

Matthew 19-05-05b

We are ready now to resume our study in Matthew chapter 5, where we are looking at our popularly designated sermon on the mount. There is a horde, a great multitudes, crowds, that have been drawn to the Lord Jesus because of His healing ministry, because of His fame that has spread throughout the Roman province of Syria, stretching across the Jordan down into Judea and the region of Decapolis. And so these huge crowds have followed Him.

So seeing them He went up on a mountain and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. And looking at them He opened His mouth and taught them saying. And He leads with this section that we call the Beatitudes, the blessed are those who section.

And then He is going to continue in verses 13 through 16 with what have been called the similitudes. It's a little bit of a misnomer because a similitude means you are like. And this is not a simile, these are metaphors.

Jesus says you are the salt of the earth. He doesn't say you are like the salt of the earth. He says you are.

So you are stuck with an English major and a penchant for detail. So these aren't the similitudes, they are the metaphoritudes. 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.

You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden, 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. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

So looking at this structurally just briefly, we begin with the eight blessed are those whose statements in verses 3-10 that are third person. We are then going to have blessed are you, the pronoun changes in verse 11, and this is sort of a hinge to two more you statements. You are the salt of the earth.

You are the light of the world. So why wouldn't these add up to ten like the Ten Commandments? Why wouldn't they add up to twelve like the number of tribes or the number of disciples? We are not sure that all twelve disciples are here yet because Matthew has not yet been called. But why not one of these wonderful biblical numbers? Because it is two biblical numbers and they are inextricably tied together.

The 3-10, we say there are eight, because there are eight, that's why we say it, talking about these categories of people. The poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, those who are

persecuted. That's eight.

Of the you statements, there's how many? You're blessed when you're reviled and persecuted, which is something of a repetition of verse 10, but it is a change. It's a restatement. Those who are persecuted, blessed are you when they revile and persecute you.

You see it? Just as sort of a restatement and a personalization of what he just said. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad. You are the salt of the earth, verse 14, you are the light of the world.

So you have eight, third person, and you have three, second person. What is the number eight in Scripture? What does it represent? We know that four is universality on the earth, like the four winds. We know that five is often the number of application, the five fingers on your hand, the five books of the law.

There's ten commandments, your right hand and your left hand. You've got four directed toward God and six directed toward men. What is the number eight? When do we first see the number eight occur in Scripture? Abrahamic covenant, people in your house need to be circumcised, and when you have a newborn son, when is he circumcised? The eighth day.

When is the cleansed leper reborn into the fellowship of Israel and allowed to return from his isolation and his quarantine? It's the eighth day. If you picture creation loosely in terms of days, the seventh day is the rest of the millennial kingdom. The way we like to think of the 4,000 years preceding the Lord Jesus and 2,000 years in the church age making up six days of history, and then the 7,000 is the Sabbath rest.

Well then what is the kingdom of the Father? Behold, I make all things new in Revelation 22. New heavens and a new earth. Eighth is the number of new life.

It is the number of the eternal kingdom of God. It is the number of blessed fellowship. Circumcised on the eighth day, this is when a newborn male child officially entered into the covenant people.

These eight commandments blessednesses all look forward to the perfection of God's kingdoms, the new life. Live out your three score and ten. How many years is that? Seventy.

And if by reason of strength you reach 80? If by reason of strength you reach 80 is a subtle allusion to if you have invested your life in God's kingdom, that time of 80s speaks of the new life, the future life. By reason of strength you reach 80. So it's new life, and these do speak of the new life, and they do look forward for their reward and their fulfillment and the reaping of the harvest and the exploitation of potential to the kingdom.

So there are eight of these. It is the time of new birth, new life, new setting. Then you have three U stages.

The three U stages are the three U statements. You are blessed, you are salt, you are light. And they are connected at the point of persecution.

And at the point of persecution, this is the point of joy. The place where the eight meets the three, three we don't have any trouble remembering is the divine side of things. And the divine mission is despite suffering to be salt and to be light even in the face of oppression.

So you are reviled and persecuted, you are salt, you are light. They connect at the point of persecution. Jesus says, they've hated me, they're going to hate you.

And this reviling and persecuting is for my sake. Verse 10, those who are persecuted for righteousness sake. Blessed are you when you are persecuted for my sake.

Jesus' sake is righteousness' sake. It is for my sake. It is the righteousness that the Lord Jesus represents.

It is the righteousness that the Lord Jesus teaches. It is the righteousness that the Lord Jesus is talking about in this teaching section that is at issue. To adopt it is to be persecuted and to be reviled.

If you live by these precepts, if you adopt them and commit yourself to them, are devoted to them, expend the effort of your life in following them, you can expect opposition. And Jesus says, those who do so are blessed. You are blessed if you do so.

And this is what makes you salt, this is what makes you light. And you are representing the divine here on the earth when you so do. This is the means of being salt and light.

And it will involve, the more effective you are at this, the more opposition you're going to encounter. Well that's the structural setup here for this section. And it is going to turn at verse 17 to talk about thinking.

And he's going to say, don't think, don't draw a false conclusion. You've heard some things said, don't draw false conclusions. And then he'll move forward at 17 in a different direction.

But we have this unit here of verses 3-16 before us this morning. So looking at this, it says, Makarioi, blessed, are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. The poor in spirit.

We're given a second perspective, a second eye. If we're looking at this with our right eye, we've got a left eye that we can look at here. In Luke chapter 6, keep your finger in Matthew 5 and turn to Luke chapter 6. Because this is going to, we can deduce exactly

what Jesus is talking about in a lot of different ways.

But we're going to have a summary, and this is sometimes called the sermon on the plain as opposed to the sermon on the mount. There are those who think that Luke has condensed our occasion here in Matthew, but it is clear from the context that this is the same but different. Look at Luke chapter 6 beginning at verse 17.

Jesus came down with them. Notice he has just called the 12 apostles in this context in verses 12-16. In those days he went out to the mountain to pray, continued all night in prayer to God.

When it was day he called his disciples to himself, and from them he chose 12. Notice the group of disciples is larger than 12 at this point, and this is a later point than our Matthew context. He went out to the mountain to pray, continued to call his disciples, and from them he chose 12 whom he named apostles.

And it names them here. And he came down with them, verse 17, and stood on a level place with a crowd of his disciples. Notice, he came down with them and stood on a level place with a crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear him and be healed of their diseases, as well as those who were tormented with unclean spirits.

They were healed, and the whole multitude sought to touch him, for power went out from him and healed them all. This is going to be important to us later on in terms of understanding who it is that Jesus is giving this sermon, this block of teaching, to the people of Judea and Sidon too. And let me just say that there is a recognition of the importance of context when you're interpreting words.

It says he came down, we're in Luke 6.17 here just briefly, he came down and stood on a level place with a crowd of his disciples. Now 12 is not a crowd. The word for crowd in Greek is achlos.

O-C-H-L-O-S. Achlos. A crowd of his disciples, and then it says a great multitude of people from all Judea, and this is a plethos.

We talk about a plethora. This is a plethos of laos. A plethora of people, a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem.

But my point here is it is possible for his disciples, this larger group than 12, to be referred to as a crowd. It is a crowd of his disciples, and then you can have even greater crowds of other people. This will be important when we're back in Matthew.

But continue down to verse 20. He lifted up his eyes toward his disciples and said, Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be filled.

Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh. Blessed are you when men hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and cast out your name as evil for the son of man's sake. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for indeed your reward is great in heaven, for in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.

Now, based on what we've already observed in Matthew, what do you notice is different? How many blessings do you have here in Luke 6, 20-23? Half as many, right? There's four instead of eight. There's actually nine in Matthew, but there are eight addressed to the third person group. Those who are this are blessed because.

Here, what is the second difference that you notice? There's not as many, so this seems to be something of a compaction or a summary. What else do you notice? What's the pronoun? Second person here, isn't it? Yours is the kingdom of God, you poor. You poor are blessed because yours is the kingdom of God.

You who hunger now are blessed, for you shall be filled. You who weep now are blessed, for you shall laugh. Notice that hunger now, you will be filled later.

You who weep now, you will laugh later. Blessed are you when men hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and cast out your name as evil. Now, this is an expansion from the two statements Jesus makes about persecution in our Matthew context.

They hate you, they exclude you, they revile you, and they cast out your name as evil. That's a four in one there, isn't it? Rejoice in that day and leap for joy. Rejoice as an imperative, as an exhortation is tied to the very same concept as in Matthew.

Rejoice when men revile you and persecute you for my sake. Blessed are those who are reviled for righteousness sake. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for your reward is great in heaven.

And he includes the same comment as in Matthew in like manner their fathers did to the prophets. This happened to the prophets. You're not the first, you won't be the last.

And the revilers are not new. This has been going on since ancient times. Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil and people who are of the light, people who are seeking to reflect God's light, are going to get the same level of rejection and hatred for the same reason as God's light in general and the light expressed in Jesus Christ in particular.

So rejoice in that day, he says, and leap for joy. This receives additional emphasis, doesn't it? Why? Your reward is great later. Your reward is great in heaven.

The idea is that your reward is sitting there in heaven waiting to be dispensed at a future time. It doesn't mean that you're going to collect and enjoy your reward in heaven. It

means your reward is sitting there now to be dispensed and enjoyed later.

And then he's going to continue in Luke with a corresponding set of woes. As there were four blessed, there are four woes. Woe to the rich, woe to the full, woe to the laughers, and woe to those who are popular.

And these correspond. You notice there's a complete symmetry here. Poor and rich, hungry and full, weeping and laughing, those who are persecuted, those who are spoken well of.

These four groups of blessed people seem to be in a bad way now. They will be in a good way later. Now there are those who are well off now, and they're going to be in a bad way later.

If you're rich, enjoy it now because you've got nothing in the future. If you're full now, you're going to be empty in the future. If you laugh now, you'll be weeping and wailing and gnashing your teeth later.

If people are happy with you now, you're as popular as the false prophets were, and we know what happened to them and what God's opinion of them was. Now this tells us two things. First of all, these are not the same occasion.

Secondly, Jesus taught thematically throughout His ministry and repeated many of these themes. And this is the essence. This is the distillation of countless teaching sessions that Jesus had.

You will notice in Luke 6, verse 20, one additional point of correspondence. Not only is it thematically similar, not only does it have some of the same elements of joy in persecution, it's one thing to be hungry, it's one thing to be poor, it's one thing to be humble or humbled, but it is something else to be actively hounded and persecuted, to be reviled and have your name dragged through the mud. This in some ways is the worst, and yet this is what Jesus connects rejoicing and great joy with in both contexts.

But what do you notice in verse 20? How did Jesus begin this particular rehearsal of these themes? He lifted up His eyes toward whom? His disciples. This is teaching for the disciples. Now what is the context here? Go back to verse 17 of Luke 6. He came down and stood on a level place with a crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, Seacoast, Tyre, and Sidon, came to hear and be healed of their diseases, tormented with unclean spirits.

They were healed. The whole multitude sought to touch Him. Power went out from Him and healed them.

So in the midst of this great multitude, who is He talking to in Luke? His disciples. Even in the midst of the crowd, He is talking to the disciples. He is looking at the disciples.

He is engaging the disciples. One of the elements of public speaking is you don't want to stand up in front of a group, whether it's a board meeting or a congregation or an assemblage of people at a wedding or a funeral or any other crowd that might gather. You don't stare down at your notes the whole time.

You're supposed to look at the people you're talking to, to engage them, to read and see if they're catching what you're saying. There is an element of feedback and of engagement by looking at who you're talking to. This, by the way, is also a true fact even in small group conversation, one-on-one conversation.

It's helpful to look at the person you're talking to. You ever talk to somebody who's constantly looking away? It's a little bit disconcerting. It's sometimes you look away because you're concentrating or you're trying to remember.

You're visualizing and you don't want to be distracted. But in normal conversation, you look at who you're talking to. The eyes of the Lord are on those who fear Him.

We look unto Him, the author and finisher of our faith. We look. We lift up our eyes.

Looking is important. Jesus looks. He lifts up His eyes toward His disciples as He says these words because that's who it's meant for.

That's who it's going to be meaningful to and make sense to and be possible for application to take place. But it is second person here, and this is later in Jesus' ministry. He begins by expressing what is generally true.

We saw this back in our Psalms, did not? Psalm 119, the first eight verses. He talks about, I have seen those who live this way and who dedicate themselves to Your Word. I want to be one of those.

Jesus says, here's what is possible for those who are this way, who develop and cultivate these characteristics, who are willing to remain in this classification of humble, not rich, not filled, not satisfied, not popular with the crowd. These people are blessed because their benefit is future and it is divine and it is eternal. Being filled and being warmed and being comfortable and being satisfied in this life is largely human.

It is temporal. It is effervescent. It is temporary.

This life is temporary. We are like the grass that withers and the flower that fades. The Word of God is what abides forever.

The rewards of God, the blessings of God, fellowship with God as we cultivate it is eternal. So why wouldn't I trade what I cannot keep for something that I can never lose? Why worry about popularity? Why worry about prosperity? Why worry about comfort and engagement in the temporal and temporary things of this life when I can be laying hold

of inheritance, opportunity, and permanent blessing and reward later? The Gospel of the Kingdom is that those things are possible to obtain and to lay up now. The time that remains to us is the time to do it.

Back to Matthew 5. We want to notice here also that what Jesus is talking about here at the beginning in these Beatitudes, these first several verses, is not yet an exhortation. It is not a call to action. It is not an imperative.

It isn't preaching. What is it? Instead of a prescription, it is a description, right? It is a description. Why is that important? Because with this description comes a response.

You're either going to pursue this and seek it or you're going to dismiss it and react against it. The description is a simple statement of fact. The poor in spirit are blessed.

Notice over in Luke it just says the poor. Here it says the poor in spirit. The poor in spirit.

Now what does it mean to be poor in spirit? This word ptochoi, p-t-o-c-h-o-i, is qualified by being poor in spirit. What is the contrast? You can look at the woe section over in Luke chapter 6. Those who are rich feel that they need nothing. This is possible.

You know people, I know people who don't feel a need for God, who don't feel a need for God's word, who don't feel a need for forgiveness and cleansing, don't feel a need for renewal, don't feel a need to seek after the righteousness of God, who don't have an engagement with the possibilities and the potentials in future life for various reasons. Either they're short sighted or they actually don't believe there is a God or an afterlife. And so what do they do? They satisfy themselves with accomplishments in this life.

And I've told you many times that the first thing I learned as an instructor I was taught this to be an instructor is if you've got any hope of implanting knowledge and information and wisdom in artillery students or high school students or any other sort of student that you've been hired to communicate with, you're going to be most effective when you demonstrate the need. Why should I listen? How many appliances have you opened as I have and there's an instruction manual in the top that says here's how to put it together. I was looking at a steam mop yesterday and you know you get glider swings and things in boxes you know some assembly required and it's got a sheet of instructions and then there'll be a shrink wrap blister pack kind of a thing full of screws and washers.

The ones where I do read the instructions are the ones where I get that shrink thing full of screws and there's five or six different kinds of screws that are of different lengths. Some of them have keeper nuts with that plastic ring so they don't come unscrewed. Others have lock washers.

Some of them have smooth heads. Some of them have Phillips heads. There's all different kinds of screws and I take one look at that and I think I will certainly use the

wrong screw in the wrong place and I have to take this thing back apart if I don't read the instructions.

I will get the instructions and lay them out and start at A and go all the way through H to get the thing built and I will take the screw and it says use such and such a screw. They've got a life size drawing and you lay it against that and say okay this is the right one. It's the right length.

It's got the right head and there's the right number of them. I'm going to use this one. I read the instructions because I feel a strong sense of need and an imminent sense of impending failure if I try to go on my own and do this.

I need those instructions. How many times do you open up a microwave that's replacing the one that burned out or you fried and burned popcorn in or whatever and it's got a big thick instruction sheet in eight languages and you just take the book and toss it aside. Why? I know how to work a microwave.

Look the buttons are labeled. It's got a turntable in it. Take the tape off.

Take the styrofoam out from inside. Plug the thing in and let's get the coffee hot. I don't need, I don't have a sense of need therefore I don't turn to the manual.

Most things I feel ought to be intuitive enough unless it's a lot of assembly required but for using an appliance what do you need a manual for? The thing ought to be clear enough that I can walk up to any blender, any microwave, any oven, any washing machine. My goodness look at these washing machines now that have got computers in them and sing songs at the end and you turn the thing on and there's dials and buttons and options and steam this and wrinkle free that and sensor. What is going on? Make the thing simple.

You're going to put controls on the dashboard of a car. I should be able to operate those without looking. Give me knobs.

Give me buttons. Give me something I can locate by touch and never take my eyes off the road. If you put a flat screen in a car, if you buy a car with a flat screen don't drive and use any of those controls.

Get the co-pilot to operate those. If you're looking away from the road because you're trying to change stations on the radio or change the temperature in your air conditioner that is dangerous. You might as well just text while you're driving.

It's very little different. The insanity of putting flat screens in cars is just beyond my belief. The sense of need is manifest.

Why have the disciples climbed the mountain? They need to hear what Jesus has to say.

What is the sense of need for the multitudes down below? I need healing. I need my friend, my relative healed.

I need my family healed. But I can't cart all the sick and afflicted up the mountainside. It was a pretty major attempt when they opened up the roof and let the guy down, the paralytic.

They climbed a set of steps and got on the roof. To climb a mountain with sick people? Why did Jesus climb the mountain? The sick can't go there. You ever try dragging somebody having an epileptic fit up a mountain? Or try to lead the blind up these rocky cliff paths.

Jesus needs to be separate from the sick. Point of application, you do not always need to be doing ministry or exercising your spiritual gift, even when you know what it is and even when you have that ability. Just because I am a teacher and have been called to that and equipped for that, doesn't mean I teach all the time.

There is a time to teach and there is a time to not teach. Jesus has the ability to heal all who come to him and there are occasions when he does so. There are other occasions where he does not.

We are going to see the pool of Bethesda and there is a throng of sick and afflicted around about him and he heals one guy and then he gets out of there. There is a time to every purpose and a season for everything under the sun. Pay attention to the time and the season.

You may know something, it is not always the time to tell it. You may be experiencing something, it is not always the time to take a picture of it and post it on Facebook. There is a time to be thoughtful.

There is a time to be quiet. There is a time to be aware. There is a time and a place to teach and there are other times and places not to teach.

There is time to engage the crowds and multitudes and Jesus does this throughout his ministry but there are other times when he goes to the mountain, when he goes off by himself. For what purposes? Jesus goes off even from the disciples, for what purpose? Regularly, consistently throughout all four Gospels. What does Jesus do when he gets away from even his closest disciples? What does he do? He prays.

And what is an essential component of prayer? Reflection on, meditation on, concentration on the Word of God. You can't pray if you are not thinking, cycling what you know into that conversation. We don't talk to each other without implementing what we know.

Our personal knowledge of one another is what makes conversation so interesting.

Shared enthusiasms, common understandings, common reactions and responses to the world around us, common enjoyment, common horror at things that happen, those things that are in common, we talk about those. Even though we know it already, it is not like, well, I learned 20 years ago that you don't like green peppers or that you really do like whipped cream.

It doesn't mean that we don't reiterate and have that in common and talk about it and have humor about it even because it is a part of relationship. If you are going to communicate with God, you have to talk about what God wants to talk about, right? Did you ever try to talk to somebody about something they have no interest in whatsoever? Have you ever been someone being talked to? Have you ever gone on one of these promotional things, buy a condo and we will give you a set of steak knives, listen to our presentation about Swampland and you will get a benefit. And you know ahead of time, there is no chance in this life or the next that I am ever going to partake of what you are selling, but I will endure it to get the steak knives.

I will endure it to get the free whatever it is they are offering. But you are not interested. People in school, elementary school, junior high, high school, college, my psychology classes, I could not have been less interested if they were talking in a language I didn't understand.

Couldn't have been less interested. God wants to talk to people who are interested in what He is interested in. If you are not that person, you are going to get thinned out.

Jesus is going to climb a mountain and leave you at the bottom, because all you are interested in is benefits. You are not interested in what He has to say. The disciples are interested in what He has to say.

They climb. So, the crowd is not interested in what Jesus can say. The crowd can be large.

The crowd can be small. When He is seated, His disciples come to Him. He opens His mouth and He teaches them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit.

This is a recognition that I have a need. It doesn't so much mean I am impoverished and have nothing. This is the kind of poverty that says, I do not have enough.

Never get ready to cook up a recipe and you look in the cupboard and you've got some, but not enough. This recipe calls for three eggs and I've only got one. It calls for a cup of sugar and I've just got a few grains in the bottom of the bowl.

I have some, but I don't have enough. We, of course, understand that being poor in spirit is a recognition that I am never satiated. I never have enough.

I've never arrived. I'm not at the point where scripture is no longer necessary for me to

look at or think about because I've got it all. I'm completely competent.

There are a lot of skills where you can pretty much know everything there is to know. You don't ever have to crack a book or go back and take a class or get a tutorial or watch a YouTube video. You've done this enough that nobody can tell you anything you don't already know.

That's not necessarily a bad thing. It just means that you're very knowledgeable and very experienced and you are competent to handle all of the routine cases that come your way. It would have to be something really exceptional where you have to go back and try to get some new or updated information.

You're fully competent. If you are poor in spirit, you recognize that as long as we are in this life, as long as we carry around our fallen nature, as long as we hit resistance from the fallen nature of others and the principalities and powers and rulers of the darkness of this age, we are never fully equipped. You can't have, some of us feel this way about ammunition, you can never have enough.

I just have to really stick both hands in my pockets to walk by 45 caliber ammunition. I would love to have just one more box or get some brass and make my own or buy more primers or buy more powder or get more lead. I feel like I could never have enough lead to be able to make my own bullets.

Anytime I see scrap lead, I want it. I am perpetually in need in that area. I feel like you can never have enough.

There's no such thing as too much. Well, in our spirit, when we look at ourselves and we recognize that as long as we're in this life, we're never going to be complete and we're never going to be perfected and we're never going to not need the ministry of God's Holy Spirit and the power and guidance and light that comes from God's Word. You can't have too much.

Look at it this way. This is like a modern example. You've probably used Google Maps and you say, well, if you show the whole United States on Google Maps and begin to zoom in, you can see the major interstates that crisscross the country.

You say, well, that's pretty good. If I'm going from Oklahoma to California, just show me an interstate and I'll find it. I'm going to Virginia, show me the interstates, I'll map a route.

Maybe I'm not going that far. Maybe I'm just going to go to Tennessee. I want to find Dollywood or I want to find, is that Noah's Ark thing in Tennessee or Kentucky? It's in Kentucky just across the line.

I'll go to Tennessee and then go up to Kentucky. Well, I need a little bit more resolution,

so let me expand my Google Map and now I start to get the state highways and some of the smaller county roads and all that. Well, if you want to be able to get anywhere you need to go and you never know where that's going to be, maybe you're a piano tuner and you've got people scattered through nine counties in northeast Oklahoma and who knows where they are.

Can you have too much detail in your Google Map? If you zoom that thing, would you love to be able to see that these people have a quarter mile long driveway and that their house is not where the pinpoint is on the road, it's up on this hill around a corner. Could you ever have too much detail on your Google Maps or in your Garmin? You know, you constantly have to go, if you use a Garmin and you've got to download the updated maps, why? Roads are changing. You know, this road's closed, this road's open, this has been rerouted.

Try to go to Tulsa through Catoosa and Verdigris now. Well, the roads aren't the same as when I lived here before. It's all different and things have changed.

Can you ever have enough knowledge when you don't know where you might have to go? Well, this is what it means to be poor in spirit. Are you prepared for any eventuality that God throws at you? You might get cancer, your loved one might have some sort of an infarction health-wise or a relocation or a job loss or a contentious situation that arises among people in your periphery that you didn't see coming. Can you ever have enough spiritual resources that you know that you're prepared for anything that could possibly happen? You can't.

And when you recognize that and you understand it and you're constantly trying to get more detail and more comprehensive understanding, what are you? You're poor in spirit. I am needy. If God has something to say to me, I always need to listen.

I don't have to say, let me stop you right there. I've heard that. Sermon on the Mount, tell me when you're done.

Listen, our church went through the Sermon on the Mount. I've been through Psalm 23. Don't talk to me about this or that or the other.

I've already been there and done that. That is a dangerous thing to find in ourselves where we don't feel the need. Poor in spirit is recognizing I am needy.

And the only one who can supply that need is my Father in Heaven. Your Father knows what you need before you ask Him. And sometimes when you do ask Him, He's not going to give you what you ask.

He's going to give you what you need. Because He knows what we need. And we have to recognize that we are needy.

And those who recognize their need are blessed. Why? Everything in the Kingdom of Heaven is coming to them. The whole Kingdom.

They possess it. This is astronomically beyond our understanding. Do you know what's in the Kingdom of Heaven? If I gave you a blank notebook and said, see how many pages you can fill describing the Kingdom of Heaven.

Okay, first page, gates of pearl, streets of gold, probably angels, saints, throne, water. If you have a lot of detail, you've got trees on each side of the River of Life. You've got people wheeling buckets of leaves outside the city.

Oh yeah, 12 gates, city built, four square. If you can fill more than the front and back side of one notebook paper with what you know about the Kingdom of Heaven, you probably know more than I do. We don't know.

Now I do know how to write double spaced and turn a two page theme into five, as do you. But you know what I'm talking about here? Theirs is the Kingdom. It is a promise.

You don't actually know how fulsome and how replete and how generous and what a treasure this promise is. If you recognize that you have a lack, you're going to have feeling like you can't believe later on. Just reflect on what we do and do not know about Kingdom of Heaven and whatever it is.

Did you ever get a thing and it wasn't until later you found out that it had all of these cool features that you didn't even see coming? I've had things for years and I suddenly discovered, wow, I didn't know it would do that. I probably should have read the manual that I thought I had no need for. Because look at what it does.

I didn't know it would do this. I accidentally hit this button and look what happened. I did it by mistake.

That's what the Kingdom of Heaven is like. You just don't know. And even if you read the manual, eye has not seen and ear has not heard, but God reveals them by His Spirit.

And He gives us a taste. He gives us an adumbration, an expectation. Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

But notice it's put in the third person, just like it is in Psalm 119 at the beginning. I've looked around and seen people in this category. Well, Jesus says here is a description of what is coming for this classification, this category of people.

It's impersonal to begin with. It goes the same for those who mourn. Now does it mean, oh, I've lost a loved one, I've had a setback, I am disappointed, I am discouraged, I am mourning.

There's a lot of reasons why we mourn. But in the same way that there are a lot of

different kinds of poverty, and this is poverty of spirit, what kind of mourning would this be? What kind of mourning would it be? It can certainly incorporate and include the things that we typically associate with that, but what does it, what does mourning actually mean? You look at this, the Greek word here is from the verb *penteo*, and it means to have sorrow, to grieve, to be working through pain. And what is it that sorrows us? What is it that grieves us? What is it that pains us? There's a lot of things.

It certainly includes bereavement. It certainly includes loss and disappointment and the product and result of evil around us, and sometimes our own failures and shortcomings cause us sorrow and grief. There's this whole concept of godly sorrow, and is it or is it not required for forgiveness? But there is in fact a godly sorrow.

There is a genuine sorrow and disappointment in self. I will be sorry for my sin, David says. I'm grieved by it.

But there is comfort in the future. Blessed are the meek, and you know even before I tell you that this word for meekness, *praus*, p-r-a-u-s, it was used in secular Greek for that which is gentle and respectful, not prone to swaggering. It has the idea of mildness.

It was used of those who could tame a wild animal, take something that is wild. This is dominance over impulse, dominance over reaction, dominance over a quick temper, dominance over a bold confidence in self. It is often used in contrast to words that talk about being rough, being hard, being violent.

This would be the opposite of those things. You are not violent. You are not rough.

You are not hard or implacable. It is used as an opposite to being angry. It is used as being opposite of being brutal, opposite of brutality.

It is a synonym for patience, a synonym for affability, being approachable, being welcoming and pleasant to others. It is used for those who agree with people who present logic, who give reasonable explanations, a reasonable account, and you are not suspicious. You are not one given to flights of temper.

It is described as a quiet and friendly composure which does not become embittered or angry at what is unpleasant, whether people or fate. This is an active attitude and a deliberate acceptance, not just passive submission. It doesn't mean passive submission.

It means you are active and deliberately choosing to be accepting, to be flexible. I think it is a good aspiration to be flexible, especially about non-essential things, to be tranquil, and it emanates from a central repository of peace. People who have trouble with being *praus* don't have a central core of peace that stabilizes them and on which they can draw when the chips are down.

If you lack peace, you are going to be all of the things that *praus* is not. You are going to

be intemperate. You are going to be ungoverned.

You are going to be inflexible about silly things. You are going to have tantrums. You are going to react.

You are going to see redness coming from your collar up. You are going to see veins pulsing in your temple. You are going to be prone to anger, prone to intolerance, prone to flights of fist-waving at what can't be changed.

You will be brusque. You will be brutal. You will be angry.

You will be impatient. You will not be friendly as a rule. You will often be unfriendly.

By the way, gentle friendliness, this praus disposition was prized in the Greek world when they encountered it. It was spoken of by their poets and authors as a virtue in human relationships. The Delphic Oracle, the Oracle at Delphi, was given to counsel people to be praus.

This was considered the highest form of wisdom and self-control. It was used of leniency by judges even though laws should be enforced, some compassion and mercy, some flexibility, some perception and what you might call in the good sense humanity being involved. All of these were marks of praus.

But this again is in the spiritual realm. This is not just a hail fellow well met as an unbeliever. When these things flow from the peace that God gives, Jesus said, peace I give to you.

My peace I leave with you. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. But when this is spiritual peace and you have spiritual praus, because it is not just, isn't he a nice guy, just flexible, they're so tolerant, they're so forgiving, never a bad word, what a wonderful person.

What it ought to be is look at the faith and the patience, how the glory of God is reflected out of this person's soul. You know why they are this way? If you ask them how they can have peace in such a volatile situation, in such a horrible set of circumstances, they'll tell you that they've got the Lord in their life. They are drawing on their knowledge of the scriptures and their relationship with God and the comfort of the Holy Spirit and their certainty that God's got this thing under control.

It's wonderful if you've lived other places and then you come back to northeast Oklahoma as we have, on the 6 o'clock news, the local Tulsa news, tornadoes hit, bad weather has struck, a guy is standing in front of the wreckage of everything that he owned, and he'll say, and they will broadcast, well they say, well how are you doing, how do you feel? He says, well you know, we've still got the Lord and God is with us and we're okay. We're looking to the blessings, there was no loss of life here. The guy is

standing in front of this stuff that looks like it's been in a giant blender, his house, all of his belongings, but he says, God's got this, he's got a reason, and we'll just pick up and move on.

There is a reservoir of peace for those who are praus, of a spiritual nature, not just a secular nature, and those people often are maintaining that peace in the face of loss, bereavement, shortcoming on the part of others, but they will inherit the earth. We're going to see more about this notion just very quickly as we close here. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

You have the ones who mourn and are comforted, blessed are the meek, they shall inherit the earth. You've got heaven in verse 3, you've got the earth in verse 5. And looking down at the latter portion of this section, in verse 6, you see that verse 11, when you're reviled and persecuted on the earth, and people say all kinds of evil against you falsely for my sake, your reward is great in heaven. You are the salt of the earth.

Salt operates on the earth, right? It doesn't say you're the salt of heaven, it says you're the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world, let your light so shine before men that they see your good works and glorify your father, where? In heaven. The light reflects from heaven, the salt operates on earth.

So we're going to see over and over again, and at the very center of this chiasm when you get to the Lord's prayer, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, earth, heaven. We're going to watch for this interplay between what is on earth and what is in heaven. Blessed are the ones who experience this on earth, because this is what is awaiting them in heaven, from heaven, sourced in heaven, stored in heaven, awaiting the time of dispensation in the future.

Well, it's a lot to think about. It's a wonderful beginning to this teaching section. We like to think of ourselves as followers of the Lord Jesus, and this is directed to us.

This is not pie in the sky, by and by. This is not something for Israel, if they will accept the kingdom. This is for followers of the Lord Jesus, and such are you if, to quote Paul.

Well, let's close here in prayer. We'll pick up here next time. Father, thank you for the truth of your word.

Thank you for the presence and power of your spirit. We pray that those wonderful heavenly gifts will conspire together in our hearts to inspire obedience and motivation and courage in the face of difficulty, comfort in times of distress, and a fixing of our eyes on the Lord Jesus as the beginner and the ender, the author and the finisher of our faith. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.