

Sermon On The Mount

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[0 : 00] Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall. Humpty Dumpty had a great fall and all the king's horses and all the king's men could not put Humpty together again. I have good news for you this morning.

There is a king who can put Humpty together again. In fact there is a king, a very different kind of king, who can put the whole universe together again.

And this morning I'm going to invite you to listen to his State of the Union address as we find it in the famous Sermon on the Mount.

If you open your Bibles to Matthew, we'll begin in chapter 4. We need to set up the context and then what I'd like to do is walk through the whole sermon.

And then make some observations at the end and I trust we'll have some time for some question and answer. If not, we'll just walk back up the road and talk along the way. Let us pray. Holy Spirit, thank you that you helped Matthew, one of the original twelve, to remember this place and event and more importantly the words of the Lord Jesus that have had revolutionary effect in the world.

[1 : 30] We pray in your mercy and grace that you would cause familiar words to come alive in our experience as never before because we pray it in the name of King Jesus. Amen.

So I'd like to start reading at Matthew 4 verse 12. This is the context for the Great Sermon on the Mount. And the context that begins at 412 is important also.

At the end of Matthew 3, we have the record of Jesus being baptized in Jordan River. And we'll talk about that when we have the baptisms later. Jesus is the word where he sees the spirit. And the spirit descend upon him in the form of a dove. You are my son with whom I'm well pleased.

And then the spirit leads him into the wilderness to be tested for 40 days and 40 nights. Jesus in that testing wins the victory over his enemy. That's important for the context of the Synoptic Gospels.

Jesus emerges from this battle now as the victor. And that's where we pick it up in 412. Now when he heard that John had been taken into custody, John the Baptist, he's put into prison, he's not yet murdered.

[3 : 05] He withdrew into Galilee where we are. Leaving Nazareth, he came and settled in Capernaum, which is by the sea in the region of Nebelin and Naphtali.

This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet, saying, The land of Zebelin and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, and Galilee of the Gentiles.

The people who were sitting in darkness saw a great light. And to those who were sitting in the land and shadow of death, upon them a light dawned.

From that time, Jesus began to preach and say, Repent, turn around, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. I've often wondered about this connection.

Matthew quotes Isaiah chapter 9, as Yossi pointed out a couple days ago. The land of Naphtali, in people in darkness, saw a great light. And then jumps to Jesus speaking about the advent of the kingdom.

[4 : 11] What's the connection between Isaiah 9 and then Jesus preaching about the kingdom? Well, if you know Isaiah 9, people walk in darkness, have seen a great light.

The people who are experiencing sorrow are experiencing new joy. The people who are under oppression are now experiencing liberation from oppression. And the instruments of war are being rolled up and burned.

For, unto us a child is born. In Handel's Messiah, when you sing that piece, the emphasis is on the word for. For, unto us a child is born.

And that's a way of pointing back to all the other things. For, a child has been born. Therefore, light in the darkness, joy in the sorrow, freedom in the oppression, the overcoming of the instruments of

war.

For, a child has been born for us. A son has been given. And his name is Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. And now, here's the key line.

[5 : 18] And the government will be on his shoulders. I think that when a New Testament writer quotes from the Bible, like from Isaiah 9, and quotes only one line, he or she is the waterless of all he's.

He is now having our minds go to the whole of the text. So, not just verse 2, the light in the darkness, but all of those verses. And then up to, the government shall be on his shoulders. And so, now we're prepared for Jesus to come on the scene. Repent for the kingdom of heaven. You could translate that word kingdom. The government of heaven is now at hand.

Our friend of mine translates verse 17 as, There's a new sheriff in town. Jesus is now bringing a new kingdom that will rest on his shoulders, because he's now the new king.

And the new kingdom has come. And walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew, his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen.

[6 : 26] And he says to them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people. And they immediately left their nets and followed him. I don't know if that's ever troubled you before, that word immediately.

But that's because they saw a good deal. They realized what they were being offered. In the first century, if you wanted to be connected to a rabbi, you would go check out the various rabbis, and then go, so to speak, apply to be one of his students.

Jesus reverses that. He goes around Galilee looking for students. And when he spots the students, he calls them out. Come follow me. Boy, they must have been overwhelmed.

This new king who is coming, different kind of king, invites them to come. Of course you're going to leave everything. What else are you going to do? You have to get up and follow him down the road. And going on from there, he saw two brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee, his father, mending their nets. He called them, and they immediately left the boat and their father and followed him.

[7 : 29] And Jesus was going about in all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom. That's Jesus' message in this part of the world.

The gospel of the kingdom. The gospel that a new government is being brought into the world. This word gospel, you might know, is the word euangelion.

And euangelion comes into the English word as evangel. This is the evangel, the good news of the kingdom. Proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.

Notice the three verbs there. Teaching, preaching, healing. When we're down in Capernaum, I'm going to comment on those connections later on. And news about him went unto all of Syria, and they brought to him all who were ill, taken with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics, and he healed them.

And great multitudes were following him from Galilee, the Diophthikopolis, way over there, Jerusalem, way down there, and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

[8 : 45] That's how far the news was so quickly spreading. And the multitudes then come to Jesus. And when he saw the multitudes, he went up on the mountain, on this mountain, and he sat down to teach.

I won't because I won't be able to see everybody. And the disciples came to him, and opening their mouth, he began to teach them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.

The Greek construction there is literally to be translated, Blessed are the gentle, for only they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Righteousness will be the theme of his sermon. Righteousness I translate as right relation, right relatedness. Blessed are those who hunger for right relatedness, for they shall be satisfied.

[10 : 03] Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for the sake of right relatedness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you, when people insult you and say all manner of evil against you and persecute you because of my name.

Rejoice and be glad, for so they treated the prophets who were before you. You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, of what good is it except to be thrown on the path and be crushed under people's feet?

You, you are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. People don't light a candle and put a bushel over it.

No, they light a candle, put it in the middle of the room so it gives light to everyone in the room. So you, share your light. Do your good works so that your Father in heaven is glorified.

[11:21] Now, do not think, do not think that even though I am bringing a new kingdom, do not think that I came to abolish the law and the prophets.

I did not come to abolish the law and the prophets. I came to fulfill the law and the prophets. I tell you that heaven and earth will not pass away until every little jot and tittle of the law was fulfilled. So, those who do not practice even the littlest commandment and then teach others not to practice them shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven.

But those who grasp hold of the commandments and teach others to do the commandments will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. I tell you that unless your right relatedness exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you won't enter this new kingdom.

Notice that in 517. There are three righteousnesses. Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees. And in the rest of the sermon, then, Jesus is going to talk about these three forms of righteousness.

[12:36] Your righteousness, which he's going to then describe as the righteousness that the kingdom rings about, the scribes' righteousness, and the Pharisees' righteousness. And so, in the next section, the rest of chapter 5, he's going to talk about kingdom righteousness as over against scribal righteousness.

And that's where you have these six, you have heard it was said, but I say it. You have heard it was said, you shall not murder. But I say to you, that if you're angry with your brother or sister, you are liable to the courts.

Whoever says to another human being, Raka, shall be guilty before the Supreme Court, whoever shall say to another human being, you fool, will be guilty enough to go into the fires of hell.

So if you're presenting your gift at the altar, and then you remember, somebody has something against you. Put your altar, your gift at the altar, and hightail it over to that person, and do what you can do to make peace.

You have heard it was said, you shall not commit adultery. But I say to you, whoever looks at a woman to lust after her, has committed adultery.

[13:56] So the best thing you can do, is if your eye lusts, pluck out your eye. It's better to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell. And if your right hand causes you to do it, cut off your right hand.

It's better that you cut, you lose a part of your body than for you to go into hell. You have heard it was said, whoever sends his wife away, give her a certificate of divorce.

But I say to you, that whoever divorces his wife, except for the cause of chastity, causes her to commit adultery. Again, you heard it was said, the ancients were told, you shall not make false vows, and you shall keep your promises.

But I say to you, make no vow at all. Just don't even bother making a vow or an oath. Don't swear by heaven, because that's God's throne. Don't swear by the earth, that's his footstool.

And definitely don't swear by Jerusalem, that's the place where the king lives. The best thing to do is let your yes be yes, and your no be no.

[14:59] Anything beyond that is of the evil one. You have heard it was said, eye for eye, tooth for tooth.

But I say to you, do not resist the one who is evil. Whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other.

Left cheek, turn to him the other. Whoever wants to sue you and take your shirt, give him your coat too. Whatever soldier forces you to carry a pack one mile, take it too.

Give to the one who asks of you, and do not refuse the one who wants to borrow. And you have heard it was said, you shall love your neighbor, but hate your enemy.

I say to you, love your enemy. Pray for those who persecute you, so that you might become sons and daughters if your father is in heaven.

[16:00] Look how good your father is. I mean he sends rain on the just and the unjust. He lets the sun shine on the evil and the good. Therefore, you are to be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect.

So that's the kingdom righteousness as over against scribal righteousness. And then he starts to go to show the kingdom righteousness as over against Pharisees. Ah, beware.

Do not practice this new righteousness, this new right relatedness before others to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward with your father. So, for instance, if you're giving in alms, don't do it the way the hypocrites do.

When they give to charity, ah, they sound the trumpet, they call attention to it, so that men might know they're giving charity. I tell you, they have their reward in full. People know that you gave. Big deal. I'm adding to the text. Do you? When you give, don't let your right hand know what your left hand is doing. I know that's a problem for your tax returns, but we'll talk about it another time.

[17:11] And, when you're praying, don't be like the hypocrites. They love to stand in the synagogues and on the street and give long prayers so that people will be impressed by how pious they are.

Well, they get the reward. People are impressed. Big deal. But you, when you pray, go into your closet, close the door, and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who is in secret will see you and hear you.

And you don't need to use a lot of words. You don't need to do that like the Gentiles do because they don't know my Father yet. You don't need a lot of words. Your Father knows what you need before you pray.

Here's how you pray. Ready? Our Father, you're in heaven. You're on the throne and you're all around us. So, hallow your name on earth as it is in heaven.

Bring your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Cause your will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. And once you give us our daily bread and please forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

[18:13] And Father, when you lead us to the test like you did your son, do not let this test become a temptation but rescue us from the evil one. If you forgive others their sin, your Heavenly Father will forgive you.

But if you won't forgive others, your Heavenly Father won't forgive you. And when you fast, don't be like the hypocrites. Oh, they like to have long faces, their hair's a mess.

In order to call attention to the fact that they're fasting. I tell you, they got their reward. They got attention. You, wash your face. Comb your hair. Look alive. You fast in secret and your Father who is the secret sees you.

So that's Jesus' kingdom righteousness over against pharisaical righteousness. And now he starts on kingdom righteousness, your righteousness. This is the righteousness now to which he particularly calls us.

Do not treasure, or do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up treasures in heaven where moth and rust cannot destroy and where thieves cannot break in and steal.

[19:25] For I tell you that where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. You heard me say what you didn't think I was going to say.

Now I'm going to paraphrase. You thought I would say where your heart is, there your treasure will be. I'm telling you a secret about your heart. Your heart will always follow your treasure.

The eye of the lamp, the eye of the body is the lamp of the body. If the eye is full of light, your body will be full of light. But if the eye is dark, your body will be full of darkness. No one can serve two masters.

You'll either hate the one and despise the other or you'll love the one and hate the other. No one can serve both God and man. Therefore, I say to you, stop worrying.

Therefore, you always have to ask what the therefore is there for. The therefore goes back to treasures, lamp, and mammon. If your treasure is on earth, if your eye is darkened, and you're living

for mammon, you will be very anxious.

[20 : 39] So stop being anxious. For, about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink or what you will wear. For is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?

Start looking at the birds of the air. They do not sow nor do they reap nor gather into barns and yet your Father in heaven feeds them. Are you not worth more than the birds?

I can imagine at that point saying, boy, answer me. Are you not worth more than the birds? And which of you by being anxious can add a single cubit, 18 inches, to your lifespan?

In fact, it's the opposite. And why are you anxious about clothing? Start observing the lilies of the field. They neither, at Solomon, in all of his glory, he's wasn't arrayed like one of these.

If the Father loves this vegetation which is here today and gone tomorrow, will he not take care of you, O people of little faith? So stop being anxious then saying, what shall we eat or what shall we drink or with what shall we clothe ourselves?

[21 : 49] For all of these things the Gentiles, and I think by Gentiles he's meaning all of these things the people who do not know the God of Israel, they eagerly seek these things.

But you, you don't need to. your heavenly Father knows that you need them. You keep seeking the kingdom of heaven and his right relatedness and all these things will be added to you.

So stop worrying about tomorrow. Tomorrow will take care of itself. Today has enough problems with it all. Do not judge lest you be judged.

For in the way that you judge you will be judged. The standard that you use to judge another human being will be the standard used against you. And why are you bothered about the speck that is in your brother or sister's eye and don't notice the log that is in your eye?

How can you say to your sister, let me take this little speck out of your eye and don't see that you've got a log in your own eye? You hypocrite. Take the log out of your eye and then maybe you can help take the speck out of another's eye.

[23 : 00] And do not give what is holy to dogs. Do not cast your pearls before swine. Otherwise, you'll just grab it and eat it up. Keep asking and it shall be given to you.

Keep seeking and you will find. Keep knocking for the door will be opened. For those who keep asking are finding. Those who keep seeking are receiving.

All the way around. And those who keep knocking the door will be opened. What man among you has a son who asks him for a loaf of bread and instead gives him a stone?

Or what if someone comes and asks for a fish and you give him a snake instead? No, if you're evil and know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who are asking him?

Therefore, however you want people to treat you, so treat them. This is the law and the prophets.

[24 : 06] And that's your righteousness that Jesus emphasizes. Notice, by the way, there's a bracketing. Back at 517, do not think that I came to abolish the law and the prophets.

I came to fulfill the law and prophets. And now here at 712, this is the law and the prophets. Jesus summarizes the law and the prophets as, however you want people to treat you, so treat them.

And now we come to the conclusion. Enter by the narrow gate, for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction and many are those who enter it.

For the gate is small and the way, the derrick, is narrow that leads to life and few are those who find it. Beware of the false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they're ravenous wolves.

You'll know them by their fruit. Bad trees don't produce bad fruit, a good fruit. And good trees don't produce bad fruit. You will know them by their fruit. Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven.

[25 : 15] But those who do the will of my Father in heaven, many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? And did we not in your name cast out demons?

And did we not in your name perform many miracles? And I will say to them, I never knew you. Depart from me, you lawless ones.

Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house upon a rock.

The rains came down, the floods came up, the winds blew against that house, and it stood because it was on the rock. But whoever hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand.

The rain came down, the floods came up, the wind blew against that house, and it fell. And great was its fall. And Matthew tells us, the result was that when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were amazed at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one having authority and not as their scribes.

[26 : 31] This word authority in Greek is *exousia*. It's made up of two words, a preposition, *ek*, and the feminine participle, *usia*. *Usia*, from the verb to be.

Ek, meaning out of the center of. Authority, out of the very center of being. These first disciples hear Jesus preach this State of the Union address that upsets up just about everything, and they recognize that it came out of the center of reality.

This is the really real. This is why East Stanley Jones said in the last century that the great need of the church right now is a blood transfusion from the Sermon on the Mount to get rid of all the parasites that have been on it so that it might enter into full flourishing as human beings.

That's how the Sermon goes. Now, there's so much to say about that. We could take many days, right? Some have taken a course for me at Regions in 15 hours.

I have two little books on part of it, on the Beatitudes, a book, and on the Lord's Prayer. And Poshayu translated the Lord's Prayer with, right, into Chinese. Her friend Hazel did the Beatitudes.

[27 : 48] I hope to write the whole Sermon on the Mount. And then, would you help me on that one? All right. I want to leave you with three things as a result of this. It could be a thousand things, but these three are a way of summarizing.

Number one, preaching or preaching this sermon, and I'm going to suggest this is really critical, Brenda, for disciple making. This is a fundamental text for our time. Whenever we're preaching or teaching this sermon, we must always keep it connected with Jesus' gospel.

Before he preaches this great sermon, he also has his opening sermon, which is that one line, the kingdom of God has come near. The kingdom of heaven has come near.

If you separate the Sermon on the Mount from the kingdom has come near, the Sermon on the Mount either becomes frustrating idealism or crushing legalism.

It's because the kingdom has come that we can be the people Jesus describes. I divide the sermon on the Mount into four sections. Kingdom character, the Beatitudes.

[28 : 52] Kingdom influence, the salt and light. Kingdom righteousness, all of those texts we read through chapters five, six, and seven. And then kingdom choices. And I think what Jesus is doing with this is he's saying, what he's doing in the Sermon on the Mount is he's describing this humanity that will emerge as a result of embracing his gospel of the kingdom.

Or another way to make it more personal. When you embrace and begin to follow the king who wears thorns, you will become these kind of people. This is clearest when it comes to the Beatitudes.

The Beatitudes, this is where I think many people go wrong. The Beatitudes are not something you are to seek to achieve. It's impossible to achieve the human being.

Rather, the Beatitudes are Jesus' portrait of what happens when you encounter this new king.

When you meet Jesus, the king, you become poor in spirit. You begin to mourn the condition of the world.

You become gentle. you begin to hunger and thirst for this to be fulfilled. You find yourself surprisingly immersive. And praise the Lord, you begin to be pure in heart.

[30 : 10] And you begin to be a peacemaker. And sorry about this, you also find yourself in trouble. That make sense? It's the fruit of receiving the gospel.

So please keep it connected. I said earlier that gospel, the word is *euangelion*, comes into the English language as *evangel*. And it's from the word *evangel* that we get this word *evangelical*. And as you know, this word *evangelical* is quite prominent in the press right now. *Evangelical* means the people of the Sermon on the Mount.

that's *evangelical*. The press doesn't get it. And a lot of evangelicals don't get it. *Evangelical* is these kind of people.

Non-retaliatory, love their enemies, gentle, seeking righteousness, don't call people names, you get the point.

[31 : 15] So that's the first thing I want to emphasize. Sermon on the Mount gets connected with the gospel of the kingdom. Am I making sense? Second point is, I want to elevate the great promise of the Sermon on the Mount.

And I wonder if you caught it. You probably didn't because most translations don't translate it as a promise. It's 548. Therefore, you are to be perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect. Holy moly. Brothers and sisters, that's not a commandment. It's a promise. How do I know that? The Greek is the future imperative. It's seldom used and it's hard to render into English. Future imperative. It's, you know, the inclination is to make it a commandment.

So I grew up knowing the Sermon on the Mount from the King James. And so you know that that verse is be ye perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect. That's not the way to render the future imperative.

[32 : 24] The way to render the future imperative is you will be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect. it's a promise.

You will be. You will be these kind of people because you're hanging out with me. So my mind goes to that great story and I think it's Lewis, C.S. Lewis teaches it in the Mere Christianity.

And you've probably heard this but it's worth reading. I find many good people have been bothered by what I said in the last chapter about our Lord's word be ye perfect. Some people seem to think that it means unless you are perfect I will not help you.

And since we cannot be perfect then if he meant that our position is helpless. But I do not think he meant that. I think he meant the only help I will give you is help to become perfect.

Lewis renders Jesus' words you may want something less but I will give you nothing less. And then Lewis explains and says I'm sure familiar to many of you.

[33 : 35] Let me explain. When I was a child I found I would have a toothache and I knew if I went to my mother she would give me something that would deaden the pain for the night and let me go to sleep. But I did not go to my mother not at least until the pain became very bad.

And the reason I did not go was this. I did not doubt she would give me some aspirin but I knew she would do something else. I knew she would take me to the dentist the next morning.

I could not get what I wanted out of her without getting something more which I did not want. I wanted immediate relief from pain but I could not get it without having my teeth set permanently right.

I knew those dentists they start fiddling about with all sorts of other teeth which had not began to ache. they would not let sleeping dogs lie. If you gave them an inch they'd take a mile. Now if I may put it this way our Lord is like the dentist.

If you give him an inch he'll take you a mile. Dozens of people go to him to be cured of one particular sin that they might be ashamed of or of which a sin that's obviously spoiling in their life like bad temper or drunkenness.

[34 : 45] Well he will cure it alright but he will not stop there. I love this line. That may be all you asked for him but once you call him in he will give you the full treatment.

That is why he warned people to count the cost before becoming Christians. Make no mistake he says if you let me I will make you perfect. The moment you put yourself in my hand that is what you were in for.

Nothing less or other than that. You have free will and you may choose you can push me away but if you do not push me away understand that I'm going to see the job through.

Whatever suffering it may cost you in your earthly life whatever inconceivable purification it may cost you after death whatever it cost me I will never rest nor let you rest until you are literally perfect until my father can say without reservation that he's well pleased with you as he said he was well pleased with me this I can do and will do but I will do nothing less.

You will be perfect as my heavenly father is perfect. Boy those folks must have been like that. So that's the second thing I want to highlight the great promise of the Sermon on the Mount.

[36 : 08] And then what I think is the great command of the Sermon on the Mount you know very well Matthew 6 24 keep seeking the kingdom of God and his right relatedness and all these things will be added to.

Just keep seeking this kingdom I'm bringing into the world. Just keep seeking this very different way of relating that I'm bringing into the world. they got through Jesus turned around the multitudes headed back down the hill where Jesus helped them live down this radical state of the union by the only king who can put Humpty together again.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.