

January 26, 2020
HEAVEN ON EARTH - Part 1

“Upside Down Just Might Be Right Side Up”

Jesus’ teachings, in what has been called the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5-7, tell us what kind of **lifestyle** will reflect the Kingdom of God or Heaven *here on earth*.

Matthew 4:25-5:2 (NIV): “²⁵Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him. ¹Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, ²and he began to teach them...”

The Kingdom of God or Kingdom of Heaven is wherever God reigns, wherever His will is done, and it is *fully* done in Heaven.

The Sermon on the Mount isn’t *how* we enter into the Kingdom but shows and teaches us how to live *once* we’re *in* the Kingdom.

Kingdom of Heaven living is a picture of what heaven will ultimately be like, and so living in the Kingdom now is akin to the *beginnings* of heaven on earth.

The Greek word that is translated “blessed” typically describes the person who finds themselves *avored* by God, and that therefore leads to a state of happiness or Biblical joy, regardless of their circumstances.

Matthew 5:3 (NIV): ““Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.””

The “poor in spirit” are those who recognize they are *sinner*s before a holy God, realize their only hope for eternity is His grace, and therefore throw themselves at His mercy.

Matthew 5:4 (NIV): ““Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.””

In the context of life in the Kingdom, verse 4 points to someone who mourns for the reality of *sins* in their own personal lives and the lives of all people.

Psalms 119:136 (NLT): “Rivers of tears gush from my eyes because people disobey your instructions.”

Isaiah 57:15 (ESV): “For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: ‘I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.’”

Matthew 5:5 (NIV): “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.”

Meekness is strength under the control of God for a higher purpose and calling.

Matthew 5:6 (NIV): “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”

Blessing occurs when people “hunger and thirst” that justice, rightness and God’s Will are done on earth as they are in heaven, so there’s justice for all.

Matthew 5:7 (NIV): “Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.”

Mercy embraces both forgiveness for the guilty, which is what we’ve received from God, and compassion for those suffering, hurting and in need.

Matthew 5:8 (NIV): “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”

To be “pure in heart” is to live fully for God, and this single-mindedness of purpose leads to a life that brings honor to God, that is a morally pure life that has integrity and no room for immorality.

Matthew 5:9 (NIV): “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.”

Jesus’ interest here isn’t in the peaceful but in the “peacemakers,” (*italics added*) those who actively seek to bring peace into our world.

Matthew 5:10 (NIV): “Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Jesus says if we are living according to the principles and culture of his Kingdom, we will be opposed by the world around us, the kingdom of Satan, and we will experience persecution.

Matthew 5:11-12 (NIV): “¹¹Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

By being like Jesus – by being holy – and living for his Kingdom, we are being unlike the world around us, and that’s when people notice us and persecute us.

The goal isn’t persecution but that our Kingdom-living will be noticed and attract others to God.

Matthew 5:13 (NIV): “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.”

Matthew 5:14-16 (NIV): “¹⁴You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

Jesus calls us to be “salt” and “light,” to preserve his good and stand out in this world in order to point everyone to Jesus.

Warren Wiersbe: “God doesn't bless us just to make us happy; He blesses us to make us a blessing.”

Though we won't experience all of the goodness and joy of the Kingdom now, we experience enough tastes to begin to get a glimpse of the real thing.

Next Week: Principles or Law?

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