

Sermon on the Mount II

by Stephen Kaung

The Sermon on the Mount is a description of the life of our Lord Jesus, and it shows us what it means to live in the Kingdom of the Heavens.

Duration: 1:17:56

Scripture: Matthew 5:3-10, Matthew 5:48

Topics: "Christian Character", "Spiritual Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes that the Sermon on the Mount is not a law, but rather a demonstration of the life that believers have within them. The speaker explains that because believers have a new life in Christ, they are called to live in an extraordinary way, different from the common ways of the world. The sermon highlights the importance of Christian character and rejects the idea that the Sermon on the Mount is solely about Christian ethics. Instead, the speaker asserts that the purpose of the sermon is to show what the life of Christ is like and what it can do for believers. The sermon also emphasizes the concept of light, explaining that believers have the light of life within them and that walking in that light allows for uninterrupted fellowship with God.

Transcript

Will you please turn to Matthew Chapter 5. Matthew Chapter 5. We'll begin with the first verse. But seeing the crowds, he went up into the mountain, and having sat down, his disciples came to him. And having opened his mouth, he taught them, He opened his mouth to teach them, and said, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall find 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 they who are persecuted on account of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens. Blessed are you when they may reproach and persecute you, and say every wicked things against you, lying for my sake. Blessed are you when they may rejoice and exult, for your reward is great in the heavens.

For thus have they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Blessed are you when they may rejoice and exult, for your reward is great in the heavens. For thus have they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

For I say unto you, that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of the heavens. Verse 48 Be ye therefore perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect. May we have a further word of prayer.

Dear Lord, our hearts do bow before Thee. Thou dost love us so much, and Thou dost love us to the end, to the uttermost, for which we are all grateful. As we gathered around Thyself this morning, we pray that Thy love will once again open our hearts.

May Thy love fill our hearts. May Thou open our inner ears that we may see Thee. We may see Thy beauty and Thy glory.

That we may be attracted to Thee. We may open our hearts and allow Thee to fill us. That Thy name may be honored and glorified.

We trust Thy Holy Spirit to open Thy words to us. And lead us into Thy truth. We ask all in the name of our Lord Jesus.

Amen. Thank God for gathering us together again this morning. We are especially thankful to the Lord that He should invite us to His own table.

And once again to taste His love. His love is really sweet. This time our burden is on the so-called Sermon on the Mount.

Here you find our Lord Jesus. He went into the mountain. And His disciples came to Him.

Then He opened His mouth and began to teach them. So the Sermon on the Mount is addressed to the disciples of our Lord Jesus. Even though a great crowd also gathered around Him.

Yet our Lord Jesus addressed Himself only to His disciples. And as a matter of fact, only His disciples are able to hear such words. Thank God we who believe in the Lord Jesus.

We are not only children of God. He has given us His own life to us. But at the same time, we are also being called to be His disciples.

Only His children could be His disciples. Because the learning of our Lord Jesus is an inward thing. It is not an outward imitation.

So without His life within us, if we have His life in us, then we are able to learn of Him. Because this learning is an inward learning. So our Lord Jesus, He opened His mouth and He began to teach His disciples.

We say yesterday that our Lord Jesus is not giving a new law. The Sermon on the Mount is not a new law. That is for people to keep.

Because in a very real sense, there is no one in the universe that can keep the words of the Sermon on the Mount. Of course there is one person. And that is the Lord Himself.

So here you find the Lord is not trying to give a new law for us to keep. Here you find He is trying to show what His life really is. We have already received that life.

And He wants to demonstrate to us what that life can do for you and for me. He is the King of the Kingdom of the Heavens. And He is the personification of that Kingdom.

If you want to know what the Kingdom of the Heavens is, look at the Lord Jesus. Because He is the Kingdom of the Heavens. The Kingdom of the Heavens expresses His life.

What His life really is. So here you find what our Lord is trying to help us. He has already given us His own life.

Now He is trying to show us what that life is able to do. If we live by that life He has given to us, that is the way that you will live. You will live the Kingdom life.

You will live a life of Heaven upon the Earth. So the Sermon of the Mount actually is a description of the life of our Lord Jesus. He has come to this Earth and He has lived it once.

And now He wants every one of us to live in the same way. He is teaching His disciples. He is not trying to condemn us.

He is trying to bring us to the place where all the potentials of the life may be fully realized. He wants to bring us to a place, a position where all the life He can give us can become real. So we are here as His disciples.

Learning from our Master. It is a gradual and progressive process. You will be complete and perfect in one day.

It takes a lifetime for us to learn our Lord Jesus. So let us be encouraged. We may experience many failures.

But thank God through failures we learn. And gradually we come to know what that life really is. Let God be glorified.

Now this morning we would like to go right into the Sermon on the Mount. The Discourse on the Mount begins with the Beatitudes. You will find blessed eight times the Lord says blessed are those.

Maybe you find there are nine times. But usually we call it eight blessings. Because the ninth one and the eighth one are put together.

Now the word blessed in the original Greek means happy. Now who are those who are really happy? Happy are those who are poor in spirit. Now we will find out how very different this is from the world.

In the kingdom of this world. We find happiness in somewhere else. Not in what we have seen described here.

But this is the true happiness. This is a happiness that comes from above. And this is a happiness that is bubbling forth from within.

This is a happiness that is given by God. And when God sees us in this state He is happy. The kingdom of the heavens is totally different from the kingdom of this earth.

What the kingdom of this earth may consider as happy. In the kingdom of the heavens it is sorrow. But what the kingdom of the heavens consider as happy.

The kingdom of the world will not understand it. Because the kingdom of the heavens is totally different from that of the earth. Now in this beatitudes.

You find the emphasis is not on doing. The emphasis is on being. It says blessed are the poor in spirit.

Blessed are those who mourn. Blessed are the meek. So here you find the emphasis is not on doing.

It is on being. That you are a person who is poor in spirit. You are a person who mourn.

You are a person who is meek. So everything here you find the emphasis is on being not on doing. Because in the sight of God being is more important than doing.

In other words what you are is more important for what you do. You do because of what you are. In other words everything comes from within your being.

It is not something that is being put on added upon you. It is something that comes from within. It is the outflow of life.

In other words it is character. When you read the beatitudes. Immediately before you, you see a picture.

You see the picture of our Lord Jesus. Because this is what he is. When he was in earth.

This is what he demonstrates to us. Now brothers and sisters. God has given that very life to each one of us.

And that life has once been demonstrated in the life of our Lord Jesus. And this life has been given to you and to me. And what the Lord is trying to teach us.

Is to let that life live. And if you allow that life to live. You will find the same thing as you find in the beatitudes.

What is important here is Christian character. Now some people take the sermon of the mount as Christian ethics. Especially those liberals in Christianity.

They love the sermon of the mount. They do not care about the other parts of the bible. Because they say the sermon of the mount gives us the Christian ethics.

And it is higher than you can find in the world. And it is a Christian ethics that we should look forward to. And we should try our best to arrive at such high moral standards.

In other words. We are using our natural life. And try to educate it, cultivate it, develop it, improve it.

Until we begin to arrive at such Christian ethics. Now brothers and sisters. Let us remember one thing.

What is Christian character? Christian character is not an improvement of our natural life. It is not trying to beautify our flesh. Christian character is from a new life.

God has given us a new life. And this new life has a new nature. Now if we follow that new nature.

If we cultivate that new nature. Then that nature will develop into a new character. And this alone is Christian character.

Why? Because if you consider the sermon of the mount as Christian ethics. And you try to arrive at it by your own effort. You may achieve something externally.

For instance you may appear to be very humble. I remember when we were young. You know we try to be humble.

So the way we try is we try to bend our body. As if we are very humble. But you know when you bend your body.

Actually your heart you are telling people see how humble I am. So it is hypocritical. It is not real.

It is just something imitating. It is something completely outward. Brothers and sisters.

Sermon of the mount is not Christian ethics. Sermon of the mount is Christian character. It shows the nature of this life.

So brothers and sisters. Let us from the very beginning lay hold of this. It is not something that you try to achieve by your natural strength.

It is returning to the life that is given to you. And allow that life to develop into Christian character. The Lord said blessed are the poor in spirit.

For theirs is the kingdom of the heaven. Now this is so opposite to the concept of the world. In the world you will say blessed are the rich in soul.

Because you can do everything. We say some people are very dynamic. Very charismatic.

Some people they have real power. They are either rich in position. Or rich in wealth.

Or rich in influence. Or rich in learning. And we say now these people are blessed.

Because they will gain. But brothers and sisters. In the kingdom of the heaven.

You find blessed are the poor in spirit. Now what do you mean by poor in spirit? Now poor in spirit doesn't mean poor spirit. Now some people have a very bad spirit.

Now poor in spirit. Now what do you mean by poor in spirit? Look at our Lord Jesus. In Philippians chapter 2. From verse 6 to verse 8. You find that our Lord Jesus being in the form of God.

And he is equal with God. And this is not something that he tries to grasp at. Because he is God.

He is one with God. He is in glory. And yet the Bible tells us.

He emptied himself. Now we have already mentioned before. Of course he cannot empty himself of his deity.

Because that is what he is. But he emptied himself of all the glory and honor that are related to his deity. He emptied himself.

And he took upon himself the form of a bond slave. Instead of the form of God. He took upon himself the form of a bond slave.

And being in the fashion of a man. He humbled himself. He humbled himself.

And he was obedient to the Father. Even to death. And at the death of the cross.

Now brothers and sisters, this is poor in spirit. Actually he is rich. And yet he lay aside his riches.

And to become poor. In order that we may be enriched. This is humility.

This is true humility. Brothers and sisters. The Bible tells us.

God gave grace to the humble. And he rejects the proud. You know naturally we are all proud.

It is only through the dealing of the Lord. He shows us. That in us, that is in our flesh, there is no good.

In our flesh, there is no good. We often think that we have so much good in us. Although I am not perfect, but there is a lot of good in me.

Therefore we often praise ourselves. But brothers and sisters. When the light of God comes upon us.

And he will reduce us to zero. And when we are being reduced to zero. We come to the place of being poor in spirit.

In other words, before God we realize we have nothing. We are nobody. And God is to be our all anymore.

You know humility. Opens the way. For us to be filled.

With the fullness of God. So blessed are the poor in spirit. Because theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.

The kingdom of the heavens belongs to them. So this is the first blessed. And then it is followed by.

Blessed are those who mourn. For they shall be comforted. Now the mourning here.

Is not mourning for yourself. You know naturally. If we are not proud of ourselves.

Then we will develop a kind of self-pity. We feel that we are not as good as other people. And we develop an inferiority complex.

And we begin to pity ourselves. And we become mournful and moody. This is not what is meant here.

Blessed are those who mourn. Why? Because this is what our Lord Jesus is. While he was on earth.

You remember in Isaiah chapter 53 verses 3 and 4. That he is a man of sorrows. Acquainted with grief. And then he says.

He bears our grief. And carries our sorrow. In other words.

He is not sorrowful for himself. He is not having grief for his own reason. But because he is love.

He is full of compassion. So when he looked upon this world. He wept.

Brothers and sisters. Because he loves us so much. He knows that we are not in the right place.

And he is grieved for our sake. That is being mournful. We should not try to pity ourselves.

But we should be filled with the compassion of God. And we should be so sympathetic to God. To the world.

Because of this. You shall be comforted. And then you find it is said here.

Blessed are the meek. For they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are the meek.

For they shall inherit the earth. I remember our Lord said in Matthew 11 verse 29. He said.

Put my yoke upon you. And learn of me. For I am meek and lowly in heart.

And rest in your soul. Our Lord Jesus is the meek one. Now what do you mean by meekness? Meekness means selflessness.

He is selfless. And because he is selfless. He can yield himself completely to God.

There is no opposition within him against God. And he is able to carry out the will of God. And again in Matthew chapter 12.

You find Matthew quoted the words of Isaiah 42. It says. My servant whom I have chosen.

Whom I have anointed. He will not strive. You cannot hear his voice on the street.

Brothers and sisters. This is what our Lord Jesus is. He never strives.

And yet. He gained the earth. You remember Abraham.

And Lot. How Abraham allowed Lot to choose whatever he felt was the best land. Abraham did not strive.

But after Lot left. God said to Abraham. You look at east and west, north and south.

And whatever you can see is yours. Even the part that Lot has chosen. God also gave to Abraham.

He is meek. And because of his meekness. He inherits the earth.

Because of his meekness. He inherits the earth. In other words.

You do not need to strive for yourself. God will give it to you. Blessed are the meek.

Now the meek does not mean that because you are meek. You are weak. The meek does not mean that because you are meek.

You are weak. You need to see that in meekness. There is great power.

Because you have the power of God. God's power is on you. Blessed are those who are hungry and thirst after righteousness.

Because they shall be filled. Some people feel they are very righteous. Now this is being self-righteous.

This is the righteousness of the scribes and of the Pharisees. But if you really seek for true righteousness. You will be filled.

God will fill you with it. In Hebrews chapter one verse nine. Chapter one.

Hebrews chapter one verse nine. Because our Lord loves righteousness more than anyone else. So God has anointed him with joy.

Above all else. When our Lord was on earth. How he seek righteousness.

In everything he did right in the sight of God. And because of that he is filled. So we need to be hungry and thirsty after true righteousness.

We humble ourselves. Realizing that we have no righteousness of our own. But Christ is our righteousness.

And then he says, blessed are the merciful. Because they shall receive mercy. God loves mercy.

And have a feast with the Lord. And the Pharisees began to criticize. That the Lord Jesus should eat with these sinners and publicans.

And our Lord Jesus said. God loves mercy not sacrifice. I come to seek the sick not the well.

So when our Lord was on earth he was so merciful. Now what is mercy? Mercy is showing love and giving grace to those who are undeserved. God has given us mercy.

He has shown so much mercy to us. And should we not also be merciful to others? You remember the parable our Lord Jesus said? One servant of his owed him so much. And when he begged for mercy.

The master had compassion on him. And forgave all his debts. But when he went out from the presence of his master.

He saw a fellow servant. Who owed him only a little bit. And then you find he held on to his neck and said, pay.

And when his fellow servant asked for mercy he wouldn't give it. And he put it into prison. And when the news came to the master.

He called his servant back. And said, I forgive you so much. And yet you do not forgive.

So he is thrown into prison. Because he doesn't show mercy. Brothers and sisters.

We have been forgiven so much. How can we not forgive those who have sinned against us? If we do not forgive. Even our prayers will not be answered.

Mercy glories over judgment. One day when we shall be judged at the judgment seat of Christ. If we have shown mercy to others.

It will glory over judgment. And blessed are the pure in heart. Because they shall see God.

God looks upon the heart. Not upon appearance. What do you mean by pure in heart? Pure in heart is more than having a clean heart.

Pure in heart means there is such purity. In other words, you are not double minded. You have single eye. If your eye is single. Then your whole body is light. If your eye is double.

Then great is the darkness. So brothers and sisters. Our Lord Jesus when he was on earth.

How pure in heart he is. In his heart there is no one but the Father. He does not consider himself.

He only says is it the Father's will. If it is the Father's will. Even if it means death and the death of the cross.

He will accept it. He will drink that cup. Because he is pure in heart.

So he sees God all the time. And those who have the life of the Lord. We will allow that life to grow.

Until all our double mindedness will be cleared up. We have no ulterior motive before God. We love him.

Because of himself. Then we shall see him with such clarity. And blessed are the peacemakers.

Because they shall be called sons of God. Look at our Lord Jesus. He is the Prince of Peace.

He came into this world to bring peace. On the cross. He make peace.

The Jews and the Gentiles. He is the peacemaker. And God wants us to be peacemakers.

To be peacemaker does not mean to compromise. You will find our Lord Jesus never compromises. But he makes peace of man and God.

He makes peace between the Jews and the Gentiles. And we also shall follow his footsteps. Then we show ourselves as the sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. Because this is the way they persecuted the prophets. Our Lord Jesus because of the righteousness of God.

He will not compromise. And how he suffered because of that. And brothers and sisters.

We shall follow his footsteps. The life within us. Will give us the strength to endure and to suffer for righteousness' sake.

Other people may do it. But you cannot. Because you have a life in you.

That righteous life will not allow you to do the same thing as the world is doing. We who are the Lords. We must practice righteousness because God is righteous.

And our Lord Ed one more. He said now if you are being persecuted by the world because of my name. Rejoice and exhort.

Because your reward is great in the heaven. Brothers and sisters. The world rejected our Lord.

And we who follow him. We shall go out of the gate. And to suffer together with him.

To suffer for the name of the Lord. To suffer for righteousness' sake. This is a demonstration of the strength of life.

So here you find at the beginning of the Sermon of the Mount. The Lord give us this beatitude. He show us who he is and what he is.

And he said now you have my life in you. Let that life live out. Let that life live out from you.

Then you are really in the blessed position. So dear brothers and sisters. When we by the grace of God.

By the working of the Holy Spirit. And by the working of the cross in our life. And by faith.

We will inherit our inheritance. And when we begin to demonstrate that kind of Christian character. This is the testimony of the kingdom of the heaven.

We will be as salt. We will be as light. Salt that will prevent corruption.

Even though the world may look down upon us. And yet they do not know that it is the Christians who keep this world from total corruption. It is the Christians who slow down the process of total corruption.

And we Christians serve a purpose in this world. We are keeping this world from total corruption. And we are to be the light of the world.

To shine upon the darkness. To expose what is in darkness. And to show what real light is.

This will become our testimony on this earth. So here you will find that is how the Sermon of the Mount began. It is a blessed life.

Then it is followed by this statement. The Lord said unless your righteousness surpasses the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees. You shall not enter into the kingdom of the heaven.

Unless your righteousness surpasses the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees. Now what is the righteousness of the scribes and of the Pharisees? In a sense, the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees is something that is respected by the world. You know at the time of our Lord Jesus.

The scribes and the Pharisees are as models for the people. Because they have a righteousness. But what is their righteousness? Their righteousness is the righteousness according to the law.

You remember Paul when he was Saul? He said according to the righteousness of the law, I am perfect. The righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees. Is the righteousness of the law.

But it is the righteousness of the letter of the law. In other words, they try to keep every letter of the law. But in keeping the letter of the law, they violate the very spirit of the law.

In the eyes of the world, they are very righteous. And yet, their righteousness is hypocritical. So our Lord said, you scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites.

Because you keep everything external. There is nothing inward within you. And because it is an external righteousness.

It is just a kind of behavior. It is not a character. It is not real.

It is hypocritical. And because of that, you find they become very arrogant. And they become very critical of people.

Such righteousness is harmful instead of helpful. So the Lord said, unless your righteousness surpasses the righteousness of the scribes and of the Pharisees. You cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.

And to explain it. The Lord uses five illustrations. Two illustrations he takes from the Ten Commandments.

Two illustrations he takes from the statues and ordinances. And then one illustration he takes from the tradition of the fathers. And he uses these illustrations to show them.

What is the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees? And what is the righteousness that surpasses the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees? Now without going into details. Just take the principle. And you will find the difference there.

The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees is all outward. It is human effort. And whatever is of human effort, you find all you can reach is the outward correctness.

But there is nothing real within. But the righteousness that exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. You find that it comes from within.

It is of the heart. It is a result of the life. And because of this it is living.

And it is real. That is the difference. So brothers and sisters.

What the Lord is trying to teach us. Is that the Sermon on the Mount is not a law. It is grace.

It comes from within. It is the overflow of a life. It is supernaturally natural.

And because this is supernaturally natural. You find there is no evil in it. And then at the end of chapter 5. Our Lord concludes it with this statement.

Be ye perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect. Why? Because we have such a life within us. How can we live in an ordinary common way? The world, because of the life they have.

They have a manner of life. We have a new life in us. Can we live the same common way as the other people? If that is the case.

Then how can we show that we have another life? With this new life of Christ in us. He expects us to be extraordinary. For a Christian to live an ordinary life is a shame.

To live an ordinary life is a shame. Because having this life in us. God expects us to be extraordinary.

So do not be content. Just say well I am as good as other people. And if you are as good as other people, you are shameful.

Because you should be extraordinary. God is perfect. And he wants his children to be perfect.

But you say how can I be perfect as God is perfect? God is perfectly perfect. Our perfection is relative. Let me use an illustration.

Let me use an illustration. First John chapter 1 verse 7. If you walk in the light as God is in the light. You have fellowship with one another.

God is light. He dwells in light. He is perfect light.

He is a hundred candle light. There is no darkness in him. And there is no turning in him.

That is God. But the Bible says. If you walk in light.

And what is that light? In verse 5 it says God is light. In other words, you who believe in the Lord Jesus. You have the light of life in you.

That life in you is light. It will shine. But when you first believe in the Lord Jesus.

You have that life in you. And that life has a nature of light. And the nature of light is the same nature as God is light.

But you only have one candle light. He is hundred candle light. You have one candle light.

But if you walk in that one candle light. Your fellowship with God will be uninterrupted. The degree of light is a hundred degrees.

But the nature of light is the same. So you find that even though you know all the light. Only little.

You know life only a little. But you walk in the light of life. There is no hindrance between you and God in fellowship.

But as you fellowship with God. Then the blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanses you from all sins. But because of your fellowship with God.

Then your life grow a little bit more. And you begin to see a little bit clearer. You begin to see what is of God, what is not of God.

Things that you have never seen before. Now what do you do? You walk in the two candle light. Then your fellowship with God is uninterrupted.

And then you grow a little bit more. Your life grows a little bit more. You have three candle light.

You see clearer now than before. Now can you still walk in two candle light? Now if you walk in two candle light. Your fellowship with God will have progress.

You need to repent. And the blood of Jesus Christ will cleanse you. Then you follow the three candle light.

And your fellowship with God again is so wonderful. And that's the way we gradually grow in life. So be perfect because God is perfect.

So brothers and sisters, how we praise and thank him. First of all he put his life in us. And gradually that life shines.

He cannot do it all at once. We cannot stand it. We will be dead.

So how lovely he is. How gently he treats us. Gradually as your life begin to grow.

More light is given. And if you follow that light. Then gradually a new character is being built.

By the Holy Spirit you transform from glory to glory. Until you are conformed. That is the kingdom of the heavens.

Shall we pray? Dear Lord we want to thank thee. Because thy kingdom is real. Thy kingdom is an inward reality.

Thy kingdom is of life. And how glorious is that life. We thank thee for dealing with us so gently.

Thou leading us step by step. Until we are conformed to thy image. Lord show mercy again upon us.

Lead us to the place where you are. That we may see thee and we may be like thee. In the name of our Lord Jesus.

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