

Sermon on the Mount Part I - The Kingdom

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[0 : 00] Would you open your Bibles, please, to Matthew chapter 5. After several introductory considerations, we are going to engage this Sermon on the Mount.

And it's found in Matthew chapter 5, 5, 6, and 7, actually. And we will read down through verse 16 for our scripture reading.

Ordinarily, Gary Harple would be leading us in this, but he and Carolyn are in the Caribbean scuba diving this morning. They've been there several times.

They are quite experienced at scuba diving and have done it in several places across the world. So we wish them well. All right, follow along, if you will, please, as I read these 16 verses.

And when he saw the multitudes, he went up on the mountain. And after he sat down, his disciples came to him. And opening his mouth, he began to teach them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

[1 : 17] 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 satisfied.

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 the sons of God.

Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you, for they shall be called the Lord. Blessed are the people of heaven. Blessed are you, when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you, falsely, on account of me.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great. For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty again?

It is good for nothing anymore, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden, nor do men light a lamp and put it under the rock under the peck measure, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

[2 : 52] Let your light so shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Now, it's quite clear here at the outset of this sermon that our Lord pronounced or promised a number of blessings to be the portion of all of the individuals that he has described.

The poor in spirit, the comfort, those who will be inheriting the earth, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, they are all going to get their reward by way of these blessings.

The question is this, when? When are these blessings going to be realized? Asking that question and answering it, as far as I'm concerned, is the key to this whole Sermon on the Mount.

And whether you recall it or not, it was, I don't know exactly when it was. I'd have to look it up. It's been, every time I think it was a few months ago, it was probably a year and a half.

[3 : 56] But I brought a message entitled, What Everything is All About. And that's what this is all about. What everything is all about.

Now, how can there be anything that everything is all about? Well, there is. And we will do our best to establish that this morning because once you understand this, you will gain an appreciation of the actual undergirding item that is what everything is all about.

This is what life is all about. This is what death is all about. This is what war and peace are all about. This is what everything is all about. And it is summed up in just one word.

And we will be dealing with that one word extensively. This is because the past, the present, and the future, which is all of anything that anybody has anything to do with, at least those of us who are humans living in a time-space continuum, we function on the basis of past, present, and future.

You need to understand that these items, past, present, and future, are not circular. They are not in a revolving mode where everything just goes around again and you just wait however long it takes and it will come around again and then however long it takes it will come around again.

[5 : 28] History is not circular. It is lineal. We are going somewhere. There is a conclusion. There is an ending where we will in fact live happily ever after.

And I'm really glad to be able to say that. So what is it? Right now, we are on an extreme detour.

This happiness express, if you want to label it that, has been derailed. We are not there.

Not only have we not arrived, we may not even be close to arriving. But I just want to assure you there is an arrival point. There is a destination.

This is all predicated upon the reality that when God created the heavens and the earth, and after the six days of creation, he was able to look out upon all that he had created, and he not only pronounced it good, he pronounced it very good.

[6 : 42] It was just the way he wanted it. But you know as well as I that it would only be a little while. How long exactly, we don't know.

But eventually, Eve succumbed to the temptation of the serpent she gave to her husband, and he did eat. And that constituted the initial disobedience of the volitional creature, which man was, that God had created.

So immediately there fell into their midst an estrangement that wasn't there before. And God and Adam and Eve, who together had something wonderful going, found that it was ruined.

It was marred. And guilt and fear set in, and they hid from the God whom they'd always been happy to see. And they hid because they were afraid and so on.

And so this fall, this fall introduced a new dynamic into the world that God had created that he didn't put there. And we call it sin.

[7 : 50] It has infected the entirety of the human race so much so that there has never been a generation born that has escaped it. And every generation ends the same way.

It's like that depicted in Genesis 5, where you read about all of those individuals. And each verse ends with, and he died. And he died. And he died. And this one, born, lived so many years.

And he died. And you are going to be, and he died also. And she died. And so are we all. Because of what was lost.

And what was lost was paradise. God created a veritable paradise to begin with. But he turned this paradise over to those whom he had put in charge of it.

And he turned it over to volitional creatures. That means these individuals apparently were the only ones, well, possibly angels.

[8 : 47] I don't understand the creation of angels and how it differs from humanity. But we know that out of all of the biological life, and I don't, we would not call angels biological life because they are an entirely different order.

But out of all of the biological life God created, including fowl and fishes and all of the beasts of the field, man is the only one whom he appears to have given volition.

That means man has the capacity to not only know right from wrong and moral issues, but he has the capacity to do right or to do wrong.

And you cannot have one if you do not have the other. So, as a result of man exercising his volition, which crossed with the will of God, this new dynamic was set up called sin and death by sin.

And so, death came by one man, sin, Adam. And so, death passed upon all men, for all have sinned. And all have sinned in Adam. So, God's perfect paradise was ruined.

[10 : 02] It became paradise lost. And from Genesis 3 all the way through the rest of the Bible is the historical account that is given of the regaining of paradise, recapturing that which was lost.

That's where we're going. That's where we will arrive when we get there. We are not there now. And that ought to be obvious to us. If you want to know exactly when we will get off the detour and arrive, keep your place in Matthew 5, and come back for just a moment to Acts chapter 3.

Acts chapter 3. And if you have given any time and attention to the book of Acts, you will recall that Acts chapter 3 in many ways is much like a continuation of Peter's message that he delivered on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2.

And really he's saying essentially the same thing. And the message, the essence of the message was this. Israel, you need to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

So, we read in Acts chapter 3, beginning with verse 13, where Paul says, or Peter says, The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus, the one whom you delivered up, and disowned in the presence of Pilate when he had decided to release him.

[11 : 54] But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One. Now, get the picture. There's a huge crowd of people here. We don't know how many, but it's safe to say probably a few thousand. We know there were three thousand out of the aggregate number that came to believe in Jesus back in Acts chapter 2.

And where they are is in the temple courtyard. And this is a huge expanse. The whole top of the Temple Mount area is approximately the size of 12 football fields.

That's a pretty good piece of real estate. That's the Temple Mount area proper. Of course, the Dome of the Rock and where the temple was located was just a very, actually not even as large as this auditorium.

The actual original Jewish temple. Although the grounds that surrounded it, of course, were larger. But the temple itself wasn't as large as this auditorium. So, there are several thousand people gathered there.

And Peter is delivering, if you will, the continuation of the Pentecostal message. He began in Acts chapter 2. And continuing on in verse 15, he says, But you put to death the Prince of Life, the one whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses.

[13 : 15] And I'm sure that Peter was standing there, probably with the full complement of the now 11 members in the apostolic band that Christ had chosen.

They were all there with Peter. And Peter's saying, And we're all witnesses of this. And all of these guys, Peter, James, and John, and Bartholomew, and Thomas, and all the rest of them, they're standing there with Peter.

And they're nodding their heads, Yes, yeah, we were there. We saw it. We were witnesses. And on the basis of faith in his name, it is the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man.

This is the man who Peter healed, and he was lame from his mother's womb there, and they'd raised him up at the temple gate, beautiful, whom you see and know, and the faith which comes through him has given him, that is this lame man, this perfect health in the presence of you all.

And now, you see, they're looking for an explanation for this. This was a guy who had a regular post assigned to him there near the temple gate, beautiful.

[14 : 24] And there he would sit and beg every day. It was considered of them to be an honorable occupation, especially if you couldn't do anything else. And as he situated himself, family, friends, relatives would carry him, literally carry him up to that spot and plunk him down there every day, and he would sit there with his cup.

And as the people came into the temple to make their sacrifice and their offerings to the Lord, very often, they would be in a more generous frame of mind because they were going in to do something religious.

And part of the Jewish religion was that you honor the poor with your alms. So this guy had a choice spot, probably all staked out. He probably had like an ownership of it. Everybody knew that that was so-and-so's spot.

And he was the regular beggar. So they all knew him. But now, this guy is walking and talking, jumping up and down, looking at his legs, and everybody's saying, what is this?

What's going on? That's so-and-so. He's been, I've known him for 30 years. He's never been able to walk or even stand. What's going on here? Now Peter's answering the question.

[15 : 30] And that's what his sermon is all about. And he says in verse 17, regarding their treatment of the Messiah, Peter says, and now, brethren, these are not Christian brethren. In Acts chapter 3, there are no Christians, not even the apostles.

What they are is Jewish believers. And they did not stop being Jewish because they believed in Jesus as the Messiah.

They are just as much Jews, and Peter will die a Jew. Doesn't change their Jewishness at all. It's just that there are Jewish believers, and there are Jewish unbelievers. And now they are the two groups with whom this great conflict was ongoing.

And Peter says, and now, brethren, he's talking about Jewish brethren. I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also.

But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, he's talking, of course, about the Old Testament because the New doesn't even exist when Peter is saying this.

[16 : 36] And what he announced through the prophets was that his Christ, his Messiah should suffer. He has thus fulfilled. He's done that.

He has suffered. He suffered and died. In other words, what he is saying is God has done his part. God has done what he promised he would do.

God promised that he would provide a Messiah. He has done that. He has fulfilled it. Therefore, repent therefore, and return.

Return to whom? Return to the God they left. This was Israel. Their disobedience, their corruption, their continual unbelief and the behavior that accompanied it, Peter is appealing to them to get their act together.

You people need to straighten up, he's saying. You need to repent of your sin. You need to return to the God whom you've left. And then he says, that your sins may be wiped away in order.

[17 : 45] Now, here we are. In order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.

What does that mean? What is a refreshing? A refreshing is taking something that is tired and worn and bedraggled and pouring something into it or onto it that refreshes it, that makes it feel alive again.

And I want you to pick up on something here because this is really, really important. What Peter is saying is, this isn't going to happen until Israel is ready to offer a corporate, a national repentance.

Look at the way this is worded. Repent, therefore, and return that your sins may be wiped away. Now, look at this.

In order. This is a purpose clause in the Greek, and it means, to the end that, to the end that, times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.

[19 : 13] What's keeping these times of refreshing from coming? Israel's lack of repentance. Israel's corporate refusal of repentance.

You talk to the average Jew today, whether they are in Israel or living someplace else in the world, and you might as well talk to a wall because this doesn't register with them. But this is really key.

This is very important. Peter is saying, Peter is saying, the repentance and turning of the nation of Israel is key, is germane, is essential, is a prerequisite for the times of refreshing coming upon the whole world.

And as long as Israel is out of place, the rest of the world is too. Now, you'd be surprised how many people there are who find that kind of thinking detestable, abhorrent, ridiculous.

You are saying that Israel and their spiritual posture is the reason why the world is not enjoying the times of refreshing and blessing from God?

[20 : 25] That's right. That's exactly what I'm saying. This just points out again in another way how key Israel is.

and Israel doesn't even know it. For the most part, they don't know it. They are not as aware of this as we are. And what's the other consequence of that?

What else is holding it up? Look at it. And that he may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you. Well, when Peter said this, how long had Jesus been gone?

Not very long at all. The ascension is in Acts chapter 1. This is Acts chapter 3. This is mere weeks after the ascension. And Peter is saying, if you, Israel, will get your act together spiritually, even though Christ left just recently, God will send him back.

And the program will continue. Now, we know what happened, of course. They did not. And they still have not. So Israel is still nationally remaining under judicial blindness.

[21 : 38] Because it started way back here. And it continues. This is so critical and so key. And it just saddens me that so many Christians do not understand this.

Read on. that he may send Jesus, the Messiah, appointed for you. Now, look at verse 21. Whom heaven must receive.

Did heaven receive him? Sure did. The apostles stood there in Acts chapter 1 and they watched Christ bodily ascend right before them. And they went right up into heaven until he became just a little speck.

And he was out of their sight. And then the next thing they knew, while they were still standing there, gawking up into heaven, looking for some sign, all of a sudden an angel appeared and said, You men of Galilee, why stand ye here gazing up into heaven?

This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come again in like manner as you have seen him go into heaven. But he didn't say when.

[22 : 46] He didn't say when. And you know something? Right before our Lord ascended, the apostles asked him this question. And this is so key.

And this is the key to the Sermon on the Mount. They asked him the question. They said, Lord? Now, they had no idea that he was going to ascend. He had told them earlier that he was going to leave, but he would send the comforter and his name and so on.

But they didn't know that he was going to go right up from them. They didn't know that. And as they are standing there conversing on the Mount of Olives, the disciples ask him, and they said, Lord, is it at this time that you are going to restore the kingdom to Israel?

That's what this was all about. When Christ went riding into Jerusalem on that donkey, and the people strew the palm branches in the way, and they were shouting, they were shouting, Hosanna!

Hosanna! to who? To the son of David. David had been dead and buried for a thousand years, and this was David's direct ancestor, Jesus of Nazareth.

[24 : 08] And when they said, Hosanna! That means, save now! Save now! They thought he was coming to rescue them as a nation from the Romans who were occupying the land.

Romans who had defeated them militarily, and now they were there pushing all of their orders and commands upon them and exacting taxes from the Jews, and they hated the Romans with a passion.

And they thought when Jesus is riding into town and everybody's gathered out and they're saying, Hosanna! to the son of David! This is wonderful! They had every reason to believe he was going to ride that donkey right up to the Jewish temple, and he's going to sit down on a throne, and Rome is going to be history, and the kingdom is going to be returned to Israel, because where had the kingdom been?

The Jews had not had a kingdom. Started out, remember, with Saul, and then moved to David, and then to Solomon, and then to Rehoboam, and the whole list of kings that is given there in 1st and 2nd Kings, and they had the division of the kingdom between the north and the south, and they each had kings, and you follow the kingly line, and when it comes down to 586 B.C., and the king of Israel, the king of Judah, where the throne was located, and the temple was located, was Zedekiah.

Zedekiah was their last king, because when the Babylonians came in, they destroyed Israel's kingship, they destroyed the temple, they destroyed the throne, they subjected the people to captivity, they carried them all off, they left Jerusalem in ruins, they broke down the wall and tore all of that down, they just made the whole city a shambles.

[25 : 58] That was the end of their kingship. That was it. There was no more monarchy, no more throne of David, and no more kings to sit on it.

It all came crashing down, and they would never have a kingdom again, and they still don't. They still don't.

So they had been without a throne and without a king or without a kingdom for hundreds of years, but the promise to every Jew that they held to so tightly was that God is going to reestablish the throne of Israel, and guess who the king is going to be?

Read 2 Samuel 7, it's going to be David's greater son, Jesus the Messiah. So they thought, that's it. That's it. But then, he never sat on a throne.

He died on a cross. Now, you talk about a total reversal. How could that be? How could God allow that to happen to the very one that he promised, the one who was personally sent from the Father?

[27 : 11] How could he allow that to happen? They didn't understand that either. But he allowed it to happen because it had to happen. That was the basis for Christ righting the wrongs of Adam.

God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. And in that death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, he paid the price for God being able to lift the curse on humanity.

And now, this can be presented to Israel. This suffering Messiah can be presented to Israel after his resurrection.

That's what Peter is doing in Acts 2. That's what Peter is saying. You crucified him. God raised him from the dead. God will send him back. If you will repent now, change your mind as a nation, and God will send him back and the program will continue.

They didn't in Acts 2, and Peter's preaching the same message. He's giving them another chance in Acts 3, and Stephen will give them another chance in Acts 7, and all of them end with opposition.

[28 : 22] Stephen ended with his death. So it was a very legitimate question that they asked our Lord right before he ascended. Is it at this time that you are going to restore the kingdom to Israel?

And the implication is, you know, we thought that's what you were going to do before, but that all ended on the cross. And now, after your resurrection, and here he had been resurrected for 40 days, and now they're thinking, Is it now that you're going to establish the kingdom?

And Jesus said, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath in his own power. But you will receive power after that the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me.

In other words, he didn't say yes and he didn't say no, but he did say there are some alternatives that you need to think about, and this is what it's going to be. And that's what he told them. So, here in Acts chapter 3, whom heaven must receive, and heaven did receive Christ, at the ascension, until, that's a big word, until, until what?

Until the period of restoration of all things. Well, they are not now restored.

[29 : 46] We've got a lot of things that remain broken, and fouled, and contaminated. And this, this period of restoration in verse 21 is identical to the times of refreshing in verse 19.

Spoken of, a little different language, meaning exactly the same thing. And this period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from ancient time.

So, that's the kingdom. That's the millennial rule of Christ. That's the messianic kingdom.

The king, the kingdom, its restoration, constitute the theme of the entire Bible. The central subject of all of the word of God is the kingdom.

Because the kingdom is the righteous rule and reign of God himself. That's the kingdom. And yet, it is a term that is consistently confusing to so many people.

[31 : 04] And if we can just dispel some of that confusion this morning, it will be well worth having been here. The kingdom and its restoration constitute the theme of the Bible.

When I said earlier, what is everything all about? This is it. This is it. Everything else is minor compared to this. World War I and World War II are minor compared to this.

This is the big picture. This is what God has in mind all along. It is the reestablishing, the refurbishing, the renewing of that which was lost.

It is the recapturing of a lost paradise. And the characteristics of that are sublime because they are utopian.

They are paradisaical. They are the ultimate. They are the way everything is supposed to be. But is it now? You know what's just killing us now?

[32 : 10] Just killing us. It's corruption. Corruption. Every place is full of it. Local, state, and federal governments are so filled, full of corruption, it's running over.

I mean, lying and cheating and innuendo and misleading and all the rest of it. And it's on all levels. And it isn't just government, it's culture in general, society in general.

It's just reeking with corruption. And corruption is nothing more than moral contamination. We are suffering from an onslaught of moral failure on just about every level.

We've got from the abortion issue to families being torn asunder to to the homosexual issue and same-sex marriage.

Good grief. Same-sex marriage? Get out of here. Same-sex marriage? These are studies in national insanities.

[33 : 15] That's what we're talking about. And it's all fueled by this corruption. And when these things are done away and fixed by the only one who's going to be able to fix them, then it will be the way it ought to be.

But it isn't now. And this is what the Sermon on the Mount is all about. The kingdom and its restoration constitute the theme of the Bible.

That is what everything is all about. And the king, the king of the kingdom and his enthronement constitute the central personage of all the Bible.

And Israel, as a nation, is the principal people and nation through which both are keys. Personally, Christ, and nationally, Israel.

Now, I want to give you, quickly, three diverse uses of the word kingdom, because that's where a lot of the confusion comes in. A kingdom, the word in the Greek is *basileia*.

[34 : 26] And it's probably, I didn't look this up, but it's probably related to the word *basilica*. I don't know that for sure, but it probably is. And the *basileia* kingdom means a realm, a land, a thralldom.

We talk about the realm of the United States. That's just really another word for kingdom, even though we don't have a king. Well, some have suggested that the Oval Office has been morphed into a throne room.

And there are things that come from it that do make us wonder, don't they? Yes. Well, anyway, a kingdom requires a king.

And our Lord, of course, who is the Messiah, the son of David, was also not only the king of the Jews, but the king of all the earth, and the lord of lords, and king of kings.

And he being the principal person through to whom the Bible refers, he's found in Genesis all the way through Revelation in one way or another.

[35 : 45] Israel is that key nation, it is the kingdom nation. But let's look at this now. There are three diverse uses of the kingdom, and I'm not going to spend much time here, but it's very important that you understand this distinction because if you travel in some of the circles that I do and kind of rub shoulders with Christian people, I know many of you do, most of you do, and sometimes I'm rubbing shoulders with a lot of clergy in different settings, and I hear a lot of talk about the kingdom, and they're building the kingdom, and we're doing this for the kingdom, and so on.

There is a sense in which that is okay and appropriate, and I'll address that in just a moment, but there is a wider sense in which it is greatly misunderstood. So let me give you these three definitions, and if you can keep these fixed in mind, they will really serve you well.

These are three diverse uses of the word kingdom, and they are all found in scripture. The great mistake that people make is when they see the word kingdom, they always think the same thing, but it isn't always the same thing.

It's like a parallel that when some people hear the word baptism, they all think of the same thing. They all think of water, and they all think of the way their church or their denomination uses it.

That's baptism. But the Bible records 12, count them, 12, different baptisms, and most of them aren't even water.

[37 : 17] But people tend to think of one and the same thing whenever they hear the word baptism, and they do the same thing with the word kingdom. First of all, there is a universal kingdom, and this is the realm, the area, the real estate, if you will, over which God rules and reigns and always has and always will.

You could almost make this synonymous with the universe. And a psalm that expresses that is Psalm 145 and verse 13, where the psalmist said in reference to God, thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.

There has never been a time when the universal kingdom did not exist, and there will never be a time when it will not exist, because it is the rule and reign of God over all, wherever that is.

That's the universal kingdom. Then there is another kingdom that is referred to, and by the way, this universal kingdom, doesn't logic compel you to note that the kingdom over which God rules and reigns, always has and always will, doesn't it strike you as being different from the kingdom for which the disciples were told to pray?

And when you pray, say, Our Father who art in heaven, thy kingdom come, thy will be done. Surely they wouldn't be talking about the universal kingdom, would they?

[39 : 00] Because there's no coming to it. It's never left. It's always here. It's always there. It's always everywhere, and there never has been a time when it hasn't been. So they're not praying and asking for that kingdom to come.

That's the kingdom that the psalmist is talking about. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. In 1 Chronicles 29.12, the writer says, Thou reignest, speaking of God, Thou reignest over all.

There never has been a time when he hasn't reigned over all, and there never will be a time when he will not reign over all. That's the universal kingdom, and I think it is best described by using that word.

But this was certainly not the kingdom that they were praying for regarding its coming. Then, there is a spiritual kingdom, and it is referred to in Colossians 1, verse 12 through 14, and there the apostle Paul talks about Christ having washed us, cleansed us from our sin in his own blood, and we are forgiven all trespasses in Christ, and he has transferred us from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear son.

That is a spiritual kingdom. There's no physicality to it. There are no people in that kingdom. There are only spirits, and by people I'm talking about body, soul, and spirit together.

[40 : 41] But you are a member spiritually of the body of Christ. When you receive Christ as your Savior, your spirit, your human spirit, is that which connected with God.

It wasn't your body that connected. It was your immaterial spirit being, which all human beings have. That's what was regenerated when you were saved.

And that's what will leave the body and go to be with the Lord when you die. So that spirit, not our body, that spirit is a member of the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ.

And everyone, whoever they are, wherever they are, if their faith and trust is in Jesus Christ, they have been transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear son.

There's no believer who has not. That is referred to as the spiritual kingdom. Now, if people want to talk from the standpoint of their building the spiritual kingdom, and you do that through evangelism and bringing people to faith in Christ so that when you do, their spirit becomes a member of that kingdom, I don't have any quarrel with that.

[41 : 55] That's a perfectly legitimate use of it. But the vast majority of the times the Bible uses the word kingdom. Please hear me well. It is talking about a literal, physical, earthly, material kingdom right here on the planet.

And Christ himself will be the head of that kingdom. And it will be a worldwide kingdom. That's the kingdom that Jesus told the disciples to pray for that kingdom to come because it hasn't and it isn't here now.

It is a future thing. Now, if we can please, let's go to, well, I want to just, I want to just buttress this just a little bit more.

So, let's go to Luke chapter 19. Luke chapter 19. And we read about Zacchaeus at the beginning of chapter 19, the wee little man who climbed up in the sycamore tree.

And it's a fascinating account. And if you will just pick up with verse 11 of Luke 19, it says, and while they, that is the disciples, while they were listening to these things that Jesus was talking about, Zacchaeus, Jesus went on to tell a parable.

[43 : 37] And we are told why he went on to tell a parable. And we are told why he went on to tell this parable. Because Jesus gave, I think, 33 parables, parables, but this is only one of them.

And he didn't go around just spouting parables just to be telling stories. He told parables because his parable related to something that was happening at the time.

And he used the parable to illustrate it. And such is the case here. While they were listening to these things, Jesus went on to tell a parable because he was near Jerusalem.

this is his last trip to Jerusalem. This is his final trip to Jerusalem. But as they listen to him explain these things, they don't have a clue.

I mean, not a clue that, yes, Jesus is going to Jerusalem and we're going with him, but when he gets there, he's going to die on the cross. Even though he had told them that earlier, they didn't believe it.

[44 : 44] They didn't buy it. Because that's no way for God's Messiah to come to an end. That's ridiculous. God sent him. He's not going to let him die on a cross. God is greater than the Romans.

Maybe the Romans will want to crucify him, but God would never let that happen. So they're thinking in the back of their mind, and Jesus knows what they're thinking. And I'm not reading in the white spaces here.

They are thinking, oh boy, this is it. When he gets to Jerusalem, wow, sparks are going to fly. I mean, we're going to send the Romans packing, and Jesus is going to take his throne, and God's going to be glorified, and it's going to be wonderful.

So while they were listening to these things, he went on to tell a parable, because he was near Jerusalem, and they supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately.

why? How? Because Jesus was going to see to it. That's how. As soon as we get there, he's going. That wasn't in the plan at all.

[45 : 46] But they didn't know that. And he went on and told this parable. And what was the parable about? The parable was about this certain nobleman who was to receive a kingdom, but he was going to be gone.

He was going to be an absent nobleman, and he would be gone for a considerable period of time, and when he returned, he would require an account of those he left behind.

That is a perfect, this parable is a perfect description of what Jesus was going to do and what he was not going to do. But they couldn't interpret it at all.

And many still can't interpret it today, even though it's laid out right before us. This is what he's talking about. Now, I want you to come to Matthew 5, believe it or not, we're really going to get to the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew chapter 5, and I just want you to look at a few verses by way of introduction. The first I'm thinking about is look at verse 3.

[46 : 49] Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is what? The kingdom of heaven. Is that the kingdom we've been talking about?

You bet it is! this is not the universal kingdom, and this is not the spiritual kingdom. The spiritual kingdom, consisting of the body of Christ, didn't even exist here in the Gospels.

That won't even come into being until Jew and Gentile are blended into one body, making a new man, which will be called the body of Christ. Doesn't exist here at all. And while we're here, look at this.

Verse, well, actually, there's whole five verses in that segment, but look at verse 10. Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is what?

Kingdom of heaven. Verse 12. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven, is great.

[47 : 57] What heaven? Kingdom of heaven. Most Christians read this to mean heaven, the dwelling place of God, where he is, where believers go when they die. That's not the heaven that he's talking about here.

He's talking about the kingdom of heaven. The context establishes this. And the kingdom of heaven is not going to be a heavenly kingdom. It's going to be an earthly kingdom. God is very much committed to the physical earth.

Jesus Christ died, not only to redeem mankind, but he died to refurbish and replenish the earth. It fell with him.

This world is not as it was created and not as it was intended, but the restoration will care for that. Verse 12, rejoice and be glad for your reward in heaven is great.

Verse 19, whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments and so teaches others shall be called least in what?

[49 : 00] In the kingdom of heaven. If you understand that the Jew lived, ate, drank, dreamed about the coming of the kingdom, that was his primary consideration, and it was all wrapped up in the person of the Messiah.

That's why the Messiah was so critical. He not only would redeem Israel and lead Israel, but he would lead Israel to lead all the rest of the world.

So the prayer was, the anticipation was, the Messiah, the Messiah, the Messiah. They waited 4,000 years for him to come. And then he finally did.

And John the Baptist announced him. And what did John say? Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. It's right around the corner. And the reason it's right around the corner is here comes the king, and he's going to bring it.

Do you see how it all ties together? This is so critical. This is so essential to understand. If you understand this, you unlock much of the whole of scripture.

[50 : 13] It all focuses upon this one thing. verse 19 shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

This is the same kingdom. And verse 20, I say unto you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.

this isn't talking about going to heaven when you die. No, no. So many times, just like baptism and just like kingdoms, when Christians hear the word heaven, they always think of the same thing.

But it isn't necessarily the same thing. What's the key? Context, context, context. That's got to be the key. Sometimes, heaven does refer to the dwelling place where God is right now.

And Paul calls it the third heaven. But sometimes heaven is right here on earth. It is the kingdom of heaven. And the reason it's called the kingdom of heaven is because it is the rule and reign of the God in heaven brought to earth.

[51 : 29] And it will be established here. That's why it's called the kingdom of heaven. It's not the kingdom in heaven. It is the kingdom from heaven brought to earth. That's the millennium.

That's the messianic kingdom. That's the mediatorial kingdom. That's the kingdom of which all of this is speaking. And when Christ is giving this sermon on the mount, what is he thinking of in terms of backdrop?

The kingdom of heaven. Is this where we are now living, the kingdom of heaven? No. Then are these things listed here in all of these do's and don'ts that have a very legal tone to them?

Are they in direct reference to believers today? No. But you say that in the wrong circles and them fighting words. They'll brand you a heretic for sure.

But it all fits and it all comes together. This is. A couple of more verses. Look at chapter 6 and verse 33. Very familiar passage. verse 3 and verse is Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness.

[52 : 42] What kingdom do you think that is? Same one we're talking about. Kingdom of heaven. Seek that. Who is he telling to seek? Is he telling you to seek that? You see, this is another illustration that I've said so often.

Everything in the Bible is for us. But not everything is to us. The animal sacrifices in the Old Testament and the Mosaic Law and the Levitical Laws of Purification, they are all for us, but not to us.

Romans 15 4, I think it is, says whatsoever things were written aforetime. Whatsoever things were written aforetime. What would the writer of Romans, Paul, be talking about?

aforetime. He's talking about the Old Testament. The Law and the Prophets and Moses and the Psalms and all of that. Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.

It didn't say, whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our doing. It doesn't say that. It's written for our learning. So we can learn and benefit from, spiritually, a whole lot of things that are not directly to us, but they are for us.

[54 : 07] If they are to us, it means go and do likewise. But if they are for us, it just means, hey, there are things here that would be good for you to know, and it will help you connect the dots, and it will give you a greater sense and appreciation for God and for His Word.

So they are for us. Everything in the Bible is for us. The Psalms and the Proverbs, for instance, have wonderful spiritual applications for believers of all ages and all dispensations.

But you can't say they are to us because that would mean you're supposed to do those things. You're supposed to offer those animals. You're supposed to do this. You're supposed to do that. You're supposed to keep the Sabbath.

You're supposed to keep the Sabbath. No, no, no, no, no. It's for us, for our blessing, our benefit, our learning, for enabling us to connect the dots, for enabling us to see God's hand in history, at work, in the lives of men, and how He has done it, and that God has always been faithful, etc.

All of those things are for us. They're for our blessing and for our spiritual growth. But it doesn't mean you go and do these things. And that's where much of Christendom gets off track. And the last one is chapter 7 of Matthew and verse 21.

[55 : 23] Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

We've got two words there. Heaven, they are spelled exactly the same, but they're not referring to the same thing.

The first one is entering the kingdom of heaven is not heaven by and by. When you die, you go there. That's not that heaven. Entering the kingdom of heaven is here on earth.

This is what he's talking about. All of these are. But that my Father who is in heaven, what's that heaven talking about? Same word, spelled the same way, but it's the dwelling place of God.

The first heaven is here on earth. The second heaven is the dwelling place of God. entering the kingdom, inheriting the kingdom, all of that has to do with earthly realm.

[56 : 26] And it will become even more clear. Now, when you take that into consideration and you look at all of the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5, 6, and 7, you will see, unmistakably, it has a very legalistic bent to it.

It really does. And that should be a clue. You know what? This sounds more like it's under the law than under grace.

Well, bingo! It is! It sounds so much like it's under the law because it is under the law. There's no reason to believe when you come to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, there is no reason at all to believe that the law has been set aside because now this is the New Testament.

No, no, no, no, no. No, no. Christ lived, functioned, operated, and taught under the Mosaic law. And he did not come to destroy it, but to fulfill it.

It is a beautiful concept. And you will, as we go through this Sermon on the Mount, I can trust you. You can trust me when I say you are going to be connecting dots like you've never connected them before.

[57 : 37] At least that was my experience when I came to appreciate these things. my head was so full of light bulbs going off one after another, it was dazzling. But it all fits, and it's a beautiful, beautiful thing.

I'm out of time. I'm sorry. I feel like such a pig. I've taken your Q&A; time. But I'll tell you what we'll do.

Next time I'm here, which will not be next Sunday, but Sunday after, if you have questions about this, and listen, I don't, if you think you've got questions, think, well, I don't believe what Marv said, and this completely contradicts everything he said, put that down on paper.

I drop it in the offering box. Because I want to know about it. I really do. Any questions, comments, criticisms, whatever, I don't care how hostile they are, I'm looking for truth.

And if you've got truth I don't have, I want it. So you write out your questions, drop them in the offering box, and when I get back, we'll do our best to treat them. Would you do that? I'd appreciate it.

[58 : 51] Well, let's stand. We'll be dismissed. Father, we are so grateful for a comprehensive word, and we are grateful that you have put it together as you have.

You have not taken all of these subjects and delineated them and included them in one place in the Scripture, so we could read that one place and get everything about that. But you have taken these priceless truths and you've scattered them.

You've strewn them all throughout Scripture. And we believe that this drives us to study and compare and note and consider.

And we are so grateful that you have. Thank you not only for giving us the word, but for the manner in which you put it together forces us to dig and to broaden our spiritual horizons and our understanding of this priceless word that you've given.

Thank you for it all in Christ's wonderful name. Amen.