

Sermon on the Mount - Part 1

by David Servant

David Servant explores the significance of the Sermon on the Mount, emphasizing the characteristics of true discipleship and the blessings outlined in the Beatitudes.

Duration: 28:30

Scripture: Matthew 5:3-4, Matthew 5:6-12, Luke 18:9-14

Topics: "Spiritual Poverty", "Eternal Life"

Description

This sermon focuses on the Sermon on the Mount, delivered by Jesus in the region near the Sea of Galilee. It emphasizes the importance of recognizing spiritual poverty as the starting point for a relationship with God and the pathway to receiving blessings and ultimately inheriting eternal life. The Beatitudes are explored as a guide to understanding how one can know if they are among the blessed and destined for heaven.

Transcript

Boker Tov, that means good morning in Hebrew. And here we are in Israel, in the region of the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus spent so much of his ministry time. Well, I'm sitting right now on the cliffs of Arbel, which are in the northwestern portion of the Sea of Galilee.

And you can see behind me part of the cliffs of Arbel, separated by a huge valley, and I'm on the highest part of the cliffs of Arbel, right over in this direction, as you can see in this pan, is the Sea of Galilee as the sun rises over it in the east. Jesus would have had to have walked many times right down this valley behind me on his way, coming from Nazareth to the Sea of Galilee, going back to Nazareth, where his boyhood home was. He spent almost 30 years there in Nazareth.

And our goal is to spend some time every day working our way through the Sermon on the Mount. The Sermon on the Mount was, of course, given in this region right here. We know that for a fact, that's what the scripture says, and Jesus gave his most important and his longest sermon ever on a mountain somewhere around the Sea of Galilee.

Nobody knows exactly where he gave that sermon. He didn't leave a plaque to tell us, and it wasn't until about 300 years after that sermon that anybody even tried to identify the place of that sermon. Of course, that'd be a hard thing to do 300 years later.

There's no real description given to us in the New Testament. And the Sea of Galilee is not really a sea at all. It's a lake.

It's called the Lake of Geneseret in the Bible. Today, it's called a lake, the Lake of Kenneret by the Israelis. And it's only about seven miles wide at its widest point and about 14 miles long at its longest point.

And so from the many mountains that surround the Sea of Galilee, you can look down and you can see the whole thing. Just about anywhere you stand along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, you can see the other side. And so that helps to put it into a perspective when we consider the stories of Christ that occurred right around the Sea of Galilee.

The Sea of Galilee is where Jesus walked across the water. The Sea of Galilee is where Jesus calmed the storm and so forth. And we'll talk about that later on as we work our way through the Sermon on the Mount.

But if you've got your Bible, I'd like you to open to Matthew chapter 5. The Sermon on the Mount is actually three chapters, Matthew 5, 6, and 7. And to set the background for the Sermon on the Mount, we need to back up a little bit and read a few verses of chapter 4 preceding chapter 5. So take a look if you've got your Bible. If not, we'll have the words there right on the screen. You can read along with me.

It says in verse 23 of Matthew 4, And Jesus was going about in all of Galilee, that's where we are right now, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people. And of course this made him very, very popular as the next verse tells us, verse 24. And the news about him went out into all Syria, and they brought to him all who were ill, taken with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics, and he healed them.

And so you can see a lot of spiritual and supernatural activity right here in this region, and word spread. They didn't have, you know, a newspaper in those days. They didn't have television.

They didn't have the internet. But word of mouth traveled from village to village. And Josephus, the ancient Jewish historian, tells us there were hundreds of small villages in the Sea of Galilee area.

So Jesus had his work cut out for him. There was a lot of people to reach, a lot of synagogues where he could proclaim the gospel of the kingdom, and no doubt hundreds of people were healed in his ministry in this region. Well, then verse 25 sets us up for verse 1 of chapter 5. It says, and great multitudes followed him from Galilee, and Decapolis, and Jerusalem, and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

Well, having been in Israel now for several days and traveled to some of these places that have just been mentioned, I mean, Jerusalem, it took us by car yesterday about three hours to get here from Jerusalem. Now, granted, we did get lost a few times and made a few circles there in Jerusalem, but it's a long drive. And we came down from Jerusalem into Jericho and then made our way up the Jordan Valley all the way here to the Sea of Galilee.

Of course, the Sea of Galilee empties into the Jordan River and that flows then for miles and miles down to the Dead Sea where, of course, it stops. There's no outlet out of the Dead Sea. So for people to have walked from Jerusalem, news was spreading.

And the Decapolis on the other side of the Sea of Galilee, Judea, this whole region of Israel and Belos south of Galilee, Judea, Jerusalem was in Judea, of course, Bethlehem in Judea, and then from beyond the Jordan, well, I've just described to you where the Jordan River goes. And so his fame was going far and wide, and naturally it was because of the miracles. If there's healing, if there's miracles, people come.

And that's always been true about the spread of the gospel. Any place in the world where there's been a revival, there has to be that element of the supernatural. Well, Jesus had it like nobody else.

Well, not everybody came from Jerusalem. Not everybody came from Judea or Decapolis. Who came? Well, it would have been a certain category of people.

Of course, sick people who recognized they need healing would have come, but also very spiritually hungry people would have come. Those who are not spiritually interested, they've got other things that are more important to do than make a journey that's going to take them several days, or in some cases maybe more than a week, to get to see miracles or to listen to this rabbi teaching up near the Sea of Galilee. And that kind of sets us up here in chapter 5 and verse number 1. Let's read it together.

A lot of times this verse is just skimmed over as if it were unimportant, but really it's spiritually significant to us. It says that when Jesus saw the multitudes, he went up on the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. And so we start at the beginning of the verse with multitudes of people, it says, but near the end of the verse it says his disciples came to him.

And in between that time was him seeing the multitudes and then him climbing a mountain. He went up on the mountain. Again, we're not told what mountain.

It could have been this mountain. Well, I want to tell you, if it was this mountain right here, I mean, we're hundreds and hundreds of feet now above the level of the Sea of Galilee, and if those multitudes were gathered along the shore, which they likely were, the main trade route came right up along the western side of the Sea of Galilee, that's where Capernaum was and so forth, a fairly large town. If that's where Jesus was, regardless of what mountain he climbed, it wasn't an easy journey.

If he walked for 10 or 15 or 20 minutes, let me tell you, everybody's hearts would have been beating quite fast and people would be huffing and puffing. And it just seems to me that what this verse is telling us is that there was a certain class of people who were willing to huff and puff and to get their hearts going, to follow Jesus because of their spiritual hunger. That's why we're told at the end of the verse that his disciples came to him.

Not everybody's a disciple, and certainly not everybody among those multitudes were his disciples. Disciples were his followers, those who listened to him, those who believed in him, those who began to put into practice what he said. In fact, if we read in Luke chapter 14, the requirements that Jesus laid down to be one of his disciples, there was a high cost to being a disciple of Christ.

If Matthew is using that term as it's used throughout the rest of the New Testament, these were the committed people. And that helps us to see something. Jesus is not casting his pearls before the swine.

Jesus is a guy who practiced what he preached. He told us, don't cast your pearls before the swine. That is, don't give what is valuable to those who don't recognize its value.

Jesus wasn't, like so many of us are, trying to water it down to the point where it appeals to the largest audience. He really wasn't so seeker-sensitive, a word that we often hear today. He was not looking for just people who were curious.

He wasn't looking for people who were just mildly interested. He wasn't looking for spiritual hobbyists. Jesus was looking for disciples, people who would listen to what he said, and who then would apply and do what he said.

And that's what he's looking for today, people who will obey him and follow him, people who are willing to pay the price and climb a mountain, if need be, in order to hear what he has to say. And so I just want to encourage you. This series is going to take us quite a long time to work our way through the entire three chapters of the Sermon on the Mount.

It's going to take some effort on your part to tune in or to watch it on your DVD player. But it's going to be well worth it. There's other things that you could do, sure.

Our busy lives are calling us in so many different directions. But the person who takes the time and makes the effort to listen to what Jesus has to say is the person who's going to be very, very, very happy indeed. And so by the time that Jesus, his heart was no doubt huffing and puffing, his lungs rather were huffing and puffing, his heart was beating, he finally reached a place in the mountain where he was apparently satisfied that he had left a percentage of the uncommitted and the uninterested behind.

And he sat down. And the scripture says, then his disciples came to him. We don't know how many there were, although it wasn't just like it was the 12 that he chose to be apostles.

It was no doubt hundreds of people. When we come to the end of the Sermon on the Mount, we'll see that it says the crowds were astonished at his teaching. And so there were lots of hungry people, hundreds and thousands of hungry people.

How many people were left in the valley below? That's just a matter of pure speculation, just as it is a matter of speculation as to which mountain Jesus gave this sermon on and how far he had to climb before he stopped and the committed listened to what he had to say. Well, the very next part then of this sermon goes into what we call the Beatitudes. This is where the sermon begins.

And as we'll see as we read through this in our series, Jesus has constant themes that are running throughout this Sermon on the Mount. And one of them is how you can know if you're going to heaven. Well, that ought to be the supreme interest of every single person on the face of this earth, because this life is just a blink in all of eternity.

As we travel around Israel, we come to lots of places where, you know, the ruins of a city that was destroyed over a thousand years ago, and you think to yourself, where are these people now? You know, all the things they were involved in with their lives, their day-to-day lives, what they accomplished, what they were proud of, all the things they worked so hard for, what does that amount to now? You get a real sense of the vanity of the life of the average person traveling in places like this. Well, when we come back after a short break, as we take a side trip, we're going to talk about the Beatitudes and exactly how they apply to our lives and how they can help us know whether or not we are going to be going to heaven or not. Be right back.

Well, I'm standing here on the Mount of Olives, and the scene behind me is the one that is most frequently photographed of the old city of Jerusalem. Directly behind me, across the Kidron Valley, is the Temple Mount and the Eastern Wall. And on top of that Temple Mount, you can see the gold-covered Dome of the Rock, one of the most sacred places in the Muslim faith.

Of course, back in Jesus' day, that Dome of the Rock wasn't there. That's where Herod's Temple stood, and it was torn down. Jesus predicted that would happen right here on the Mount of Olives.

You'll recall that in the Gospels, it's recorded that Jesus was in the Temple, and he told his disciples there wouldn't be one stone left upon another that would not be torn down. And they walked across the Kidron Valley behind me, sat on this mountain, and as they overlooked the Temple, Jesus told them of the events that would lead to its destruction, and the end of the world, and his second coming. We're still looking forward to that on this very mountain.

All right, welcome back. We're going to continue our journey through Matthew chapter five, as we ultimately plan to work our way through chapter six and seven, the entire Sermon on the Mount that Jesus gave on a mountain somewhere where I'm sitting right now, near the Sea of Galilee. It could have been this very mountain itself.

I kind of doubt that, simply because the drop-off from this cliff is so scary, I can't imagine Jesus bringing any crowd up here for the danger that a child might have fallen off. It's a long, long way down there. Well, if you have your Bible, then, take a look at Matthew chapter five and verse number two.

We're going to read through verse number 12, as we show some scenes of some beautiful areas in and around the Sea of Galilee, and you can read along with me. Then, we're going to come back and take these one by one, looking at each individual beatitude, and trying to understand exactly how they apply to our lives. Remember, that in the last segment, I talked about how there's a recurring theme in the Sermon on the Mount.

We're going to point it out again and again. The theme is, how can you know that you're among the people who are going to go to heaven? Of course, that is the most important thing. As I mentioned to you at the close of our last segment, as we travel around Israel and see these ancient ruins, and the people who lived in these cities that no longer exist, we ask ourselves the question, where are they now? What did their lives really amount to? What did they accomplish? The most important thing is to be ready to die, because this life is just a blink in eternity.

As we read through the beatitudes, I want you to look for that theme of how you can know you're going to heaven. It's a little bit disguised here, but you're going to see it, I'm sure, and if you don't, I'm going to point it out to you. Beginning in verse number 2 of Matthew chapter 5, "...and opening his mouth, he began to teach them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you

falsely on account of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you." Well, I hope that you heard throughout those various beatitudes, for example, twice the phrase, "...theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Well, you know, that's nothing less than telling us these are the people who are going to go to heaven, and they're blessed because of that.

Well, over and over again, through these beatitudes, Jesus said, "...blessed are these kinds of people." And you can see, if you add all of the blessings up, they amount to really one big blessing, and that is the blessing of going to heaven one day, to be with God throughout all eternity. And I believe, you know, if Jesus is truly the Son of God, then He knows who are the blessed and who are not the blessed. If Jesus says you are blessed, you're blessed.

If Jesus says you're not blessed, you're not blessed. You can argue all day long with Him. You can argue all day long with me.

It doesn't make any difference. God's Word is what stands. And so, as we look at these beatitudes, we should be asking ourselves, am I among the blessed or not? And if I fall into this category of people who meet these characteristics, well, then I'm among the blessed.

If I don't meet these characteristics, if Jesus is not describing me, well, then I'm not among the blessed. Now, don't, you know, give up in despair, because you can be among the blessed. There's certainly a way.

We'll talk about that. But the first thing is to ask yourself, am I among the blessed? And if you're among the blessed, then you're going to heaven. He said, you know, in the very first beatitude, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

And the last beatitude, blessed are those who have been persecuted, et cetera, et cetera, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. He also said, blessed are the pure in heart, they shall see God. So, very clearly, these are all future blessings.

One of them is they'll inherit the earth. Well, that's coming one day. One day we'll be satisfied, those of us who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Well, I'm not satisfied yet. I'm sure you're not either. And so, that's a future blessing.

So, you can see, there's that recurring theme. You know, how can you know if you're going to heaven? How can you know if you're among the blessed? Well, here's the way to start. And this is the introduction to a sermon.

He's trying to set the stage. He's trying to let people know, here's the most important thing. Here's how you can know if you're among the blessed, those of you that have just climbed up this mountain to listen to me.

Take a look at your life. Am I describing you here in these beatitudes? You know, a lot of people read these beatitudes like people who are not Christians read their horoscopes. You know, they have a certain zodiac symbol based upon when they were born.

And they say, oh, I'm a Virgo. And so, let me look at Virgo's word for today. And they try to find out what's going to happen to them in the future because they're divided into these categories of people.

Well, people look at the beatitudes the same way. They'll say, well, let's see, which one am I? Well, goodness, I'm a pretty merciful person. And so, what's the blessing that I get? Oh, I'm going to receive mercy.

And that's the one that applies to me. And that's the one that I'm going to cut out and put it on my refrigerator door so I can just feel blessed. You know, because I'm a merciful type person.

I want you to throw that idea out. Jesus is not talking about the unique characteristics of different kinds of people who are blessed. Jesus is here talking about the characteristics that are shared by everybody who is in the blessed category who are all going to receive the ultimate blessing of inheriting eternal life.

You can't see them on camera. I'm fighting little tiny fleas here that are biting me on my neck and on my back. So, if you see me scratch, that's the reason why.

Alright, so, now let's go back through these beatitudes. Look at them one by one and ask ourselves the all-important question, is this describing me? And the first one is perhaps the most difficult one of all to fit into, at least as it's stated by Jesus. Verse number 3 says, Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of God.

It seems like a contradiction. You know, I thought people who are spiritually rich are the people who go to heaven. How could being spiritually poor qualify you to be able to say mine is the kingdom of heaven? Jesus one time was speaking about a rich fool who laid up treasure on this earth and who was rich in earthly goods but who was not rich toward God.

And so, he was speaking in terms of spiritual poverty and spiritual wealth. One time Jesus said to one of the churches in Revelation, I know that you are poor but you are rich. So, he was speaking first of all of their material poverty and then of their spiritual wealth.

And so, we are trying to interpret what Jesus said here in light of things he said in other times and wondering how in the world does being poor in spirit somehow or another qualify you or at least characterize you as one of the people who is going to go to heaven. I've thought and thought about that and the only answer that I can come up with is this one. That is, people are blessed when they recognize their spiritual poverty because that's the beginning, the first step of a relationship with God.

The leaders of these people the spiritual leaders all their lives the teachers in the synagogues, the rulers of the synagogues, the scribes and the Pharisees you know, from what we can tell from what Jesus said, they had it all wrong and they were very proud because of their limited keeping of the law, you remember the story that Jesus told of the Pharisee and the tax collector who went into the temple to pray and the Pharisee stood and he was very proud and he said, God I thank you I'm not like other men like that tax collector over there I fast twice a week, I tithe of all I get and these are very minor minor minor things according to the Lord Jesus himself tithing and fasting and so forth and then Jesus said that the tax collector who was a real sinner no doubt was beating his breast unwilling to lift up his face to God and he was saying be merciful to me the sinner and Jesus said truly I say to you this man left that house justified so he was among the blessed and why was he blessed?

Because he recognized his spiritual poverty he realized he was bankrupt before God he was a sinner who needed a savior and when you realize that oh my that's when the blessing starts God's grace has been poured out on you when you humble yourself the scripture says God gives grace to the humble but he

resists the proud and so when a person humbles himself or herself and begins to open their heart just a little bit and say oh I'm a sinner and if I'm ever going to be saved if I'm ever going to be worthy for heaven it's going to have to be because God had grace on me because God had mercy on me and that's a person who's recognizing his or her spiritual poverty and so in light of all the rest of scripture that's the only way I can see this fits in and no doubt that there were people in his

crowd that day who had climbed that mountain because they were feeling that sense of spiritual poverty they might have been going to the synagogue you might be going to the church all your life and you still feel this void on the inside of you and you're thinking something is missing here I still don't have what I'm looking for and I don't have the assurance that I'm going to heaven even though I go to church week by week I think some of these folks in Jesus' crowd were the same way there are always people like that but there is that blessed group amongst those religious people who want to go to heaven who have some sense that there is a God and they can see him in his creation and they're in some sense wanting to have a relationship with him who recognize you know what I don't make the

mark I'm falling far far short of the glory of God because scripture says all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God when you recognize that you are indeed a blessed person because until you get to that point there's no hope for you there's no salvation there's no redemption you know Jesus' death on the cross really is ineffectual and meaningless as far as you're concerned because you don't need it you're getting into heaven on your own good works like a Pharisee you can say I go to church and I give some money and so forth but that's about all you can say no the redemption that Christ wants to work inside of you and in your future is much much much greater than that is and so here's the starting place here's what Jesus says is a blessed person when you recognize you don't have

anything to offer to God you need to fall upon your face and repent and cry out for his mercy that's when the blessings start and so if you haven't done that I encourage you to do that and then join us the next time as we work our way through the next verses of the Sermon on the Mount starting right here with these Beatitudes God bless you thousands of hungry pastors around the world with a vital biblical truth every single year we do that in two ways first of all by pastors conferences they're happening almost every single month somewhere in the world and secondly through the translation and publication and distribution of a 500 page equipping manual called the Disciple Making Minister.

Pastors are just loving this book because it's full of information that helps equip them to be more fruitful for the Lord Jesus Christ. That in a nutshell is the ministry of Shepherd Serve the second division of Heaven's Family is known as Orphan's Tier and through the ministry of Orphan's Tier we are meeting the very pressing needs of over a thousand Christian orphans in over six different developing nations through a sponsorship program that is absolutely wonderful for just \$20 a month you can provide food, clothing, shelter school fees and Christian nurture for a little follower of Christ somewhere in the world hey why don't you check out orphanstier.org there's probably someone waiting there just for you the third and the final division of Heaven's Family is known as I Was Hungry obviously taken from the words of Jesus in Matthew chapter 25 where he warned about the future judgment of the sheep and of the goats.

Through the ministry of I Was Hungry we are meeting the very pressing needs of Christ followers around this world in very poor nations we're helping widows, orphans, lepers refugees, victims of disasters. You can read all of our current projects at IWasHungry.org you can make a real difference if you'd like to get involved in all three of the divisions of Heaven's Family you can invest in what is called the Heaven's Family Mutual Fund it's a great idea, you can read about it at all three of our websites thanks so much,

God bless you

Video: https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/KbSp7_G1qfQ.mp4

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-servant/sermon-on-the-mount-part-1/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net