



**Culture Shock:
Countercultural Living Through the Sermon on the Mount
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"Right Relationships"
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Key Verses: Matthew 5:6-8

Key Thought: Throughout "The Sermon on the Mount", Jesus immerses us into a culture that tends to be counterintuitive and disorienting for most people: the culture of the kingdom of the heavens. Verses 3-5 laid out the progression of our awareness of and relationship to God. Verses 6-8 take the next logical step by highlighting characteristics we should strive to maintain in relationship to one another as members of this divine kingdom.

Points to Consider:

- V.6 – "Hunger and thirst for righteousness" refers to seeking the betterment of those around us. It is good for us to work for the good of others, actively demonstrating concern for things like liberation from oppression, civil rights, justice, integrity, and honor. In Matthew 25:34-40, Jesus tells His followers that a craving for righteousness that leads to action is equivalent to serving Him directly. It is for these blessed ones that He is preparing His eternal kingdom.
- V.7 – "The merciful" refers to those who demonstrate love by reaching out to help those who are helpless. Jesus modeled this by going to the cross for us, exposing our sins to God's forgiveness, therefore bringing about our healing. As a result, we are compelled to demonstrate mercy toward others.
- V.8 – "The pure in heart" refers to those who become so by paying attention to God. Purity is not something we will our way to by simply avoiding sin, for our hearts are wicked (see Jeremiah 17:9, Matthew 12:34, 15:19). But there is hope! A clean heart and renewed spirit results from a daily rhythm of confession and repentance before our gracious and loving Father (Psalm 51:10). As we regularly seek Him, our hearts are purified, and our relationships with others become more healthy.

Discussion Prompts:

- Consider what your world would look like if you had a genuine hunger and thirst for righteousness? Are there specific ways in which you can improve the way you work for the good of others?
- Consider the proper role, if any, of the "morality police" when one is called to show mercy.
- Take time to ask the Lord to show you your heart. Commit to one way you can improve on regularly paying attention to God.
- Close with prayer for one another, based on your discussion.