never walked or stood on his own feet a day in his life, and he was situated there in that same place of the temple, year after year, as a beggar, because that's all he could do.

And relatives and friends would carry him in and deposit him there in the place that he had dibs on. And then at the end of the day they'd pick him up and carry him home again. And you're used to seeing that guy there, and when you come along, this time he's not sitting there begging, he is jumping up and down, looking at his legs, stomping his feet, grabbing Peter and John, hugging them, not wanting to let them go because they had been instrumental in healing him.

And everybody knows this guy. He's been there for years. Oh, that's old so-and-so. He's always there. He's never walked. And everybody knows that. How are you going to answer that? The only way I can suggest, the only way that you could possibly deny it is to be so spiritually blind is to refuse to connect the dots.

[47 : 21] And what they actually said about Jesus was, miracles that he did. Nicodemus, Nicodemus says, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that you do, except God be with him.

So, Nicodemus was persuaded. But there were those of the Pharisees crowd who said, this man casts out demons by the power of Beelzebul.

You know what that's saying? You know what that means? they are saying that Jesus is in cahoots with the devil.

And they are working together to deceive these people and make them think that God is behind this. And it's really the devil.

Jesus is doing these miracles by the power of Satan himself. And Christ said, if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come among you.

[48 : 36] And he went on to say, all manner of blasphemy shall be forgiven unto man, but blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven in this age nor in the age to come.

And blasphemy against the Holy Spirit was attributing the miracles that Jesus Christ performed. And the power of the Spirit was attributing them to the devil himself.

That was blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. So spiritual blindness is just incredible. There is no blindness. The verse we took at the beginning, if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, whose minds the God of this age has blinded, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ.

So spiritual blindness is that which keeps, prevents people from seeing the truth as it is in Christ. I think everybody starts out from a position of spiritual blindness.

And the light comes little by little by little. We hear a little more truth, we hear a little more truth, and some darkness is dispelled, and we get a little more light. And then one day, one day, we get the information that puts it together.

[49 : 55] You connect the dots. Aha! And one of the things we say is, I saw the light. But it wasn't this kind of light. It was spiritual light.

Wow, what a difference. Someone else before we dismiss? Okay, Roger, you want to follow up? Go ahead.

Yeah, verse 3, when it says, theirs is the kingdom of God, did those people have a contentment in the absolute hope of God and his security?

Is that what separated them from the shalls in the verses down below? Well, you may have something there. I don't know exactly that that's the case, but you may very well be onto something there.

I'm sure there were varying degrees of commitment on the part of these people, just as there are today. When Jesus delivers, and with this I'll let you go, when Jesus delivers the discourse that he does in John chapter 6, where he talks about eating the flesh of the Son of Man and drinking his blood, and unless you do, you have no life in you, and the text goes on to say, and of course we understand the implications of that.

[51 : 15] Christ was talking about partaking of him, and he was using that as an analogy, and the text goes on to say that some of his disciples, some of his disciples said, this is a hard saying.

In other words, this is really hard to swallow. I can't get behind this. And it says, his disciples went back and walked with him no more.

They peeled off. So, like I said, there are various levels of commitment there. And Jesus turned to his apostles.

These guys were leaving. They were bailing out. And Jesus turned to his apostles and said, are you fellows going to go too?

Are you going to leave also? And Peter said, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

[52 : 28] There's nowhere else to go. Nothing has changed. There's nowhere else to go now, either. Have you been there? Have you been to Calvary?

Do you know Jesus Christ as your Savior from sin? Or is he just a religious figure from the ancient past? How you answer that makes all the difference in the world.

Would you pray with me? Father, we are rightly enamored with the person of Jesus. Every time we open the scriptures that speak of him, we just stand in absolute awe.

Never man spoke like this man. Christ enjoys the uniqueness no other human being ever had. Such an incredibly wonderful Savior.

We owe him our everything. And our prayer is that everyone here may know the joy of sins forgiven and the assurance of a right position with our God because they put their faith and trust.

[53 : 44] And the only one who can save them, the only one who is legitimately able to bear the name Savior. Savior. Our prayer is that anyone here not knowing him will find no rest and no peace until they deposit their everything in this blessed person.

Thank you for being the Savior that you are, for having accomplished what you have. No one else like you. We are so grateful.

Dismiss us now, we pray with your blessing in Christ's name. Amen.