

Sermon on the Mount - Part 17

by David Servant

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a holy life and trusting God for daily provision in order to inherit the kingdom of heaven.

Duration: 28:30

Scripture: 1 Timothy 6:6

Topics: "Kingdom Living", "Christian Stewardship"

Description

This sermon delves into the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, emphasizing the importance of seeking first God's kingdom and righteousness, warning against greed and the love of money, and highlighting the correlation between holiness and gaining heaven. It stresses the need for contentment with basic necessities, trusting in God's provision, and living a life of simplicity and service to others.

Transcript

Welcome to another beautiful morning here in Galilee, and it's just a few minutes after six o'clock. The sun's just rising over the Sea of Galilee in front of me, and we're just once again full of joy that we're in this beautiful place not far from where Jesus gave the original Sermon on the Mount as we continue our study through the Sermon on the Mount. Our hearts are filled with a little bit of trepidation this morning, and we're glad we're going to be spending some time in the Word of God because war just broke out last night about 100 kilometers north of here on the border with Lebanon.

And so if some helicopters fly over, we'll point that out to you as they go over. All right? If you have your Bible, can you open to Matthew chapter six? And we have just completed the first part of what Jesus taught his disciples about stewardship. And before we continue in chapter six, I want to point out to you once again this recurring theme in the Sermon on the Mount that I've pointed out over and over again, how you can be certain you're going to heaven.

Or another way we could say it is what you must do if you expect to go to heaven, or what you must not do if you expect to stay out of hell. And it started with the Beatitudes in chapter five. Jesus told us who are the blessed people? Who are those who are going to inherit the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven? And who are those who are going to see God? And it's only a certain category of blessed people who are identified by certain characteristics.

So clearly from the beginning, Jesus is telling his disciples how you can be certain you're amongst those who are the blessed or who are not the blessed. Then he continued in chapter five. He said in verse number 20, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

And so there he's setting a standard. You've got to do better than the scribes and Pharisees. There is a correlation between holiness and gaining heaven.

Then he raises the bar more specifically and talks about our personal relationships. And he says if we would allow hatred in our hearts towards our brother, and to the point where we would spew venomous words against a brother and say, you fool, he said you're guilty enough to go into the hell of fire. So there it is again.

He's warning his disciples about the possibility of them ending up in hell. Right after that, he talks about the sin of adultery and specifically lust. And he says, you know, if your right hand caused you to stumble, cut it off.

It's better to enter into life missing a hand than to be cast into hell with both your hands. So again, he's warning his disciples about the possibility of their going to hell if they allow lust to consume them. He then talks about making sure that we tell the truth.

Let your yes be yes and your no be no. And although he never says here that, you know, if you're a liar, you won't make it into heaven, we know that another place in scripture tells us that. I think it's John chapter 21, excuse me, Revelation chapter 21.

All liars will have their place in the lake of fire. And then in chapter six, Jesus begins to talk about our motives for why we do what we do. And he emphasizes three things.

One is when we give alms to the poor, when we pray, and when we fast. And he talks about the hypocrites who do that just to be seen by men. And he says, truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

That means, you know, they're not going to go to heaven because their religiosity, their holiness is just a show. They're doing it to be seen by men. Christ says, don't be like them or if you're like them now, you'll be like them later.

He said, if you practice your righteousness to be seen by men, you have no reward with your father who is in heaven. And so there you see again and again, then in the Lord's prayer, he tells us that we should pray. Father, I ask for your forgiveness, forgive me just as I have forgiven others.

And then Christ warns, if you don't forgive men for their transgressions, neither will your heavenly father forgive you of your transgressions. And if you're, obviously if you're not forgiven by God, then you know, you're not qualified for heaven. Unforgiven people don't get into heaven.

So here's another warning. It's just popping out all over this sermon. It's amazing to me that this is so ignored and that there are so many teachers today who are continually harping on the fact that if you're once saved, you're always saved.

There's nothing you can do to jeopardize your salvation. That disagrees emphatically, completely, totally with what we've repeatedly read Jesus warning his disciples about, amen. And so, you know, I'm going to

stick with Jesus myself.

I believe that as the writer of Hebrews wrote, he said, pursue the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. And Paul emphasized these same things that Jesus emphasized. He said, don't be deceived brethren, fornicators and adulterers.

That's the sexually immoral. And he talks about the thieves and the covetous and the greedy. All these people, the swindlers, they, the unrighteous, they will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Okay. So there's a correlation between heaven and holiness. What's the correlation? We're saved by grace.

That is God gives us an opportunity to repent and be born again and be filled with this Holy Spirit so we can walk in holiness. That's the grace he's showing us. And, and we're saved through faith.

That is when we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, praise God, you know, we begin to follow and obey his commandments because we believe in him. And so faith without works is dead. This is a sermon we could almost say about salvation, couldn't we? It's a sermon to the true disciples so that they can be certain that they're on the narrow road that leads to life.

And Christ is going to talk about that narrow road in his conclusion in the sermon. Okay. So now let's pick up where we left off on our last program in chapter six and verse number 25.

I think in the King James version, it starts with the word therefore. In my version, I'm reading from a version called the new American standard and it says, for this reason, I say to you. And so as someone said, anytime you see the word therefore, stop and ask yourself what it's there for.

And it's always there for this reason, and that is what is about to be said is based upon a foundation that was just laid, what was just said. And so Christ's words in Matthew six, verses 19 through 24, all about stewardship. You can't serve God and mammon, you know, making sure that your heart is not greedy.

And if your heart is greedy, if you have an evil eye, as we talked about last time, then you're full of darkness. And Jesus's words there about not laying up your treasures upon this earth, but laying them up in heaven. All of that is leading then to what he says in this very next section in Matthew chapter six and verse number 25.

So let's begin reading here for a moment and see if we can make sense of this in light of what he has just said. Jesus says, for this reason I say to you, do not be anxious for your life as to what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor for your body as to what you shall put on. Is not life more than food and the body than clothing? Look at the birds of the air.

They do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? And which of you, by being anxious, can add a single cubit to his lifespan? And why are you anxious about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow. They do not toil, nor do they spin.

Yet I say to you that even Solomon in all of his glory did not clothe himself like one of these. But if God sow or raise the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will he not much more do so for you, O men of little faith? Do not be anxious then, saying, what shall we eat, or what

shall we drink, or with what shall we clothe ourselves? For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek, for your heavenly father knows that you need all of these things. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. All right, now you can see very easily how that fits in perfectly into what Christ has been saying, because he told all of his disciples, don't lay up treasures on this earth.

And so if they're going to obey that instruction, that commandment, they're not going to have a lot of stuff lying around, piling up. The man who's piling up all his treasure on the earth is a person whose God is money, who is letting mammon dictate his life's decisions. And so a person who obeys what the Lord says in these commandments, he's not going to be storing up stuff and piling up things in his bank account.

And so he's going to have to have an element of trust, where he trusts God day by day for his daily provision. That's kind of a scary thought to many of us who are so fearful of what's going to happen, not just tomorrow, but what's going to happen next week and next month and next year. And we're saving up and saving up and saving up so that we can make sure that we're ready for anything.

But according to what the Lord says here, we can trust him for, well, as he told us in the Lord's Prayer, we can trust him for our daily bread. Okay? And so that's a level of trust I think that a lot of people haven't even begun to think about yet. And it's totally foreign to so many who profess to be followers of Christ.

Well, Jesus says, I want you to trust in me just like the birds of the air. They're not worried about what's going to happen to them a week from now. They're not worried about tomorrow.

They're only thinking about, well, I need enough food for this day and I'm sure there'll be food there tomorrow. And so the Lord does not want us weighed down with anxiety about all these things. You know, oftentimes when this sermon is preached in wealthy Western countries, it's culturalized for wealthy audiences.

And we're not told what Jesus told us, that is don't worry about tomorrow, what you shall eat and what you shall drink and what you shall put on because none of us are worrying about those things because we are storing up so much treasure, you know? So it's always said, well, don't worry about, you know, what's going to happen when you retire or don't worry about, you know, if you're going to have enough money to, you know, make your mortgage payments and so forth. And, you know, contextually our situation is so different than the situation of the people to whom Christ spoke originally. But I don't think we should ignore the historical context of what Christ was saying right here.

We can trust him to the degree that we don't have to worry about anything at all for those basic provisions that we all depend on because God will take care of us if we seek first his kingdom. Okay? All right. We'll talk about this more in the next segment.

I'll be right back in one minute after this short break. Hey, I'm not far from Laodicea, the lukewarm church of the book of Revelation, and here is an example of an amazing thing. Waters pour out of these mountains and it's full of calcium, leaves deposits, and ancient people took advantage of this by directing the water in certain ways they wanted it to go.

And ultimately, the water flowing, leaving behind its calcium deposit, actually created walls. And this is an excellent example. They could take the water anywhere they wanted it to go.

I took a shower this morning in my hotel just not far from here. They don't have any hot water, they just have the water that comes out of these hills. It's lukewarm.

It's just the right temperature to give you no pleasure. Okay, welcome back. Let's look again at these very important words of the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew chapter six, trying once again to read them within their context and within their historical context as well.

Jesus is told his young disciples, don't worry about what you're going to eat, what you're going to drink, or what you're going to wear. Those are the most fundamental basic necessities that we have, are they not? We need food to keep us going, we need something to drink to keep us alive, and we need some covering. And in climates that are colder climates, we need shelter as well.

You can hardly survive without having a roof over your head to protect you from the rain and the snow. So that's basically all we need. And we talk about, well, what are my needs and what are my wants? From a biblical standpoint, I've just listed our needs.

Nothing else do we actually need. And so we ought to realign our thinking there and recognize that we have so much. I get so tired of some of these TV preachers always telling us how God's going to bring us out of poverty.

And a quote from Deuteronomy chapter eight, say, look, under the curse of the law, look, they were going to suffer poverty, but Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law. And so you can come out of poverty. And of course, it's always tied into send me a donation to help you come out of poverty.

You know, well, first of all, read Deuteronomy chapter 28, the curse of the law, and see if there's anyone you know who's suffering that degree of poverty. Most of the people who are considered, you know, impoverished in wealthy nations like ours are wealthy by the standards of most of the developing, all of the developing world. I've been preaching to thousands of pastors in Nigeria, for example, and I've told them sometimes what it's like to, you know, be living your life in an American prison where you get, you know, three meals a day, you get your own bed, you probably have air conditioning in most cases, you might have your own TV set and so forth.

And it always causes an uproar as I say that I have to actually stop in my sermon and let them joke around with each other because they're always say, I can tell what they're saying. Let's go to the United States and commit a crime. That way when we get thrown in jail and our lives will be better than they are right now, you know, and so people who are on welfare in the United States are wealthy by the world standards.

All we need is food and covering. All right. And notice Jesus said in Matthew 6 and verse number 32, your heavenly father knows that you need all these things.

Okay. So according to Christ, that's our needs. And so if you want to make it clear in your own mind, that's it.

So don't ever say, well, I think I need, you know, a new car. You don't need any car. Now you say, well, in order to get to work, I do.

Yes, I understand that within the context of our lives, but I'm saying to really get it in context of scripture and what really are our needs. I mean, you don't need a job if you have food and covering, right? Right. All

right.

Now this is not the only place this is brought out in scripture, food and covering being our real only, our only real needs is found in other places of scripture. For example, first Timothy chapter six, Paul was writing to Timothy about a false teachers and warning against them and so forth. And he says in verse number three, if anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ with the doctrine or the teaching conforming to godliness, or if he doesn't, it doesn't accept our teaching about holiness and obedience to the Lord's commandments.

What what's the amount to according to Paul, he is conceited. He understands nothing. He has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words out of which arise envy, strife, abuse of language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of depraved mind, listen to this, who suppose that godliness that is, you know, living a godly life is a means of gain.

Now in the context, Paul speaking here, he's talking about purely financial gain. So people are thinking the only reason to do what's right is to get more money. Well, that's believed by many people in our culture today.

Why do they, why are they honest? Because honesty pays. Why don't they, you know, do certain things, you know, in their business practices? It's not because they love God. It's because they're, you know, they know that they're more likely to make money if they apply some godliness in their lives, but that's their motive.

Now look what Paul says, but godliness actually is a means of great gain. Now he obviously is not saying, in contradiction to what he just said, that it's a means of financial gain. He says it's a means of great gain, but he means ultimate gain, he says when accompanied by contentment.

Okay, that's the difference. Godliness is a means of great gain, but it has to be godliness that is a contented godliness, that is not a greedy godliness. Now keep reading.

Verse seven, here's what I wanted to get to. For we brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. That's the teaching of Christ, right? Why lay up treasures on this earth? It's all destined to perish, and you're going to leave it behind when you die.

Now listen to verse eight. If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. So godliness is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment, and the kind of contentment that Paul is talking about is the contentment that says, I'm happy if all I have is food or covering, that's all that I need, I'm satisfied.

But he says, those who are not content with just having food and covering, now look how he defines them in verse number nine. But those who want to get rich, so he's contrasting those people with the people who are content with just having food and covering. Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and the snare, and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.

He's warning about missing out on eternal life, because the love of money leads people to serve money, and they don't serve god, and they prove it by piling up their treasures on this earth, and they're always wanting a bigger pile, they're not content. Now verse 10, and here's one that oftentimes those TV guys often quote, but misquote it. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many a pang.

And so he tells Timothy, flee from these things, you man of God. That's completely the opposite of what some of these guys are telling us, and so many people are listening to them and buying into their lies. Now they're always quick to tell you, well it's not money that's the root of all evil, ha ha ha, it's the love of money, and you can commit that sin and not have any money, ha ha ha.

Quickly trying to put at ease everybody who's piling up treasures on this earth, like themselves, driving their luxury automobiles and living in their mansions and so forth. And so you're saying, well you know, again, they're trying to pan off to us the lie that greed is only an attitude that has nothing to do with what you actually do. But think about how illogical that is, and we all know it's a lie.

If you've got three children, and they're sitting at the kitchen table, and you set down a plate of three cookies, and little Billy grabs all three, while his brother and sister look on like that, what do you say to little Billy? You say, oh now Billy, that's okay if you get all three cookies, just don't let any greed into your heart. No, he's guilty of greed by his actions. Greed is selfishness as it relates to material things.

He's grabbed all three for himself, that shows he's got greed in his heart. And by the same token, our actions show what's in our heart. Jesus told us, where your treasure is, that's where your heart is.

And so these guys who say, you know, the love of money can be committed by those who have nothing. Well yes it could, if they're anxious, and worried, and striving at trying to get more and more. Yes, certainly that's true, but those who are piling up treasures on earth, there's no doubt that their actions reveal you love money, therefore you don't love God, you don't serve God, because Jesus said, it's either one or the other.

If you serve mammon, you're not serving God. If you love God, you can't have a love for money. It's one or the other.

So by piling up treasures, by increasing our goods and so forth, and at the same time obviously we're closing our heart against those who have needs that we could meet. Remember John said in his epistle, and his epistle was all about the same thing, how you can tell if you're going to heaven, and he says, if I have the world's goods, in other words, stuff, and I see my brother in need, and I close my heart against him, how does the love of God abide in me? Well the rhetorical question there is answered with the word, it doesn't, the words it doesn't. It does not abide in you if you close your heart to your brother, when you have this world's goods.

So well, I tithe, but if you still hang on to an abundance, and laying up treasures on this earth, it still proves beyond any shadow of a doubt, you're greedy, you love money, and you're only fooling yourself in thinking that you love God, just as the Pharisees fooled themselves. Okay, so for the love of money is not just an attitude, it is an attitude that is revealed by actions, and so the true disciples of Christ are obeying his commandments, living as simply as possible, scaling down as much as they possibly can, so that they can live simply, so that that enables them to do exactly what Christ said, lay up their treasures in heaven. And of course then, because they trust him, they don't have to pile up treasures on this earth, because they know he's going to take care of their needs all their life.

And to be honest with you, most of them aren't thinking about retirement, they're thinking about how they can serve God, and if they can continually, if they have strength in their bodies, and health in their minds, they can keep on working until the day they die. Maybe not working so hard, but still working to earn an income, so as not to be a burden upon others, so they don't have to be piling up treasures on this earth

now, saving money you know, for a luxurious life in retirement. They can keep, be productive in their retired years, making money, giving money, or devoting more time in some ministry or service to the Lord.

They're not thinking about taking it easy, they're thinking about bearing more and more fruit right until the time they die, so that the last year of their life will be a testimony not to their atheism, but to their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, amen. And finally, they're not worrying, because they trust God, and they know that he's going to take care of them. But again, it's contingent upon those who, you must seek first his kingdom, and his righteousness, and then God will take care of your needs.

In fact, he'll do more than that, he'll bless you so that you have something to give, and to be a blessing, because it's more blessed to give than it is to receive, but before you can give, you've got to first receive something so you have something to give, okay? Thanks so much for joining me, we'll be right back here on our next program in Matthew chapter seven. Until then, keep serving Jesus with all your heart. God bless you.

Hey, there's a whole lot more happening through the ministry of Heaven's Family than just this teaching broadcast. Heaven's Family consists of three divisions, the first of which is Shepherd Serve. And through the ministry of Shepherd Serve, we are literally equipping thousands of hungry pastors around the world with vital biblical truth every single year.

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Thanks so much. God bless you.

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