

A Flourishing Life — Delivery Transcript

Matthew 5:1–3 (CSB) • Wes Terry • Sunday, February 22, 2026 • Kingdom Culture

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If you have your Bible, you can open it to the book of Matthew. We're going to be in Matthew chapter 5. And as you're turning there I'll tell you a little bit of a story of a young man around 100 to 120 AD or so young man from Samaria had a Roman father and a Greek mother. His name was Justin. And like a lot of other young men in the Roman Empire, at least around that time He was on a quest to try to find the meaning of life, find the truth, and a vision of wisdom that would help him obtain a life of flourishing.

The life that really I think any man wants, not just men, but women as well. Most of us have this innate desire for life to work, like it's supposed to work, and for life to be fulfilling in every way. And so Justin on that quest ended up exploring philosophy, and the dominant philosophy of the Roman Empire, at least during that time period, was a worldview known as Stoicism. Stoicism was popularized by men like Seneca, Cicero, the senator, great politician, Tacitus, other guys just made Stoicism kind of the default position. For Roman men in particular.

But what Justin began to discover in Stoicism was that it wasn't quite getting everything. They talked a lot about ethics. They talked about overcoming suffering through detachment and discipline. And there is some something to that about just kind of toughen up, stiffen your lip and get over it. And part of getting over suffering is becoming that type of a developing that kind of resiliency. But for all of the talk that they had about those things, they almost never seemed interested in knowing whether God existed and if God existed, how to know him better, what it meant to Commune with God, to have a relationship with God, those things were really not ever talked about.

And so Justin left the school of Stoicism and he began to explore other avenues. And Greco-Roman philosophy, if you're not familiar with it, there's a very rich tradition. And so Justin went from Stoicism to a school of Aristotle The peripatetics was what these disciples of Aristotle were called. He found a teacher steeped in the philosophy of Aristotle, and he said, would you please teach me? I want to become a disciple of Aristotle. And the teacher obliged

and began to give him some instruction, but eventually Justin found out this guy's kind of a scam artist and all he wants is my money. He's not really teaching me anything about Aristotle, he's just robbing me blind.

And so eventually Justin shut that down. And he left the school of Aristotle to a different school. He went to a teacher steeped in Pythagorean philosophy. Pythagoras, the great Greek philosopher. I'll if you'll go to the next slide, I'll show you a picture of some of these men, of at least what they might have looked like, nobody really knows for sure. This of course is Cicero, the Roman stoic, the Roman senator steeped in Stoicism. Aristotle got that beautiful beard. This is Justin, of course, right here in the center. And Pythagoras was a brilliant mind.

Mathematics, Pythagorean theorem, you may be familiar with that, but also music and astronomy and just beauty of general different sorts. And Justin thought, man, these guys got it right on these issues. Maybe they know the way to know God. And so he became a disciple of this rabbi, not a rabbi, this guru. Let's just call him a guru. But the guy teaching Justin said before I'll teach you Pythagorean philosophy you've actually got to master these other disciplines first. You've got to master music and astronomy and mathematics and then I'll teach you philosophy.

And Justin's just like I don't have time for that. I'm getting old. And so he became very discouraged and really frustrated because all he wanted was a flourishing life. He wanted what every man wants, what every woman wants. And he was asking the question, why is it so difficult to find true wisdom? Why is it so difficult for me to find the way to flourishing. And so, discouraged, he finally landed on the original goat, the greatest of all time, Greek philosopher, a bald old man by the name of Plato. Of course Plato was long dead by this time period, but Plato was famous for writing down the dialogues of Socrates, which was one of Athens' greatest thinkers, and through the reading of Plato and Socrates and those dialogues, Justin finally saw the meaning of the universe.

He, like Plato, agreed that there is an objective reality in this world, that objective truth and goodness and beauty, those things are fixed and they're eternal. They're not changing all the time or dependent upon your subjective point of view. These things are what they are regardless of what people feel or think. And Plato was famous for developing this idea that those fixed realities are beyond our realm. He called our realm the intelligible realm. Where you can kind of see things, but the things we see are not the real things. He says they are shadows.

But the real substance is immaterial. It is invisible. It is in the realm of the ideas. And so he had the analogy of the cave. You come up out of the cave so that you can see the lights. And once you see the sun through the sun you can see what really is. And then good philosophers come back down and teach people what life is all about. And so Justin became

a very good philosopher in Platonic philosophy. He actually became so gifted He became known as Justin the philosopher.

And he persuaded people of Platonic philosophy, left left and right, very gifted debater, rhetorician. But all of that changed one day when Justin ran into an old man in a field next to the Aegean Sea and as he talked to that old man, he began to explain his experience that he kind of been lost and searching for answers to life. And that he had found those answers in Platonic philosophy that truth, goodness, and beauty led us to the throne of God, as it were, and that one day I'm going to gaze into the eyes of God.

And that that old man. We don't know whether he was a Jewish convert to Christianity or something else, but he was a follower of Jesus. Justin would go on to write books called dialogue with Trypho, and in that book, this old man was a converted Jew. To Christianity, but for whatever reason, or whoever the historical character was, he left Justin with one lingering question. And it was a rock in his shoe that he could never get rid of. And the question was, have you ever read the Old Testament prophets? Because the Old Testament prophets were also philosophers.

And they, unlike the Greco-Roman philosophers, didn't speculate or conjecture or kind of s you know, shoot in the dark, they actually claim to receive their wisdom from God, that they were animated by the Spirit of God and wrote down what they wrote. And that in their writings and philosophy. They talked about a personification of wisdom, that wisdom would become a person and that he would redeem the world. And that this Christ figure prophesied by the prophets would usher in the kingdom of God and bring about flourishing. The human flourishing that we all want was kind of presented as a vision that would materialize when the Messiah come, and that Messiah came in Jesus of Nazareth.

And the Christian gospels explain how Jesus fulfilled all of those prophetic utterances in the Old Testament prophets. And have you ever read about that story? Have you ever considered Jesus and Justin said, no, I have not. I've never read any of those things, but it just stuck with him and made him uncomfortable, and so he began to read. He picked up an Old Testament Hebrew scroll and began to read through some of the prophets and then he began to put the pieces together of this vision of wisdom from a Christian or Judeo-Christian worldview and what all that looked like and then he got his hands on the gospels, which mind you at that time had not been put together in a book like we have today called the New Testament.

They were just Biographies of Jesus floating around in the ancient world in the first centuries. Very likely one of the books he read was the Gospel of Matthew. And as he reads the Gospel of Matthew and other Gospels just like it, he begins to see how Jesus is unique, that Jesus was wisdom, but wisdom personified, that He, unlike Plato, could could take me all the way. That Plato went up the ladder to access these divine realities, but that God had

actually come down the ladder. And revealed those realities through Christ, and that in Jesus is all the wisdom and truth and goodness and beauty, and that that thing can be given to us by grace through faith.

And eventually Justin left Platonic philosophy and became a converted Christian and became one of the most able defenders of Christianity even still today. And converted people through philosophical dialogue and just old school evangelism. Because he saw Jesus as a philosopher, but someone greater than even Plato. I think a lot of people when they read the Bible, even like the Gospel of Matthew, they can make the connections. Jesus is greater than Moses. Greater than David, greater than all of those Old Testament things, but we should also come to see that Jesus is a greater philosopher.

You don't normally think about Jesus as a philosopher. But he actually presented a vision for a genuine life of flourishing, just like Aristotle, just like Plato, just like all the other philosophical traditions. Jesus was saying human flourishing actually comes this way. And what Justin realized is that Jesus does what Plato didn't do, what Plato showed in hints and shadows, Jesus gives in full. That Jesus actually brings about a life of flourishing through grace and that anyone can receive that life that they'll just begin to follow him. And I want us to read the Gospel of Matthew through the eyes of Justin this morning so that we can kind of see what he saw.

Because the Sermon on the Mount, more than any other sermon. Gives us the worldview of Jesus and his wisdom for a flourishing life. People have read the Sermon on the Mount for who knows how many years. It has shaped Western civilization. More than many other documents. Winston Churchill after world War II said we need the Sermon on the Mount in order to rebuild Europe so that it can flourish once again. That's how strongly he believed in the in the ethical power of the Sermon on the Mount. All of these are not Christians.

Some of them are not even friendly faces. They all can see that the Sermon on the Mount is special. St. Augustine said it's the perfect pattern of living the Christian life. Tolstoy said the epitome. Of Jesus' religion. The dictionary guy, Daniel Webster, said it can't even be a merely human production. These words must have come from the mouth of God. Philosopher Immanuel Kant, I don't necessarily recommend him, but he says of the ethics and the Sermon on the Mount, they're unparalleled in purity and solemnity. Surpassing all other religions or ethical codes.

And John Doam, very long quote, I just got the very tail end. He says, within all the body of divinity is in these three chapters and this one sermon. And so the Sermon on the Mount is one of the greatest sermons ever preached. And it's really a distillation of the worldview of Jesus. We said last week that Jesus came to teach and preach and heal, and that as a teacher and a preacher, he was reframing the way people saw the world. And that it isn't until you

get out from underneath those false assumptions that we all carry that you begin to really understand how the world works and how to find a life of flourishing.

And so that's what we're going to do this morning. The Sermon on the Mount is in Matthew chapter 5, and if you're new to Broadview, if this is your first time, we've actually been going through the book of Matthew since the end of last year. And we've gotten through what most people would say was the introduction to the book. The introduction is chapter one to the end of chapter four, and chapter five begins the main body. And most people who study Matthew will tell you it's very strategically arranged. He wasn't just kind of writing stuff down.

It was all very deliberate and intentional. And he has not one but five different sermons. That make up the body of his book. Some people call them the five major discourses, and they're all on different topics. The first of the five is the Sermon on the Mount. I'm not going to go through the other ones, but then after the fifth major discourse, you have the end of the book, the death and resurrection of Jesus. And every one of those discourses has events of Jesus on either side. So it's kind of wrapped Encapsulated in the life of Jesus and in the middle of that circle is his teaching.

And what you have in the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount is what Jesus had been preaching up until this point, which is that he was going to usher in what God had promised in the Old Testament. Matthew is very keen on showing that Jesus is the Christ. Seven times in Matthew's gospel, he uses this little phrase. To fulfill what the prophets had spoken. That was given seven times, just in his introduction, from chapter one all the way to chapter four. Seven times he says that phrase. All of them to communicate that Jesus is unique because Jesus alone fulfills what God promised in the Old Testament.

Everything that the prophet said about a Messiah and the kingdom of God and the earth being healed and restored and things functioning like they were originally meant to be. Jesus uniquely meets that criteria and he is going to usher in the kingdom of God. And what he does in the Sermon on the Mount is shows what that kingdom life looks like. That's why the name of the series is a kingdom culture because when you can see the Sermon on the Mount and begin to adopt those attitudes in your own life, you begin to experience true flourishing.

So what I want us to do is to read the very beginning. Of the Sermon on the Mount. It's called the Beatitudes. There's eight different Beatitudes and they all begin with the phrase, blessed are. Blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are the poor. You've probably heard these phrases thrown around. They all come from the Sermon on the Mount. When you read the Sermon on the Mount, it's easy to get lost in the weeds because there's all of these different topics and they feel kind of disjointed. But one thing you'll notice if you get above the weeds, if you look at the Sermon on the Mount from the 30,000-foot view, there's one thing that holds it all together.

And that's the one thing that Jesus focused on, maybe more than anything else. And even though it was the major focus of Jesus, I think for many Christians today, they have no idea what it is. We talked about it a little bit last week. It's this phrase, the kingdom of God. It was what John came preaching about before Jesus even came on the scene. If you go to the next slide in Matthew 3, which is in the very beginning of the book. John says, repent, the kingdom of heaven is near.

John dies, what does Jesus do? He begins teaching the same thing. Preach. He preached repent because the kingdom of heaven has come near. Last week in that little summary statement which talked about the entirety of Jesus' teaching, notice the phrase, he taught and preached. The good news of the kingdom. Is it any surprise then that when you get into the Sermon on the Mount, the very first thing that Jesus mentions is the kingdom of God. The very first beatitude of all eight is blessed are the poor in spirit. Why? Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Not only the first beatitude, but the very last one as well. Blessed are the persecuted because of righteousness, because the kingdom of heaven is theirs go a little bit lower to the main thesis of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus says, unless your righteousness exceeds the scribes and the Pharisees, then you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. It talks about people who hear and do the word are great in the kingdom of heaven. Those who hear and don't do the word are least in the kingdom of heaven. And throughout the Sermon on the Mount, in very strategic places, Jesus again inserts this phrase about the kingdom of God.

A very famous example is the Lord's Prayer, which many people think is the climax of the Sermon on the Mount. Wherein Jesus teaches us to pray. If you go to the next slide, he says, in the very beginning of the prayer, followed, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. Later in the sermon in Matthew 6. 33, Jesus says, of anxiety and spending money and those things, seek first the kingdom of God. His righteousness and all these other things will be taken care of.

And then at the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, as he's tying everything together, no surprise, once again he mentions the kingdom of heaven. Not everyone who says, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven. Only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. And then after his sermon, he makes all these healings and does all these different things. And he sends his disciples out. To preach, just like he had been doing. And when he sends them out in Matthew chapter 10, guess what he tells them to preach?

He says, as you go, proclaim the kingdom of heaven has come near. So for Jesus, the major focus was the kingdom of heaven. For Luke, he saw it kingdom of God. It's essentially the same thing. And yet for many Christians today, when they hear that phrase, they don't have a clear vision of what that really means. What would you say? You don't have to answer out loud. I asked my small group this question, and some of the answers included things like, I

think about going to heaven after I die. The kingdom of God is up in heaven, and we'll go there someday.

That's true. Jesus promised eternal life that you'll die and then live again. But when the original audience of Matthew heard Kingdom of God, that's not what they would have thought. For the original audience of Matthew steeped in the Old Testament, this theme of the Kingdom of God Was littered everywhere. The kingdom of God was what was promised to David before he became king. Of your throne there will be no end, and the descendant will sit on that throne forever. And then they told about a kingdom that that Davidic king would bring, and that that kingdom would be a kingdom of peace and justice and righteousness, that there would be no more injustice or brokenness or anything like that, that the child would lay next to the cobra and never be stung and that Israel would never again be uprooted from their land.

That God's people could live in security for all the days of their life, that this kingdom would be the end of exile, it would be the restoration of true worship, that this kingdom would bring worldwide knowledge of God throughout all of the earth. That not only would this kingdom never be crushed, but this kingdom would crush all opposition. And that is it crushes the opposition of counterfeit kingdoms. It would establish itself everywhere, and the knowledge of God and the peace of God and the goodness of God would redeem everything, not just us and not just our politics, but literally the physical world.

That the trees would sing and the desert would be no more and there would be lush l l a l luscious, lavish, lush, lush, lush. There would be lavish vegetable life. There would be no more drought. No more of the things that when we think about, look at those things, go, man, that's not the way it should be. There's no more death, no more decay, no more any of those things. That is the kingdom of God, and that is what Matthew's readers would have heard. It's not just a future promise you go to heaven when you die.

It's the promise that heaven will come down here. Heaven will come down here. And it will be good forever. It's taking us back to the Garden of Eden. It's restoring what was lost. That's the kingdom of God. And that's what Jesus said, I've come to bring. So when we think about kingdom, what you I think a phrase you might use is that really the kingdom of God is God Himself. It's God come to be with us. And that when you enter into the kingdom, what you will begin to experience is that the world will once again fully function as it was intended to be.

That's the kingdom of God. That that politics, which is broken, will be functioning fully as God intended it to be. And that economics and local churches and marriages will function like God intended them to be. Friendship and relationships and parenting and all of those things, that the brokenness that creates chaos, that all of that will be undone, and finally things will function as they were originally supposed to be. And here's what's so crazy. That

kingdom, Jesus says, I'm starting it now. Here and now, I'm bringing in the kingdom. And if you want to enter in, here's the way.

He's doing what Aristotle was doing. He's doing what Plato was doing. He says, this is the flourishing life. I'm going to paint a picture for how you can enter into true flourishing. But I have to reframe the way that you think if you're going to fully enter into it. Alright, that's a long introduction. Let's read let's read the Beatitudes so that you can see what I'm talking about. Remember, he has become famous. The summary statement in chapter 4, verse 25, large crowds followed him from everywhere. And then when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on the mountain.

We're not sure which one. And then he's up on the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. And then he began to teach them, his disciples, saying, blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the humble, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. And blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness. For the kingdom of heaven is theirs. You are blessed when they insult you and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of me. Be glad and rejoice, because your reward is great in heaven. That is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you. You can't really read the Beatitudes without getting a little bit Excited?

At least I can't. At once it is encouraging and shocking and scandalous all at the same time. Unfortunately, I feel like our English translations of the eight Beatitudes do a little bit of a disservice of what Matthew's original hearers would have heard. Remember, Jesus didn't speak in Koine Greek, he spoke in Aramaic, derivative of the Hebrew language. And then that gets translated and translated. It's hard to fully convey in English what they would have heard. So what I want to try to do with the rest of our time is try to hear it like they would have heard I want you to imagine the scene for a moment.

Jesus is up on the mountain. Again, we don't know exactly what mountain, but he was surrounded by incredible crowds. We don't know who exactly was in the crowds, but we can know a couple things for sure. It likely included a lot of the people that Jesus had been healing from town to town. In other words, these were people who were former demon-possessed. They were crazy people. They were paralytics. They were alienated and marginalized. These were the no-names, the do-nothings, the forgotten man and woman. These were also disciples of Jesus who weren't much better than that.

Jesus didn't choose disciples who were high up on the religious ladder. Remember he chose men like Simon, Peter, and Andrew, who were fishermen. He chose James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were fishermen by trade. These are blue-collar, normal people, not the higher-ups on the rung. Not that there's anything wrong with higher ups, but I think Matthew is trying to say Jesus is starting a movement not with the top rung but with the bottom rung instead because he's trying to make a statement about the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is not just for the hotshots.

The kingdom of God is for the humble and the lowly. It's for the forgotten man and woman. These are the ones that will listen. And so big crowds followed him. But disciples followed him up the mountain. Now Matthew is making a very clear distinction between those two types of people. The crowds were there for all sorts of reasons. Of which you can probably guess. Some were curious, some were spies, maybe, some were selfish in their agenda. They had problems, they wanted healing, maybe they thought they could get Jesus to do something for them.

But the crowds, they don't go up the mountain. The ones who go up the mountain are the disciples. And it was only to the disciples that Jesus turns and teaches, which I think is Matthew's way of saying, if you're going to get the kingdom. Jesus only shares the kingdom with the ones who choose to follow. Only the ones who follow Jesus will hear the words and the invitation. And if you want the life of flourishing that I think every human wants, inheriting that flourishing life is going to require you to go up the mountain.

On the one hand, that's encouraging because it doesn't matter who you are. It doesn't matter where you've been. It doesn't matter if you're alienated in society, your past record, your You know, your societal, what do they call it, social credit score? Jesus doesn't care about any of that. The only thing that Jesus cares about is whether you'll follow him right now. And if you will follow him right now up the mountain, which I'm sure would have been taxing, then he will turn and he will show you the way into the kingdom of God.

And the first words out of his mouth are, blessed are the poor in spirit. And imagine hearing those words as someone who probably was. The destitute, the lame, the formerly outcast, and all of those things. Blessed are the poor in spirit. Theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Now again, I think we hear that phrase and sometimes can miss what he's saying. It almost sounds like a tit for tat or some kind of a spiritual quid pro quo. You remember the quid pro quo? You scratch my back, I'll scratch your back, that kind of a spiritual transaction.

I will give away a lot of money and become poor, and then God will have to give me the kingdom. That's kind of sometimes how some people will read it. Am I wrong? Or am I right? That is not what Jesus is saying, but it just feels that way in the English. And to help us read the sermon the way Matthew's original readers would have heard it, I need to do a

little bit of a history lesson to show you to better make the connection, okay? The Old Testament was written in Hebrew, right?

You guys know that. And in the Hebrew, there are two words for blessed. There's one word for blessed that most of us think when we think of that word in common usage, this idea of God bless me. God hook me up. God, I need a favor. God, I need a solid. God, I can't do this. Would you do it for me? That's the Hebrew word baruch. You got to say it with a little bit of snot in your throat. Which isn't hard for me this morning because I got something from Dallas yesterday.

But baruch, it's a it's an intentional act of favor from one to another. And again, you can be blessed by God. You can also bless the Lord. You can bless the Lord. You can give him a solid. You can say, God, you're so awesome. You're so great. You can you can praise him and bless him and baruch in that way that's all within this range of meaning. In the book of Genesis, famous example, God blessed Adam and Eve. He blessed them and said, be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it.

That is baruch. God baruched Abraham and gave him a child. God baruched Jacob and changed his name. And gave him a wife too. Really wonderful. Two wives. But he baruched Israel. He baruched David. He baruched Solomon. He's he's blessing in that way. That is not the only word for blessing, though. There's another word in the Hebrew Old Testament that conveys a similar theme, but it's not baruch, it's the Hebrew word ashrei. Ashrei is a and I have no idea if I'm pronouncing that right, but it go talk to someone smarter if you want to know what it really sounds like.

It's this idea of not a one-off like concrete provision from God, but rather a an ongoing state. Of flourishing. In fact, in the in the English translations, it sometimes would get translated happy. Happy, I think I gave you Psalm 1, happy is the one who doesn't walk in the advice of the wicked. But again, happiness in its classical sense didn't mean like a momentary feeling, like, oh, I'm so happy. But then you're not happy, just kind of here and there. Really the original classical term for happy was a state of good fortune.

That's actually the English word hap is the root of the word for luck. Andness is a state of being, so it's a state of being in good luck. But again, not like good luck, like you got lucky, but a state of flourishing or being fortunate. Sometimes we'll even say, man, I feel so fortunate. What you're meaning is that things are going really well for you. And that idea is very different from the idea of baruch. Baruch is an act of showing favor. Ashrei is a state of flourishing, a state of good fortune.

And there's another distinction. A baruch is something between two parties. It's like a vertical from God down to you. A ashrei is more of a public pronouncement. It's a it's a declaration. Man, they got it good. They are doing awesome. Their life is killing it. They are

living the American dream. They are Ashrei. And if you look at where the Bible kind of defines this word, this Imagery in Psalm 1 is super helpful. The Ashrei, Ashrei is the one who doesn't walk in the advice of the wicked or stand in the pathway with sinners sit in the company of mockers instead.

His delight is in the Lord's instruction. He meditates on it day and night. Notice the analogies used to describe that kind of life. That kind of life is like a tree planted by flowing streams. In other words, there's constant nourishment, constant support. He's he's he's in he's got it so good. It bears its fruit in its season and its leaves do not wither. In other words, not only does it bear fruit in the good times, it doesn't die in the winter. There is no time for this kind of life in which it's not kind of manifesting new life it's always on.

It's always flourishing. It is in a constant state of happiness. Whatever he does. Prospers. That's the word Ashrei. He uses it again. I don't have this on the screen, but he uses it again in Psalm two. The very end of Psalm two. It talks about the king and the wrath of the king, and the king wipes everyone off the earth. But blessed are happy is he who takes refuge. In the Lord. Ashrei. For me, this word would have a certain look. Like when you think what is what is perfection?

When you think what is the good life? What comes to your mind? Everybody's definition is probably different. For me, it's below 60 degrees for sure. We are we're up on the we're up on the mountains. And we actually own the house this time and there's a there's a fire Burning. It's early morning or late evening whenever there's like a natural Instagram filter on the world. You know what I'm saying? And I'm there with Audra enjoying bold coffee and the kids are playing in the Distant, far enough that we can have some privacy.

The there's a four by four side by side with two rows that we can all fit in it. Like go go explore some trails later on. And the smell of a perfectly cooked, medium rare ribeye. I mean ribeye. Maybe so. Do you know what I'm saying? Man, that's for me, that's the good life. That's everything is money. Everything is just right. All of us have that vision. Okay, that's Ashrei. That is that's what that is. And it's really someone looking at that and going, man, that is it. They got it.

And here the only reason any of that matters, this is not just a long rabbit trail. When the Hebrew Old Testament got translated into Greek, It replaced the Hebrew words. And the Greek word that replaced the Hebrew word Ashrei was the Greek word Makarios. And that's the word Jesus uses in the Sermon on the Mount. And so when Jesus says, blessed are the poor in spirit, what he's really saying is they've got it good. They are living real life, life as it was originally meant to be, which is on the face absolutely shocking and scandalous.

What do you mean? Because in the first century they knew what Ashrei was. It wasn't poor in spirit, it was rich. It was powerful. It was politically connected. That's what the good life was,

just like we would point to the American dream today. But Jesus turns it upside down. He says, no, that's actually not, that's not real flourishing. Real flourishing are people who have come to the end of themselves. People who realize it's not my power, but God's power, in which true life is found, that his power is made perfect in my weakness, and so I'm going to live from a place of need.

I'm going to live from a place of dependency. Jesus says, theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the ones who mourn. Not that they're sad, ee, or depressed, but that they see sin like God sees it. They look at the brokenness in their life and they don't justify it, excuse it, or diminish it. They see it for the ugly, nasty thing it is, and they mourn and say, God, I hate this. Blessed are those who mourn because they will be comforted. Blessed are the humble or the meek, which means a power under control.

The ones who live from a place of surrender. God, I could probably do this my way, but I'm not. I'm going to let you kind of steer the ship because you're much wiser. And I trust you. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Not that you want to be a righteous man necessarily, but that you long for the day when righteousness will reign. This world is jacked up. It is not right, and I Can't stand it. And I long for the day when Jesus makes it right again. Jesus is saying those people are blessed because they will inherit the kingdom.

Now he's not doing what he is not doing is it's kind of glorifying misery. And the other thing he's not doing is saying, if you'll become miserable, God will bless you. That's very dumb. Don't do that. That's not what Jesus is saying. He's saying that these kind of people are the kind of people who will be rightly postured. These postures are the kind of postures one needs to inherit the kingdom. And that when you become the kind of person who is marked by humility and surrender and brokenness over sin, that God will use that posture for your benefit.

And he will bring you into a kingdom in which people will look and say, man, that person has got it together. They are ashrei. They are flourishing. And what's so crazy? We went to an apologetics conference this weekend and secular studies on what is true flourishing, what is human flourishing. Even secular people are beginning to recognize it's not Pride and arrogance. It's not wealth and self-reliance and self-sufficiency. All that does is give you anxiety. More money, more problems. It's people, not that money is bad, but when money becomes so dominant in your life that that it drives everything, you're not going to be flourishing.

It's rather the people who live from a place of dependency on the Lord. Humble people that run the world. It's humble people that are the most satisfied. It's people who kind of don't settle for less than but are zealous for the righteousness of God. They are the ones who end up becoming very successful in life. And all Jesus is saying to these very poor people, to these

very marginalized people, you are not far from the kingdom. You are not far from the kingdom because the kingdom of God is for the poor in spirit.

And again, that logic works all the way down. So those who follow Jesus will find abundant life. I would say the top line is the Hebrew Azure, the bottom line is baruch. They will be comforted. They will be filled. They will inherit the earth. Now I open this sermon with the story of Justin, the philosopher. Like I said, Justin read Matthew, and he saw Jesus as the greater Plato. He is the he is what Plato wasn't. Plato was teaching a way. He was teaching a truth and a way of life.

Jesus is abstract truth personified. He is the way, the life. Plato was trying to climb up the ladder. Jesus is God come down the ladder. The Stoics were saying through discipline and effort you can find tranquility. Jesus is saying true salvation comes through humility and grace. And Justin, when he saw that higher, greater philosophy, he repented of his sins and he put his trust in Jesus and he became one of its most ablest defenders. But eventually living in that kingdom would cost him dearly. And he would be arrested by Roman Praetorian guard and brought before the prefect, which at that time Rome was basically falling apart.

They had emperors, but the emperor wasn't even the one in charge. It was the guy with the swords. And they're a political maneuvering that that carried the day. And so they're before the prefect, and the prefect says to Justin and his Christian brothers, You need to quit worshiping Jesus and bow to these Roman gods. Now for Romans, they really didn't care about Christians. They thought Christianity, Judaism, it's all fine. It's probably just one big thing. We're good with it with whatever you worship so long as you'll worship Roman gods too, specifically the emperor, who we believe is divine.

As soon as Christians stopped worshiping that, they were a source of trouble and a problem. And that's what they wanted Justin to do. You need to bow down to idols. And Justin refused, because he had come to understand that true life is in the kingdom of God, and that when the kingdom of this world and the kingdom of God come to clash. My priority and allegiance is to Jesus. And so there's this wonderful quote of Justin who became known not as Justin the philosopher. Rather, Justin the philosopher came j became Justin the martyr, and these were his dying words.

We hope to suffer torment for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ and so be saved. For this will bring us salvation and confidence as we stand before the more terrible and universal judgment seat of our Lord and Savior. And then he and the rest of his cohort say, You can do what you will. We are Christians, we do not sacrifice to idols. The reason I mentioned this story is because Justin came to understand. To inherit the kingdom that Jesus describes, it's more than just intellectual understanding. It's more than can than kind of memorizing the proverbs and saying, I'm going to live my life according to this and not that.

True entrance into the kingdom requires a heart of faith. And what I mean by faith, again, is not mere intellectual ascent. Justin understood true faith is allegiance to Jesus as a king. If I'm going to live in the kingdom, I've got to bow my knee to the true king. And Jesus is the true king. He's the philosopher king. King of Kings, and I'm going to bow my knee to him alone. And when there becomes a competition of where my allegiance will lie, my knee will bow to Jesus above and before anyone else.

And the question for us this morning, if you want a flourishing life, a flourishing life comes through the kingdom, and the kingdom comes through repentance and faith. Plato is wonderful. I love Plato. Read him again this year teaching my ninth tenth grade human whatever they are tenth grade humanity students. They're brilliant men. They got so close. They got they nailed it on so many areas. But even though they understood the problem, they had a deficient solution. There's only one way to have a life of flourishing. And that way has been given to us as a gift from God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

And if you've never entered into a saving relationship with Jesus, then today would be a day for you to do that, for you to realize me running my own life has created chaos and nothing really good. And so we're going to enter into a time of response where you'll have an opportunity to make that decision