

Sermon on the Mount – Systematic & Biblical Theology & Intro Jan 2026

WELCOME. This month we begin our study of the Sermon on the Mount found in Matthew chapters five through seven. We will be going through this series for the next two years. There is simply too much material to go over in one year. We want to move a bit slower – we want to have time to consider together the meaning of the text and its implications for our lives.

The first couple of months of each study we want to look at an introduction to that study and some points of theology and doctrine. We hear the words “theology” and “doctrine” pretty often I think, and we understand them to be important words, but I want us to have a working definition that we can call to mind so we can really understand what it is we’re trying to do these first couple of months.

DEFINING TERMS

The first thing I want to touch on is the meaning of the word **theology**. When I am asked what theology means, I have said, “the study of God.” Literally, that is the meaning of the word – theo meaning God and ology meaning study of. But after poking around a little bit, I find that definition to be inadequate for how it’s actually used. The primary and authoritative source for studying God is the Bible, and when we hear about any sort of “theology” there is likely a stronger orientation to the Scripture than to the Person of God.

There are four main branches of theology. Thankfully, a couple of them are fairly intuitive.

First is **historical theology** – this is studying how doctrine has evolved through church history.

Second is **practical theology** – this is my favorite. Biblical counseling falls under this branch. It seeks to understand how to practically apply and live out biblical doctrine.

Third is **biblical theology** – and this is the most difficult one to pin down because different theologians define it differently. Wayne Grudem considers it a “technical term” and it is the study of a specific portion of Scripture or a particular author and how that portion of Scripture fits in the whole of Scripture. Stephen Wellum defines biblical theology as being “the discipline of understanding the Bible as a unified, unfolding story of God’s redemptive plan, centered on Jesus Christ, revealed progressively through history and covenants.” I am going to suggest that it is a movement from a portion of text to the whole of Scripture and how those are related to one another.

And lastly **systematic theology** – (think methodical) this is taking any one topic and studying it throughout the entirety of Scripture from beginning to end. This overlaps with biblical theology – they are not completely distinct categories.

If we consider these four branches of theology to be processes, the result or product of the processes of theology is **doctrine**. **Doctrine** is a set of beliefs, and those beliefs are a result of the process of careful studying of the Scripture.

Can anyone think of a common means by which doctrine is learned? (catechisms)

A common means of studying doctrine is through **catechisms**. They are succinct question-answer summaries of beliefs. Catechisms are not Scripture – in other words, they are not quoting Scripture - but

they are developed from the study of Scripture. So, you will often see Scripture references under the Q&A to research further if desired.

Question 98 of the Westminster Shorter Catechism goes like this:

Q. 98. What is prayer?

A. Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.

Ps. 62:8; 1 John 5:14; John 16:23; Ps. 32:5-6; Dan. 9:4; Phil. 4:6

Does anyone know the most famous doctrinal statement in religious history? (Nicene Creed)¹

The Nicene Creed was composed through two councils (a meeting of church leaders to manage church related concerns both mundane and significant) in the 300s (325 Council of Nicaea and Constantinople 381) for the purpose of settling important doctrinal issues especially the nature of the Trinity (one God in three Persons) and the nature of Jesus Christ (fully God, fully man)².

We believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
begotten from the Father before all ages,
God from God,
Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made;
of the same essence as the Father.

The Nicene creed isn't Scripture, but it's derived from the study of Scripture and it reflects the teachings of Scripture in a consolidated, synthesized manner.

Let's briefly **REVIEW**.

Who can define historical, practical, biblical, systematic theology? Doctrine? Example of doctrine?

WHY STUDY THEOLOGY (OR THE BIBLE) DEEPLY

The Bible Teaches Me Who I Am and What My Purpose Is

¹ Quoted from the Nicene creed 381AD after the counsel of Constantinople (original 325, Council of Nicea)

² Arianism claimed Jesus was not divine.

If someone was to ask me, “why should I study theology? This is all a bit intimidating. I’m having learn what theology even means.” I would say, “So am I – I just refined my definition of theology after using it for many years.” All of us have to start from the beginning. None of us came out the womb knowing theology, knowing the Bible. Is it worth my time and energy and money? And the answer is an emphatic “yes.” It’s worth our time, our energy, our money, because the *Bible teaches us who we are, what our purpose is, and how we live out our purpose.* Without the counsel of God through his Word, we cannot rightly understand who we are and for what purpose we are to live.

The Fool Does Not Discern His Way – Let Us Not Be Fools

We must consider that there is a real category of wasting our lives and of being fools. The fool is a prominent biblical category.

Proverbs 14:8 says, “The wisdom of the prudent is to discern his way, but the folly of fools is deceiving.”

We are to be wise and discern (distinguish between right and wrong, between good and evil based on the wisdom of the Scripture) our way. Fools do not give careful thought to their way before God, but the wise person lives carefully so that he may stand before God and be accepted. Fools are spiritually dull and disinterested and find more pleasure in their own designs and purposes than in considering God’s designs and purposes. We are to be wise and discern our way by studying intently, carefully, eagerly what God has revealed to us through his Scripture. May God keep each of us from wasting our lives and living as fools because we are ignorant and unwilling to invest ourselves in the study of his Word.

Do Not Compare Your Understanding to Another’s – Have a Heart Posture of Valuing Scripture

There’s no bar to meet – like I need to know as much as some other person. Or I need a degree to study the Bible. No, it’s a heart posture of valuing what God has revealed and believing by faith that what God has said in the Scripture is true and needful for me personally. Not just needful to live wisely in this life but that but needful for the salvation of my soul that I may live in the next life. And how can we know what God requires if we do not know his Word? Let us not lean on our own ideas or our own understanding, or on Twitter posts or Instagram memes and cliches or on a prayer that you prayed a long time ago.

Questions or comments?

GOD’S DESIGN AND PURPOSE FOR HIS PEOPLE

So, what is God’s design and purpose for the lives of his people and really for all people? (To glorify God).

Isaiah 43:6,7 says, “I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, 7 everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”

We are created for the glory of God. What does this look like?

Genesis 1:26,27 “Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

We were designed by God to glorify him **by imaging him** (Let us make man in our image...) in all that we think, feel, say, and do and in **having dominion** over his creation (the fish, the birds, the livestock) as his representative, carrying out his rule and reign through our/mankind's dominion.

So, question: **What, then, does it mean to be human?** (To be made in the image and likeness of God. The birds, the fish, the livestock, the plants – none of these were made in the image and likeness of God).

Biblical Anthropology

We were created in the image of God. This is called biblical anthropology – the study of man, who man is, in light of the Scriptures. (I want to credit Anthony Hoekema for a lot of the information in this section. He has articulated most clearly these concepts of the authors that I've read).

To be made in the likeness of God is what it means to be human and not an animal or a plant. To be human is to image God. In the fulness of our person we were made to “mirror God” (Anthony Hoekema (who-KEM-a)). So, when people look at us, they should see something of God – his goodness, his love, his faithfulness. To interact with a person should be to some degree representative of interacting with God himself because we mirror him or are like him or image him.

If you look up what “inhuman” means you'll find it means not looking like God: “lacking human qualities of compassion and mercy; cruel and barbaric - exceedingly brutal or savagely cruel.” Synonyms for inhuman are sadistic – taking pleasure in causing pain to others; monstrous – outrageously evil; devilish, demonic, harsh, severe, heinous, merciless, pitiless, unforgiving.

Even unsaved, secular society unintentionally recognizes that to be human is to be like God – merciful, kind, compassionate, forgiving, considerate of those around them. And to be “inhuman” is to be unlike God – lacking compassion, lacking mercy, unforgiving, cruel, and barbaric.

This is a mind-blowing concept in two ways that I would identify personally: first is the incredible weight of responsibility that we have to live in a way that mirrors God, and the second is how dignifying it is to each of us to have such a design and purpose of mirroring God. Our purpose as human beings is not centric upon ourselves and our own desires and ambitions and glory but is centric to God and his glory

and his desires and his purposes. We are created for something far beyond just the satisfaction of ourselves; we are created for the glory of God.

If imaging God in how you live feels beyond your capacity, I can assure that biblically it is. We must look to Christ to be made a new creation through his gospel so that we would desire in our own selves to image the LORD and be enabled by his Spirit living in us to carry it out. Through Ezekiel, God says he will give those who put their trust in him a new heart and will put his Spirit within them and cause them to walk in his statutes.

Ezekiel 36:26, 27 “And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

There are two ways that we image God – one, in the **kind** of being we are – this is the **structural** aspect of our likeness to God, and two, in **what** we do – this is the **functional** aspect of our likeness to God.

The **structural aspect**, the **kind** of being man is, encompasses things like reason, intellect, morality, conscience, worship, responsibility, and volitional powers (in other words the power to make decisions). So, we could say “What *kind* of being is man?” Man is a thinking being, a being of intellect. “What kind of being is man?” Man is a moral being, a being of conscience. “What kind of being is man?” A being who bears responsibility and has the power make decisions. In these capacities, in these **structural aspects**, we are like God and therefore we image him. These structural aspects also include any giftings or abilities given to believers through his Spirit that the Scripture talks about in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12).

(Romans 12:6 “Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them...”)

(1 Cor 12:4 “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit...”)

God has made us **structurally** in his image – he has made us the **kind** of people we are – for the purpose of us carrying out our **function**.

The **functional aspect** of imaging God, quoting Hendrikus Berkhof, is “man’s living in right relationship to God, the neighbor, and creation.” And what does this look like? What does it look like to live in right relationship with God, neighbor, and creation? It means living according to true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness with God, neighbor, and creation. The **functional aspect** of imaging God is living in right relationship with God, neighbor, and creation by living according to true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness.

These three components come from Colossians 3:10 and Ephesians 4:24:

“put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator” and

And Ephesians 4:24: **“...put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”**

When Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, the image of God in man did not disappear but was then marred, distorted, perverted, corrupted, deformed. Humanity still images God in their capacities (as

Hoekema would say, in the structural aspect) but these capacities and giftings are used sinfully to satisfy man's desires not God's good purposes.

So, the image of God in man is corrupted but there is hope. Colossians 3 and Ephesians 4 say, "put on the new self." There is a renewal of the image of God that takes place in every believer when they turn to Christ in faith and repentance. The believer becomes a new creation putting on "the new self" at the point of salvation and is progressively, incrementally, increasingly being conformed to the image of God through sanctification.

Hoekema says, "Sanctification, therefore, ought to be understood as the progressive renewal of man in the image of God."

And Paul says in his letter to the Romans - **Romans 8:29, "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son..."**

Summary

So all humanity is made in the image of God for the purpose of glorifying him in who we are (structure) and in what we do (function; living in right relationship with God, neighbor, and creation). At the fall, the image of God in man was corrupted but those who have turned to Christ in faith are progressively being renewed in true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness (Col 3 and Eph 4) to be renewed in the image of God/Christ.

Thoughts or questions?

What does this mean for the SM? How should this impact how our understanding of the significance of Christ's teaching?

When our culture speaks about living in the fulness of our person it uses terms like self-actualization (from Maslow's hierarchy of needs). Self-actualization consists of things like accepting yourself how you are, being true to your own values and preferences, express yourself freely, understand yourself and your capacities, and finding meaning in relationships and careers and experiences. When the world talks about self-actualization or its synonyms self-fulfillment or self-realization or self-awareness, its focus is on self. But the Bible orients us to God.

We do not live to express ourselves – we have a purpose that is far greater than our own person. Our purpose is to live to express God. We were designed in God's image, and as the believer grows in understanding and faithfulness, in obedience – the believer changes more and more into the image of God. We are not to reflect ourselves, but we are to mirror God.

In the Sermon on the Mount, we are learning how to functionally image God, *how to live in right relationship - in true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness - with God and neighbor*, how to live out our being made in the image of God. How to progressively and incrementally be restored to the fulness of our humanity prior to the fall when the image of God in us was uncorrupted and undistorted. Christ

teaches us how to relate rightly to God through obedience, prayer, vows, money, prioritizing God's kingdom and through persistence.

And Christ teaches us how to relate rightly to our neighbor as related to forgiveness, anger, marital faithfulness, purity, retaliation, giving, and judging. In the SM we learn how to live increasingly in the likeness of the image of God which is our design and purpose as human beings. How to live in the fulness of our humanity.

The SM is not a list of rules; it's not a lot of really good ethics; it will not make you a good person. It is the word of God to humanity to teach us what it means, what it looks like to be fully human, how to live in the likeness of God in our person (our **structure**) and in our relationships (our **functioning**).

REVIEW

What is God's design and purpose for the lives of his people? (To glorify God).

How do we glorify God? (By living after his image and likeness).

What does it mean to be human? (To be made in the image and likeness of God – not a plant or animal).

What was significant about the meaning of “inhuman?” (To be inhuman is to be unlike God).

We are made in the image and likeness of God “structurally” and “functionally.” What do these two terms refer to? (What we are *like* as human beings and how we *function* – specifically our relationships with God, man, and creation).

How do we live in right relationship with God, man, and creation? (By living according to true knowledge, in righteousness and holiness).

What is the term for the progressive renewal of man in the image of God? (Sanctification).

REVIEW

So, we have been made to glorify God. We are made in his image both structurally – in what we are like, and functionally – in what we do (our relationships). With entrance of sin into the world, the image of God in us was broken, distorted, perverted. Adam and Eve rejected the rule of God, and their relationship became disordered.

But when a person is redeemed or saved, the image of God is progressively renewed in them. The believer again lives in right relationship with the LORD living according to true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness; the believer lives in obedience under the rule of God.

Thoughts or questions?

THE PURPOSE OF THE COVENANTS: A RIGHT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

We are going to take a brief look at the biblical covenants and to see how they relate to God's rule and reign and the fall (when the image of God in man became distorted and broken).

To live in right relationship with God (which is how we functionally live in the image of God) is to live according to true knowledge, righteousness and holiness. *This is inherently obedience to God*, faithfulness to God. We cannot live in right relationship with God, we cannot live righteous, holy lives while at the same time disobeying God and walking in unfaithfulness. Humanity's right relationship with God is to live in submission to all that he has required of us.

1 Peter 1:14-16 “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, 15 but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

What happened with Adam and Eve? Did they live in right relationship with God? (No, they rebelled and rejected his rule, rejected his authority, sought moral autonomy “discern good from evil”).

How would you define God's “rule” or “reign” over his creation? (God's rule over creation is our being in right relationship with God. God has established the rules for our existence, the rules for our relationship with him and to reject his rule is to no longer be in right relationship with him).

How do we know what God requires of us to be in right relationship with him? (We look to the covenants).

Can anyone define “covenant”?

A covenant is an enduring agreement that defines a relationship between two parties involving a solemn, binding obligation(s) by at least one of the parties toward the other, made by oath under threat of divine curse, and ratified by a visual ritual (Taken from Gentry and Wellum's text Kingdom through Covenant, Daniel C. Lane).

It involves permanent and serious commitments of faithful, loyal love, obedience, and trust. The biblical covenants are relational in nature.

God relates to humanity in Scripture through covenants. The covenants “define the relationship” between God and men. It is through the covenants that we understand what God requires for us to live in right relationship with him.

How do we relate to God today? Is it still through a covenant? If so, which covenant?

Today, God relates to us through the New Covenant. When the prophets spoke about the New Covenant in the Old Testament, it was called the Everlasting covenant³ five times, the covenant of peace⁴ three

³ Everlasting Covenant x5 – Jeremiah 32, 50:2-5, Ezekiel 37

⁴ Covenant of Peace x3– Isa 54, Eze 34, 37

times, to having a new heart and spirit⁵ three times, but only once as the New Covenant.⁶ In the New Testament it's called the New Covenant five times and only once the everlasting covenant.⁷

Luke 22:19, 20 “And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to (the disciples), saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” 20 And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.”

We come to God through the shed blood of Jesus – that is the New Covenant. The New Covenant defines our relationship with God – we turn to him in repentance and faith, and God grants us full forgiveness and gives us his Spirit and his righteousness and we are accepted by God.

We don't come to God through the Levitical priesthood and Old Testament sacrificial system – that is the Mosaic covenant made at Siani made with the people of Israel. You may hear about folks who believe Christians should keep the OT law and OT feasts etc. This is called the Hebrew Roots Movement. But we do not live under the covenant at Siani; we do not live under a covenant mediated by Moses and made with the people of Israel.

We live under a covenant mediated and guaranteed by Jesus Christ.⁸ The book of Hebrews makes clear that the Mosaic covenant was never intended by God to be permanent – it was prophesied through Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and the minor prophets that God would make a new covenant with his people. Although they do not all use the term “new covenant”, they use covenantal language that refers to the coming “new covenant.”

Consider **Hebrews 8:7-10** - “*For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second. 8 For he finds fault with them when he says: “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, 9 not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord. 10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”*

Whenever we read “I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts” that is covenant language. Or “I will be their God, and they shall be my people” that is covenant language. The text says, This is the covenant that I will make...”⁹

There are six major covenants in the Bible: the covenant with creation, with Noah, with Abraham, at Siani (with Israel), with David, and the new covenant in effect today. These are also called the Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic covenants. The covenants are the means through which God fulfills his

⁵ New heart and spirit x3- Eze 11, 18, 37

⁶ New Covenant 1x- Jer 31:31

⁷ Eternal/everlasting covenant Heb 13:20

⁸ Allen, David. Hebrews. The New American Commentary. P 446

⁹ Believers are bound up with Israel: Gal 3:29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

promises to save. The covenants incrementally bring this about with the final goal of the covenants being the establishment of God's rule and reign over his people, his people being brought back into right relationship with him.

These covenants form the spine of Scripture and without them there are just a collection of stories. The covenants are what bind the meta-narrative or the overarching story of redemption together. Each covenant progressively reveals how God will bring about complete restoration and full forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ.

(Explain covenant head*)**

Creation covenant - God's initial arrangement with Adam, highlighting humanity's duty and the promise of life through perfect obedience (which Christ fulfills).

Noahic covenant - God's promise to preserve creation, a common grace extending to all peoples.

Abrahamic covenant - Promise of land, descendants (nation), and blessing to all nations through Abraham's Seed (Christ).

Mosaic covenant - Reveals sin and points to the need for a greater mediator; the law's requirements are fulfilled by Christ.

Davidic covenant - Promise of an everlasting kingdom through David's greater Son (Christ).

New covenant - instituted in Christ's blood, fulfills the promises of the Old, bringing grace, forgiveness, and the indwelling Spirit, making the church the new covenant people.

REVIEW

How do we know how to walk in right relationship with God? (Through the covenants).

Which covenant are we currently under? (New covenant).

What does God require of us under the new covenant? (To turn to him in repentance and faith and walk in holiness as he is holy).

Who is the mediator of the New Covenant? (Jesus Christ)

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

When I first began studying for this evening, I was interested in studying the Kingdom of Heaven. That is where we are now. The concept of the Kingdom of Heaven/God resulted in the study of all these prior theological concepts. Let me try to pull them all together, and we will finish up.

In his gospel, Matthew refers frequently to the Kingdom of Heaven (32 times) and the Kingdom of God (4 times). These two terms are interchangeable and don't differ in their meaning.

Here are a few examples KOH used in Matthew:

John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus by proclaiming,

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:2).

When Jesus began his ministry after John the Baptist was beheaded

From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (4:17).

When Jesus sent out his twelve apostles giving them authority to cast out demons and heal diseases (10:1), he instructed them:

proclaim as you go, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand’ (10:7).

When Jesus healed a demon possessed, blind and mute man, and the Pharisees said it was by the power of the “prince of demons” (12:24), Jesus said:

“But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you” (Matthew 12:28).

When I began to study the SM and specifically the meaning of the kingdom of God, one of my first questions was something along the lines of, “If God is sovereign, as he plainly claims to be, how is it the kingdom of God is a just now happening thing?”

For example, in Psalm 145:13 the Scripture says, **“Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations.”**

God has reigned for all eternity. **How is the kingdom of God just now at hand?**

In Matthew (and the gospels), when Matthew is referring to the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God, he is referring *specifically to the saving reign of God and the restoration of a right relationship between God and man*. All through the OT God had been progressively revealing his plan of redemption and full forgiveness for mankind through his covenants (and within the covenants, prophesies, types, and shadows).

Each of the Old Testament covenant heads had failed – Adam, Noah, Abraham, Israel, and David – none had upheld their part of their covenants to walk in faithful obedience and loyal love to God. But now! The Son of God, Jesus Christ, had come into the world to act as the covenant head of a new covenant, *the New Covenant*, and through Jesus’ perfect obedience and sacrifice for sin, mankind could be restored to a right relationship with God.

Through Jesus Christ acting as the guarantor and mediator of a new covenant, full forgiveness of sin and restoration of one’s relationship to God is possible. This is the righting (or making right) of God’s rule and reign over his people. What could not be accomplished through previous covenant heads – Adam, Noah, Abraham, Israel, David - was accomplished once for all through Jesus Christ, the God-Man. Each of these covenant heads were responsible to live under the rule and reign of God and image him by reflecting the person and rule of God.

Is everyone here familiar with the idea that Christ fulfilled the law on our behalf? Here is the context for that. A covenant head was responsible to fulfill the covenant obligations on behalf of those they

represented. If they obeyed, they brought blessings on those they represented and if they disobeyed, they brought curses according to the covenant terms. Jesus Christ fulfilled the covenant obligations, fulfilled the law, and made full forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God a possibility.

Now the kingdom of heaven is at hand, the establishment of the saving rule and reign of God – it is near – it is among the people of Israel with the coming of Jesus Christ. God is about to restore mankind to right relationship to himself through the New Covenant. He will call people to himself in repentance and faith, remove their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh and his spirit, and incline them to keep his statutes just as was prophesied in Ezekiel and Isaiah and Jeremiah. Through the finished work of Christ the promise of internal transformation is made possible.

Man must choose his response to the call of the kingdom to repent and turn to God for forgiveness.

Just as those who heard Christ preach when he walked on earth, we too are faced with the call – Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. A way has been made for full forgiveness of sins. All that the covenants have been pointing forward to has taken place. To enter into the kingdom is to enter into a right relationship with God. To move from a disordered relationship marked by sin and the rejection of God's rule and reign to a right relationship of love, loyalty, and faithfulness.

Man's relationship to God being restored results in entering the kingdom.

When we turn to Christ in faith and repentance and live under the rule and reign of God, we have, at the same time, entered in the kingdom. Because to enter the kingdom of heaven is to live under the rule and reign of God and at the same time, to extend his rule and reign through our imaging and representing him in our person and our relationships.

Matthew's discourse (SM) teaches us how to live as disciples of God in the KOH.

Matthew scholar RT France calls Matthew's Sermon on the Mount a discourse on discipleship because in the SM we are learning how to live in the kingdom of heaven under the rule of God imaging him and representing him in who we are and in our relationships. The SM is not a list of ethics that we should follow to be good people. Rather, through the SM we learn how to walk in the fulness of humanity, imaging God, living under his rule and reign in right relationship, and fulfilling our purpose as his image bearer and representative. We are learning in the SM what it looks like to be fully human.

We see this in **Matthew 5:45-46 - But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.**

Through this study of the SM may each of us grow increasingly into the image and likeness of God and the fulness of our humanity being convicted and convinced to walk in loyalty, faithfulness, and love to Christ who represented us to God the Father in the New Covenant that we might have full forgiveness of sin and reconciliation to God.