

## ASTONISHED

Matthew 5:1-2, 7:28-29

MPS **By opening His mouth, Jesus opens our eyes- leaving us astonished at His Kingdom.**

## WELCOME

- Serve day is today
  - Join us at First Methodist at 4PM. We will share a meal, worship, and read the Word with our most impoverished neighbors
  - We would love for you, your family, friends, neighbors, or community group to come fellowship and serve our community together!
- Sign up for Baptisms on Easter!
- Men's event on March 6 with guest speaker Matt Carter at Chokee Farms

## PRAYER:

**Psalm 145:8–13 (ESV)** *8 The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. 9 The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made. 10 All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your saints shall bless you! 11 They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and tell of your power, 12 to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. 13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations. The LORD is faithful in all his words and kind in all his works.*

Lord, I give thanks to you for:

Salvation, eyes to see you, ears to hear you, Your Word, Holy Spirit, family, friends, provision, presence, goodness, work/career/job, marriage, health, church family.

**Psalm 145:14–17 (ESV)** *14 The LORD upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down. 15 The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. 16 You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing. 17 The LORD is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works.*

Lord, uphold and raise me from \_\_\_\_\_

Relational pain, depression, anxiety, financial difficulties, debt, anger, bitterness, dryness, loneliness, grief

Lord, open your hand to satisfy me/us with \_\_\_\_\_

Your presence, peace, joy, hope, friends/community, provision, direction, wisdom on a decision, comfort, freedom from bad habits/addictions/sin, understanding of you and your word, fruitfulness in ministry

***18 The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. 19 He fulfills the desire of those who fear him; he also hears their cry and saves them.***

## INTRO

- If we haven't' yet met, my name is Tim Bice I'm one of the pastors at GB
- I'm thrilled we are starting a new series today called:
- Astonished – a verse by verse (expository) series on The sermon on the mount...
- The series that takes us past Easter
- This is the first of five major discourses in Matthew where Jesus teaches his disciples living in the kingdom of God while still on this earth.
- Last year we had an introduction to the kingdom of God this year it will be our theme.
- Today will be like getting ready for vacation.
- The sermon on the mount includes
  - What your blessed life looks like, Beatitudes
  - That your identity is salt and light,
  - He covers your lust and anger,
  - marriage and divorce,
  - loving your enemies,
  - The Lord's prayer,
  - giving, fasting
  - Loving your enemies
  - Overcoming anxiety and worry
  - The golden rule
  - evangelism,
  - how to give grace to others instead of judging others
  - how to build your life on what is most important.

## OPEN

Play BabySees video

We need some proverbial glasses to see his kingdom clearly as well... Jesus gives us the means for it:

**Mark 1:15 (ESV)** **15** and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

**Matthew 5:1–2 (ESV)** **1** Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. **2** And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

**Matthew 7:28–29 (ESV)** **28** And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, **29** for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

**Matthew 6:22–23 (ESV)** **22** “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, **23** but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness.

**By opening His mouth, Jesus opens our eyes- leaving us astonished at His Kingdom.**

### **1. Jesus opens His mouth**

**Matthew 5:1–2 (ESV)** **1** Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. **2** And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

- Opened his mouth: a Hebrew idiom - signals the start of significant discourse, prophecy, teaching
- It signals something **weighty and revelatory** is about to happen, preparing the reader (and listeners) for kingdom truths that will astonish (as in 7:28-29).

**John 1:1,14 (ESV)** **1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God **14** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

- It's why we are in the Word so much!
- The bible is like a pop-up book, when its opened, King Jesus pops up
- “When the Child of God looks into the Word of God and sees the Son of God, he is changed by the Spirit of God into the Image of God for the Glory of God.” Wiersbe
- To stay away from Christianity because part of the Bible is offensive assumes if there is a God he wouldn't have any views that upset you.

**By opening His mouth, Jesus opens our eyes- leaving us astonished at His Kingdom.**

### **2. Jesus opens our eyes**

**Matthew 6:22–23 (ESV) 22** “*The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, 23 but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!*”

- “The **eye** (similar to the “heart” in Jewish literature) is a **lamp** that reveals the quality of a person’s inner life. A **healthy** eye (clear vision) suggests loyal devotion to God, while a **bad** eye (impaired vision) connotes moral corruption” ESV Study Bible

### What is He opening our eyes to?

#### **The kingdom of God**

- We know Jesus is talking about the Kingdom in this sermon; look at all the references to it.
- **Matthew 5:3** — “Blessed are the poor in spirit, **for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**”
- **Matthew 5:10** — “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, **for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**”
- **Matthew 5:19** — “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.**” (Two mentions here.)
- **Matthew 5:20** — “For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter **the kingdom of heaven.**”
- **Matthew 6:10** (in the Lord's Prayer) — “**Your kingdom** come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” (This directly petitions for God's **kingdom** to come.)
- **Matthew 6:33** — “But **seek first the kingdom** of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” (Note: ESV uses “**kingdom of God**” here, unlike the “kingdom of heaven” phrasing elsewhere in Matthew.)
- **Matthew 7:21** — “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter **the kingdom of heaven**, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”
- You can’t have a kingdom without a king – Jesus opens our eyes to him and his kingdom

How many of you have read C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*? You know, that incredible first book, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*—they even turned it into a movie! You remember how it starts off, right? Four kids—Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy—in wartime England, hide themselves in an old dusty wardrobe. They push past musty coats, and they step into a whole other world, a new realm of existence called Narnia - a snow-draped land shimmering under the

White Witch's cruel spell. They encounter Aslan, the great and majestic lion. The wardrobe was a threshold, a doorway to a realm that existed alongside their own.

- Narnia's a new realm pointing to the Kingdom of God, a place you enter without leaving where you are. Narnia doesn't replace England—it's hidden within it, reminding us that when we put our trust in Jesus, we step into a whole other realm –
- it's the Kingdom of God. We're still in this world, but we're also in a new reality—where the presence of the risen King changes everything.

**Psalm 119:18** — “**Open my eyes**, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.”

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### **3. We are left astonished**

**Matthew 7:28–29 (ESV)** **28** *And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, **29** for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.*

- The root idea of astonished is actually “striking or beating” (plagues, Egypt). This word carries the idea of being astonished \*because\* something hit you or shocked you (previously unaware and powerful).
- It means to be: thunder struck, awestruck, overwhelmed, floored, astounded, made speechless
- Figuratively, to knock someone out of their senses, to stun, or to leave them dumbfounded with amazement. It's not mild surprise; it's a jolt that disrupts normal thinking and leaves you reeling in awe.
- Unexpected kindness from a stranger, northern lights, Hubble telescope images of distant galaxies, grand canyon, someone pays your home off, buys you a new car, gives you a trip of a lifetime... astonished, thunderstruck in such a way you forget your troubles, you forget your pain, you are so consumed with what unexpectedly hit you that you are as content and satisfied as you've ever been.
- My friend David Huffman, pastor of Redeemer 30A church in Santa Rosa, did this thing called “ask a pastor anything.” He set up shop in a coffee house and took appointments. One guy who took him up on the offer was an atheist. He told David, give me your reason for God's existence without using the Bible – David gave him 9.

- One of David's reasons for God's existence astonished the atheist. It was Suffering and evil in the world.
- As you know, many arguments AGAINST Christianity revolve around evil and suffering. It's often asked as "how can the loving God allow you suffering in the world." That was this atheist's belief too. David flipped the script on him. He told him, "I think it's one of the greatest reasons for the existence of God is suffering and evil."

1. When we see or experience suffering, there is something written on our hearts that says, "that's problematic." This is not how things ought to be – we all know it intuitively. We know suffering and evil aren't the way things should be – but how? For suffering to exist means there is an opposite of suffering – blessings, goodness, flourishing. For evil to exist means there is an opposite to evil – God, His kingdom. In other words, if suffering were all there was, then we would never understand the concept of bliss. It would just be how things are.
2. Secondly, suffering points to the existence of a God because it's the only world view by which suffering makes sense or brings meaning in the natural world. God takes our suffering and the evil done to us and uses it for good. He's the one that can make our difficulties make sense. He's the only one who can bring beauty from ashes. Outside of a Christian world view suffering and evil make no sense

- This man was astonished at David's answer – so much so that he attended David's church... AND WAS SAVED!
- How? God opened His mouth through His Word through David, opened the atheist's eyes and astonished him with this kingdom.
- I don't think it's God's fault that you are no longer astonished at Him. Something has crept in to take God's place, and whatever it is, its astonishing ability is always short lived – instead of that thing leaving you astonished... its left you apathetic.

#### Scientific results of being astonished.

- University of California Berkeley did a large and expansive study on the effect of "awe" or 'astonishment' on our brains, particularly spiritual astonishment: 'an emotion triggered by encountering something vast and beyond our immediate understanding,'

- When humans experience transcendent awe, synapses fire in our brain causing us to be measurably:
  - more humble
  - more patient
  - more connected to others
  - more kind
  - more generous
- We also experience: increased critical thinking, better moods, a decreased sense of materialism

**2 Kings 6:17** — “Then Elisha prayed and said, ‘O Lord, please **open his eyes** that he may see.’ So the Lord **opened the eyes** of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.”

You were wired to be astonished, and God is the endless source of astonishment

#### **CONCLUSION:** The Greatest Astonishment: God Saves Sinners Like Us

- One night Jesus was surrounded by his enemies. They came after him. One of his servants freaked out too and drew a sword and began to wield it.

**Matthew 26:52–54 (ESV)** *52 Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. 53 Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? 54 But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?”*

- In other words, Jesus was saying: “I could have the chariots of fire. I could have the angelic hosts.”
- Here’s what Jesus is saying to Peter. “Peter, I did not come to be saved by the chariots of fire. I came to be abandoned by them.”
- The only reason you and I can be sure the chariots of fire will never abandon us, the only reason we can be sure God will be with us, the only reason we know God not give us what we deserve is because there was ONE who took what we deserve. Astonishing

- Look at that until that dazzles you. Look at what he did. Look at him actually saying, “I could have the chariots, Peter. That’s not why I came. I came to be abandoned by them so you could forever, all the rest of your life, be surrounded by them.”

QUESTIONS FOR GROUPS:

1. When is the last time you were astonished at what God said or did on your behalf?
2. How can you be astonished today by His Word and presence? What practices will you put in place to pursue Him?