

Feb. 4

Intro/Doctrine

Hi Ladies, I am so excited to further dive into our studies on the Sermon on the Mount. We are still in the broad overview portion of our study. Rebecca started us off last time, tonight we are going to continue by focusing on the STRUCTURE of the sermon and the THEMES. The Structure and the Themes.

Rebecca started us out very broad and let's just review a few of these quickly. Call it out if you know it. What we are created for? Anyone remember? (for the glory of God by being made in His image). Then there were 2 aspects of our likeness to God? (Structural- our capacity, intellect, reasoning, moral sensitivity, gifting, being responsible & Functional- to live in right relationship with God, neighbor, & creation). From here, I wanted to also highlight the Hoekema's definition of sanctification that she shared "Sanctification, therefore, ought to be understood as the progressive renewal of man in the image of God." we understand that what is being renewed in us are these two areas- our inner person (the structural portion) and our relationships, the way we interact with God, neighbor, and creation. This is going to be important as we continue in our study.

So all of this, begins to shape how we approach the sermon. As we start to narrow our funnel a bit more, I want us to begin by looking at the book of Matthew (don't worry, this will be brief, I promise. 😊) We find the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapters 5-7. Okay, so a semi-obvious question, who wrote the book of Matthew? Yes, it was Matthew. Can anyone tell me anymore about who he was as a person? (One of the 12 Disciples, called by Jesus, tax collector, his other name was Levi which is how the other gospel writers refer to him before he started following Jesus, when he was a tax collector).

The next thing, I want us to consider, is who the book of Matthew is written to. Who is the audience? Anyone have any ideas? It was written primarily to a Jewish audience. This is evidenced by his over 60 references to the OT and Matthew's emphasis on how Christ is the fulfillment of the OT promises, even in how he begins with the genealogy of Christ back to Abraham. He is referencing what the Jewish people already knew about their heritage to show that Jesus is the King and long-awaited Messiah of Israel. He refers to Christ as the "son of David" (1:1; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30). MacArthur even notes that Matthew "guards against Jewish sensibilities regarding the name of God, referring to "the kingdom of heaven", where other evangelists speak of "the kingdom of God"". This reference to the kingdom of heaven occurs 32 times in Matthew nowhere else in Scripture. What is primarily used in the rest of Scripture and a handful of times in Matthew is the phrase "kingdom of God". These phrases are synonymous and shouldn't be viewed as two different things. Rebecca had an excellent concise definition of the kingdom of heaven. She states

the kingdom of heaven is “the saving reign of God and the restoration of a right relationship between God and man” which has been fully and finally brought about by the power and work of Jesus Christ.

Alright, so we have taken a look at the (broad background, information on the book of Matthew) so let's now start to narrow a little more and look specifically at the Sermon on the Mount or as R. T. France terms it “The Discourse on Discipleship” (p. 153). I think that title pairs so well with the description Rebecca gave us of how to think of the sermon. The sermon is written for us who are believers for our sanctification, for our greater conformity into the image of God. We find this sermon in Matthew chapters 5-7, let's go ahead and turn there now. This begins with Jesus going up on a mountain and teaching them. What He teaches, this sermon is what is now called the sermon on the mount and what we will be studying in greater detail over the next 2 years. What is beautiful to see in these opening verses is some mirroring imagery of Moses going up on the Mount of Sinai to receive the law, and here we have Jesus, the greater Moses, going up on a mountain calling us to something greater which we will see more as we talk tonight.

Structure of the Sermon

Let's first start by looking at some of the sections heads as we peruse through the sermon. Unfortunately we don't have the time to read through the whole thing, but I do highly recommend doing that a few times on your own. So beginning in chapter 5, we have the helpful heading of The Sermon on the Mount, these headings are the smaller text just above the verses. The next one is the Beatitudes, then what else? Call them out for me. Salt & light, Christ came to fulfill the law, anger, lust, divorce, oaths, retaliation, love your enemies, giving to the needy, the Lord's prayer, fasting, lay up treasures in heaven, do not be anxious, judging others, ask & it will be given, the golden rule, a tree and its fruit, i never knew you, build your house on a rock, the authority of Jesus.

Even as we read through this list, it is easy for the sermon to sound topical and to focus on these smaller statements or short passages that seem to stand alone from the rest. We may read the Beatitudes and latch on to one or two that stick out to us, or maybe we find ourselves struggling with anger so we cling to those verses which are so extremely helpful to us in discerning sin in our heart. But one of the things I found as I was studying was that if we only read Scripture that way, we can miss out on the bigger picture, in a sense we miss the forest for the trees. What was Matthew's and rather the Holy Spirit's intent in this sermon? That is what I found so helpful in looking at the whole structure of the Sermon. Matthew was a brilliant writer, and of course empowered by the Holy Spirit, but as we consider this passage as a whole we begin to see truths and connections come to light that we easily could have missed. Let's take a look here and start to unpack this structure a bit more. A little caveat before we begin, the structure of the sermon is open for discussion. As

I was reading different commentators they all seemed to have a slightly different preference on how to organize the sermon. I went with Jonathan Pennington just because I liked it honestly. The bottom line is there are many ways to divide this up or emphasize different parts.

So first up, we have the introduction. Pennington makes an interesting note on the beatitudes...

Pennington Structure

- **Introduction 5:1-16** Invitation to Flourish “The Beatitudes are an invitation to the way of being that will result in flourishing, while the salt and light statements are the spreading of this flourishing to the world through witness, deed, and invitation to the same. Matthew 5:3-16 is an appropriate, consistent, vision-casting introduction to the Sermon.”

Next we move on to the body of the sermon found in 5:17-7:12 and here at the beginning of this section we have what would be, in a sense, Matthew’s thesis statement of the sermon. Look with me at verses 17-20

- **Body 5:17-7:12 Thesis statement in 5:17-20 (Christ came to fulfill the Law).**

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

So here we see the first whisperings of this idea of “greater righteousness”¹ that we will see more of and discuss more fully a little bit later. So now that brings us to verse 21 and starting here, I would like us to do a quick activity. In verses 21-48 we have two phrases repeated a few times. I want us to take a minute or two and mark these on your worksheet. The first phrase is “You have heard that it was said...” or “It was also said” those are meaning the same thing and the second one is “But I say to you...”

Once we have identified these repetitive statements, we start to notice some parallels in these sections. Let’s look at the first section in 21. First we see Jesus stating what the law says, “You shall not murder...” Then His statement “But I say to you...” is going to signal the

¹ “It is clear from this thesis statement that the central section of the Sermon is centered on Jesus’ teaching about the necessity of having a “greater righteousness” to enter the kingdom (5:20).” (Pennington, p. 120)

true intent. He is not contrasting two laws here but is rather further explaining the depth of what is truly required. Then after His explanation he gives a practical application.

Lloyd-Jones described this as a general principle followed by a particular example or illustration. He is beginning the emphasis on the spirit of the law rather than the letter of the law.

- **Greater Righteousness in relation to God's laws (5:21-48).** 6 statements "You have heard that is was said...But I say to you" Jesus offers these not to contrast the law that came through Moses with his own teaching (keeping in mind thesis statement in verses 17-20, but should rather be thought of as explanations. Six Examples: Murder, Adultery, Divorce, Swear falsely, retaliation, love your neighbor (This could be done as an activity during the teaching: Ladies are given the prompts "You have heard it said" & "But I say to you" and find them first before providing the outline)
 - Giving of the Law statement (You have heard that it was said...)
 - Jesus' explanation of its true intent (But I say to you...)
 - Practical application
- **Greater Righteousness in personal Piety (Piety has to do with our duty in religion, if we are "religious" what does that mean for us- in a broad sense) (6:1-21)**
 - Intro heading in 6:1 for whole section followed by three examples. These sections follow the structure of first, statement of what not to do, then a statement of what to do. "When you..."
 - This section also shows a comparison of earthly versus heavenly reward
 - Giving to the needy
 - Prayer
 - Fasting
 - Concluding statement (also intro to next section) found in 6:19-21

It is not uncommon in Matthew's writing to find a section that is the conclusion of one section but also introducing the next. That is what we find here in 6:19-21. Jesus now continues with explanation of greater righteousness in one last area.

- **Greater righteousness in relation to daily life in the world (6:19)**
 - Greater righteous regarding things of the world (6:22-34)
 - Examples:
 - You cannot serve God & money
 - Do not be anxious about your life: eat, drink, clothing
 - Greater righteous regarding the people of the world (7:1-12)
 - Examples:

- Judge not that you be not judged; speck and log comparison
- Whatever you wish others to do to you do that unto them
- **Conclusion (7:17-27) 3 Sections.** “Each of these three images utilize the common wisdom technique of exhorting listeners to pay attention to the consequences of two different ways of being in the world as the means of invitation to proper flourishing...Constant through all these subunits is the idea of singleness or wholeness, which is the consistency between the internal and external in the disciple.” pennington, p. 127
 - Wide and narrow gates (7:13-14)
 - Wolves in sheep clothing & good and bad trees (7:15-23)
 - Two house builders (7:24-27)

Pennington points out that the way of being in these final verses parallels the the beatitudes in the beginning in pointing out the way of being in the world that is “an invitation to true human flourishing. ...The sermon properly concludes with another invitation, this one darker and stronger in the form of wisdom warnings to build one’s life on Jesus’s teachings lest destruction come.”

- **Descending and action (7:28-8:1)**
 - Jesus finishes His teaching and comes down off the mountain.

WHEW! OKAY. We did it. We have the sermon outline. Again, the point of looking for the structure is to help us see the emphasis that is beyond what is readily apparent on the surface. Even as we looked at the structure, it also started to reveal some of the themes of the sermon. What are themes? Repeated ideas. Yes, so did anything stick out to you that was repeated? These may be a little more difficult to pick up on fully because we haven’t read through the whole thing. But we will go ahead and look at them tonight, and I pray that the Lord will use this to further deepen your understanding of the sermon in the coming months and as you spend time personally reading and meditating on it. but I would like us to deep dive on a couple words in the sermon that will continue to fill out that picture of the forest that I really don’t want us to miss. Again, think of this in terms of sitting under one of Pastor Wayne’s sermons. There are definitely themes to them right? Some broad overarching points? With Jesus’s sermon here, we have the luxury of having it in print and so we can focus on the parts, but there are a couple more themes I want us to see. As we deep dive on these words, it might feel like we are focusing down too closely but hang with me and I hope and pray it will all come together for you.

Themes

One of the main themes in the Sermon on the Mount is the Kingdom of Heaven that Rebecca covered for us last time and we just reviewed. The next major one was that of RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Righteousness

Vine's definition *dikaiosynē* (*righteousness*) "is "the character or quality of being right or just;" it was formerly spelled "rightwiseness," which clearly expresses the meaning. It is used to denote an attribute of God, e.g., [Rom 3:5](#), the context of which shows that "the righteousness of God" means essentially the same as His faithfulness, or truthfulness, that which is consistent with His own nature and promises; [Rom 3:25, 26](#) speaks of His "righteousness" as exhibited in the Death of Christ, which is sufficient to show men that God is neither indifferent to sin nor regards it lightly. On the contrary, it demonstrates that quality of holiness in Him which must find expression in His condemnation of sin."

This concept, especially in the context of the sermon on the mount, was rather challenging for me to grasp. In Scripture we find very clearly righteousness as a central component to our salvation. Even back in Gen. 15:6 in speaking of Abraham, it says "And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness." We have a foreshadowing of Christ's redemptive power. Then jumping forward to Romans 5² we have the picture of death coming to all men because of Adam and then through the work of Jesus Christ in his perfect life, death, and resurrection, His righteousness is made available to all who would believe in faith. The challenging part is that the Sermon on the Mount shows another aspect of how we relate to righteousness. Let's look at a few of these verses.

We see the word "Righteousness" used multiple times in this passage.

Matthew 5:6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (*dikaiosynē*), for they shall be satisfied."

Matthew 5:10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness (*dikaiosynē*) sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 5:20 "For I tell you, unless your righteousness' (*dikaiosynē*) exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 5:45 "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 (*dikaios*) and on the unjust."

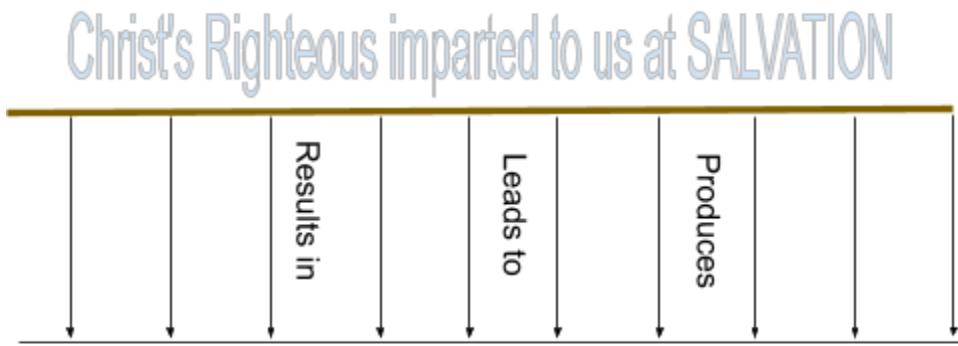
Matthew 6:1 "Beware of practicing your righteousness (*dikaiosynē*) before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven."

² Romans 5:17-19 For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. Therefore, as one trespass[fn] led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness[fn] leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

Matthew 6:33 “But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness (*dikaiosynē*), and all these things will be added to you.”

In these verses we have this idea of righteousness being something we pursue. But why are we pursuing it if we already, as believers, are covered in Christ's righteousness? How do we seek it or practice it? I really labored over this idea, and I want to depict this in a picture that I hope will be helpful as we think through this.

Here we have 2 railroad tracks



We have been declared righteous because of the righteousness of Christ and you see that reference in Matt. 5:45 where the word used is “just”. But what we see here in Matthew is this underlying idea of “now and not yet”. We have been declared righteous but we are not complete yet. The process of sanctification has just begun. Our “progressive renewal of man in the image of God.”³ Christ paid our debt and completely took our punishment that we deserved thus satisfying the wrath of God and if we put our faith in Him and HIS works, not our own, then we are saved from condemnation and freed to begin the process of pursuing complete righteousness. Jesus contrasts this multiple times in His sermon when he speaks of the Pharisees righteousness. It was a righteousness found only in their works. But we MUST have both. Look with me at James 2:20-22. I am going to read this from the NASB translation. “But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? 22 You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected;” This same idea of faith in the work of Christ working with our works resulting in perfected faith is what we see in Matthew 5:48. Jesus says “You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” This word “perfect” here is not the impractical demand for outward moral conformity, but the idea of completeness. Of

³ Hoekema

whole being holiness. It is reminiscent of the Levitical call to be holy because God is holy⁴ It is pursuing righteousness in terms of our whole being living in conformity to the image of God. Are we able to do this on our own? Can we bear that responsibility? Absolutely not. But in this passage we see this beautiful picture start to become apparent that we are called to endeavor to do and could never completely satisfy, Christ has already done it for us. He has and continues to cover the ways we fall short even as we are being more conformed into His image. It doesn't mean we just give in and say well Christ covers it. Should we sin that grace may abound? No, we endeavor to "present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness."⁵ Our whole being is being conformed by the work of Christ and our battle for righteousness in fighting our sin in our innermost being. That bring us to the next major theme and that is the HEART.

The Heart

I don't want to take the time here to contrast the way our culture thinks of the heart with how we as believers do. Much time was given to this last year when we discussed feelings and if you would like more info on that or to do a deeper dive on the heart and how to think rightly about it, we have some great books we could refer you to. So for the sake of time, I will define for us that the heart refers to the deepest part of our being, it is beyond just our emotions, but includes our soul, reasoning and mind. This is what is referred to when Jesus says, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees. It is a righteousness that extends to our heart, that is not primarily concerned with the outward. **Psalm 15:2** He who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks truth in his heart; **Psalm 51:6** Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.

When Jesus is referring to a righteousness that is greater than the OT law, in Matthew 5:21-48, He speaks in these examples of the deeper sin issue being what is happening in the heart.

When we ignore what is in our hearts and strive solely for the outward conformity, for the keeping the letter of the law rather than the spirit, we are hypocrites. We often think of hypocrisy as saying one thing but then doing another, but Jesus takes it to the deeper level of our heart. Jesus is not primarily concerned about us being hypocrites before men. Yes, it is easy for us to see hypocrisy in someone else when we can point out that they do not live according to what they say they believe, but sisters, look at the deeper point here, the greater application, that GOD sees our hearts. He knows when our hearts are not

⁴ Lev. 11:44 Lev. 19:2 Lev. 20:26

⁵ Romans 6:1, 13

conforming to His desires. When we are seeking the approval of man rather than God. He is not fooled. So how do we think about God? Is He this superhuman taskmaster that sees and judges every wayward thought of our hearts. Let's consider this theme of God our Father in Heaven.

Our Father in Heaven

This reference to our Father in Heaven occurs 16 times in the Sermon (5:16, 45, 48; 6:1, 4, 6-2times, 8, 9, 14, 15, 18-2 times, 26, 32; 7:11, 21). In every instance but one Jesus refers YOUR Father in heaven. The one exception is in the 7:21 about those who say Lord Lord did we not do all these things in your name and he says not everyone who says to me Lord Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven but those who do the will of my Father. This also points to the application of the sermon being for believers, those who are part of God's kingdom.

Sometimes, thinking about God as your heavenly Father is not the most helpful image in the best sense and for some can make coming to God incredibly challenging because of the poor examples of earthly fathers. The emphasis here is that we are part of a greater family. We BELONG to God who is in heaven. God, who is ruler of all things, sovereign over the happenings in the universe, is our heavenly Father and we belong to His Kingdom.

As we consider all these things, the general reading of the text and it's emphasis, maybe it feels burdensome to you, like an impossible task. Well, there is one more theme that we see in the Sermon that I would hate for us to miss.

When look back at the beginning of the sermon in Chapter 5, what word do you see repeated over and over in those first 11 verses? Blessed. Right.

Can anyone think of anywhere else in the Bible that we have the word blessed? Any stand out passages in your mind?

I know this might seem like a harder question, but just thought I would throw it out there.

Gen. 1 God blessed them and said be fruitful and multiply

Gen. 9 When noah and his family came off the ark, it says God blessed them

Gen. 12 Yes, this is a major one. This is when God is blessing Abraham as part of the Abrahamic covenant.

Gen. 32 God blesses Jacob

All these use the Hebrew word *barak* (*k is breathy*)

Occurs 330 times in passages in Gen. Exo. Lev. Num. Deut and on throughout the whole OT. This word as a verb, conveys the idea of an action done by one person for another. Most times referring to God blessing His people.

We also see the word “blessed” used in
Duet. 33:29 (ESV uses “happy”, NASB uses “Blessed”)

1 Kings 10:8

2 Chron. 9:7

Job 5:17

Psalm 1:1

Psalm 32:1 (CSB translates “how joyful”)

In these passages the Hebrew word is:

Eser or asre (plural form)

Used primarily in Psalms & Proverbs. This word is used to show state of being, a noun.
Shows a state of being after performing an action.

Taking refuge in the Lord **Psalm 34:8**

Those who keep his testimonies/ seek with whole heart **Psalm 119:2**

Those who fear the Lord **Psalm 112:1; 128:1**

The one whose help is God, and whose hope is in the Lord **Psalm 146:5**

The one who finds wisdom & gets understanding **Prov. 3:13**

Walking in integrity **Prov. 20:7**

Keeping the law in **Prov. 29:18**

Now you may be thinking, Kelli these are all in the OT this was written in Hebrew, Matthew is in the NT and written in....something else. And you would be right. The NT was mostly written in Greek and so we do have a different word for “blessed” when we see it in Matthew. But we still use what God us in the OT to help us make sure we are understanding rightly. Letting the Bible help explain the Bible

In the NT “blessed” occurs 81 times.

Eulogētos (U-lah-gay- tos)- adjective; blessed, praised. Used only when referring/ describing God (Mark 14:61, Rom. 1:25, Rom. 9:5, 2 Cor. 1:3, Eph 1:3, 1 Peter 1:3)

Eulogeō- (U- lah-gay-O) (occurs 42 times in 39 verses) verb used when people or Jesus are giving a blessing. This is the word used when Jesus prays and blesses the food before feeding the 4000 and the 5000, this is the word used at the Last Supper that we hear often when taking communion.

Matthew 26:26 “Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.””

Eneulogeō- (occurs 2 times) verb form, used twice in NT and is used when referring back to God's OT covenant with Abraham (Acts 3:25, Gal. 3:8)

So the majority of the time in the NT, the word being translated as "blessed" is Makarios (Mah-car-ee-os).

Makarios

In Matthew, specifically the Sermon, Jesus used it as an adjective to describe what our state of being is when we follow His ways.

In Greek that word is Makarios (ma car'-ee-os).

Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words

"In the beatitudes the Lord indicates not only the characters that are "blessed," but the nature of that which is the highest good."

Strong's definition=supremely blest; by extension, fortunate, well off:—blessed, happy(X -ier).

So when we think of blessed in its use here. This is not a blessing from God like we see in the OT. If we think of it that way, it would be easy to view the Sermon on the Mount as a list of ways to earn God's favor. But that is NOWHERE in Scripture. Even in the OT, the blessing of God was given because of His own choosing.

What we see rather in Matthew that is similar to what we read in Psalms 1 is "blessed" in the adjective state. It is or should be describing us, as believers.

The meaning of this word has been difficult to pin down. Many commentators have their own preference for how to interpret it and really none of them are wrong. Especially when we consider it's use in 1 Tim. 1 & 6 where it describes God, it would make sense that as human beings we have difficulty wrapping our minds around it.

Martin Lloyd Jones uses the word "Happy".

Jonathan Pennington uses the word "Flourishing" He says, "[The beatitudes] are Jesus's maxims, declaring with authority what is the true way of being that will result in happiness and human flourishing. They are Jesus's answer to the universal philosophical and religious question, **how can one be truly happy?**"

Let's consider a couple other Scripture passages that helps us.

1 Tim. 1:11 "in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted."

1 Tim. 6:15 “which he will display at the proper time—**he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords**”

When we see “blessed” who is it describing?

Used to describe God- His state of Being. No wonder we have a hard to understanding and describing what it means. Our language just falls short to capture its full meaning. This passage further emphasizes that when we follow in obedience we are becoming more like Christ! His person! His state of being! Is that not beautiful. Does that not picture for you even better what God is like? He is constantly, always and forever blessed. That is His constant state, and He wants us to become like Him in that. He wants the very best for us. This sermon is not a list of rules implying further restriction on our lives. It is an INVITATION. An invitation to the blessed life. The way that is truly flourishing. “An inspirational vision for the wise way of being in the the world that will result in what all humans desire–human flourishing.” (Pennington, pg 51)

The Sermon on the Mount shows the actions that we can take to have a blessed life. A flourishing life, a happy life. However you choose to describe it. These do not relate to earning the blessing of God. Those verses are given and written in way that emphasizes God **choosing** whom He will bless **separate** from the actions of the person⁶. What other context do we see that happening? Think major event in life of believer. Salvation. Yes. So as we consider the sermon on the mount, we need to see that these are decisions that we have the choice in. If we are true believers, our blessing from God is secure in the work of Christ. There is NOTHING that you can do to undermine or lose that gift. But we also know that after salvation, God does not turn us into robots. We begin our journey of sanctification, which more appropriately could be called the crusade for sanctification. It is fraught with many battles. Many daily decisions of dying to self because we read in His word that His way is the blessed way. As upside down as that may feel and we are going to dive in to some difficult dicy situations, His way is always the blessed way, the way that leads to our true flourishing.

Summary/Thesis:

The Sermon on the Mount is about what life in the kingdom looks like, as disciples of Christ, always recognizing that Christ is our only means of righteousness, as He fulfilled the whole law, which leads us to a life of true flourishing in the Kingdom of God, our Father.

⁶ Eph 2:5