

# Sermon on the Mount: Introduction

by J. Glyn Owen

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*The Sermon on the Mount is a summary of the Christian faith, boiled down to its essential quintessence by our Lord Jesus Christ, and it provides a clear and concise guide for believers.*

**Duration:** 46:30

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:3-6

**Topics:** "Sermon on the Mount"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding the content and approach of Jesus' teachings. He suggests that the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's Gospel provides a condensed version of the Christian faith, with each word and statement holding significant meaning. The sermon can be divided into four sections: the character of the king's subjects (Beatitudes), the conduct that should mark out the king's subjects (ethical injunctions), and the criteria for distinguishing true and false subjects of the king. The speaker encourages the congregation to memorize the Sermon on the Mount as a source of guidance and ammunition when facing moral and ethical challenges in the world.

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## Transcript

It is good to be back with you again after two weeks absence. I'm sorry I have not been able to be present when some of you have been passing through times of sickness and sorrow, but we have been remembering you and are assured that the grace promised by our Lord Jesus Christ will have been sufficient even in some very dark moments in the lives of some of our of our members. We rejoice that some of you are out of hospital.

You were in hospital when I succumbed to the weakness of the body, and it's good to see some of you here this morning. We trust that the hand of the Lord is very really upon you. Now, I have felt constrained for some time to attempt to expound the Sermon on the Mount.

I have for some reason or other been inhibited, perhaps really, because some years ago I did take a series on the Beatitudes. And you know we preachers are a very proud lot of people, and there are folk in this congregation that seem to forget from, who seem to remember things that were said 10 years ago, and they they tell you about it. Well, I don't know whether it was that or not, but at any rate I felt somewhat constricted.

A number of things have happened recently which have brought me to the point where I feel we simply must do this. I mentioned one thing only. Quite a number of younger people and new Christians have asked some such question as this.

Is there no, is there nothing that we have in Scripture that kind of summarizes the Christian faith? Of course we know the whole of the Word of God, the whole of the Bible is necessary. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable, so we need the whole of Scripture, but is there no summary form? Is there nothing that gives us the quintessence of the Christian faith in a simpler form? And it just dawned on me that that is precisely what we have in the Sermon on the Mount. We have the Christian faith boiled down by our Lord to its essential quintessence.

Every word is meaningful, every statement could be actually a chapter, or if you like a book or a sermon. And more, it is possible for a young Christian who is really concerned to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord, it is possible to memorize these chapters in Matthew's Gospel. There are only three chapters you know, five, six and seven, and there is no reason on earth why every member of Knox Church shouldn't be able to memorize this great Sermon on the Mount.

And if we do, I can assure you, we shall find as we go out into the world and face the problems and moral, ethical issues and other issues that face us out there, this will be to us a kind of well within whence we are supplied with ammunition. Now that's a mixture of metaphors, but whence we are supplied, may be supplied, by the necessary means to deal with the questions that are sometimes very challenging. Now for that reason, therefore, I'm going to begin a new series this morning on this great Sermon on the Hillside, or the Sermon on the Mountainside, or the Sermon on the Mount, I don't care how you choose to refer to it, the one translation is as good as the other.

This morning I'm going to confine myself to an introduction, but I trust it will not be without a word of God. But very often it is necessary for us to see the whole and to have some bird's eye view of the whole before we can appreciate the part. And I think that may very well be true of this remarkable piece of inspired literature, the Sermon on the Mount.

Now unfortunately, of course, not everyone has this high and elevated view of the Sermon on the Mount, and there are some who have used it for ends that I certainly do not have in view. You will remember, for example, following the first, well, you will have read, some of you will not remember, but you will have read how following the First World War, there were many who made the Sermon on the Mount the basis of what used to be called the social gospel. To them the entire Christian message was summed up in these terms.

The gospel was a social gospel. It had very little to do, very little to say about our relationship with God. What really mattered was, how do you behave towards society? And they looked to the Sermon on the Mount as if it were the last word on that, and they saw nothing else in the Sermon.

They very strangely, myopically, glossed over the Beatitudes which come at the beginning of the Sermon, and they chose out such passages as tell us that we should turn the other cheek and love our enemies and one thing and another, and they chose these particular excerpts and built their case upon that. Well, now the Sermon on the Mount is infinitely more than that. Then there have been others who have only seen in the Sermon on the Mount something that in the New Testament matches the giving of the law in the Old Testament through Moses.

When Moses had brought out the children of Israel from Egypt, by the grace and power of God, and they'd come through the Red Sea and come into the wilderness, you remember on Mount Sinai, God gave his law to his redeemed people. And there are those who think of the Sermon on the Mount in purely such terms. They think of it as a legal document.

They see no gospel in it. There is no good news in it at all. It's just a legal document.

Indeed, some of them go much further, and they see analogies which may or may not be meant. In the baptism of the Lord Jesus, they see a picture of Israel crossing through. In the baptism of Jesus in Jordan, they see a reference back to the crossing of the Red Sea by Israel.

In Jesus' temptation in the wilderness, they see something that corresponds to the children of Israel in the desert. And then Jesus goes up to the mountain, the New Testament mountain, and he does exactly what Moses did. So they say.

Well now, I believe there is much more than that in the Sermon on the Mount. It does declare what God's will is concerning various aspects of Christian behavior. And it does so with equal authority to that which underlies the Decalogue, the commandments, the Ten Commandments, and the other commandments of the Old Testament.

But it is infinitely more than that. There is grace in the Sermon on the Mount. The way of salvation is declared in the Sermon on the Mount.

And I challenge any man or woman in all honesty to come with us and look eyeball to eyeball at the teacher teaching us these beatitudes, and not thereby sense the dragnet of the Gospel winning you, wooing you, carrying you in the way of eternal life. But then there are others. I must refer to these two.

There have been certain good Christian people. We refer to them as dispensationalists. Now I know there may be one or two of them here.

There are dispensationalists and dispensationalists. They're not all to be tarred with the same brush. Those who read Scofield's reference Bible and not all of them do.

Now the dispensationalists don't believe that the Sermon on the Mount has got anything to say to the Church. The pure dispensationalist, or should I say the extreme dispensationalist. They believe, you see, that when Jesus came into this world he came to set up a kingdom.

And in that they're right. But he was disappointed. And God's will was so completely frustrated he could not set up his kingdom.

So then, as it were, as a second thought, God is with his back against the wall. He's cornered. He can't do what he wants to do.

Jesus is disappointed. What will he do? Well, he found a church. And the church is an ecclesia, a calling out of people from among the multitudes who reject him.

And so they build the church. And the church comes into existence. Now, say our strong dispensationalists, the Sermon on the Mount only speaks to those who are in the kingdom.

And not until the kingdom has come in its glory will the Sermon on the Mount have anything to do with people. You can put it all on one side. It's got nothing to say to you until the kingdom has come on earth as it is in heaven.

Now, respectfully and humbly, I trust, I violently disagree with that. I want to give you two reasons. And I believe that the two are adequate.

I hope you will. The first reason is this, that there are so many things said in the Sermon on the Mount that cannot apply when God's kingdom has come on earth in all its consummated glory. For example, Jesus tells us in the Sermon on the Mount to love our enemies.

There will be no enemies in the millennium. Satan will be bound and sin will be banished. There will be no enemies.

Jesus tells us in the Sermon on the Mount, if somebody takes away your outer cloak, give to him the outer one also. There will be no such need when the kingdom has come in all its glory. These and a number of other things in the Sermon on the Mount cannot apply to the day, to the time, to the era, when the kingdom of God is consummated on the new earth in which righteousness, as Peter says, makes its home.

The other thing is this, and this to me clinches it. If there were need for a clincher after our first point, all the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, maybe you can find one little point. But let me say, the vast body of the teaching found in the Sermon on the Mount is also found in the epistles.

And in the epistles it is unequivocally addressed to the church, not to a kingdom that is yet to be, but to the church that existed then and was going to continue to exist throughout this church age until Jesus Christ comes again. Now, if the same truths in the codified or brought together in the Sermon on the Mount, they do not apply to the church, but only to the kingdom. I'm sorry, I don't often have to deal with negatives, or I don't often deal with negatives like that, but I think it is necessary.

But I want to add this in order to be fair. In the new version of the Schofield Bible, which has come out, in the foreword there is a change of stance. And what was denied in the older version is now somewhat conceded in the new.

In the old it said, the Sermon on the Mount in its primary application is neither the privilege nor the duty of the church. It's got nothing to do with the church. I have not the statement before me that we find in the new version of the Schofield Bible, but it withdraws that, at least in measure.

Now someone will ask us, or would ask me, all right, you're coming to the Sermon on the Mount, which version are you going to take? Because we find such a difference between the version that we have in Matthew and the version that we have in Luke, for example. We find that the Lord Jesus is alleged to have said something in Matthew, and he says something quite different in Luke. Here's an illustration.

In Matthew, our Lord Jesus Christ says, blessed are the poor in spirit. In Luke, says the cunning critic, Jesus said, blessed are you poor, not poor in spirit, poor, you poor. I'm not going to deal with that this morning.

We'll come to that again. But I believe that the answer is very, very clear, and we don't have to go far for it to find the explanation of it. But there are those who suggest that there are differences here.

Now, I come to the Sermon on the Mount as it is recorded by for this reason. I believe that our Lord Jesus repeated many, many things at different times and in different places. What preacher did you ever hear of who only preached once on a given theme? What prophet in the Old Testament do you know of who only delivered his message once, in one place, in one way? As a matter of fact, of all peoples, the Hebrews, the Jews, believed in the importance of repetition.

And those of you who have studied Hebrew poetry will know that they have a, they have a genre there, they have a classification, a kind of poetry which is referred to as parallelism. And there are many kinds of parallelism, but the point of it is this. Parallelism, simplest, the simplest form of parallelism, is nothing but repetition.

It is saying something in one way and in the next line saying the same thing in different words. For example, just this is purely illustrative, maybe not the best one. I have before me Psalm 38 and verse 1, O Lord do not rebuke me in your anger.

And the next line says, O discipline me in your sole displeasure. Now that's, that's, we would say, tautology, that's repetition. But you see, this was the genius of the Jewish method.

There were no printing presses, there were no books, everything had to be written by hand, and so the Jews were taught to memorize. In order to memorize, things were repeated. And you find that coming into the New Testament, both Paul and Peter stress this.

I find a number of places where both Paul and Peter stress the importance of repetition. Paul, for example, in Philippians chapter 3 and verse 1, he says, it's no trouble for me to write the same things to you again. And what's more, he says, and it is a safeguard for you.

Peter goes further. In 2 Peter 1, beginning with verse 12, he says, so I will remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me, and I will make every effort to see that after my departure, that is after my death, you will always be able to remember these things.

Have you got it? The principle of repetition is in written into the scriptures, and our Lord Jesus is no exception. Sometimes he said something in a given context, he said it again in another context, and there were times when he said it here, addressing a certain people in a certain context, and he said it in a slightly different way to another people in an entirely different context. The glory of the Sermon on the Mount, according to Matthew, is this.

It seems that by the inspiration of the Spirit, Matthew has brought together the whole sermon as it was once delivered in one sitting. Remember the teacher sat as he taught in New Testament times as in the Old Testament, and this sermon was given in one sitting, and it starts, and you can see how it works out according to plan, you can see the thinking of our Lord. It is a most remarkable document, even as a piece of literature, and because I believe it has this quality of wholeness about it, I commend it to every Christian man and woman here this morning, and very especially to those of you who are new in the faith.

Now, a few words further of introduction. Two things I want to say, two main things. One, I want to say a word about the context in which the sermon is placed in Matthew.

Now, this is important, because there are two things in the context that we really need to grasp if we are to get the most out of this sermon. The first is this. The credentials of the teacher have been made very clear in the context.

You see, I want us to see behind the teaching the teacher. I want us to see that the one who is teaching here is none other than the incarnate Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And if there is one thing that has taken place in the context here in Matthew, it is this.

The personality and the authority of the teacher has been made clear. Now, let me expound this as simply as I can and as quickly. If you have your New Testaments with you, I want you to notice, I want to take you back to the genealogy in chapter one.

And I want to point two things from that genealogy. Most of you skipped this, I'm sure. Well, now there are lots of things to be learned from the genealogy.

The first thing that is stressed there concerning Jesus is that according to the flesh he was of the seed of Abraham. Of the seed of Abraham. The first point of the genealogical table begins with Abraham.

Verse two. And the table ends with Jesus who is called Christ in verse 16. The point to note is that Jesus is racially designated as the seed of Abraham.

Second thing. He who by implication, if not in so many words, presents himself as king in this sermon. He presents himself as king announcing the manifesto of his reign or of his kingdom.

He is also the seed of David. According to the genealogy. Now that too is important.

Because you see, Jesus is coming as king. Abraham was not a king. How can Jesus claim kingship? Well, he claims kingship on one basis.

In that he was the seed of David. His kingship is based on other factors also. But he is in the royal line.

Racially he was from the seed of Abraham. Royally he was the seed of David. But the context here goes well beyond that.

Racially a seed of Abraham. Royally that of David. Jesus' pedigree as it is outlined here goes beyond that.

Now look at verse 20 in chapter one. Here we read that he was conceived of the Holy Spirit. Now you say, that's something.

That's something bigger. That's something infinite. Yes, it is indeed something infinite.

It is something exceptional. It is something extraordinary. It is something supernatural.

Here we've moved into a new territory altogether. The teacher was not only a seed of Abraham, he was that. He was not only a seed of David, he was that.

But he was the seed of God. There's something about this person who teaches this sermon that you cannot say about anybody else. He was conceived in the virgin's womb by none other than the third person of the Trinity.

He was unique in his conception. But you know it doesn't even stop there. Because he was conceived of the Holy Spirit, verse 20 in chapter one, then we read he shall be called Emmanuel.

Well why called Emmanuel? Well just read on. Verses 22 and 23. He shall be called Emmanuel because Emmanuel means God with us.

Who then is the teacher of this sermon? Well he's the seed of Abraham. He's the seed of David. But he's more than that.

He's the seed of God. He's God incarnate. He's the great Emmanuel that was to come according to Isaiah 7 14.

Born of a virgin in the fullness of the time. You know that is not the end. Go down to verse 6 of chapter 2 and you will read in quoting from Micah's prophet, we have these words.

You Bethlehem in the land of Judah are by no means least among the rulers of Judah. For out of you will come, now notice, a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel. Who have we here? The seed of Abraham, the seed of David, Emmanuel, God with us.

The promised ruler of his people Israel. Neither is that everything. In chapter 3 and verse 3, John the Baptist tells us that he had been sent to prepare the way of the Lord.

And in another place somebody asks John the Baptist, are you the one that was to come or look we for another? Who are you and who is this person? Oh says John, I am only the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord. That's my task. But you notice the implication of it.

John was preparing the way for who? For the Lord Jehovah. Now this is something which is very significant and very important for us if we are coming in the right spirit to this sermon on the mount. You're not coming to listen to me.

If you do, God will judge you for it or any other preacher. You and I need to see beyond every man in every pulpit here. We need to see none other than the Christ, the seed of Abraham, the seed of David, the great Emmanuel come down among men, the shepherd and ruler of Israel, the Lord.

And therefore as we listen we shall worship. So as far as the context is concerned then, the credentials of the teacher have been made clear. The next thing is this, the subject of his teaching in the context has also been unequivocally declared.

You might have gathered from what has been said, but you know it already I'm sure from the context. Jesus began his preaching when John the Baptist had been put in prison. What was the subject of Jesus' preaching as he began? Exactly the same as that of John the Baptist.

Well what was John the Baptist's subject? The kingdom of heaven has come near. What's the kingdom of heaven? Now this is over simplification and you may very well challenge me on the adequacy of what I'm going to say, but you can't say everything in one sermon. Now what is the kingdom of heaven? It is this, first of all it puts the emphasis upon the fact that God is King.

That's why we chose that first hymn this morning. Rejoice the Lord is King, the kingship of God. Now this is a truth in the Old Testament as much as in the New.

The whole of the Bible thunders at us, God is King. Psalm 103 clinches it and I don't go beyond that this morning, I have no time. Psalm 103 says the Lord has established his throne in the heaven.

Notice this, his kingdom rules over all and the implication is over all other kingdoms. Where is your kingdom? What is your kingdom? A Canadian kingdom? An American kingdom? A Russian kingdom? A Persian kingdom? What are they? Where are they? My friend, over all the kingdoms of the earth God rules, God reigns from beginning to end. And men needed to be reminded of this because God had allowed sin and Satan to intrude into his universe.

And men asked the question, has God lost the reins from his hands? Has something taken him unawares? Has he made a mistake? Has he met his Waterloo? No, no. The whole of the Old Testament thunders at us, the Lord is King. Nevertheless there are many things under God's rule permitted by him which are contrary to his ultimate purposes, including sin, at large in society, in your heart and mine.

Second thing is this, there is a day coming when God will so rule that he will get rid from the universe and from every human life, every vestige of sin and impurity and unrighteousness and whatever displeases his rule. This is the kingdom of God that we await in the future, this is its consummation. When God will rid this entire universe of every conceivable thing that offends him, every man, every woman, every kingdom, every ruler, every subject, and in your heart and mine, my friend, if God is your King and as sure as he is, he will get rid out of your heart every sin, every evil, every perversity, every twist, every evil thought and desire.

And he's pledged to do that. You've got to bargain with that if you're going God's way, because he's pledged to get rid of sin out of the universe. And when at last we come to the new heavens and the new earth, naught will enter the defiles.

Imagine that. Not a thing that defiles. There are some people and they they're just so smutty, they can't speak without bringing some smut into somebody else's mind and thought and imagination.

Naught that defiles ever enters into the new Jerusalem. The wolf will lie down with a lamb. The leopard will lie down with a goat.

The calf and the lion and the yearling together, and a little child will lead them. And that passage ends in Isaiah chapter 11 by saying this, they will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. But now, this is the point here in this context.

When John preached, the kingdom of heaven is near, and lost his head because of it. And when Jesus took up the same theme and began to preach, the kingdom of heaven is arrived and has come near to you. They were both saying this, that God has already taken the first step towards ridding the universe of those things that are inconsistent with his nature and his purpose and his character.

God has come into time to get rid of these things. Now he may take a long time. Not that he needs take a long time, but he may do it.

But he's moved in. And this is what the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ was proving. In this particular context, we read, and Lowe read it for us this morning, we read Jesus went throughout Galilee teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

He has come in, you see, to show that he has power to deal with the effects of sin, with the symptoms of sin, with the consequences of sin in human life. But he has come to do infinitely more than that. On the way to Calvary, he dealt with the symptoms of sin and disease and various other ways.

But on the cross, and it was to the cross that he was going, he was going to deal not with the symptoms, but with sin itself, as a damning thing that takes men to hell and separates them from God forever. Our Lord says the kingdom of heaven, the power of God, the rule of God has broken into time. We've started to deal with things.

And John in his gospel tells us that every miracle he wrought was a sign of that. Bear with me and I'm through. You must have a little patience with me this morning.

I've been silent for two weeks, but I'm not going to be long. But there's something else to say, and I would like you to take this with you for an understanding and an appreciation of this sermon. The content of the sermon in embryo.

It can be divided into four points, I believe, or four sections. And I want to say them because it is very important to see the drift, to see the way our Lord moves. I think as important as the subject he deals with is the way he deals with it.

Now, how does he deal with it? Well, first of all, we have the character that goes to the making of the king's subject. He starts in the Beatitudes verses three to ten. He starts by delineating the kind of character that will characterize his subjects, the subjects of his kingdom and of his rule.

And you see, this is starting at the beginning, of course. There are some people who've believed. I was talking about the social gospel a little earlier on.

They've thought and they believe quite sincerely, but they believe falsely. And all you have to do is to tell people what's right, and people will do it. Educate people.

Now, education is a value. There's no question about that. And the man in the pulpit today is not arguing against the need for further education and enlightenment, not on your life.

But I have learned, my friends, it's not enough to tell people what's right. Haven't you? There is something deep in our nature that goes against what we know to be right. And the things I know and I want to do, sometimes I don't do them.

And the things I know I shouldn't do, these are the very things I delight in. Isn't that true of you? Jesus starts at the beginning and he lays the foundation of his sermon. And the foundation is this.

Look at these Beatitudes. This is the kind of person you've got to be. You need these Beatitudes and their characteristics in your life.

Not one of them, not two of them, not three of them, but all of them. And all of them increasingly as you grow in grace and in the knowledge of your Lord Jesus Christ. You need to be poor in spirit.

Now, not a man without spirit or a woman without any spirit, you know, dead, languid, not caring for everything. Not that, but poor in spirit, humbled. There's no way into the kingdom until you and I come down from our perch of self, well, pride, and come down and see ourselves for what we are in the sight of God.

We've got to start there. And we must learn to mourn for our sins. And we must learn how to be meek, and how to hunger and thirst after righteousness, and how to be merciful toward others, how to be pure in our heart, how to be peacemakers, even though we are persecuted in so doing.

Now, the only point I want to stress this morning is this. That's where Jesus starts, and it's got to stop there. You can't break into the Sermon on the Mountain and turn and love your enemies, unless you come this way.

Unless you've been humbled, and unless you've been remade by the hand of God himself in such a manner that you're a man with a character like this. It is only insofar as you and I have this kind of character that we can turn the other cheek. The natural thing is to fight back.

But God can make us anew. He can make us love our enemies, and pray for those who spitefully use us, and so forth. The second thing is this.

The charge that expresses the ministry of the king's subjects. Character is important in itself, but it is to be employed, to be used by God in a fallen world for a certain purpose. And he tells his disciples, you are the salt of the earth.

You who have a character like that which is delineated in the Beatitudes, you are the light of the world. As the salt of society, you have the capacity to stop the rot of sin from spreading. In a home, in an office, in a school, in a college, anywhere, you have the capacity to be the salt that stops the rot.

More than that, you have the capacity, you have the light to bring into the darkness that can start a new day in the darkest place on earth. Jesus went into Galilee of the nations, the darkest place of his day, and the light of the world shone into the gloom, and men came into the light. And he tells his people exactly the same.

You are the light of the world in all its darkness. Now you see the point? Character. And now you have something for us to do as men and women of this kind of character.

It doesn't end there. Now from chapter 5 verse 17 to chapter 7 and verse 14, we have the conduct that should mark out the king's subjects. Here we have our great ethical injunctions.

Some of them Godward, some of them manward. These should be the characteristics of the king's subjects. And lastly, the criteria which goes to the ultimate manifestation of true and false among those who profess to be subjects of the king.

Matthew 7 verses 15 to 27. There will be a certain test at the last, says Jesus, among those who profess to be my subjects. There will be prophets who will come to you, he says, and I want to warn you beforehand they will be coming like wolves in sheep's clothing.

They're not what they profess to be. By their fruits you will know them. But he says there will be another test, and he uses another metaphor.

He says, it's just like a man building a house. Some people build a house, and they're foolish enough, he says, really, to build a house without any foundation at all. They start building on the sandy soil, and they build, but a storm is coming by and by, and the storm is going to put that house to the test.

And as the rains will come down, he says, and the floods will come up, the house will fall, because it was not founded upon a rock or upon a foundation. On the contrary, there will be those who on that day will find that they have built upon a foundation. And when the rains come, and the floods arise, and the winds blow and beat upon that house, that house will stand because it has been built upon the rock.

What's the rock? Paul says to Jesus, here it is, the rock is to hear these sayings of mine, and do them. You got it? That's the rock. Many will come to me in the last day, and they'll say, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? Didn't we cast out demons in your name? Didn't we do this and that and the other in your name, in your name? And Jesus will say, I don't know who you are.

I've had no intimate relations with you. I don't really recognize you as my own. I don't recognize you as my subjects at all.

You haven't got the character of the Beatitudes. You're not humble. You don't mourn for sin.

You don't hunger and thirst after righteousness. Your heart is not pure. I don't know you.

And they will go away into utter perdition. My friend, there's a great day coming when you and I will have to go through the test. We shall all have to stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

Those of us who have heard the words of this Beatitude will be asked not whether we enjoyed it, or what we thought of the preacher, or what criticism we had of the teaching, but whether we obeyed it. Why is it so important? Because Emmanuel, the Lord God Almighty, in His incarnate state, is the teacher of it in the power of the Holy Spirit. And that word has been inscribed into Scripture and is proclaimed unto you.

I ask you this morning, come to terms with this before we come to the sermon. Acknowledge the Lord Jesus to be the person He is according to the Scriptures, and according to the testimony of the Spirit to Him, and of His people to Him, and of the church to Him. Trust Him as your Savior.

And when you come to this sermon, come having already decided what He says you will do. And I guarantee you this. I guarantee you this.

Your life will be transformed, whether you're a sinner or a saint, whether this morning you're a believer or an unbeliever. You will know something. You will grow as you've never grown before, as you hear the word of God through the lips of His incarnate Son.

And now from the word inspired and written and handed down to us for our profit. However feeble the preacher, it makes very little difference here. The word is so clear.

May the Spirit of God grant us, grant us to learn at His feet, that we may know life in all its glory and the blessedness. I close with this. The Old Testament ended.

Read the last words of the Old Testament. Threatening a curse. That's how the Old Testament ends.

Jesus comes dancing into the New Testament, and the first word that proceeds out of His mouth, and He repeats it eight times over is, Blessed, blessed, blessed, blessed, blessed. I don't want you to be cursed. I want you to be blessed.

I want you to be saved. I want you to be redeemed. I want you to be happy.

I care for you. It's the same God. But now in grace He has come radically to deal with the sin that separates us from Him in time and threatens to separate us from Him in eternity.

Receive me, says Jesus. Receive my teaching. I want you to be happy.

I want you to be blessed. I want you to be blessed indeed. So may it be.

What a wonderful thing. If in every pew we're knocked over these coming days there will be those who will leap into blessedness and come to know what our Lord Jesus is talking about. I'm excited.

I believe it'll happen. Will you pray with me? That there shall be no man or woman who will come and just listen, but that we shall see men and women leaping into life because of the Word and the Spirit of God. Let's pray.

Our Heavenly Father, we ask that You will graciously undertake for us as we come to study Your Word. And may this kind of overview that we've had this morning be such as to give us the key to an understanding of what is to come. Lead us in Your way.

We do need You, our Heavenly Father. Some of us have not professed to know You. Others of us may have professed to know You, but in our hearts we doubt whether it's true.

And others of us are in other conditions of soul and spirit. We want to be taught. We need to be taught.

We come to be taught, and we come to be saved. Oh, lead us by the hand. Oh, gracious God, our Father.

We ask it through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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