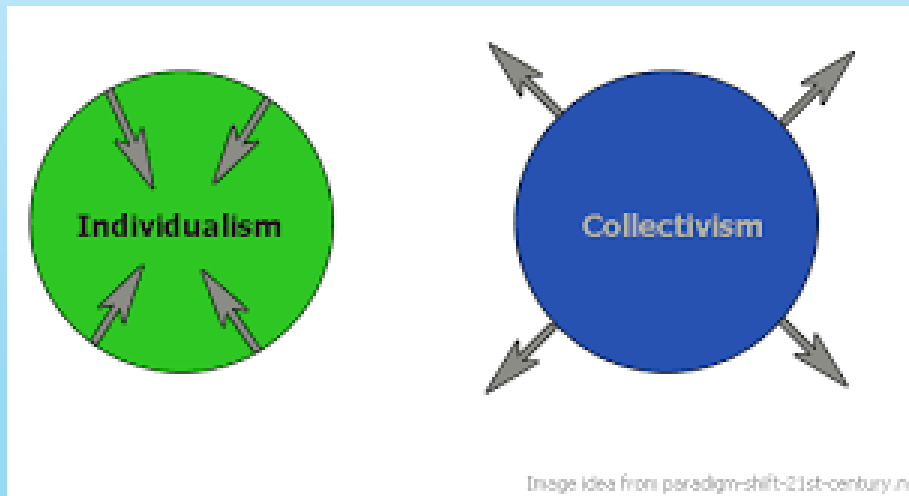
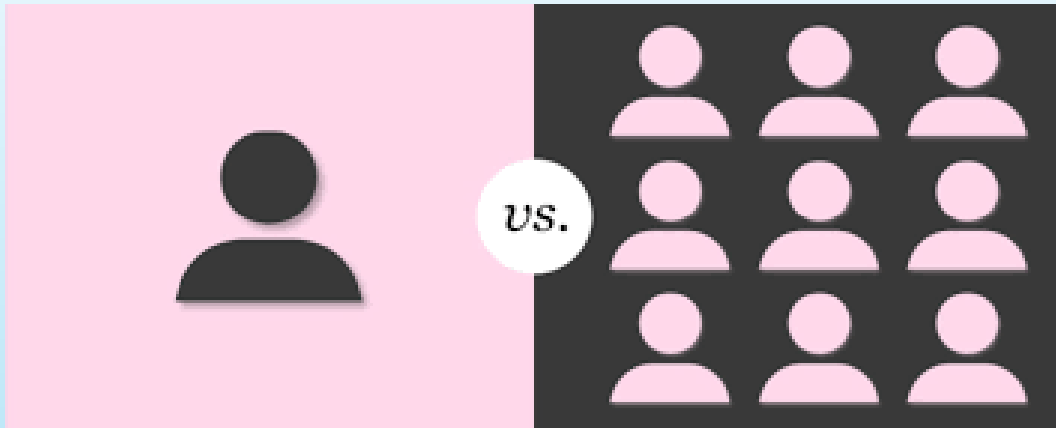




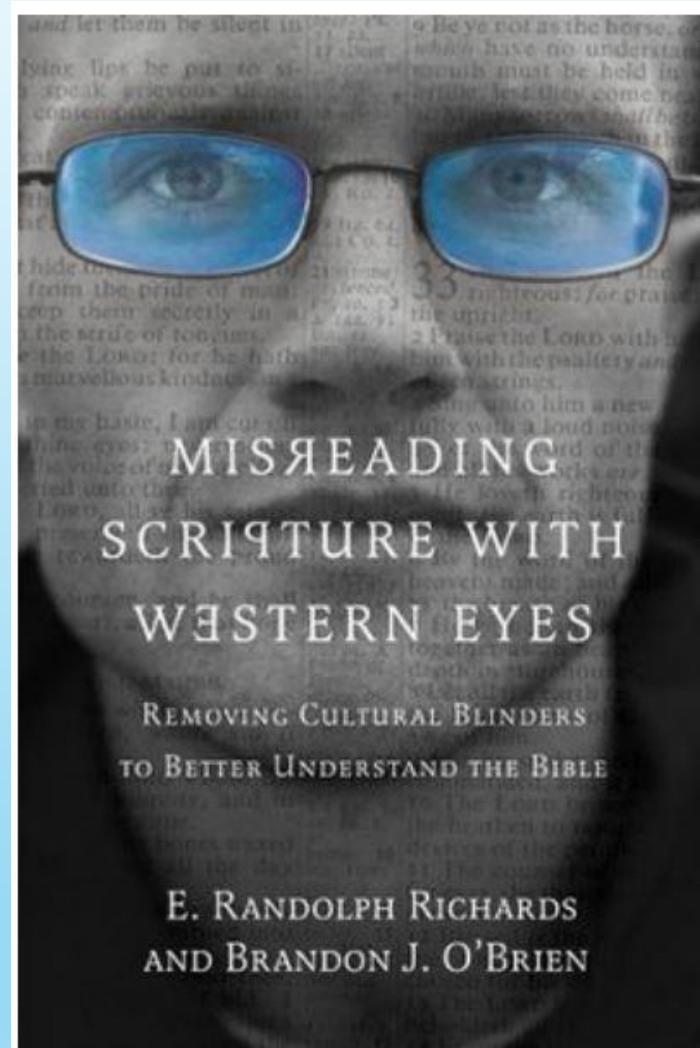
The Sermon on the Mount – Matthew 5:1-7:28

Local
Context

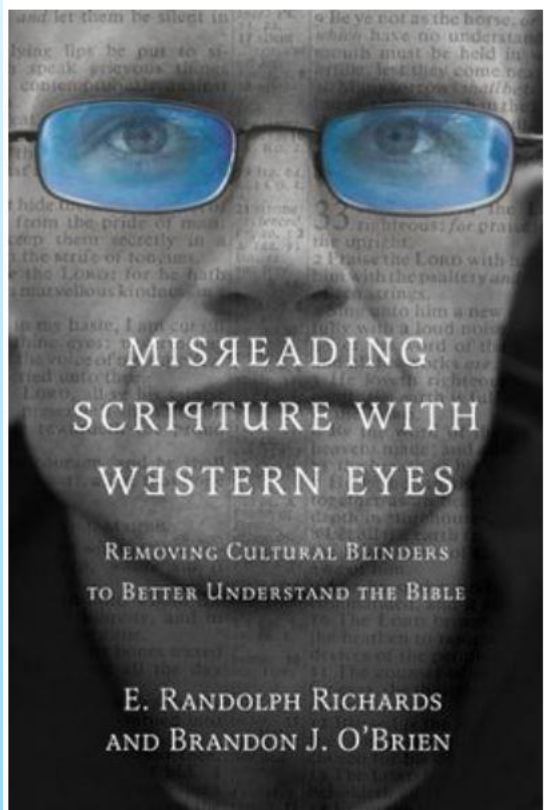
Bible Interpretation: The cultural starting point



Bible Interpretation: The cultural starting point



Bible Interpretation: The cultural starting point



The Prodigal Son: Luke 15:11-32

From the West-

the Loving Father who forgives me.

From the East-

the wicked son who wished his father dead.

From the Context- the ungrateful sons

(Pharisees) who scorned their gifts.

Big Point #1 The Sermon on the Mount is a teaching to a community.

The Jewish world

The kingdom of heaven is an Old Testament concept;

Ps 10:16 The Lord is King forever-

David's and Solomon's kingdoms were a vision of God's desire.

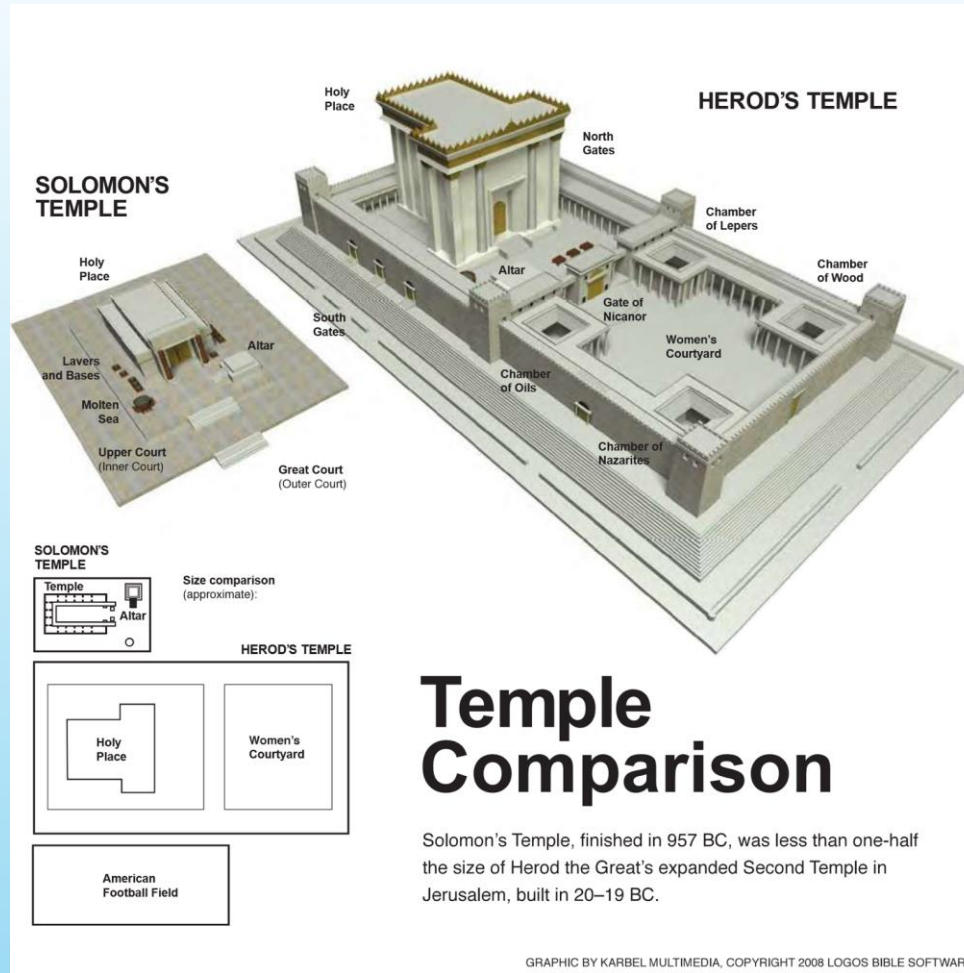
The prophets spoke of a future kingdom- described in language that cannot be a kingdom on the earth as we know it.

The nature of the NT "kingdom"- the law, the synagogues the pharisees, the system- seen as a "physical"- political kingdom.

This is the context in which the Sermon on the Mount speaks into.



Solomon reigned from 970 to 930 BC, then he began building the temple in 966 BC. It took him 20 years to complete.



The first century synagogue was often in the home of Priest or Pharisee- a much humbler symbol of the Jewish faith.



Cultural Context

The “Kingdom of God” in the first Century



Scribes: recorders not enforcers

Pharisees: Religious enforcers,
interpreters, believed in demons,
angels and the resurrection

Sadducees: Religious interpreters;
no supernatural

All were part of the 70 member
Sanhedrin



Religious Context



Matthew

4:17 “From that time on Jesus began to preach saying “repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand”.

4:23 “And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.”

The Sermon on the Mount – Matthew 5:1-7:28

Local
Context

Matthew 4:23- He went about teaching and healing and proclaiming the Gospel of **the Kingdom**.

Kingdom of Heaven 32 Times only in Matthew

Luke 4:43 I must preach the good news of **the Kingdom of God**
(the other Gospels) 68 times in 10 NT books

Matthew 19:23-24-Jesus uses them interchangeably.

23 And Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the **kingdom of heaven**. 24 Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the **kingdom of God**.”

Did Matthew intentionally use “the Kingdom of Heaven(s)” to lead the Jewish mind to consider that the Kingdom was much, much more than a temple on a hill?

What did Jesus mean by “the Kingdom”?

Mark 1:14-15 “The Kingdom of God is at hand”.

Luke 17:21 “The kingdom of God is in the midst of you.

John 18:36 “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting...”

At hand.... In your midst..... not of this world. *Which is it?*

Both

Matt 28:20-All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me...”

John 5:19 The whole world lies in the power of the evil one.
“world”

“Already- but Not Yet”

Positionally Jesus is in control- positionally we belong to him, practically, Satan has limited authority, practically we are not yet redeemed.

Big Point #2- The Sermon on the mount, and all the teachings, are an “already but not yet” facet of the Kingdom”

The *Message* of the kingdom:

Matthew 4:23 “And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming *the gospel (good news-euangelion)* of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people”. (cf Luke 4:43)

The Kingdom players

Matt 4:1-17 *The temptation* establishes Jesus as the “man-King”, victorious over sin and “the qualified sacrifice”.

Matt 4:18 22 *The calling* of his disciples- the kingdom workers who will carry on the work.

The *setting* of the “good news of the kingdom”

Matthew 5:1 “Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

Very “Moses like”

And he opened his mouth and taught them saying

“*Makarios*”....

“Blessed” in the OT : *bārûk*.

When applied to God it has the sense of praise

1 Sam 25:32 “Blessed be Yahwah the God of Israel”.

(David-when Abigail prevented David from murdering Nabal)

1 Kings 1:48 “Blessed be the Lord , the God of Israel...”

(David- when Solomon was crowned)

Ps 28:6 “Blessed be the Lord, for he has heard my voice....”

(David-when petitioning God)

The OT equivalent of the NT word “blessed” is “aš·rê”

Job 5:17 Behold, *how* (aš·rê) is the man whom God reproves...

Ps 1:1 (aš·rê) is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked....

Ps 2:12 (aš·rê) are all those who take refuge in him.

Ps 32:2 (aš·rê) is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity and in whose spirit is no deceit.

Ps 106:3 (aš·rê) are those who observe justice and do righteousness at all times.

Isaiah 30:18 (aš·rê) are all who wait for him.

Blessed Verses

Luke 12:35-37 “Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes.”

John 13:17 “If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.”

Romans 4:7-8 “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are covered.”

James 1:25 “Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial.”

1 Peter 4:14 “But even if you should suffer for righteousness sake, you are blessed because the Spirit of Glory and of God rests upon you.”

What “composite” definition of “blessed” would you write using the verses above?

Makarios- blessed, happy, fortunate,
to be envied, smiled upon.....

Do these attempts at translation capture the
meaning?

John 10:10 ... I came that they might have life and have it abundantly.

Perissos: something more, beyond, surpassing, exceedingly.

Flourishing

Big Point #3- When English words are not helpful, study other places in the Bible where the word is used to see the tone or context of the meaning.

Blessed Verses

Flourishing are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes.

If you know these things, you will *flourish* if you do them.

Flourishing are those whose lawless deeds are covered.

Flourishing is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.

Flourishing is the man who remains steadfast under trial.

But even *if you should suffer for righteousness sake, you are flourishing* because the Spirit of Glory and of God rests upon you.

The Sermon on the mount is the instruction on how to flourish in the Kingdom. It cannot be separated from a relationship with the Savior/King. If we want an “abundant” life- a life that has meaning, purpose and can withstand the trials, challenges and tragedies of life, we need to know how to “flourish”.

“Inclusio”

Matthew 5:3 “Flourishing” are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of God

Everything in between is also characteristic of the Kingdom.

Matthew 5:10 “Flourishing” are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake for theirs is the Kingdom of God.

The progressive nature of the Beatitudes

The statements of truth in the beatitudes (the macarisms) are both sequential and cyclical; they build one upon the other, and they continually call us back to the foundation.

Already- but not yet.

*The Beatitudes are NOT a way of manipulating the actions of God and they are not a legalistic means of gaining entrance to the Kingdom.

*The Beatitudes ARE an invitation to live wisely and skillfully in a covenant relationship with the God of the garden of Eden (the kingdom of God as created), resulting in a life that flourishes now (already) and in the restored kingdom of eternity (not yet). See Psalm 1

**Matthew 5:3 Flourishing are the poor in Spirit- for theirs
is the Kingdom of God.**

(Luke 6:20 omits “in spirit)

So, what kind of poverty?

Does being “poor” alone get you into the Kingdom?

What kind of poverty?

What this poverty is not:

Matt 5:42 “Give to the one who begs from you.”

Doesn't this “ruin” their “blessedness”?

Matt 26:11 & John 12:8 “The poor you will have with you always”. (This is not an injunction that helping the poor is pointless).

If the disciples were NOT the poor, were they not “blessed”?

Phil 4:12 “I know how to live in abundance and to live in lack”. Did Paul have and not have “blessedness”?

Some people are born into poverty- and live a life hostile to God. Are they “blessed”? Do they get to go to heaven?

The Tax Collector: Luke 18:9-14

A man who was “poor” in spirit.

Who did Jesus tell the story to and what do we learn about them?

Compare and contrast the prayers of the Pharisee and the tax collector.

What did Jesus say about the tax collector?

Why did he call him “justified”?

Justified. δεδικαιωμένος (dedikaiōmenos)

Verb - Perfect Participle Middle or Passive - Nominative

Masculine Singular

Strong's Greek 1344: From dikaios; *to render just or innocent.*

What do these “poor in Spirit” receive?

Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly **not enter the kingdom of heaven (5:20)**.

Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord’, will **enter the kingdom of heaven**, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven (7:21).

The “foundation” of the new expression of the Kingdom is about how you join. It’s not by being a pharisee or by being a religious pretender.

The kingdom is gained by a relationship with the King and recognition of the holiness of the king and the sinfulness of man.

Flourishing are those who realize their poverty of spirit – compared to God (Romans 3:23). They receive citizenship in the Kingdom. This is the “good news” of the Kingdom!

BE-Attitude- like the tax Collector!

The tax collector was “flourishing” in his realization that his standing before a Holy God was completely poverty stricken. Jesus called him “justified”. He was living as a citizen of the “already” kingdom – and he gained entrance into the “not yet” Kingdom.

Ps 32:2- Flourishing is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, in whose spirit is no deceit.

**Matthew 5:4 Flourishing are those who mourn
- for they will be comforted.**

What kind of mourning?

What kind of comfort?

What kind of “mourning”?

Mourning the death of a loved one?

Mourning the loss of a dream, a job, a relationship?

How does the promise of *comfort* fit with this definition of mourning?

Mourning in Scripture

Of the nine terms used for sorrow, the one used here (pentheó-mourn) is the strongest, the most severe. It represents the deepest, most heart-felt grief, and was generally reserved for grieving over the death of a loved one.

Gen 37:5 Jacob's grief when he thought Joseph was killed by a wild animal. (LXX pentheó)

Mark 16:10 The disciples before they knew Jesus was raised from the dead.

Not like being sad you missed Christmas because of Covid.

David: Ps 51:4 “Against you only have I sinned”.

Paul: Romans 7:18 “In my flesh is no good thing”- “sinners of whom I am chief” (1 Tim 1:15).

Jeremiah the Prophet: 4:13 “Woe to us for we are ruined..”

Ezekiel 16:23 “Woe to you for all your wickedness...”

Jesus Matt 23:37 and Luke 13:4 “Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem...”

Mourning for the fallen creation Romans 8:19 “The creation groans....”

Biblical mourning is focused on mourning for the broken relationship with God and the Kingdom of God.

Looking to the future (not yet) Kingdom is the only place to find true comfort. Comfort in this world is false, fleeting and corruptible. Only eternal “comfort” answers every kind of grief. Do you think the tax collector was “comforted” in his “mourning”?

Matt 5:4 *Flourishing* are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Woe is me! Is 6:5-8

! וַיִּיָּאֵל ('ō·w-) Interjection Strong's Hebrew 188: 1) woe! alas! oh!
1a) **passionate cry of grief** or despair.

The source of Isaiah's despair: "I am lost; I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips"

paraklēthēsontai-Comforted!

BE-Attitude- be like Isaiah “Woe! is me!”

Isaiah was flourishing in the comfort of God’s forgiveness.

Turning his mourning into the joy of service, his response to the cleansing of his sin was “here am I –send me”.

Ps 112:1 Praise the Lord! Flourishing is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in his commandments.

Matthew 5:5 Flourishing are the Meek

- for they will inherit the earth.

Meek- weak?, quiet?, humble?

What kind of meekness?

praus: mild, gentle

Original Word: πραῦς, πραεῖα, πραῦ

Matthew 11:29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am (praus: meek, gentle) and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls.

Matthew 21:5 Say to the daughter of Zion, Behold your king is coming to you- (praus: meek, humble) and mounted on a donkey, on a colt the foal of a beast of burden.

2 Cor 10:1 I Paul, myself entreat you, by the meekness (praus) and gentleness of Christ...”

Matt 27:11

Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him “Are you the King of the Jews”? Jesus said “you have said so.”

Matt 27:12 But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he gave no answer.

Names Jesus called the pharisees:

1. blind guides (Matt. 23:16).
2. fools (Matt. 23:17).
3. white-washed tomb-full of dead men's bones (Matt. 23:27).
4. serpents (Matt. 23:33)
5. generation of vipers (Matt. 23:33).
6. hypocrites! (Luke 11:44).
7. graves (Luke 11:44).
8. children of the devil (John 8:44)

Jesus sense of “timing”

John 2:4 And Jesus said to her “Woman, what does this have to do with me? My time has not come.”

John 7:6 Jesus said to them, “My time has not yet come, but your time is always here.

John 7:8 You go up to the feast. I am not going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come.”

John 7:30 So they were seeking to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come.

John 8:20 These words he spoke in the treasury, as he taught in the temple; but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.

John 13:1 Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the

John 17:1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you,

end.

Matthew 26:18 He said, “Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.’”

John 6:38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.

Meek= submitted, self controlled, living for the demands of the Kingdom.

A right time in the Kingdom timetable to be silent (Matt 16:63), and a right time to turn tables over and scatter coins in the temple. (John 2:14-15)

The phrase '**they will inherit the earth**' is translated 'the earth will belong to them' [CEV, NCV]. This verb means to receive a possession or benefit as a gift from someone who has died, generally a parent.

Matthew 21:22 And **all things you ask** in prayer, believing, you will receive.”

John 14:13-14 **Whatever you ask** in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you **ask Me anything** in My name, I will do it.

John 15:7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask **whatever you wish**, and it will be done for you.

John 15:16 You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that **whatever you ask** of the Father in My name He may give to you.

John 16:24 Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; **ask and you will receive**, so that your joy may be made full

1 John 5:14

This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything **according to His will**, He hears us.

“in his name” “according to his will”

BE-Attitude- be like Jesus!

Flourishing are those that have a meek, submitted spirit- they live for the Kingdom- and the timing of kingdom tasks. They are qualified to ask *anything* and receive *everything*.

Ps 37:11 But the meek shall inherit the land and flourish in abundant peace.

RECAP

The Kingdom Jesus is presenting now is a spiritual Kingdom that he will build in the hearts of his followers.

Recognizing our spiritual poverty- in relation to the King- is how we gain entrance to the kingdom and a relationship with the King. (Remember the “good news”?- this is it!)

Until we enter the future Kingdom, sin is always with us (1 Jn 1:8) and it should cause us to mourn. Mourning brings the comfort of forgiveness- no mourning- no comfort.

RECAP

Kingdom members live in “controlled meekness” –(remember-already but not yet). They seek to discern the “timing” of Kingdom purposes- speaking when it’s expedient for the Kingdom, being silent and submitted when King says “no glory for me in this moment”.

Spiritual poverty- brings the kingdom.

Biblical mourning brings comfort from the King.

Comfort begets Christlike Character .

The joy of Christ-like character cries out for more.

**Matthew 5:6 Flourishing are those who hunger and thirst
for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.**

What kind of righteousness?

Filled with what? Satisfied How?

Personal Reflection Study

“There are several marks of genuine hunger and thirst for God’s righteousness. First is **dissatisfaction with self**. The person who is pleased with his own righteousness will see no need for God’s. Second is freedom from dependence on **external things for satisfaction**. Third is craving for the **Word of God**. Fourth is the **pleasantness of the things of God**. A final mark of true spiritual hunger is **unconditionality**. When our spiritual hunger and thirst are genuine, they will make no conditions; they will seek and accept God’s righteousness in whatever way He chooses to provide it and will obey His commands no matter how demanding they may be. The Rich Young Ruler had conditions-he went away sad. Don’t go away sad.”(J. MacArthur)”

Individual Reflection Paper for Study on your own *Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness*

Blessed are the Hungry!- Individual Reflection Time

Was there a time in your spiritual journey that you came to realize your spiritual poverty?

Was there a time that you allowed that poverty to lead you to accept salvation in Christ?

Did anything you heard today cause you to revisit that reality in a new way? Are you rejoicing that the Kingdom is yours?

If today is the first time you have been confronted with the idea of “spiritual poverty”, and you’d like to talk to someone about how you can be one of those who are blessed to be “in the kingdom”, talk to one of the retreat leaders today!.

Has the comfort of being right with God, in spite of the continuing struggle against sin, brought you to a point a meek surrender to the will of God? Are you ready to “flourish” in your Christian walk by living for Kingdom purposes?

Are you ready to ask God to cause you to hunger and thirst for more of the meek Christ-like spirit of righteousness?

The promise of this Beatitude is that those who hunger and thirst-(continually; present tense continuous Greek participle), will be filled, or satisfied- in a way only God can bring! Admittedly, this feeling of contentment is as fleeting as our ability to continue to hunger and thirst for the things of God. (already-but not yet!)

What kind of righteousness?

Is this simply being able to claim “imputed” righteousness, such as what Paul describes in 2 Cor 5:21? Certainly, there is no righteousness before a holy God, except the righteousness we receive through salvation by grace and the sacrifice of Christ (Eph 2:8,9). But, is the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount pointing only to a work that was done for us? Or, does it include an expected effort of conduct on our part? Not conduct that “earns” eternal life, but conduct that confirms participation in the Kingdom and allegiance to the King?

δικαιοσύνη /dikaiosýnē ("divine approval") is the regular NT term used for righteousness ("God's judicial approval"). δικαιοσύνη /dikaiosýnē ("the approval of God") refers to what is deemed right by the Lord (after His examination), i.e. what is approved in His eyes.

Consider these verses: (Completing this section at home, after the retreat will be more beneficial, but reviewing the rest of the Sermon on the Mount will perhaps raise questions that the rest of the retreat will answer).

Matthew 5:17-20 What is the kingdom expectation for outward demonstration of living for the King?

Matthew 5:21-48 Why is this section an “already but not yet” challenge?

Additional related Scriptures:Ps 23, Ps 34, Ps 42:1-2, Ps 63:1, Ps 107:9, Is 26:7-9, Jn 4:14, 6:48, 7:37-38.

Finally, read Luke 1:46-53.

What parallels can you see between this passage and Matt 5:2-8?

Those who see their spiritual poverty before God, know they need the riches of salvation through the King, Messiah, Christ Jesus; they receive the kingdom.

*Those in the Kingdom look back in mourning at their wickedness-
and receive the comfort of forgiveness from the King.*

*Those who receive forgiveness and the
comfort of a place in the Kingdom,
reflect the meekness and gentleness of Christ the King
-and they hunger and thirst to be filled with more.
The work of the Spirit on the inside, now turns to
expressions of outward kingdom love- The merciful are
those who have received undeserved mercy.*

The first four beatitudes deal with inner principles, principles of the heart and mind. They are concerned with the way we see ourselves before God. They form us into the image of Christ.

The last four are outward manifestations of those attitudes through the help of the indwelling Spirit and a personal relationship with Christ. They determine how we reflect the image of Christ to the world.

Matthew 5:7 Flourishing are the Merciful
- for they shall receive mercy.
What kind of “mercy”.

Other “responsive” principles in Scripture:

Forgive us our debts- as we forgive others.. (Matt 6:15)

Forgive as the Lord forgave you (Col. 3:13)

Whoever wants to save his life must lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it’ (Matt 16:25)

Work out your salvation.... (Phil 2:12)

Add to your faith.... (2 Peter 1:5)

God looks for a response to what he provides. He gives grace- we should be gracious, he gives compassion, we should become compassionate, He give mercy, we should extend mercy.

Luke 10:25-37

The Merciful Samaritan

- *We don't know if he was “good”, but he was merciful.
- *His mercy was “**unconditional**”-extending to those not like himself.
- *His mercy was “**risky**”- extending to his “enemy”.
- *His mercy was “**complete**”-extending to every practical need.
“When he saw him he had compassion”.

BE-Attitude- be like the Samaritan!

Flourishing are those who extend the love and mercy of the Kingdom. They will continually receive mercy from the King.

**Psalm 41:1 Flourishing is the one who considers the poor!
In the day of trouble the Lord delivers him;**

**Matthew 5:8 Flourishing are the pure in heart
- for they shall see God.**

What kind of “purity” and “heart”? How do they “see”?

What kind of “purity”: καθαροὶ (katharoi)

Adjective - Nominative Masculine Plural

Strong's Greek 2513: Clean. clear, not mixed or polluted

“Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who has *clean hands and a pure heart*. Who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully.”

Ps 24:3,4

*does not lift up his soul – to what is false.

Matthew 6:21–24

21 For where your treasure is, there *your heart* will be also.

[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!

[24] “No one can *serve two masters*, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will *be devoted* to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. (ESV)

Matt 6:22 clear, (healthy)

ἀπλοῦς (haplous)

Adjective - Nominative Masculine Singular

Strong's Greek 573: Single, simple, sound, perfect. Probably from the base of pleko; properly, folded together, i.e. Single.

Not mixed – not diluted- not containing “impurities” as in things that don't belong, are not the same, that diminish the power, effectiveness and strength.

James 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a *double-minded* man, unstable in all his ways.

James 4:8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and *purify your hearts*, you double-minded.

It is the kind of thing Paul spoke of when he wrote,
“this one thing I do ...” (Phil. 3:13). He did not say, ‘these
twenty five things I dabble in.

Luke 2:25-28 Simeon

25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and *devout*, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26 And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 27 And he came in the spirit into the temple and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law, 28 he took him up in his arms and praised God and said;

Luke 2:25-28 Simeon

29 Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace,
according to your word 30 for my eyes have seen your salvation
31 that you have prepared in the presence of all the peoples-
32 a light for revelation to the gentiles and for glory to your
people Israel.

BE-Attitude- be like Simeon!

Flourishing are those whose hearts are undivided, devoted to the Kingdom and looking for the coming of the King. They will see God when he comes in big and small ways, every day.

Ps 86:11 Teach me your way, O Lord that I might walk in your truth. *Unite (unify, remove competing desires)* my heart to fear your name.

Matthew 5:9 Flourishing are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the Sons of God.

What kind of peace?

National peace? Political peace? International peace?

What kind of peace?

εἰρηνοποιοί (eirēnopoioi)

Adjective - Nominative Masculine Plural

Strong's Greek 1518: Pacific, loving peace, a peace-maker.

From eirenopoios and poieo; pacificatory, i.e. peaceable.

Romans 5:1

Peace with God

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (ESV)

*It is reconciliation with God that brings *peace with God.**

Romans 15:33 May the *God of Peace* be with you all. Amen

2 Cor 13:11 Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the *God of love and peace* will be with you.

Phil 4:9 What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me- practice these things, and the *God of peace* will be with you.

If this “peace” comes from God, and God is the “God of peace”, then no “earthly” definition of peace will do- no matter how much the United Nations wants to co-opt it.

Col 1:20 “Making peace by the blood of his cross”.

The Nature of this peace is that it is *a divine work*.
For peace means reconciliation, and God is the author of peace
and of reconciliation.

Eph 2:14-17

“For he himself is our peace.... That he might create for himself one new man in place of the two (Jews and gentiles), so making peace and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross...and he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.”

Who then, are “the sons of God” and why?

Eph 5:20 “Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled (be at peace) with God”.

What “peacemaking” is not:

Peacemaking is not people-pleasing.

Peacemaking is not compromising convictions.

Peacemaking is often not “win-win”.

Peacemaking is not a popularity contest.

Four characteristics of a peacemaker:

First, he is one who has made peace with God- he is a believer.

Romans 5:1- she has peace with God

Second- leads others to make peace with God. We share the gospel. Eph. 5:20 She is an ambassador.

Third- She esteems peace in the Body of Christ of great worth.

Matt 5:30 She maintains a clean heart before God and other believers. “..if you remember your brother has something against you...

Fourth- She endeavors to demonstrate a life of peace if at all possible. Romans 12:18 “in as much as it depends on you”

BE-Attitude- be like Paul!

Flourishing are the peacemakers, who seek to bring others into a reconciled relationship with the King.

Col 1:28-29 “Him we proclaim, warning everyone, and teaching everyone, with all wisdom that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil – struggling- with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.”

Dan 12:3... “and those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above, and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.”

Prov. 11:30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and whoever captures souls is wise.”

2 Cor 2:16 An aroma of life to some, the stench of death to others.

Not everyone will love the message.

*Matthew 5:10-11 Flourishing are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven
(inclusio vs. 5-10)*

*Flourishing are you when others revile you, and persecute you
and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.
Rejoice! And be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so
they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

“for righteousness sake” “on my account”

(qualifying conditions)

revile you- *To reproach, revile, upbraid, to defame, i.e. Rail at, chide, taunt.*

persecute you *—to harass, to drive away, to press, to harm*

utter all kinds of evil against you falsely- *Evil, bad, wicked, maliciousness of all kinds, including all the forms of declension;*

Rejoice! *Be calm, happy, be exceedingly well, at peace*

And be glad- *Celebrate! Jump for joy! Exult*

for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Fruits of Persecution

1. *Jesus promised persecution would come.* John 15:18 “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. 20 Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. 21 ***But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me.***

Fruits of Persecution

2. *Persecution (harassment, reviling, unkindness, slander) are the mark of a Godly life.*

2 Tim 3:10-12 You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, 11 my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. 12 ***Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,***

Fruits of Persecution

3. *Persecution (harassment, reviling, unkindness, slander) are the entrance into a deeper fellowship with Christ- and, the generations of martyrs before us.*

Phil 3:8-11 Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— 10 ***that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.***

Fruits of Persecution

4. *We are called to Persecution (harassment, reviling, unkindness, slander).*

1 Peter 2:21 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you might follow in his steps.

3:9 Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless- for **TO THIS YOUR WERE CALLED** that you might obtain a blessing.

BE-Attitude- be like every generation of serious believers in the last 2000 years of Christianity in the Church age.

Flourishing are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Flourishing are you when others revile you, and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely, on my account.

Rejoice! And be glad! For your reward is great in heaven for so they persecuted the prophets were before you.

13“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet.”

14“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

Application

How can you apply the study of this passage to make lasting changes in your Christian walk?

- 1. Remember the “already – but not yet” quality of the Kingdom.
Phil 3:12 “Not that I have attained... but I press on”.*
- 2. Remember the “progressive” nature of the Beatitudes.
Matt 3:2 The “Good news” of the kingdom begins with “repent”.*
- 3. Use the passage to check your “flourishing” status.
1 John 10:10 I have come that they might have abundant life.*

Flourishing check up:

5:3 poor in spirit or proud in compromise?

5:4 mourning sin or mad at sinners?

5:5 Meek and controlled or emotional volcano?

5:6 Hungry for more of God or satisfied with the world?

5:7 Remembering the mercy given to you? Or holding a standard of who “deserves” mercy”

5:8 Devoted to the things of God or is your heart divided, serving 2, 3 or 4 masters?

5:9 Intentionally sharing your faith, planning redemptive opportunities or hiding your light under a basket?

5:10 Expecting persecution as a fact of life or avoiding any kind of conflict over what you believe?

5:11 Exulting and rejoicing when people ridicule you for what you believe? Or people pleasing to avoid taking a stand?

Summary and Conclusion

God's plan and desire for our Christian life is that we would progress beyond "saved", "forgiven" "in the Kingdom" and go on to be conformed to the submitted meekness of Christ. To hunger for more of the Kingdom in our lives, extend the mercy of God to others, be more and more devoted to Kingdom purposes as the years go on and therefore "see" the purposes of God all around us and have the courage to call people to acknowledge their sin and make peace with God through the King of Kings, the Lord Jesus. And finally, to rejoice, to celebrate, to count it a privilege when the world calls us names, limits our access to society and eventually, causes us bodily harm and loss of life.