

Just What Is Happiness?

Matthew 5:1-2

¹ *When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him.*

² *He opened His mouth and began to teach them, saying,*

1. Introduction

- THE FIRST THREE chapters of Matthew **take up the Sermon on the Mount**.
 - **Luke also records** the Sermon on the Mount, but **his record is much shorter** than Matthew's record.
 - **Some even believe** that Luke's record of the Sermon on the Mount is a **similar sermon** given at **another time**.
 - The Sermon on the Mount, as recorded in Matthew, is **the crown jewel of all the teaching and preaching of Christ**.
 - Matthew 5, the **first of the three chapters** in Matthew **about the Sermon on the Mount**, can be **divided into five major parts** as follows:
 1. The **Communicating** of the Sermon (Matthew 5:1, 2)
 2. The **Consecration** in the Sermon (Matthew 5:3–12)
 3. The **Comparisons** in the Sermon (Matthew 5:13–16)
 4. The **Corrections** in the Sermon (Matthew 5:17–20)
 5. The **Contrasts** in the Sermon (Matthew 5:21–48)
- **The dazzling crown** of the Sermon on the Mount is the first part which is commonly **known as the "Beatitudes."**
 - These beatitudes **speak of consecrated living**.
 - **Some list** the number of **beatitudes as eight**, others as **nine**—
 - **depending on whether one counts all the "blessed" words or combines the persecution beatitude into one.**
 - We're **going to list the beatitudes as nine**, for we have divided the **persecution beatitude** into the **two parts**.

A. Blessed = Happy

- It is **important to note** that the word "**blessed**," which is **the hallmark of the beatitudes**, **means happiness**.
- In its **use in the Sermon** on the Mount, it is **not "happy" in the sense of happenstance or luck or chance**; but "**happy**" in the sense of the **highest form of happiness, joy, and blessing that one can have**.
- It is happiness as a **result of the inward spiritual condition** of man, **not the outward material or physical condition**.
- **The word translated "blessed" in the Sermon on the Mount is, in fact, translated "happy" in five other passages in the KJV.**

- While the **meaning of the word can involve** material prosperity, **here in the context** of the sermon it **obviously involves spiritual prosperity**, something **far greater** than mere material prosperity.
- It is **also important** to note that the word “beatitude” which is **not found** in the Bible, is **simply a synonym for “blessed.”**
 - It **can be said** that the beatitudes are **attitudes that should be in us**, if we are to be **consecrated** to the Lord.
 - Christ’s exhortation in the Sermon on the Mount is that we should be in these attitudes.

B. Where Does Happiness Come From?

- We’re looking at **Matthew chapter 5**.
 - Obviously, it’s **going to take us some time** to get through all of this.
 - The Sermon on the Mount **takes up chapter 5, chapter 6 and chapter 7**.
 - And I believe that **all of this was delivered by our Lord as one sermon**, at one particular time.
 - And, of course, these truths **were again and again taught by him at different points**, at **different intervals in different locations**.
 - But there is a **tremendous strength** and power to putting this all together as **one great sermon**.
 - And we’re going to take a **long time to study these revolutionary truths**, these truths that **hit the world like some kind of a bomb** that **exploded on the minds** of those who heard them.
- But let me **begin our discussion of this wonderful section** - a discussion which, no doubt, will range over many months to come - **with this statement**.
 - **Jesus is in the business of providing** people with happiness.
 - And that’s why we’ve entitled this opening message “**What Exactly is Happiness ...**”
 - Sadly, **not everybody really understands** that, not everybody **really believes that**.
 - In fact, there are **many Christians who aren’t too sure** that they **really experience** the reality of true happiness.
 - But **Jesus is in the happiness business**.
 - Happiness is **His concern**.
- Now this is **very evident to us because here**,
 - ...in the **very first sermon ever recorded** as having been **preached by Jesus Christ**,
 - ...**as we enter** into the gospels the first time we **meet a sermon of our Lord**,
 - ...it is a **sermon that begins with the constant ringing theme of happiness**.
- If you’ll notice in verse 1 and following, you’ll see the word “blessed” used **9 times**.

- The word **simply means “happiness” or “happy”** and we may read these that way.

“And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain and when he was seated, his disciples came unto him and he opened his mouth and taught them saying, ‘Happy are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Happy are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Happy are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Happy are they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

“Happy are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Happy are the pure of heart, for they shall see God. Happy are the peacemakers, for they shall be called “the sons of God.” Happy are they who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Happy are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted the prophets who were before you.’ ”

- **Nine times we see the word “blessed,” the word “happy.”**
 - And I say it again, the Lord is **in the happiness business.**
 - The Lord is **in the business of giving men and women blessing.**
 - The ultimate **end of it all in verse 12** is that these **points of happiness should result in** rejoicing and exceeding gladness.
 - And so I say it **again**, God is **in the business of making our lives full** of joy, **full** of gladness, **full** of happiness.

C. Only the Introduction of the Entire Sermon

- Now this is **only the introduction** to the sermon.
 - **Having stated that basic goal of His teaching to bring about true happiness -**
 - and I’m **not talking about the world’s happiness** based upon happenstance or circumstance.
- We’ll **get into** that in detail **as we go.**
 - But **true happiness is the goal.** and like any good preacher he **states his objective at the beginning.**
- **The very beginning** of the Sermon on the Mount **tells you**
 - the **whole point** of the Sermon on the Mount,
 - and that is that **we should know real blessedness,**
 - **real happiness, real joy, real gladness, genuine divine reward.**
- And then **from there on**, he **goes to talk about how** it is that this becomes possible,
 - what kind of life style it is that produces this kind of happiness.
 - That becomes the running theme through chapter 5, chapter 6, and chapter 7.

D. Securing the Basics

- Now we have to get the basics before we can understand this absolutely fantastic sermon,
 - I think the greatest single sermon ever preached.
- We have to get the foundation.
 - So this morning we're just going to lay some ground work and we're going to give you a little bit of a teaching approach to it rather than a preaching approach, but you've got to get a grip on these basics so that the rest will be meaningful to you.

1. First of all, I want to set for you the context.

- I want to give you a little bit of a backdrop, a little bit of background.
 - I want to frame it a little bit if I can,
 - so that you'll understand the significance of these words to the people at the point in time, at this juncture biblically.
 - It all needs to fit together.
 - We need to understand context a little bit.

a. First of all – and there are several contexts to look at.

1) First of all, we have to get a biblical context.

- By that I mean a **biblical background**.
 - **Where** are we **in the Bible**?
 - **Where** are we **in the flow** of God's revelation?
 - **Where** are we **in God's plan of revealing his truth** to man?
 - Well, this is a **new point** in the **history** of God's **dealings with men**.
 - This is a **dramatic change**.
 - This is an **incredible transformation**.
- Just to **show you** what I mean, I want you to look at the **very last message of the Old Testament**.
 - The **very last message** is in **Malachi 4:6**.
 - This is **the way the Old Testament ends**.
 - This is **what it says**.
 - **Malachi**, the **last** book and the **last** verse of the **last** chapter.

“And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers - ”

- **now listen** to this,

“ - Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”

- How **interesting**.
 - The Old Testament **ends with a curse**.
 - The **New Testament begins** with a **blessing**.
 - Now that's **a dramatic change**.
- The **last words of the man of God**, *“a curse.”*

- That's the **last words**. "A curse."
- The **first words** of the Man of God, the living Christ, "**Blessed**."
 - Blessed. **Blessing and cursing**.
- The **Old Testament**:
 - The law, Sinai, thunder, lightning, judgment, cursing.
 - The New Testament: Zion, grace, peace, blessing.
 - A **dramatic** change.
 - The word "**blessed**," *makarios*, in fact, that's **a common name for people who are Greek**.
- You may remember the **Bishop Makarios** of the Greek Orthodox Church.
 - *Makarios* is **an adjective that simply, basically means** "happy" or "blissful."
 - That's **really what it means**.

2) Expanding the New Message

- But I want to **expand that a little bit** so you'll **understand the significance** of this new message.
 - The word **basically comes from a root *makar***, that root means "**to be happy**," **real happiness**.
 - **Not in the world's sense of happiness based upon** positive circumstance.
- Both **Homer and Hesiod spoke of the Greek gods as being** -
 - Now **note this** because this is a **very important point** -
 - They spoke of the **Greek gods as being blessed in themselves** and they said it was a state **unaffected by the world of men who were subject to poverty**,
 - To **weakness and death**.
- In other words, the **ancient Greek** concept of *makar* and *makarios* is the idea of **a kind of happiness**,
 - and a **kind of blissfulness**, and
 - a **kind of contentedness**, and
 - a **kind of blessedness** that is **unaffected by circumstance**.
- That's **really what they were saying**.
- The word, then, **has the idea of**
 - an **inward bliss**,
 - an inward **happiness** which is
 - **neither** the result of circumstance
 - **nor** **subject to change on the basis of** circumstance.
 - **This is the basic New Testament meaning of "blessed."**
 - It means **an inner peace**,
 - an inner **bliss**,
 - an inner **happiness**,
 - an inward **joy**
 - that is **not produced by circumstance**

- nor is it affected by **circumstance**.
- It is a state of happiness,
 - a state of wellbeing in which God desires his children to live.
- Now let me take it a step further.
 - 3) It is a word that indicates character.
 - It is a word that talks about character.
 - It is touching man at the very base of his existence.
 - It is a character word.
 - And the reason I say that is **because it is used to describe God**.
 - For example, we find many times in the Bible the statement, "Blessed be God."
 - For one, **Psalm 68:35** says that. "*Blessed be God.*"
 - **Psalm 72:18** says, "*Blessed be the Lord God.*"
 - **Psalm 119:12** said, "*Blessed art Thou O Lord.*"
 - **First Timothy 1:11** says, "*The blessed God.*"
 - In other words, whatever... - now get this - ...**whatever this state is**,
 - ...it is **true of God**.
 - Do you understand what I am saying?
 - **Whatever it is**, it is **true of God**.
 - **Whatever it is** to be blessed and blessed, **it is true of God**.
- Now since this word is used of God - and by the way it is also used of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- It says in **1 Timothy 6:15**,

"The Lord Jesus Christ who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords."

- So this blessedness is a character which is true of God, a character aspect which is true of God and of Christ.
- Now that makes it something we need to take a step further.
- If whatever this blessedness is, it is true of God and it is true of Christ - now watch this -
 - ...then the only people who will ever experience it are **those who partake of God and partake of Christ**.
 - Okay?
 - There is no blessedness apart from that.
 - But Peter tells us in **2 Peter 1:4** that we who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ - watch this - are "partakers of the divine nature."
 - Right?
 - We are partakers of the divine nature.
- 2. *The upshot of that as applied here is that we can know*
 - the same bliss,
 - the same inner state of contentment,

- the **same happiness deep down within us**
 - **that is known by God** and the Lord Jesus Christ themselves.
- What **a marvelous thing that is to realize.**
 - **Makarios then, is fundamentally an element of the character of God.**
 - And man will only know that element insofar as he is a partaker of the divine nature.
- So - watch - **from the very beginning it is established,**
 - ...**the Sermon** on the Mount has nothing to say and nothing to offer to someone apart from faith in Jesus Christ.
 - That's **basic.**
 - But **for those of us who know and love** the Lord Jesus Christ,
 - for those of us **who by faith in Christ have become partakers** of the divine nature,
 - the **same** bliss,
 - the **same** contentment,
 - the **same** happiness,
 - the **same** sense of blessedness that is known by God of Himself and
 - Christ of Himself **can be known by us of ourselves.**

3. *It's a tremendous thought.*

- **Once** a person knows God through Christ, blessedness **becomes available to him or to her.**
 - So **to begin with** - note this, people -
 - that **when we talk about happiness,**
 - **OR** we talk about blessedness,
 - it is in a biblical context and
 - it is **not talking about a superficial attitude** based on circumstance,
 - it is **talking about an inward attitude based upon the very indwelling** of the character of God Himself.
- So we **see, then, that this is a tremendous thing that God is saying.**
 - That whereas **the old covenant ends with a curse,**
 - the **new one ends with the potential of** the very character and nature of God **indwelling the believer**
 - **so that there would be a blessedness** that is **only true** of God Himself.
 - **I don't know if you get a hold of that.**
 - That is an **absolutely mindboggling** thought,
 - ...that **you and I could be such partakers** of the divine nature as to **know the very bliss** that the eternal God **knows in his own mind.**

- That's **the kind of contentment God wants for us.**

4. *The Old Testament is **the book of Adam,***

- and **Adam and his story** are the **story of the Old Testament.**
 - It's kind of a **sad story.**
- The **first king in the earth was Adam**
 - and it was **said by God to Adam** that he had **dominion over the earth.**
 - He was the **first monarch,**
 - but he **fell and since he fell** the Old Testament **had to end with a curse.**
 - But **in the New Testament** there's a **new king** and
 - that's **why Matthew starts** the New Testament,
 - because **he is the one who presents the King.**

5. *The **King is immediately presented.***

- The **last Adam,**
 - the **second Adam,**
 - the **greater than Adam,** and
 - He is **a King who does not fall.**
- The **first king fell** and **left a curse.**
 - The **second King reigns and leaves a blessing.**
- **One writer** put it this way,

“The first Adam was tested in a beautiful garden and failed. The last Adam was tested in a dangerous desert and succeeded. Because the first Adam was a thief he was cast out of paradise but the last Adam turned to a thief on a cross and said, ‘Today, shalt thou be with Me in paradise.’ The book of the generations of the first Adam ends with a curse. The book of the generations of Jesus Christ ends with a promise, ‘There shall be no more curse.’ ”

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- That's **how Revelation ends.**
 - **So the Old Testament gave us a law** to show man **in his misery** and
 - the **New Testament gives us life** to show man **in his bliss.**
 - **Big difference.**
 - So Matthew **introduces to us immediately** - as we have studied once and again - **immediately introduces us to the new king,** doesn't he?
 - **Fantastic new reality dawns** upon human history.
 - There is a **new king.**
 - There is **one who can reverse the terrible curse** of Adam.
 - And **immediately as we hit** the New Testament **we face Matthew's presentation of the king.**

- And we have **already studied the ancestry** of the king,
- and we studied **the arrival** of the king,
- and we've studied **the adoration** of the King,
- and we've studied **the prophetic anticipation** of the King,
- and we've studied **the announcer of the King**, John the Baptist,
- and the **affirmation of the King**,
- and the **advantage of the king as He won** in his temptation,
- and **the activity of the king**.
- And **now we come to the address of the king**,
- the **manifesto of the monarch himself**.
- The Sermon on the Mount is **the great statement of the king**
 - as he **opens his mouth** and gives blessing instead of cursing **to those who desire it**.
 - **That's the general biblical context** in which this sermon is delivered -
 - a **new age**, a **new king**, a **new message**.
- But there is **also the fact that**
 - **as you look at** the beatitudes as this blessed message is given **it seems somewhat paradoxical**.
 - And Matthew is **presenting a kingdom that**
 - **doesn't really fit what most people would have anticipated**.
 - You see, **happiness as Matthew outlines it here** in the words of Jesus
 - **isn't exactly the way** the world would do it.
 - In fact, it **says here that the happy people are**
 - the **poor** in spirit,
 - the **mourners**,
 - the **meek**,
 - the **hungry** and the **thirsty**,
 - the **merciful**,
 - the **pure in heart**,
 - the **peacemakers**,
 - the **persecuted**,
 - the **reviled**.
- Now you say, "**Wait a minute**.
 - I'm **not sure I want that kind** of happiness.
 - **Sounds like misery with another name**.
 - You've **got to be kidding**."
 - Well, **that's the point**.
 - **There is a paradox** because all the way down **connected to happiness is misery**.
 - And I'm going to **say it right here** and you're **going to see it as we go**.

- **Misery is the key** to happiness.
- You say, “**Now, wait a minute. Misery is the key** to happiness?”
 - That’s **right**.
 - We’ll **see that as we go in detail**.
- But to most people, the **whole thing seems absolutely absurd**.
 - **One** writer said this.

“It is as if Jesus crept into the large display window of life and changed all the price tags.”

- It’s **all backwards**.
- What do you mean happiness **comes out of misery**?
- What are you saying?
- Why the world says,

“Man, look, happiness is – we’ve got books on that. Happiness is duh, dut, duh, duh. You know, we work on that a lot.”

- Happiness is **the gogetter**,
 - the **guy who can push** everybody out of his way and
 - the **guy who can get** what he wants,
 - **when he wants, where he wants and how he wants**.
 - **That’s happiness**.
- Happiness is **macho**.
 - Happiness is **doing your own thing**.
 - Happiness is **grabbing all the gusto** you can get.
- **That’s happiness**.
 - Happiness is **acquiring the world's things**.
 - Happy are **the rich**, and
 - happy are **the noble**, and
 - happy are **the famous**, and
 - happy are **the popular**.
- But **that isn’t it**.
 - The message from this king **doesn’t really fit the picture**.
- And Matthew is **so dynamic in such** a presentation
 - because **his message just devastates** worldly attitudes,
 - even of the Jewish people themselves who would have **read Matthew first of all**.
- Even Seneca, the Roman philosopher, tutor of Nero in the first century **said this**.

“What is more shameful than to equate the rational souls’ good with that which is irrational?”

- **What he was saying** was any fool **knows you can't** fill up a man's empty soul **with external things**.
- You **can't fill a rational need** with an irrational object.
- That's what the **world tries to do**.
- Jesus **comes into the world to announce** that the tree of happiness **doesn't grow in** the cursed earth.
 - Have to tell you that, folks, **the tree of happiness doesn't grow in the cursed earth**.
 - But **so many seek it**.
 - Think about **Solomon**.
 - Solomon was **the most magnificent king that ever lived**.
 - If **anybody should have been happy** according to the world's standard, **he should**.
 - He had **nobility**.
 - Listen, **his parentage** was the royal **line of David** through which the **Messiah would come**,
 - the most **royal, noble line** in the **history** of the world.
 - There was **nobody with more** nobility than Solomon.
- His **palace** was the **paragon of the earth** and it was **located in the city**, the city **of God**, the city of **Jerusalem**.
 - His wealth was so immeasurable and his **treasure was so vast** that the Old Testament says **silver was as common as rocks**.
 - His **pleasure was fabulous food, incredible stables**.
 - I've **seen pictures of Solomon's stable** up in Megiddo, it's incredible -
 - **Room for literally thousands** of the finest horses that could be found in the world.
- He had the **buildings**,
 - and the **servants**,
 - and the **vineyards**,
 - and the **fishponds**,
 - and the **gardens**.
- **Women?**
 - By **the hundreds**.
- His **intelligence?**
 - Why, he was **the most intelligent man who ever lived**.
 - He **had it all**.
- In the **world's evaluation**, he **had it all**.
 - He **should have been an infinitely happy man** and **all he had to say about it is this**.

"Vanity, vanity all is vanity."

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- The word means **"emptiness"**.
 - And the New Testament **put it this way**.

*“A man’s life consists **not in the abundance** of things which he possesses.”*

- Listen,
 - if you’re **looking for happiness in the world’s goods**,
 - you’re **in the wrong place**.
 - The **tree of happiness doesn’t grow** in the cursed earth.
 - It’s **not there**.
 - **Physical things don’t touch** the soul.
 - Did you **get that**?
 - It’s a **simple point** but I want you to **think it through**.
 - **Physical things don’t touch the soul**.
 - You **cannot fill a spiritual need with** a physical substance.
 - It **can’t be done**.
 - **But people try** to do it.
 - You know, I mean if you’re **really miserable in your marriage**, go **buy a new car**.
 - Or if you **had a rotten argument** with your wife, go out and **buy a new suit**.
 - You’ll **feel better**.
 - **Right!!!**
 - You **cannot fill a spiritual need with** a physical substance.
 - That’s **foolish**.
 - You **can’t do the other**, either.
 - **When you’re hungry** you **don’t want a lecture on grace**.
 - You want your dinner.
 - And when you’re **out on the desert** and you’re **dying of thirst** you **don’t want somebody to talk to you about the wonderful mercy of God**.
 - You want water.
 - You **cannot fill a physical need with** a spiritual substance.
 - It’s **just as ridiculous to think** you can fill a spiritual need **with a physical substance**.
 - It **can’t be done**.
 - And yet there are **tons of so-called Preachers who are seeking to do that very thing**.
 - They seek to offer any manner of **physical and worldly things** and call it **spiritual enrichment**, doing so **in what they call God’s Name**.
 - But that it **futile at best**
- It is **Abomination in reality**.
- **Things which cannot quiet the heart in a storm cannot provide any kind** of blessedness.

- You **can't pour oil on** a wounded spirit.
- I **think about Saul** when he was **sore distressed**,
- **All the jewels** in his crown **couldn't do anything to comfort** him.
- I **think about king Belshazzar** in the book of Daniel,
 - he was **carousing**, and **drinking**, and **living it up**,
 - and they were **having a wild party like few in the history** of any nation,
 - and **all of a sudden while** he was there **Daniel 5:3**

³ *Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken from the temple of the house of God which had been in Jerusalem; and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them.*

- says he was **drinking** wine in the **golden vessels of the temple** and
- he was **really draining it down** and everybody's cup was **gold**
- and then a **figure of a man's hand** appeared on the wall and **wrote Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin,**

"You are weighed in the balances and found wanting."

- And all of a sudden **the Bible says his countenance changed**.
 - And you **know what happened?**
 - The **wine went sour** and the **food was like a rock** in his stomach.
- **One of the great Puritan saints** who has written wondrous things that really touch the heart of anyone who is a student of the Bible is
 - a man named **Thomas Watson**, and Thomas Watson said this.

"Things of this world will no more keep out trouble of spirit than a piece of paper will stop a bullet. Worldly delights are winged,"

- he **says**.

"They may be compared to a flock of birds in the garden that stay a little while but when you come near to them they take their flight. 'So riches make themselves wings and they fly away as an eagle,' Proverbs 23:5 says. They are like the meteor that blazes but spends and annihilates itself, they're like a castle made of snow lying under the torrid beams of the sun."

- External things **do more to discomfort the soul than to bless it**.
- **Ecclesiasties 5:13** says,

"Riches are kept for the hurt of their owners."

- Did you **get that?**

"Riches are kept for the hurt of their owners."

- There's **no satisfaction in** what the world offers, and **when Jesus came into the world** - listen to me, people -
 - ...he **wasn't offering the world stuff**.
 - And there are **some people passing themselves off today as Christians** who are **offering the world stuff**.
 - They're promising **financial prosperity, money, success**.
 - **Jesus never offered** that.
 - **That's never in** the Sermon on the Mount.
 - The **opposite is here**.
- In fact, **the things of the world become fuel for pride**,
 - they **become fuel for lust**, and
 - they **become a snare**.
- And **Jesus himself said** the things of the world,
 - the **cares** of the world,
 - the **riches** of the world **will rise up and choke out the Word**.
 - They are **thorns** and they **will do to your soul what thorns do to your shirt or your dress**.
- Listen, **what God is saying in all of this marvelous and incomparable sermon**, in these beatitudes, is simply this, people:
 - You **will never find happiness** in this world.
 - **Never**.
 - You **might as well learn it**.
- That is **like seeking the living among the dead**.
 - And **the angel said**, "**He's not here. He's risen**."
- And I want to **just borrow that concept** and say
 - **if you're looking** for the **living reality of real blessedness** in the earth,
 - you're **looking among the dead for the living** and it's not there.
- You've **got to ascend** to another level.
 - **Paul put it** this way.

"If ye be then risen with Christ, seek those things which are - "

- **what?**

" - above. Set not your affections on things on the earth."

- **John put it** this way.

"Love not the world neither the - "

- **what?**

" - things that are in the world."

- There's **no satisfaction** there.
 - **Happiness is not here**.

- Blessedness **isn't in the cursed earth**, it's **on another level**.
- And the **Sermon on the Mount is going to take you to that level**.
- Are you **ready**?
 - It's going to **take you right out of the world**.
 - It's **going to counter everything you hear** by the fast-pitch salesman.
- It's **going to counter everything you see** on the billboards, **everything you read** in the magazines.
 - It's going to **give you an entire different standard of life**, totally **opposite of what the world tells you**.
 - So you're **going to have a tough time really living it** if you don't learn it well,
 - because it's **going to be bombarded by** everybody coming along in **the world system**.

b. Now let me take you to another thought about context.

- **There is a political context here**, too, that's just fantastic.
 - The Jews were looking for a Messiah, only **their definition of a Messiah was a political ruler**, right?
 - They were **looking for somebody to come**, you know, **riding into Jerusalem on a white horse**, and
 - **zap all of the Romans**, and they'd all fall over dead, and
 - he'd **lead a great revolution** infinitely beyond anything they'd ever heard of,
 - **even that of Judas Maccabeus** and his sons that had **overthrown Greece temporarily**.
- Boy, **they expected some really whirlwind deal** to happen when the Messiah arrived.
 - They were **looking for political things**.
 - They **tried to make Jesus a king** there in Galilee when he **first began his ministry**,
 - **John tells us**, because they **saw a welfare state**.
- He **fed the 20,000 people** and they **showed up the next morning for free breakfast**.
 - They **thought it was the greatest thing they had ever seen**.
 - This guy was **going to feed them**.
 - There was **going to be constant welfare**, **never** have to work again.
 - **He just makes food**.
- They were **looking at the politics** of it.
 - They were **looking at the accommodation to their own humanness**.
 - And **the Lord passed through and left them** and didn't want to be **that kind of king**.
 - Listen, the Jews were **looking for a political kingdom** but **Jesus never offered one**.
- He **looked at Pilate that day** when he was going through the mockery of a trial and

- he **said to - Pilate said to him**, “*Are you a king?*”
- And **Jesus said**, “*You said it.*”
- And **Pilate, in effect, said**, “Well, what in the world kind of kingdom are you?”
- **He says**, “*I’ll tell you something.*”
- **My kingdom is not** - “*what?*” - **of this world.**

“My kingdom, if it were of this world, my disciples would fight. But my kingdom is not of this world.”

- **Jesus never brought about** the issue of **politics**.
 - He **wasn’t so concerned about** changing the structure as he was **working on the inside**.
 - And this is **what he says in this first sermon**.
- There’s **no politics in the Sermon** on the Mount. **None**.
 - There is **not one reference to the social, political aspect** of the kingdom made here, **not one**.
 - **The Jews were so concerned about the politics and the social life**.
 - **Jesus makes no reference** to that at all.
 - **The stress** - I want you to get this - **the stress is on being**.
 - That’s the word you’re **going to have to see**.
 - The stress is **on being**.
 - It’s **not on ruling or possessing** it is on being.
- In other words, he’s **not after what men do**, he’s after **what men are**.
 - **What men are**.
 - **Because what they are will determine** what they do.
 - **All of the ideals** that are given in the Sermon on the Mount are **contrary to human ideas about government, human ideas about kingdoms**.
 - In fact, **the most exalted people**, the most exalted people in Christ’s kingdom **would be the lowest of the low in the world’s evaluation**.
- Do you **know who the greatest man was who ever lived?**
 - Up **until this time**, who was it?
 - John the Baptist.
 - **As far as the world was concerned**, he was nothing but a raving maniac running around in a modified Tarzan suit eating bugs.
 - And he **wasn’t even a part of the religious system**.
 - **Jesus said he was the greatest man** that ever lived.

¹¹ *“Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has **not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist!** Yet the one who is **least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.** (Matthew 11:11)*

- And then he went on to say, “**But there’s one greater than he.**”
 - Do you **know who** it is?

- The **least in my kingdom.**
- Do you **know who that is?**
 - The **poor** in spirit,
 - the **mourning**,
 - the **meek**,
 - those who **hunger and thirst**,
 - feel **empty** inside,
 - those **full of mercy**,
 - those **pure in heart**,
 - those **who make peace**,
 - those **who are persecuted**,
 - those **who are reviled**,
 - those **who have all manner of evil spoken against them.**
- You know, that **sounds to me like the biggest list of losers** I ever saw.
 - Well, **by the world's standards they are.**
 - The **world says,**

“Exert yourself. Demand your rights. Be a bigshot. Push yourself up. Hold onto your pride.”

- This is a **different kind of a kingdom.**
 - It even **advocates persecution without retaliation** and **bleses those who live that way.**
 - It's a **spiritual kingdom.**
 - So **the political aspect of this message was devastating.**
 - It was **absolutely everything was the opposite** of what they **expected a Messiah to say.**
- Now, I **want to talk about just one more area about the religious context** and you'll have **a general idea of the thrust of the Sermon on the Mount.**
 - We've seen a **little of the whole biblical context.**
 - We've seen a **little of Matthew's perspective,**
 - something of **how the world would view it,**
 - something of **the politics of it.**

6. But now I want you to know the religious scene.
- It's really fascinating.
 - a. **Jesus was confronting a very religious society.**
 - In fact, a **whole society full of religionists.**
 - They were **professional ritualists.**
 - And that's **an important backdrop.**
 - Let me just **divide them into four groups.**

b. *There were four main groups within the religion of Judaism:*

- The **Pharisees**, the **Sadducees**, the **Essenes** and the **Zealots**.
 - We've **talked about them at other times**.

1) **First of all, the Pharisees.**

- Now **here you go**.
 - The Pharisees believed that **happiness was found in tradition or legalism**.
 - They were **hot on the past, big on the past, real big**.
 - They believed that **real happiness came through obeying the traditions of the fathers**.

2) **Then there were the Sadducees.**

- And the Sadducees believed that **happiness was found in the present, modernism, liberalism**.
 - **Can the past, man, we're here**.
 - We've **got to do it now**.
 - An **updated religion, brand new liberalism, chuck the old stuff**.
 - You know, **in a sense, they both had a little tiny bit** of truth.
 - The **Pharisees** were right.
 - True religion has to be **based on the past**.
 - The Sadducees **had a little bit** of truth because true religion has **also got to work in the present**.

3) **And then there were the Essenes.**

- And the **Essenes** said,

"Nope. Happiness is in separation from the world."

- Oh, it **sounds good**, doesn't it?
 - Only they were **talking about geographical separation**.
 - They **just moved out** of town.
- **Years ago** there was an **ad in a Christian magazine** put in by one of our very, very fundamental Christian colleges that **said the school was located 15 miles from the nearest sin**.
 - Just offhand, I'd say **that's wishful thinking**.
 - But the **Essenes** believed **we've got to get out of town**, where there's no sin.

- **So there were** the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Essenes,

4) **And Then There Were The Zealots.**

- And Zealots said **happiness is found in the political overthrow**.
 - Happiness is **found in revolution**.
 - Happiness is **found in knocking off Rome**.
 1. So, you see, the **Pharisees** were saying, **"Go back."**
 2. And the **Sadducees** were saying, **"Go ahead."**

- 3. The **Essenes** were saying, “**Go out.**”
- 4. And the **Zealots** were saying, “Go against.”
- And the **Pharisees** were the nostalgia buffs.
- And the **Sadducees** were the modernists.
 - They were buying Danish furniture.
- And the **Essenes** were the isolationists.
 - They were stashed up in a monastery somewhere.
- And the **Zealots** were the so-called religious, social activist.
- What a mess.
 - **Sounds just exactly like 2016** to me.
 - 5. **We’ve got religionists** living in the past.
 - 6. **We’ve got liberals** trying to invent a new religion for the present.
 - 7. **We’ve got people who think** holy living is an issue of geography and they just want to **make sure that they don’t ever go near anything that looks like sin.**
 - 8. And **then we’ve got the people who think religion is a matter of leading a parade** and a march on somewhere.
- **Jesus was confronting a whole society full of religionists.**
 - They **all had their own little thing going.**
 - And **the point that Jesus was making is,**

“Hey, you know, you're all wrong, every one of you.”

 - **For the Pharisees** he was saying,

“Religion is not a matter of external observance.”

 - And **for the Sadducee** he was saying,

“Religion is not a matter of human philosophy invented to accommodate the new day.”

 - And **to the Essenes** he was saying,

“Believe Me, religion is not a matter of geographical location.”

 - And **to the Zealots** he was saying,

“And neither is religion a matter of social activism.”

- **What he was saying is this,** “My kingdom is inside.”
 - Do you see?
 - It’s **inside.**
- That’s the **whole point.**
 - That’s **the whole message of Jesus to the world.**
- That’s **the whole basis of the Sermon** on the Mount.
 - It’s **inside, not outside.**

- **Not outside rituals,**
- not outside **philosophy,**
- not outside **location** or monasteries or any of that stuff,
- not outside **activism,**
- **it's inside.**
- What Jesus is **saying right here**, I believe, is **cracking open the door on the new covenant** of which **Jeremiah said,**

“God would write His law on their inward parts.”

- Do you see? Going **inside.**
- And so **Jesus summed it up by saying to them,**

“Look, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Essenes, the Zealots, and everybody who was either a conglomerate of all of that or stood underneath those four areas, I want to tell you all something, unless your righteousness exceeds that kind of righteousness you will, in no case, enter my kingdom.”

- Do you see?

“Unless you’ve got more going for you than that external stuff, you’ve got no part of my kingdom, because as I’ve said before there is no source of blessing in the cursed earth.”

- It’s **beyond that.**
 - All that religion was **dealing with externals and the Sermon on the Mount invades Jewish thinking** with a blast that **true blessedness comes from the inside**, not the outside.
- The **same is true today.**
 - **Don’t comfort** yourself in the fact that **you’ve got the right theology.**
 - The **liberals can’t comfort themselves** in the fact that
 - they’ve **spun off this great new theory,**
 - or the **Bible is not the word of God**, they’ve really updated it.
 - Boy, **they’re really contemporary.**
 - They’re **flowing with the age.**
- A man **cannot comfort himself in the fact** that
 - he’s **moved away from the world** and
 - **moved up into a monastery** and he sits there and
 - **contemplates God, undistracted** by the things of the world.
- **Nor can a man comfort himself** because
 - he thinks he’s a **social activist** and
 - he’s **running around all over the place** trying to **straighten out society.**
- Those **are not the things Jesus is after.**

- Oh, **ultimately, all those things have a corner on a part of the truth, don't they?**
 - We **need to be socially involved**, and
 - we **need to be set apart unto God**, and
 - we **need to be contemporary**, and
 - we **need to be based** on the past,
- ...but **in and of themselves they're external**, and
 - God is **after what's inside**.
- Way back in **1 Samuel 16:7**, the Lord laid it out when he said,

“the Lord looks on the heart.”

- And **Proverbs 4:23** says,

“Keep your heart for out of it are the issues of life.”

- Well, you **better guard your heart**.
 - That's **the issue**.
 - Well, **you know, if you took care** of your spiritual heart **like you take care of physical heart** it would be amazing, wouldn't it?
- People today are **literally going crazy over protecting their heart**.
 - Joggers **everywhere**,
 - people **riding bicycles**,
 - running **up and down hills**.
- **Got to take care** of the heart.
 - You can go in the shopping center and **stick your arm in a thing now**.
 - Put 50 cents in there and it **will tell you how your heart's doing**.
 - Have you ever done that?
- A little deal **reads your blood pressure**.
 - Boy, **take care of that heart. Guard that heart**.
 - And if you've **got a little bit of a problem**, boy, **lay off** the fats and the cholesterol, **watch your triglyceride count**, and on, and on.
- And, you know, **the Bible says** you better **guard the heart that's the real issue**.
 - That's **speaking of the real heart**.
- The Hebrew thinking was it was the seed of all your knowledge of God, the mind.
 - Listen, **if we did as much to protect our spiritual heart** as we do to protect our physical heart,
 - we'd be in **great shape spiritually**.
 - But **sometimes we just ignore** that area and **that's what Jesus is after**.
 - In **Luke 11:39** - Williams translation is great on this passage.
- **Listen** to what it says.

“Jesus said, ‘Now you have the habit of cleaning the outside of your cups and dishes but inside you yourselves are full of greed and wickedness, you fools. Did not the one who made the outside make the inside too? Dedicate once for all your inner self and that once you will have everything else clean.’ ”

- See? **That's what Jesus' message was.**
 - That's **the heart of the Sermon** on the Mount.
- Now, **on the basis of that context and that overview** I want you to know