

PP The King and His Kingdom

Part 1-Introduction: Matthew 5:1-2

1/21-22/2016

The *'The Sermon on the Mount'* is the greatest sermon ever preached by the greatest preacher
 Who ever lived, and it offers a challenge as we begin today a series through it
 You drop a rock into a hole in the earth and listen for it to hit the bottom...well I am discovering
 that if this sermon has a bottom, I haven't heard the rock hit yet
 I believe it is the foundation of everything Christ preached, the springboard for all of the
 teaching contained in the epistles of the NT
 It's incredibly deep, unbelievably challenging to preach and even more challenging to live
 Today, I want to give you some background that will help us as we navigate through this series

PP 1-The Sermon on the Mount is all about the King and His Kingdom

It was Augustine of Hippo, the North African theologian who called it the Sermon on the Mount
 Matthew's gospel proclaims that God's kingdom has come and this sermon describes the
 lifestyle of those who belong to that kingdom
 But have you heard or read much teaching about the Kingdom of God?
 It has been a vacuum in theology until recently, and unfortunately, much of the popular teaching
 and books on it since have been less than helpful and not always biblically accurate
 It's important that we have some key insights about the kingdom of God

PP i. *The kingdom of God has broken into this world; its fullness is yet to come*

John the Baptist announced that the kingdom of God was to come: ***"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*** Matthew 3:2

Jesus preached the same message: ***"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*** Matt. 4:17
 His entire ministry taught about and demonstrated the power of the kingdom of God
"And He went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people."

Matthew 4:23

PP Acts closes with Paul in Rome, ***"proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance."*** Acts 28:31

What we experience now in this kingdom is a foretaste of what will come when Christ restores
 all things, for His reign will cover all things, and there will be no death and no sin
 But this doesn't define what the Kingdom of God is, so let's answer that question

PP ii. *The Kingdom of God is made up of God's redeemed people*

PP ***"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."*** John 3:5

The kingdom of God exists, not geographically, but where hearts bow to the King in submission
 The kingdom of God grows as God's people are making disciples of Jesus Christ
 The church is the kingdom of God made visible, and our mission is not to make Easton, Pa a
 Christian city, but to see people in Easton become disciples of Jesus Christ

PP The moment a person trusts in the saving death and resurrection of Christ, she is *‘delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of His Beloved Son’*

Colossians 1:13

The King of this kingdom is Jesus and the sermon on the mount shows us how we who belong to God’s kingdom are to live

It’s a description of the lifestyle of those who belong to the kingdom of Jesus

It will show us what Jesus is doing in the hearts and lives of those who are in His kingdom

It is His training course, His discipleship manual, the goal of His instruction and life

And it leads us to another critical understanding of what the Kingdom of God is

PP iii. *The Kingdom of God is the rule or reign of God specifically over His redeemed people*

There is a thought that has crept into Christian writing and preaching, that one can have Christ as his Savior, but at a later time choose to make Him Lord

But no one makes Jesus Lord, we receive Him as Lord, and it’s impossible to live in God’s Kingdom without Jesus being the Lord of your life

The authority of Jesus demands a response of submission to gain entrance into His kingdom

One cannot fully understand what it means for Jesus to be Lord at the moment of salvation, but all of the Christian is learning to love the rule and reign and blessings of the King

The Sermon in the Mount is about Jesus the King and His Kingdom that He rules, and how He is teaching the citizens in His kingdom how to bring about His redemptive, restoring work

PP 2-The Sermon on the Mount is all about discipleship

Illus My father owned a construction company and of course, I was often drafted into working with him. One job he gave me was to cut several boards to a specific length he gave me as we framing a house. I went to work...the wrong way. Each board I cut, I used as the measurement for the next one, each time shortening the board more and more. By the time I was done, the final boards were more than an inch short, and I wasted material and time. What I should have done was to measure and cut the first, making sure it was correct, and label it ‘sample’ or ‘pattern’ to use it as the guide for the rest of them.

Jewish discipleship understood this danger, and created a careful system of making disciples that was alive and well when Jesus called His own disciples

It provides the backdrop to the book of Matthew and weaves through the Sermon on the Mount

In the Sermon on the Mount we see Jesus the rabbi training His disciples to follow Him

What will serve us well then, is to understand what disciple-making looked like in Jesus’s day

“Seeing the crowds, He went up on the mountain, and when He sat down, His disciples came to Him. And He opened His mouth and taught them, saying” **Matthew 5:1-2**

The Sermon on the Mount must be understood in the cultural setting of that day

The Jews living near Jerusalem viewed the northern Jews of Galilee as uneducated and irreligious, but the contrary is true instead as I’m about to explain

Schooling took place in the local synagogues, and was led by a hired Rabbi, or teacher

PP Jewish boys and girls began their studies at 6 years old in **Beth Sefer**, elementary school, where the teaching focused primarily on the Torah

Beth means 'house' in Hebrew, **Beth Sefer** was the House of the Book

The book was the Torah, the first 5 books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy)

Children read it, wrote about it, and memorized large sections of it, some even memorized it all
At the end of this stage of schooling, all girls and most boys stayed at home, where the boys learned the family trade

PP The best male students went on to what we would call secondary school, **Beth Talmud**, House of learning, for male students 10-14 years old

They studied the prophets of the Old Testament and began to study the Oral Torah, the interpretations of the Torah that the Rabbis had made

They began to make their own applications, similar to modern catechism classes

Most did not have their own copy of the Scripture, so memorization was key and done by reciting the scriptures out loud, utilizing constant repetition

And they learned how to give an answer by asking a question

PP Only the best of the best made it to **Beth Midrash**, House of Study

The student was allowed to seek out a rabbi and ask permission to study with him, often leaving home to travel and live with him for a lengthy period of time

The rabbi conducted a rigorous interview to see if the student knew enough, or was disciplined to be his disciple as they would only accept the very top students

Questions would be asked like how many times the word 'well' is found in Genesis, or how many times does Habakkuk reference Deuteronomy 17?

If the student failed, the rabbi would tell him to go home and learn the family business, make babies and pray that they become rabbis

If accepted, the rabbi would say two Hebrew words which translated are '*Come follow me*'

Every Jewish young man longed to hear those words from a rabbi, and it brings meaning to

Matthew 4:19-20, "And He said to them, 'Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.' *Immediately they left their nets and followed Him.*"

Though ordinarily, a student would come to a rabbi, Jesus mostly reversed that

And interestingly, none of the 12 main men He called had ever made it past the rabbi test

They had not been the best of the best, in fact, at most, they never made it past Beth Talmud

PP The moment a rabbi accepted him, the student became a **Talmid**, a word that means disciple
A disciple is more than a student who wants to know what the teacher knows for the grade and to complete the class

PP The goal, the passion of the Talmid was to be like the rabbi, to become what the rabbi was

If he accepted you, you became his Talmid, and he taught you to become like him in every way

If the rabbi walked with a limp, you would often see his Talmidim walking behind him limping

A Talmid was passionately devoted to his rabbi, noting everything he did or said

Paul, who grew up in this system of discipleship said, "***Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.***"

1 Corinthians 11:1

PP One rabbinical saying was, "*May you follow him so closely that the dust of his sandals covers you.*"

Watching, listening and imitating were core practices to becoming like the rabbi

PP The teaching, philosophy and interpretation of scripture that a rabbi had was called his 'yoke'

The rabbi would speak to groups of people and invite them to take their ‘yoke’, their interpretation of the Scriptures and submit to it as his Talmidim

PP *“Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.”* **Matthew 11:28-30**

PP The decision to become a Talmid, a disciple, was one of total submission to the rabbi
The disciple transferred allegiance to the rabbi, regarded more highly than his own family

PP *“Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.”* **Matthew 10:37**

It was inconceivable to become a disciple and not be consumed with learning to totally yield to the rabbi or become like him in every way

PP *“A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master.”* **Matthew 10:24-25**

PP The Talmid was to live with the rabbi, be with him, learning his ways, imitating his ways, and submitting to his yoke, his authority and interpretations

Recall Jesus walking on the Sea of Galilee and one of His Talmid, Peter, who was learning to imitate His rabbi, steps out of the boat and begins to walk toward Him

He believed that if His rabbi could do this, then surely he, one of His disciples could as well

But then he doubted and began to sink beneath the waves

Jesus said to him, *“O you of little faith, why did you doubt?”* **Matthew 14:31**

What Peter doubted, was likely that His rabbi had the power to make Peter like Him

PP When a rabbi garnered a large following, they were believed to have s’mikhah, which means the authority to make new interpretations

Ordinarily, a scribe, or rabbi would quote famous rabbis when they taught

But a rabbi with s’mikhah would interpret and his teaching would be fresh, new

PP *“And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at His teaching, for He was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.”* **Matthew 7:28-29**

Eventually, if they stayed with the rabbi, they themselves would become rabbis as well, and pass on their learning and lifestyle to their own Talmidim

This disciple-making was evident in the Apostle Paul, who standing before King Agrippa on

PP trial, heard him say, *“And [King] Agrippa said to Paul, “In a short time would you persuade me to [act like a Christian]?”* **Acts 26:28**

Jewish discipleship was all about becoming like the rabbi in all ways, and when trained fully, the disciple became the teacher with his own disciples who they trained to be like themselves

“Seeing the crowds, He went up on the mountain, and when He sat down, His disciples came to Him. And He opened His mouth and taught them, saying” **Matthew 5:1-2**

What we are about to see in this great sermon, is the training of Jesus for His disciples

He has s’mikhah, authority, and He is teaching His yoke, His interpretation, and inviting those

He has invited to follow Him to learn it, and become like Him in all things

By the end of Matthew’s gospel, Jesus will say to His Talmidim,

PP *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the*

Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” **Matthew 28:18-20**

Christ makes disciples who know how, and live to make disciples of Himself

The rabbis of His day trained disciples who could train disciples to become like themselves

PP *“But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ.”* **Matthew 23:8-10**

Jesus taught that all discipleship must train men and women to be like Him

And what is Jesus like and how do we do that?

PP The entire sermon is the exposition of Jesus Himself...this is who Jesus is and how He lives, and it is what He is doing in every person who has come into His kingdom

He is training us to be like Him, live like Him, so we can in turn help others in the same way

He is our Rabbi, we His Talmidim, and He has invited us to follow Him and take His yoke upon us, and His s'mikkah has sent us with a mission to make disciples for Him

The *King and His Kingdom* is a sermon series that will take a long look at how Jesus trained His disciples as He is building His kingdom

Let's pray