

Matthew Ch5v1-20 - Kingdom Living

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- [0 : 00] Chapter 5. And if you're using notes this morning, I've confused you all, I've even confused myself, which isn't a difficult thing to do.
- We're going to go Hebrew today. We normally read left to right. Hebrew goes right to left. So you'll see the title on the front, Living for the King. When you've completed that page, don't open it up, just go to the very back.
- And it'll be Jesus the King at the top and you can follow through. And then at the end of that page, open up the middle and then it's back to English again.
- So start with Hebrew and part to English. Now that I've confused you, we're going to read God's word. Thank you so much, Claire. Hope you don't mind me asking. Thank you. Thank you. That's great. Brilliant.
- Let's continue in our reading of the Gospel of Matthew.
- [1 : 23] Starting at verse 1 of chapter 5 and we'll go down to verse 20. Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down.
- His disciples came to him and he began to teach them. Jesus said, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
- Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
- Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- [2 : 37] Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.
- You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.
- You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand and it gives light to everyone in the house.
- In the same way, let your light shine before others that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. Do not think I have come to abolish the law or the prophets.
- I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the law until everything is accomplished.
- [4 : 04] Therefore, anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven.

But whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Well, let's keep our Bible open and we'll pray. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Father, would you give us that hunger and that thirst and may it only be satisfied by Jesus and knowing him more.

Meet us in our need today. Show us the greatness of your kingdom and what it is to live as your people in that kingdom.

[5 : 33] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Well, we're going to jump straight into the text today so you can take a deep breath.

We're straight into the deep end. And we're going to look at three themes that build on one another. We're going to look at God's kingdom has come, enter the kingdom, and then live as God's kingdom people.

So, God's kingdom has come, enter the kingdom, and live as God's kingdom people. So, the first one, God's kingdom has come.

Let's read verse 1. Now, when Jesus saw the crowd, so, just prior to this, Jesus has been about teaching in different places and he's been healing lots of people and of course it's caused a stir and there's crowds of people going wherever he is.

So, when Jesus saw the crowd, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. Seems the obvious thing to do, isn't it, when you want to get away from people?

[6 : 42] Go and climb a mountain. It's what I like to do because when you get up a mountain you don't particularly see many people up there, do you? Apart from sheep and they don't want to talk to you either.

Well, here we have Jesus going up a mountain. except for Jesus is not trying to get away from the crowds. Look at the end of verse 1.

His disciples came to them, to him and he began to teach them. This begins a whole teaching section.

It's like one big long sermon that goes all the way through to the end of chapter 7. So, if you just quickly have a look at chapter 7 and verse 28.

So, he's gone up the mountain, he begins teaching and then he concludes verse 28, when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching.

[7 : 48] You see, the crowds are still with him. They followed him up the mountain. Jesus isn't trying to get away from anyone. Jesus has taken an intentional and deliberate step to go up a mountain because by going up a mountain, he's revealing something about who he is and what he has come to do.

Mountains are very significant things in the Bible. Things happen on mountains. In particular, is what happened on Mount Sinai. Do you remember that event?

Well, go with me all the way back to Exodus. It's the second book in the Bible, Genesis, Exodus, chapter 19. Exodus, chapter 19.

So God, through Moses, has rescued the Israelites from Egypt and God brings them to Mount Sinai. And from this mountain, God speaks and reveals his purpose in rescuing his people.

They are to be God's treasured possession. So let's pick it up in verse 3. So then Moses went up to God and the Lord called to him from the mountain and said, this is what you are to say to the descendants of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel.

[9 : 27] You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all the nations you will be my treasured possession.

Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These, Moses, are the words that you are to speak to the Israelites.

So God rescued his people to be, verse 5, his treasured possession, to be his chosen special people. But in being his special people comes a purpose.

Look at verse 6, you will be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. You see, the role of the priest was to represent God to the people.

So if you are a kingdom of priests, that means together they are to represent God to all the nations around them. And if you are going to be holy, it means you are to be set apart, to be different.

[10 : 40] You are to reflect God's character. So if you are a holy nation, that means that together as God's people, you are to reflect God's character to all the nations and all the people around you.

So as God's treasured people, they are to represent God and reflect God to the nations. That was God's purpose.

But the problem was they failed. Instead of drawing the nations to God, the nations drew them away from God. Rather than being a light to the world, they became part of the darkness.

They didn't represent God fully and they didn't reflect God as they should. But yet when God makes a promise to bring a people to himself, he will fulfill that promise.

Let's go back now with that in mind to chapter 5 of Matthew. So look at verse 1.

[11 : 52] What has happened? Well, just as Moses went up the mountain before the people, so Jesus goes up the mountain before the people.

The difference is that Jesus is claiming to be God on the mountain. Remember the name given to Jesus earlier in Matthew 1 verse 23?

You will give birth to a son and you will call him Emmanuel, which means God with us. So as Jesus stands on the mountain before the crowds, he stands there as God.

He is the true priest representing God to the people. He is the true holy one reflecting God to the people. As Jesus speaks, people are hearing the very words of God.

You see, Jesus going up the mountain side is not to get away from people. It's significant. It tells us something about who Jesus is and why he has come.

[13 : 00] Have a look over at verse 17. Jesus says, don't think that I've come to abolish the law or the prophets. That is, the Old Testament scriptures, scriptures like what we've just read in Exodus 19.

I haven't come to abolish them, but to fulfill them. In other words, what you see in the Old Testament is a picture, it's pointing towards me, it's longing for me to come.

I am the faithful one who has not failed. I am the light come into the darkness to draw people to myself because the coming of Jesus is the coming of God's kingdom.

And that is the case today. Jesus has come, that means God's kingdom has come. And God's plan and purpose is the same.

He is to rescue a people for himself who will be his treasured possession, a people who are a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation who will draw people to God.

[14 : 09] God's God's kingdom has come. God's kingdom has come.

Second, he calls us to enter into the kingdom of God. Jesus is calling a people to himself.

Look at verse 1 again. His disciples came to him and he began to teach them. He teaches how we might enter the kingdom and become his treasured possession.

And his teaching initially is focused on eight beatitudes or blessings. The first one, verse three, and the last one, which starts in verse 10 and continues into verse 11.

The first and the last of these blessings set the theme. It's repeated. Theirs is the kingdom of heaven. So how do we enter the kingdom of heaven?

[15 : 25] Well, first we are to be poor in spirit. Verse three, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Those who are poor in spirit enter the kingdom. Suppose you get yourself into debt. You might go to the bank and get a loan, but instead of dealing with your debt, you decide to use that money and keep on spending, and so you get into a pattern of just borrowing and borrowing, and sooner or later, you become bankrupt.

You haven't the resources or the means within yourself to pay it off. Well, to be poor in spirit is to recognize and to own the fact that I am spiritually bankrupt, that I've been running up an increasing sin debt and I have no resources or means to pay it off.

And rather than plead innocence or ignorance, we accept our condition and completely rely on God. It's saying, I deserve justice, but I am desperate for mercy and grace.

It's what David prayed as he accepted his sin of that adultery and murder. This is what he prayed to God. God, my sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.

[17 : 02] You see, poor in spirit, that contrite heart, it's coming before God with nothing and offering nothing except our broken, ruined lives.

Poor in spirit is the necessary heart attitude to enter the kingdom. It is what marks out members of God's kingdom.

So first, poor in spirit. second, a God given righteousness. Do you see what it says?

Verse 10, blessed are those who persecuted because of righteousness. In other words, that if you are righteous, you will face some kind of opposition.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. those who are righteous enter the kingdom.

[18 : 09] Well, what does it mean to be righteous? How can I be righteous to enter the kingdom? Well, Jesus explains it for us. We read it in verse 20. Jesus says, I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Now, the Pharisees were the religious lot. We'll meet them lots of times as we go through Matthew. They were the religious leaders of the day. And they had worked up, they'd done their sums as they read through the Old Testament scriptures.

There were 613 laws. And they not only claimed to know every single one of them, but that they kept every single one. They saw themselves as righteous, pure, blameless, and right before God.

In their eyes, they were the keepers of righteousness and they made sure that everybody else kept these laws so that together they could become a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

Do you see what Jesus says in verse 20? Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees, you won't be able to enter the kingdom of heaven.

[19 : 28] Now Jesus is not saying you must be better than the Pharisees. He's saying you need to surpass it.

In other words, you need a righteousness that is something altogether different. Have a look with me please to Matthew chapter 23.

23. Go to Matthew 23. Here Jesus confronts these very Pharisees over their understanding of what it is to be righteous.

Because they're all telling everybody, do this, do this, be righteous and you'll enter. And Jesus confronts this notion. Let's pick it up in verse 27.

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You look like whitewashed tombs. Now for us in our culture we put flowers where people have been buried, then they whitewashed, they got out nice white paint and cleaned them all up.

[20 : 54] It was nice and bright and white. He says you are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean.

In the same way on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

We're all good at putting on a show aren't we? Nice and white and bright on the outside. We can all do our acts of righteousness committed at church, serving away, giving generously, obeying all the COVID rules in society and we can spend our time making sure that everybody else keeps to my little standard of what it is to be right and good.

But Jesus says it's not about that, it's about what's on the inside that counts. He's concerned with what's in the heart, our motives, our attitudes, our desires, what we're thinking about people who don't measure up to me.

The reality is we are all hypocrites. We look so nice and bright on the outside but inside we are bones, we're dead, we're unclean.

[22 : 29] Let's go back to chapter 5. You see, we need a righteousness that doesn't come from self, where we manage to do all these different things, but we need a righteousness that is given to us by God.

It's not about external behaviours, but about an internal change of heart. Any one of us can put on a show, but no one can change the true self, the heart.

So righteousness that comes from God is the necessary thing we need for heart change to enter the kingdom. kingdom. So we need to be poor in spirit, we need a God given righteousness and well if that's the way it is then we are truly blessed.

You see, to enter we must begin to apply what we've just looked at to our own life. We become poor in spirit and we seek his righteousness. As one writer put it like this, every day Jesus comes to us with his mercy and grace and says, I'll do a deal.

I will take all your failures, all your sin, all your guilt, all your bitterness, all the curse, all the wrath, all the death, and in return I'm going to give you love, joy, life, righteousness, peace.

[24 : 10] Nothing delights Jesus more than for us to come to him empty and needy so that we might be filled and satisfied. We give him our sin and we receive his righteousness, his perfection.

We give to him our sin debt and he credits us with his righteousness. Now if that's how we come to Jesus, we are truly blessed people.

Verse three, blessed are the poor in spirit. Verse ten, blessed are those who are righteous, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

You see, if you are blessed, you are approved by God, you've been accepted by God, you are now his treasured possession. In coming to Jesus, you become a priest in his kingdom, representing God to others.

You become a holy one in his nation, reflecting God to others. You see, Jesus has come to us today, speaking his word to us, calling us to himself, commanding us, enter the kingdom.

[25 : 32] kingdom, and as we humbly come, as we rely on him, we become his treasured possession. God's plan and purpose remains the same, for him to make himself a kingdom of priests and a holy nation that will bring others to the king and into his kingdom. kingdom. So the kingdom has come, enter the kingdom, and third, live as kingdom people. So what does Jesus say to his kingdom people? You say you follow me, you say you've entered your poor in spirit, that you've received my righteousness, what does that look like now for us in his kingdom?

Well, first, it's about distinctive living. Look at verse 13. Jesus says you are the salt of the earth.

We can say at least one thing about salt, it's distinctive, isn't it? It tastes different. You always know if you've eaten something with salt in it.

[26 : 47] Salt, to state the obvious, is salty. So Jesus' message is simple, be distinctive in the way you live. Be different from those around you.

Be salty people. So in what ways are we to be different? Well, let's just think about these. I'll throw a few things out.

How we speak about others to others. Are we building them up in our conversation or are we just knocking them down? how we treat those who hurt us?

Do we forgive their gripes or do we bear grudges? How we use our finances? Are we open-handed or are we tight-fisted?

How we respond to practical needs around us? Are we willing to give of our time or do we begrudgingly do what we have to do because someone's seen us?

[27 : 57] Here's a good question to ask ourselves. Think about who you'll meet this week. The people in your work? People who you live next door to in your neighbourhood?

Your social group? Do they see difference in the way you live? Or do you just blend in with everybody else?

Are we just kind of camouflaged in with everyone else? We can't see any difference, just the same. You see, if there's no distinctive living, if we're not salty, look at the end of verse 13, it is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

kingdom people live distinctive, salty lives. Second, there's attractive living.

Look at verse 14. You are the light of the world. A light stands out in the darkness, doesn't it?

[29 : 13] So, look at the rest of verse 14. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. We're used to lots of lights in our society, but then you think of a town, and the lights in that town, if you are a long distance, you can see that town from a long way away, and you're attracted towards it.

You're heading to the light. Jesus' message is clear. Be a light for good in this world of darkness. In other words, be attractive in the way you live.

Draw people to the light by the way you conduct yourself. So, what's that going to look like for you and me? Well, think about this.

It's listening to others' concerns and not voicing your complaints. sacrifice. It's sacrificing what you want and giving to those who are in need.

It's about inviting people into your home, not waiting to be invited. It's pursuing the good of others, not protecting the comfort of self.

[30 : 38] Again, it's good to ask ourselves this question. If you were to ask them or they were to write something about you, would people say, Johnny is so caring, he's such a loving neighbour, or would they say he's stingy and selfish?

Are we a light in the darkness? Or by our words and actions are we adding to the darkness? You see, kingdom people live attractive lives.

And this attractiveness, this distinctiveness, well, it's not to be done in isolation, it's a community project. Again, look at verse 13, he says, you are the salt of the earth.

Verse 14, you are the light of the world. He's talking about his people, his treasured possession, his church, us, as we're gathered here today.

We are to live this kingdom life together. We're not doing it in isolation, me in my small corner and you in yours. We're together. That's why Carragoline Baptist Church exists.

[31 : 54] We serve each other, we're to love each other, show compassion and forgive and work all these things out so that our distinctive living becomes attractive.

That people see a difference the way that community live and operate and are drawn in. A grain of salt, one little inchy pinchy grain of salt has a little impact, but a fistful of salt, the impact of that.

or one little candle in the darkness, but 50 candles in the darkness. The community of God's people rescued for a purpose, drawn together to be his treasure possession, working and serving, making a difference.

We live communal lives. We don't just come and disappear. We get involved with each other. This is the best I could come up with, intentional living.

Being distinctive and being attractive is of no value if we're all just looking at each other and keeping ourselves to ourselves. Look what Jesus says, you are the light of the world.

[33 : 21] A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and then put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand and it gives light to everyone in the house so that everybody can see it and benefit.

Verse 16, in the same way, let your light shine before others that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

In other words, we are to be light in the darkness. The kingdom of heaven is to be in the kingdom of the world.

That means intentionally being with, getting to know, spending time with people who are not yet in the kingdom of heaven. Do you have friends who are not in the kingdom of heaven?

Do you actually know anybody? I mean, really know them and call them as friends where you get to know them? Well, be intentional.

[34 : 34] Go and spend time with them. Don't hide your light. Don't bury yourselves away keeping yourself to yourself. That's not what it's about. The church is not to separate or isolate from the world.

The church is to be in the world. living distinctively and attractive lives together. And as we do, end of verse 16, they may see your good deeds, your acts of love and kindness, the way in which you conduct yourself, the way you speak, and that God could use all of that to bring them to glorify your Father in heaven.

Amen. I'm worried that we can be so withdrawn that we don't mix and meet.

How sad that is. We are the salt of the earth, a kingdom of priests representing God to those around us.

us. We are the light of the world, a holy nation reflecting God to those around us. Together, the church is God's treasured possession, living our life together as God's kingdom people for his glory.

[36 : 07] kingdom has come. Are you in the kingdom? And are we together living as his kingdom?

Let's pray about that now. Father, your kingdom is a good kingdom.

You are faithful and you are trustworthy. You provide for us in all our need. And you have enabled us and shown us how we might enter and I pray right now that if you are here today and you think I'm not in that kingdom yet, come before God, poor in spirit, bringing nothing but your brokenness and receive from him his righteousness so that you may be truly blessed.

father, help us by your holy spirit to take seriously your words that we would live distinctive lives, that we would be attractive in the way we speak and the way we act, that you would help us to do these acts of love well to one another, but amongst people.

Help us to get down to the nitty gritty of life with others. Please help us not to hide our light, but to shine it forth for your glory, family, that others, our friends, our neighbours, family and workmates, would come to glorify the father and worship him.

[38 : 40] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. We're going to sing a song.