

The Greatest Sermon

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Scripture is in the New King James Version

The words of Jesus Christ are in red

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“I do not believe there is a problem in this country or the world today which could not be settled if approached through the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount.”

Harry S. Truman

33rd President of the United States

Introduction

There have been multi-millions of sermons but there is only one that is the greatest sermon ever preached. That sermon is the Sermon on the Mount preached by Jesus Christ as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew, chapters 5-7. I would like to share it with you and provide commentary on this great sermon. As I attempt this I believe it will also give me a greater understanding of this wonderful teaching from the Lord Jesus Christ to all His followers

Matthew 5

On the Mountain

And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. ² Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: (Matt. 5:1-2)

When Jesus taught, great numbers of people would come to hear Him. His reputation was being spread as a man of great wisdom who worked miracles. He would feed thousands of people with a few fish and loaves of bread. He would work all types of miracles from healing the blind and those paralyzed to even raising people from the dead. He was a prophet from God. His popularity with the people was great.

²³ And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. ²⁴ Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them. ²⁵ Great multitudes followed Him—from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan. (Matt. 4:23-25)

Jesus came to this Earth for many reasons. The most important was to die for the sins of His people and then be resurrected from death. Jesus came to work many signs, wonders, and miracles. These miracles would confirm that He truly was the Son of God. However, His teaching ministry was more important to Him than doing miracles. Jesus told those who He healed not to tell others about it. There were so many people coming to Him for healing that His preaching and teaching

ministry was being somewhat hindered. It was more important to spread the word of God than to work miracles.

³² At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. ³³ And the whole city was gathered together at the door. ³⁴ Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him.

³⁵ Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. ³⁶ And Simon and those who were with Him searched for Him. ³⁷ When they found Him, they said to Him, "Everyone is looking for You."

³⁸ But He said to them, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth." (Mark 1:32-38)

On this occasion when He delivered the greatest sermon, Jesus saw the great multitudes of people and went up on a mountain so that He could be seen and heard by more people. Notice that Jesus was seated and His disciples came to Him. Then He taught His followers wonderful truths in this sermon.

The Beatitudes

In this segment, our Lord gives us nine characteristics that Christians should strive to have and the blessings that go along with them. They are referred to as the Beatitudes. What wonderful blessings await the children of God when they exhibit these traits in their walk with the Lord Jesus! What does the word beatitude mean? It means being in a state of utmost happiness. As we live our Christian lives in these ways

we will be truly blessed and happy. Where do all blessings come from? They come from God in His mercy and grace to us.

³ *“Blessed are the poor in spirit,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

What does it mean when people are poor in spirit? Does it mean they lack spirituality? No. These people are humble in spirit. They understand their sins and will make amends to God and those they have sinned against. They don't exhibit pride in their lives. Pride is one of the great sins against God. The prideful person doesn't need God. Satan and his angelic followers were cast out of heaven and will suffer eternal torment in the lake of fire because of their pride and rebellion against God.

Satan used pride to deceive Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. When we sin, it is because of our pride. We want to do things our way rather than being obedient to God's commands.

When the Apostle Paul was writing Timothy about the qualifications of pastors, he said the following about who should not be a pastor:

⁶ *not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. (1 Tim. 3:6)*

There are three categories of sin.

¹⁶ *For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. (1 John 2:16)*

Let us all have a humble spirit toward God and mankind, for we will be able to share in the blessings of His great kingdom.

*⁴ Blessed are those who mourn,
For they shall be comforted.*

All of us go through times of mourning for various reasons. It may be because of the loss of a job. Perhaps it is because a family member passes away. We will all have to face serious illness and our own death. We may also mourn about our sinfulness. There is much to be sad about. When trials hit us, we need to turn to our Savior in prayer to ask for help and comfort in our time of need. Christ has told us in Scripture for us to ask Him for help. He may not give us what we ask for but He will answer our prayers according to His will and comfort us in our time of need. He will shoulder our burdens. *³⁰ For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” (Matt. 11:30)*

*⁵ Blessed are the meek,
For they shall inherit the earth.*

What does it mean to be meek? Does being meek mean that we are weak? No, meekness is a wonderful characteristic to have. Meekness causes us to have a quiet spirit in times of stress. It doesn't selfishly and loudly assert our rights; it enables us to calmly work out our problems without being combative. Jesus was meek yet He wasn't weak. In meekness, He taught us to give to others what they asked of us. However, He also drove out the money changers in the temple with a whip turning over their tables in righteous indignation because they demeaned God's house. One can be both meek and strong. Those who

are meek shall receive the blessings of Earth both now and in the future.

¹³ *Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. (James 3:13)*

⁶ *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.*

What is our agenda in life? Do we have our priorities right? Do we have a passion to live a godly and righteous life? Is it important to us to have a walk and testimony that causes us to be close to God? We should be filled with a desire to live a holy life. We should also want to see others live in a godly way. Jesus tells us that those whose motive is to seek righteous living in themselves and others will have their spiritual hunger and thirst satisfied. That hunger and thirst can only be satisfied through faith in Jesus Christ who is the “bread of life” and who gives water leading to everlasting life.

And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. (John 6:35)

¹³ *Jesus answered and said to her, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” (John 4:13)*

*⁷ Blessed are the merciful,
For they shall obtain mercy.*

God, in His great mercy, has forgiven us of our sins If we believe in His Son Jesus Christ.

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

We too are to be merciful and forgiving to others. Jesus tells us in Scripture that if we are not willing to forgive others of their sins against us, He is not willing to forgive us of our sins. This should greatly motivate us to always show mercy and forgiveness to others. This is true even if a person has sinned against us and has not apologized or asked for forgiveness. Jesus forgave those who were crucifying Him on a cross and they never asked for forgiveness. When we have a spirit of mercy toward others, God will bless us with His mercy.

*⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart,
For they shall see God.*

Are our hearts pure before God? What is a pure heart? We must do our best not to sin against our Father in heaven and others we

encounter. We need to be on guard, not only for our sinful actions but also sinful thoughts. How can we do this? We need to remove all temptation away from ourselves. We need to keep our thoughts upon heavenly things and how we can advance the kingdom of God. We must not dwell on the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life.

Those who have a pure heart shall see God. What a wonderful blessing to know that one day we will see our Maker! However, it is impossible for us to have pure hearts unless our hearts have been changed by the grace of God. Only those who have faith in Jesus Christ can have a pure heart. Once a person comes to faith in Christ, that person receives the righteousness of Christ as Jesus paid for that person's sins when He died on the cross. Our hearts become pure only in Christ. We then qualify to be able to see God one day! How sad it will be for those who reject Christ and will never see His loving face. They will spend a Christ-less eternity in suffering, pain, darkness, and complete loneliness without the Savior Jesus.

*⁹Blessed are the peacemakers,
For they shall be called sons of God.*

Our goal as Christians are to be peacemakers. We should love others as we love ourselves. People who love each other would always want to work out their problems peacefully and not argue or fight over them. Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God, is called the "Prince of Peace."

*For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be upon His shoulder.*

*And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isa. 9:6)*

We will only have true peace within and without if we are peaceful followers of this Prince.

There is another prince who is the enemy of Christ. He is Satan, the prince of the power of the air. He is also known as Lucifer, the devil, and the evil one. Rather than peace, He seeks to bring discord between men and God as he and his demonic followers try to tempt men to sin and reject Jesus Christ.

And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ² in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³ among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. (Eph. 2:1-3)

Satan and his followers live to satisfy their own sinful appetites. Christ's followers choose everlasting life as they strive to follow His commandments and seek a heavenly reward. Our eternal destiny will be determined by which prince we follow. Those who follow Christ will be blessed by seeing Him one day face to face in heaven. That will be the greatest moment of their existence! They will be called the sons of God. What a wonderful honor and privilege to be called the sons of God.

*¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

When we live our lives with integrity, honesty, and character some people will dislike us. We must always do the right thing even if doing it causes others to persecute us. God is glorified in us when we live for righteousness. Always trying to do the correct and right thing with a motive to serve Christ means that we are one of His disciples. Only those who have faith in Jesus Christ will enter the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. ¹² Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

There is no greater Christian honor in this life than to be persecuted by others for serving Jesus Christ. Many Christians have been mocked, criticized, ostracized, brought before the authorities, imprisoned, and executed in some of the most inhumane and painful ways for their faith in Christ. The prophets in the Old Testament and apostles of the New Testament were persecuted for serving God. If we follow Christ and not the ways of this sinful world we can expect persecution by others. Jesus tells us that those who receive persecution for following Him will be greatly rewarded in heaven.

It is important to note as we end this segment of the Beatitudes that we understand that we are not saved by doing these things. We do these things because we are saved. These are attributes of those who have been saved by faith in Christ. We must be born again by the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, if you are not a believer in Jesus Christ, you need to come to Him by faith. For it is impossible to please God without faith in His Son. If we confess the Lord Jesus to others and

believe in our hearts that God has raised Him from the dead, we will be saved. (Rom. 10:9) What are we saved from? We are saved from the wrath of God for our sins and eternal damnation in the lake of fire.

Salt

¹³ “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

Christians are the salt of the earth. What does that mean? Salt has several purposes. We add it to our food for better taste. It takes away the blandness. It can be put on roads to help remove ice or snow. It also acts as a preservative that can be put on food to help it last longer before spoilage. As Christians, we are the difference in this world. Our allegiance to Christ and His commandments give the world a taste of what is pleasing to God. We are the kingdom of God on Earth and His earthly representatives. However, if we backslide into sin and stop being a faithful witness for the Lord our effectiveness is greatly diminished. We no longer are a powerful influence for good. We become like salt that loses its saltiness. It is good for nothing but to be thrown away like trash. This should be a strong motivation for Christians to grow in the Lord and seek to enlarge Christ’s kingdom on Earth.

Light

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Christians are also the light of the world. We should be like a flashlight in this dark world of sin to help others find the way to everlasting life through faith in Christ. Our every spoken word and deed should shine forth the light and glory of our Father who is in heaven. Our thought life must be pure for our words and deeds to be pure. We must understand that others will be watching how we live our lives. We have been bought by the price of Christ’s death for us. We must strive not to disappoint our family, friends, acquaintances, ourselves, and most of all our Lord. We must live godly lives so that others will see how we live for the Lord and will give glory and honor to our Father in heaven. It is a great honor and responsibility to be a Christian.

The Law

¹⁷ “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. ¹⁸ For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. ¹⁹ Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

There were those who were false accusers of Jesus who said He was trying to do away with the Old Testament law given to Moses. What these people didn't realize was that the entire Old Testament pointed toward Jesus as the Messiah. Only Jesus has met every single prophecy of the Old Testament. If there was any doubt about Jesus being the Christ, that last statement proves He was. Jesus fulfilled the law. Now, as we follow Christ and His commandments, we have a better way than the law which prophesied of our Lord. Jesus had the utmost respect for the law however, the law could not save but only condemn mankind. Even the so-called righteous scribes and Pharisees were not good enough to enter heaven. The Bible says all of us are undeserving sinners.

²³ *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (Rom. 3:23)*

It also says no one does good in the sight of God. We can't be saved by doing good works for no one does good by God's standards.

They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one." (Rom. 3:12)

We can only be saved by our faith in Jesus Christ. We then receive His righteousness which qualifies us for heaven.

Murder

²¹ *"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.'* ²² *But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!'*

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