

THE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPELS
"The Sermon on the Mount" (1)
Matt. 5:1-9

Nov 14, 1982

INTRODUCTION

1. Matthew records the sermon on the mount (Matt. 5-7). Luke has a similar sermon, but indicates it was given in the plains (Luke 6:17-47) and apparently at a different time.
2. Four reasons have been suggested for the sermon:
 - a. To bring conviction of sin to the listeners. However, it appears the sermon is given to His disciples (professing, cf. 7:28). This is not the main concern.
 - b. To inform Christians how to live today. This view misses the historical setting of the passage. Both John and our Lord announced the kingdom promised in the O.T. This concept must be recognized.
 - c. To apply items only to the kingdom age. This gives proper consideration to the context, but does not provide clear understanding for certain items (e.g. prayer for coming kingdom; persecution of righteous).
 - d. To instruct how to live in interim before establishment of the kingdom. The truths thus become applicable to believers (disciples) of all ages. Note: 1) There is special purpose for Jesus' historical audience. 2) There is extension to those disciples beyond the immediate audience (5:10-12).
3. A basic question is raised and answered: Who will be citizens in the kingdom? This is answered enigmatically (arouses curiosity): "Blessed are the poor in spirit." "Blessed" means "happy, fortunate, to be congratulated." The "poor" does not designate physical poverty, but spiritual i.e. dependent for spiritual help. It is absolute and abject destitution before God. To such a person "is" (present tense) the kingdom. The characteristics of this dependent person are given:-

1. HE MOURNS v. 4.

The verb is very strong. It is used of passionate lament for dead loved ones. It connotes someone who is repentant for sin and recognizes his dependence upon God for forgiveness. He knows his life is a spiritual wasteland without true mourning over sin.

2. HE IS MEEK v. 5.

This is a Godward characteristic. It connotes yieldedness as distinct from timidity. It was used in Greek of an animal trained to obey orders. It does not denote weakness, for both Moses and our Lord were meek.

3. HE HUMILS AND THIRSTS FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS v. 6.

This does not mean passive assent nor an indolent person. Here is active pursuit. Regretfully many suffer "the malady or not wanting." Here is true spiritual desire.

4. HE IS MERCIFUL v. 7.

This is the response to someone in misery. It is very close to love and grace. It is a reflection of God's action to the needy.

5. HE IS PURE v. 8.

Here is loyalty to God as the King. What one is in the heart determines one's outlook. It is freedom from all defiling influences on the innerman.

6. HE IS A PEACEMAKER v. 9.

This is a missionary virtue. Carrying God's message of peace to others is in view. Of course peace with God includes peace with men.

THE ABOVE CHARACTERISTICS ARE FOLLOWED BY 6 GLORIOUS REWARDS OR DESCRIPTIONS OF GOD'S KINGDOM ON EARTH:-

1. COMFORT

Repentance brings comfort from guilt.

2. INHERIT

The millennium is obviously in mind in "earth."

3. FILLED

Spiritual satisfaction with God Himself.

4. OBTAIN MERCY

In His kingdom and at His judgment--declaration of righteousness.

5. SEE GOD

This is the enjoyment of eternal life.

6. SONS OF GOD

Here is the experience of God's favor for eternity.

CONCLUSION Doubtless, those who heard our Lord anticipated a powerful millennial kingdom--suffering gone, enemies avenged, and material prosperity. But God's vision saw a kingdom peopled by peaceable, loyal, merciful, humble subjects whose preoccupation is righteousness. His kingdom is based on spiritual values. Do you want His kingdom--His way?