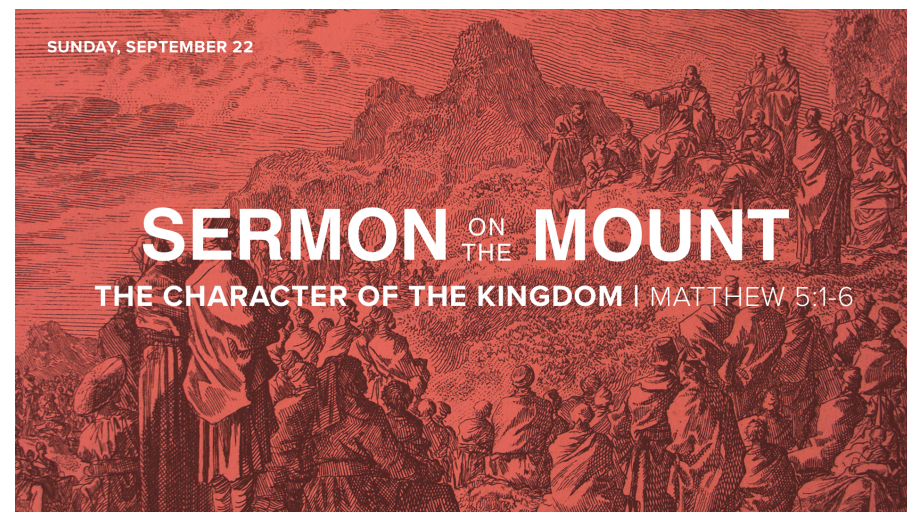


## D. THOSE WHO HUNGER AND THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS (v. 6)

*<sup>6</sup> Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*

The words we translate righteousness have a broad range of meanings. They can describe how we are made right before God or how we live right before God. When we read Paul, he is more often than not, referring to how we are made right before God (justification). When we read Matthew, he is talking about how we live right before God (our pursuit of holiness). To emphasize either at the expense of the other is always dangerous. If our emphasis is exclusively on how we are made right before God, we make living right before God of secondary importance. If our focus is on living right before God, we forget that no one can live right before God until they have been made right by him and live in the power of his Spirit.

1. What do you think it means to hunger and thirst for righteousness?
2. How are we made right with God?
3. Why is it essential that those who have been made right with God live right before God?
4. Why is it essential that we receive righteousness from God before we pursue righteousness before God?
5. What does Jesus promise will happen when we have an intense desire to be made right with God and to live right before God?
6. How is our longing for “righteousness” satisfied?
7. How does it bring lasting satisfaction?



Jesus begins the Sermon on the Mount by describing the heart and the character of the kingdom. He describes the blessing of the kingdom before leading us into the demands of the kingdom. He begins with grace but reminds us that grace always calls us into a more profound love for and devotion to Christ.

The beatitudes describe Jesus' vision of righteousness. They not only describe the heart and character of the kingdom, they also describe the heart and character of the king, and in turn, the heart and character of all who know and follow the king. The beatitudes describe those who live and thrive under the gracious rule of Christ. Those who will indeed experience the blessings of the kingdom.

### TWO VERY DIFFERENT AUDIENCES (vv. 1-2)

*Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, <sup>2</sup> and he began to teach them.*

1. Matthew describes two very different audiences. Who are they?
2. How is the Sermon on the Mount tailored to those who know and follow Jesus (the disciples)?
3. Why would the Sermon be meaningful to those who did not yet know Jesus (the crowds)?

## THE HEART AND CHARACTER OF THE KINGDOM (vv. 3-6)

### A. THE POOR IN SPIRIT (v. 3)

<sup>3</sup>*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

In Luke, Jesus tells his disciples, "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God (Luke 6:20)." A few verses later, he adds, "But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort (Luke 6:24)." While Matthew emphasizes spiritual poverty, Luke emphasizes physical poverty. In the Old Testament, the two go hand in hand. Those who were experiencing material poverty were more likely to look to God rather than relying on their own ingenuity and resources. They were more likely to realize just how much they needed God.

1. How would you describe what it means to be poor in spirit?
2. Why are those in poverty more likely to rely on God?
3. How does our affluence (or pursuit of wealth) pose a genuine threat to our relationship with God?
4. How can those of us who are reasonably affluent cultivate genuine reliance on God?
5. Even though Jesus was "rich in spirit," how did he demonstrate the humility and dependence on God that is characteristic of those who are "poor in spirit?"
6. How would you describe the "kingdom of heaven?"
7. How do we experience the benefits of the kingdom now?

### B. THOSE WHO MOURN (v. 4)

<sup>4</sup>*Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*

Luke, once again, takes us in a slightly different direction. In Luke, we read, "Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh (Luke 6:21)." Then adds, "Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep (Luke 6:25)." Luke has those who are on the fringes of society in mind. Those who are more likely to experience the sting of brokenness. Those who enjoy the world's resources are susceptible to a false sense of comfort that masks the brokenness around them and even more importantly, the brokenness inside them. One of the most moving

scenes in Scripture is where Jesus weeps over the lostness of Jerusalem (Luke 19:41). Those who know Jesus grieve with him.

1. Why is mourning a fitting response to our spiritual poverty?
2. What are some of the things in this world we should mourn?
3. What are some of the things in us we should mourn?
4. How does God comfort us?
5. How should we comfort one another?
6. How will we ultimately be comforted?

### C. THE MEEK (v. 5)

<sup>5</sup>*Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.*

In a spirit of meekness, Jesus invites us into his rest. "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest... for I am gentle and humble in heart... (Matthew 11:28-29)." When we have come to grips with our spiritual poverty and are genuinely grieved by our brokenness, we tend to respond far more graciously to those who are broken around us.

1. How would you describe "meekness?"
2. Why is meekness a fitting response to a growing awareness of our spiritual poverty and being genuinely grieved over our own sin?
3. In the Old Testament, Israel looked forward to the day that she would be restored to her land. The promise of the New Testament goes much further. We are not merely looking forward to Israel's restoration to the land, we are looking forward to earth's restoration to her creator. We will one day inherit a new heaven and a new earth in which sin and brokenness will be vanquished, and we freely enjoy the bounty of God's good creation in undiminished fellowship with him.

How does the promise of "inheriting the earth," bring us consolation and encouragement now?