

# Theirs Is the Kingdom of Heaven

by Stephen Kaung

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of being poor in spirit as a pathway to experiencing the fullness of the Kingdom of Heaven through grace and the work of the Holy Spirit.*

**Duration:** 1:06:15

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:1-3, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 12:31, Matthew 13:1, Matthew 13:11, Matthew 24:42

**Topics:** "Kingdom Of Heaven", "Spiritual Transformation"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the process of transformation and how it is possible for people to become like Jesus. The focus is on our response and responsibility to the grace of God. The speaker highlights the importance of meditating on the Word of God, emphasizing that it is not just a mental exercise but also a matter of the heart. The sermon then delves into the parables in Matthew 13, which illustrate the development of the kingdom of heaven on earth. The parables depict the sowing of the Word, the mixture of true and false believers in Christianity, the corruption of teachings, and the presence of hidden ones who possess the truth and experience of God. The sermon concludes by mentioning the end of the world and the ultimate triumph of God's kingdom.

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## Transcript

Matthew chapter 5 verse 3. Matthew chapter 5 verse 3. Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens. Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens. And Matthew chapter 13 verse 11.

Matthew 13 11. And Jesus answering said to them, his disciples, because to you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens, but to them it is not given. And finally Matthew chapter 24 verse 42.

24 verse 42. Watch therefore for ye know not in what hour your Lord comes. Let us have a word of prayer.

Dear Lord as we continue to worship thee, we want to praise and thank thee knowing that thou who has come into this world and offer thyself as a lamb of God for the sin of the world, that thou has risen from the dead, ascended up on high, and thou are coming back again. We worship thee because thou the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Even though the world does not know thee, and yet Lord by thy grace we who are redeemed, we know that thou art not only our Savior, thou art our King.

Teach us how to serve thee, how to manifest thy kingship in our lives, that we may glorify thee. We commit this time into thy hands and trust thy Holy Spirit to guide us in our meditation. We ask in thy precious name.

Amen. Last last day we meditated together on that verse of our Lord Jesus who said from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of the heavens is to be taken by violence and the violent sees on it. The kingdom of the heavens is a very special term in the scripture.

It is one section in the kingdom of God. For the kingdom of God is from eternity to eternity, and the kingdom of the heavens is that section in the kingdom of God that runs from the first coming of our Lord Jesus, the King of the heavens, into this earth. And it ends with his second coming to set up his kingdom upon the earth.

The kingdom of the heavens has special relationship with us believers, his disciples, the church. So brothers and sisters, it is very very important that we have a clear understanding of what the kingdom of the heavens is, and how much it means to each one of us. It governs our daily life as Christians, and it determines our future destiny.

So it has everything to do with us believers. I feel that we cannot move on to other things until we have a very clear understanding and appreciation of what the kingdom of the heavens is. So this morning I feel that we would like to do some more meditations together.

Not in the sense that I'm preaching and you're listening. That's not the way. I want brothers and sisters to join with me together, meditating on what the kingdom of the heavens is to us.

I pick out three verses, but I do not know whether we can cover them all. But anyway, we know that a gospel according to John is the gospel of the kingdom. In Matthew, I mean Matthew, the gospel of Matthew, is the gospel of the kingdoms.

In Matthew you have a full scope of what the kingdom of the heavens is. This is a special term used by Matthew, and in the book of Matthew you find there are three peaks concerning the kingdom of the heavens. In Matthew chapter 5 to chapter 7, you have the revelation of the nature, the reality, the eternal truth of the kingdom of the heavens.

What the kingdom of heavens really is, that revelation is given in Matthew 5 to 7. And then in Matthew chapter 13, you have the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens, spoken by our Lord in parables. Why? Because it tells us of the development, the history of the kingdom of the heavens as in this world. It is only understood by those who are the disciples of our Lord Jesus.

It is not meant to be understood by the world. The world look at the kingdom of the heavens is a mystery. They cannot understand it.

But we who are the Lord's, we should understand how it is developed through history. And then you find in Matthew chapter 24 and 25, the so-called Olivet Discourse. It is a prophecy our Lord gives as to the coming of the kingdom of the heavens upon this earth.

The public manifestation of that kingdom. So you find in the Gospel of Matthew the whole scope of the kingdom of the heavens. Now in Matthew chapter 5 to chapter 7, the so-called Sermon on the Mount.

Remember that our Lord is not speaking to the multitudes. The Bible says the multitudes come to him, but he speaks to his disciples. The multitudes overhear it, but it is the disciples whom our Lord address this so-called Sermon on the Mount.

The Sermon on the Mount is not a new law. Moses gave the law and people said our Lord Jesus gave a new law. Not at all.

Because no one can keep such words. Our Lord does not expect anyone to be able to keep these words that he speaks in Matthew 5 to 7. The more you try to keep these words, the more you realize it is humanly impossible. So what is the Sermon on the Mount? The Lord is telling us what the kingdom of the heavens really is.

What his kingship really is. How people who are disciples to him take upon themselves the character of the king of the heavens. That is what it is.

In other words, it is grace. It is not law. It is grace.

No one can do it, but grace is well able to transform us into the likeness of our king. And in being that, we be the kingdom of the heavens. That is Matthew 5 to 7. Matthew chapter 5 shows us the product of his grace.

What his grace has done in a people. Matthew 6 tells us the process. How does it work? How does it come about that people like we are can be transformed and turned into like what he is? The process of it.

And Matthew chapter 7 tells us how to possess it. In other words, what is our response? Our responsibility to the grace of God. Now, we are not able to deal in details.

So out of these three chapters, we take out only one verse. And that's the verse we want to meditate together. Now, are you ready for it? You know, I look up at the word meditate.

The word meditate in Greece, in Greek, surprises me. I always think of meditate as a matter of the mind. We use our mind to meditate.

But it surprises me. Why? Because the word meditate in Greek, first of all, means to set your heart on it. To practice it.

It is more than a matter of the mind. It is a matter of the heart. That's the reason why you find in song, it is said, may the word of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to thee.

Meditation is more than using your mind. It is using your heart. Set your heart upon it.

And then you ponder over it. Not with your natural mind, with your renewed mind. And that is meditation.

Our Lord Jesus said, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens. Who does the kingdom of the heavens belong to? Who are the kingdom of the heavens? The kingdom of the heavenly king. What is it? Who are they? Is it blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.

The so-called beatitude actually is a picture of what the king of the heavens is. These beatitudes tell us the character of the king. And that character is to characterize those who are in his kingdom.

Blessed are the poor in spirit. When you hear of the kingdom of the heavens, it probably impresses upon you that it is not a good tidings at all. It seems to be hard, difficult, demands a lot, full of conditions.

You have to struggle for it. The violent takes it. It doesn't sound like a gospel, a glad tidings.

But brothers and sisters, it is a glad tidings. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens. You know, blessed, that word, means happy.

Happy are those poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens. Now, when you hear the message, you may say, well, there is not much happiness in it. It takes away as if your happiness.

It is so difficult, but dear brothers and sisters, this is true happiness. You do not know true joy, true happiness, until you are poor in spirit. And it is a blessed position that we are to be put in.

Naturally, we are all proud people. Do not think that you are humble. When people say, look how humble I am, you know that is an expression of extraordinary pride.

What is sin? How does sin come about? That archangel, Lucifer, began to think of himself. He was created by God in such beauty, so talented, put in the highest place as a cherubim, as a cherub on the throne of God. He was supposed to lead the angels, the angelic host, to worship God, to sing praises unto God.

He was given great power and authority, but instead of being conscious only of God, his creator, he began to look upon himself. How beautiful, how talented, how powerful, what position, what authority. He began to be self-conscious.

The more he was conscious of himself, the prouder he became. The more ambitious he became, he wanted to be equal with God. That is how sin came into the world.

And the same thing happened to mankind. There you find God created Adam and Eve in His image according to His likeness for the glory of God, to obey God, to honor God, to keep His commandment, and yet man began to think of himself. I want to be, I'm over all the creatures, but that's not enough.

I want to be God. Pride, self-conscious, self-importance, self-glory, that is the root of all sins. This is the spirit of the world, of the kingdom of this world.

They respect, they even worship those who are proud, arrogant, with charisma, able to project themselves above other people, ambitious, seeking for themselves. These are the people respected by the world. This is the spirit of the kingdom of this world.

This is how we are. We are born with this pride. We think of ourselves more than anything else.

If you think you are humble, wait until someone says something that you think you don't deserve. Why do you think you don't deserve such criticism? Because you're much better than that. Isn't that pride? Why is it we are hurt when people criticize us? There is pride in our very constitution.

We cannot help it, but the kingdom of the heavens is entirely different, blessed are the poor in spirit. Not haughty spirit, not like the Laodiceans. We are rich, lacking nothing.

We have everything. Now such character, such trait is not earthly. You cannot find it on earth.

It comes from heaven. When the king of the heavens visited this earth, he brought that character to this world. You remember Philippians chapter 2, 5 to 8? He being equal with God, and that is not something to be grasped at.

In other words, that is his right, and yet he emptied himself. He emptied himself of all the glory and honor and worship that are his by right. He cannot empty his deity, because that's what he is.

He is God forever, but he put aside everything connected with deity. He took up the form of a born slave. That is inward feeling, poor in spirit.

And being in the fashion of a man, he was obedient to the Father, even unto death, and that the death of the cross. Poor in spirit. You can only find it in Christ Jesus, the king of the heavens.

You will think of a king as riding on a horse, commanding, demanding, served. But the Lord said, in the kingdom of the heavens it is different. He came to serve, not to be served, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Poor in spirit. That is where you can find it, brothers and sisters. Why is it that poor in spirit is placed first in the beatitude? Of course, when you think of God, probably you will put love in the very first, because God is love.

But here you'll find in the beatitude, it is the poor in spirit that is the first blessing. Why? It is because it concerns us. So far as we are concerned, this is where it must be.

All the other qualities of Christ, that to be impressed and be ours, come after this one quality. Poor in spirit. Only when you are poor in spirit, then all the rest of the blessings will follow.

And that's the reason why it is put as the first blessing. Poor in spirit. How can we do it? We who are naturally proud, even though we have almost nothing.

Brothers and sisters, this is beyond us. We cannot do it. It is the work of God.

The work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, when He works this character of our King into our lives, He works two ways. Positively, He will reveal the glory, the beauty of the King.

You do not know how poor you are until you really see the wealthy. You do not know how ugly you are until you meet the real beauty. Brothers and sisters, we often compare ourselves with other people that we consider as inferior to us.

Why? Why do we compare with superior people? Because of pride. A revelation of the beauty of the Lord reduces our beauty to ashes. You remember Daniel? Daniel is like a perfect person.

Who can compare with Daniel? He was the Prime Minister of the greatest empire at that time in the world. He managed so many things, and yet his enemy could not find any fault to accuse him. And yet, in Daniel chapter 5, chapter 10, when he saw the glory of the Lord, he said, my beauty turned into corruption.

You know the reason why we are not poor in spirit, the reason why we are proud, haughty in spirit, is because we have not seen the Lord. We always compare ourselves with other brothers and sisters. But once the Spirit of God reveals Christ to you, then your beauty turns into corruption.

You will no longer boast of your strength, of your beauty. You will fall down before Him as if dead. Our problem is we see ourselves.

We see others, but we do not see Christ. That's our problem. Who is willing to let go of himself? Who is willing to acknowledge that he is nobody unless you see the One who is? So, brothers and sisters, what we need is to have a revelation, a vision of our Lord Jesus.

That's what we need, because only that can humble us. But then, when the Holy Spirit gets to work, it is more than just revealing to us the beauty of our Lord. It also works in us the work of emptying.

He begins to empty us, empty us of all that we boast of, we consider as our beauty, our strength. He began to apply the cross into our lives. It is a painful process, but it is a necessary one, because it makes room to be filled with Christ.

So, dear brothers and sisters, the working of the cross in our lives is necessary to make room. We are so full of ourselves, we are so full of our opinions, we are so full of our self-seeking, and all these have to go. We have to be reduced in order to increase.

But what is increased is no longer ourselves, it is Christ. So, we say it is the work of the Holy Spirit, but it needs our cooperation. We need to be willing, we need to allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives, and if we are willing, He will do it.

Now, some people may say, if I am reduced, I become nobody. Isn't that very pessimistic, very negative? Where is my personality? True. If you try to reduce yourself and make yourself like poor in spirit, that's what will happen.

You will despise yourself, no self-esteem, no self-respect anymore. I'm nobody, I'm nothing. I'm finished.

If you do it yourself, that's what will happen. But if it is the work of the Holy Spirit, there's a difference. Why? Because, on the one hand, it is true.

It brings you to know yourself in a real way. And when you know yourself in the real way, you despise it. Do you ever despise yourself? If you have never despised yourself, you don't know yourself.

Indeed, under the light of heaven, you despise yourself. You don't want to know Him. And that's what deny means.

Deny yourself. Why do you deny? Because you don't want to know Him. It's a shame.

It is not negative at all. Because Christ, His life, His character begins to build up in you. For the glory of God, not for you.

And when you are brought into that state, you are really happy. You know why you are not happy? Because you have too much of yourself. When you are free from yourself, and Christ, when Christ fills your heart, you are in a blessed position, in a happy mood.

The kingdom of the heavens is yours. So, brothers and sisters, let us meditate on it, meditate more on it, until the Lord's work is done in our life. That's the Sermon on the Mount.

And then you know, our Lord Jesus, in Matthew chapter 13, He moves on. After the Pharisees and the scribes, they blasphemed the Holy Spirit, in chapter 12 of Matthew. Then in chapter 13, our Lord, when He addressed the multitudes, He no longer spoke openly.

He used parables. You know, parable is playing alongside a familiar scene to illustrate something deeper and spiritual sense, meaning. That's a parable.

So, our Lord Jesus began to speak in parables. And when He did that, His disciples came to Him and said, why? Why do you speak in parables and not in plain words? Our Lord said, because the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens is for you to understand, not for the Word. Brothers and sisters, the kingdom of the heavens, so far as the world is concerned, is a mystery.

It's something hidden, it's a secret, unknown, unless it is explained. But to us, to the disciples of our Lord Jesus, He explains to us. He opens our understanding, because such mysteries are supposed to be known to us.

Now, do you know these parables? These parables are very important, because it tells us of the historical development of the kingdom of the heavens upon this earth. But, this is hidden from the world. And yet, our Lord opens it up to us, who are His.

So that we can understand how does it develop. Since the coming of our Lord Jesus, the kingdom of the heavens has been brought down from heaven to earth. And He is gradually building up that kingdom.

And the process is shown us in Matthew 13. These seven parables, or eight, is continuous. It has a continuous character in it.

The first parable is the parable of the sower. The sower is none other than our Lord Jesus Himself. He came into this world to sow the word of the kingdom.

That's the seed. The fields are the heart of man. And when the word of the kingdom of the heavens is sown to the heart, unfortunately, only one of the four is a prepared ground to receive the word.

And with patience began to bear fruit. That's the beginning of the history of the kingdom of the heavens on earth. And then you have the second parable, the wheat and the tares.

In this parable you'll find there's a progression there. The wheat, the seed that the sower has sown, has become the sons of the kingdom of the heavens. In other words, the word of the kingdom of the heavens has been received.

It began to change these people to become sons of the kingdom of the heavens. And they are sown in this world. That's the field.

Everywhere you have the sons of the kingdom of the heavens. And yet, the enemy, without the knowledge of the servants, but of course, the master knew it. In other words, our Lord knew all along.

But his people do not know it. The enemy came and sowed in the same field that is in the world, tares, sons of the wicked one. And they grew together.

But when they grew up, the servants began to realize it. So they came to the Lord and said, who did it? What should we do with it? Should we pull them all out? No, leave them alone. Because if you pull out the

do not, you will pull out the wheat too, because their root began to intertwine.

Wait until the harvest time. Now brothers and sisters, what is this? This is the outward appearance of the kingdom of the heavens on this earth today. It is a picture of Christianity.

It is a picture of Christendom. Wherever the gospel is preached, wherever the influence of the gospel goes, whether it is a hospital, it is a school, or it is something else, you find Christianity began to spread. And in Christianity, you have mixture.

People profess to be Christians, but false, brothers. You cannot pull them out. If you do, you pull everything out.

You have to wait until the harvest time. That is the end of the world. And it is not the work of man, it is the work of the angels.

Our Lord will send his angels to sort them out, burn the weeds, and bring the wheat into the barn. That is the second parable. You see the development here? And then you have the third and fourth, and fifth and sixth.

These two pairs are contrast. The third and fourth tells us the abnormal growth of the outward appearance of the kingdom of the heavens. Because a mustard seed is a small seed, a living.

Our Lord says if you have faith like a mustard seed, you can remove the mountain. Why? Because it is living. But still you find mustard is a vegetable, and yet this mustard seed has grown to be a tree.

Big, huge tree. Abnormal growth. And because of this all the birds came and roosted in it.

Now in the first parable you remember the birds represent the devil. So in this parable it is the same. In other words you find Christianity has outgrown its nature.

It became an abnormal growth. So a big institution in this world. And in the big institution all kinds of evil find its nest.

That's the outward. And the inward is the fourth parable. The woman put the leaven into three measures of wheat.

Three measures of wheat are supposed to be a meal offering to God. But it shouldn't be leavened. But here a leaven is put in.

It blows up. Corrupt teaching. Heresies.

All kinds of teachings corrupted the gospel of Jesus Christ. That you'll find what the outward appearance of the so called kingdom of the heavens is in this world. But thank God they are the fifth and sixth parables.

The treasure and the pearl. These represent and even in this confusion they are still the real thing there. The hidden ones.

Hidden to the world but known to Christ. And for that he gave all to possess it. Brothers and sisters, treasure speaks of the truth.

Pearl speaks of the experience. Of heaven. Or of God.

And that is the reality within. In spite of the abnormal growth, the corruption, within God still has his hidden ones. And then finally the dragnet.

That is the end of the world. Everything will be separated. Dear brothers and sisters, that's the history of the kingdom of the heavens upon this earth.

And our Lord wants us to know it. But to the world it is still a mystery. They don't know it.

And then finally in Matthew chapter 24, 25. Our Lord prophesies how the kingdom of the heavens will eventually be established upon this earth. When the kingdom of this world shall become the kingdom of the Lord and of his Christ.

Oh brothers and sisters, do not think that our Lord is not working. Do not think that the kingdom of the heavens will never be publicly established upon this earth. Though he is in heaven at the right hand of the Father.

But he is not sleeping. He is working. The Bible tells us he is working.

He is opening the seals. He is working to bring his kingdom in. To make the kingdom of this world the kingdom of God and of his Christ.

He is working. We can be assured of that. There will be lots of tribulations.

Lots of conflicts. Because the enemy does not want to give up. But he has no chance.

His end is coming. All the signs given show us it is near. Nearer than you think.

Brothers and sisters, our Lord can come at any moment. All the prophecies before the coming of the Lord have all been fulfilled. There are prophecies that need to be fulfilled.

But these prophecies will be fulfilled at the coming of the Lord, during the coming of the Lord, and after the coming of the Lord. But so far as before the coming of the Lord, all prophecies have been fulfilled. It can happen at any moment.

But we do not know the time. So what is the word of the Lord to us? Watch. Therefore, do not go to sleep.

Do not be complacent. Do not allow the world to take away your heart. Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

Do violent to yourself, that you may seize on it. Be poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens. Be prepared for it.

And if you are ready, at any time, when He suddenly comes, you will be with Him. Brothers and sisters, see how important is the kingdom of the heavens. If we do not live in the kingdom of the heavens today, when the kingdom of the heavens is openly, publicly, universally established upon this earth, where will you be? You will be cast into outer darkness.

That is to say, no part in the kingdom of the heavens. You cannot reign with Christ for a thousand years. You cannot enter into the joy of the Lord.

Gnashing your teeth, regretting for the love of a moment, you sacrifice the glory of a thousand years. That does not mean you are not saved, you are saved. In eternity, you will be in the heavenly Jerusalem, but no part in the kingdom of the heavens during that thousand years.

So brothers and sisters, let's meditate on it. Set your heart upon it, practice it, ponder over it. Do not allow this to just drift away.

It has everything to do with you today and tomorrow. So may the Lord have mercy upon us, knowing that His grace is sufficient. Shall we pray? Dear Lord, we want to thank Thee because Thy heart is for our happiness.

Thou dost desire to bless. O, do remove from us everything that stands in the way of Thy blessing. Bring us into the position that Thou can really bless us with Thy blessing.

And we want to bless Thee. In Thy precious Name.

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