

(slide #1) Title slide

INTRODUCTION

The very first color image of the whole earth was taken from space by the DODGE satellite in 1967.

(Slide #2) wait ...

(Slide 3) a better photo from Apollo 17...

Isn't that something. It took how many years of human history for that picture to become possible. It was not possible to get far enough away to see the whole picture. They of course needed enough technology to build a rocket and send it into space with a camera to shoot the pic.

The book of Matthew, in the first few chapters, is an example of finally being able to get far enough away to see the whole picture. Matthew had the vantage point of being with Christ and seeing the culmination of thousands of years of God's redemptive plan unfold.

The promised Jewish Messiah, that was prophesied over and over in the Old Testament or the Jewish Bible, had come. It was Jesus. He was a descendant of King David from 900 years earlier, and many prophecies told that a Messiah or deliverer would be sent by God.

But there was something unexpected. This was not just a man who would come to deliver his people Israel from the Roman oppression, but he was actually God come to do what no man could do.

The Jews in Jesus' day would have a difficult time unraveling years of teachings that missed the mark about the identity of the Messiah. To them he was supposed to be a deliverer to deliver them from their enemies, but as we have seen in the pronouncement of the Angel, that he would instead,

and more importantly save the people from their sins. To many he would be a disappointment, because they thought that political freedom was most important.

Last week, we spoke of how the other various events of Jesus life, in chapters three and four of Matthew point to him being the promised, prophesied King of Israel.

Some of those signs, just to review: Like any King of the time, he had a herald to announce his coming; this was John the Baptist. Jesus also had a coronation ceremony and this was his baptism by John and God the Father and God the Holy Spirit showed up.

Jesus was tested to show his worthiness to be a King; he passed all the temptations and showed that he is a king that we can trust. He also called followers to join his “administration” so to speak. He began to live and minister to all sorts of people without distinction; Not just Jews, but he showed that the Kingdom of God was for everyone that came to him in faith.

The passage we are going to look at today has been described as the greatest sermon ever preached; and that is what we would expect since it was Jesus that preached it and we know that he is the son of God: God become man.

The big picture, the whole world view, that we need to see is that in the next few chapters of Matthew are these laws or principles of the Kingdom of Heaven given by the King for his subjects. Jesus is ushering a new age. Something new is here. All of his followers will live with these laws.

OUR CONDITION

Jesus is illustrating the “be like this” attitudes that each person in God’s Kingdom possesses. He shows why they are necessary and how they are used.

(slide #4)

The essential principles that Jesus taught:

- Show how to live with God and man.
- Show how to endure.
- Show how to bring change to others.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Let me read Matthew 5:1–16 (ESV)

¹Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

²And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

³Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

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

⁵Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

⁶Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

⁷Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

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

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

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

¹¹Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

¹²Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

¹³You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

¹⁴You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.

¹⁵Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.

¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

SOME BACKGROUND

The first thing that we notice is that there is a lot of "blessedness." Blessed are the poor in spirit; blessed are those that mourn; blessed are the meek. Now if you have heard a sermon about this passage some other time, you have probably heard that this word "blessed" means "happy."

The New Testament of the Bible, of which this is a part, was written in Greek and so the Greek word "blessed" is **Makarios**. It is translated both as happy and also as blessed. Now, I am going to go with blessed; and here is why; a person can be happy all by themselves. They can be happy in their circumstances or place and life all by themselves; where is God in this? The Bible speaks of living in a relationship with God. Where is God if blessed means that we are happy? Many people are happy and do not live with God in any place in their life! Besides, does it make sense to say, "Happy are those that mourn?" They are clearly not happy, so it must be something more.

Also, you will notice that as a result of being “blessed” they receive something:

Blessed are the poor in spirit (for) theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those that mourn (for) they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek (for) they shall inherit the earth.

And on and on. This shows that “blessed” means that a person will receive something and it is not just because they are happy, but God is too! God is pleased and actively gives “blessings” to a person with these attitudes or disposition to life.

There is a famous chapter in the Bible in the Old Testament that states the “blessings” that God will give for obeying his laws. It is in Deuteronomy 28. I will read verses 1-3.

Deuteronomy 28:1–3 (ESV)

¹“And if you faithfully obey the voice of the LORD your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I [Moses] command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. ²And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the LORD your God. ³Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field...

The point is that God is the one that blesses. He was involved in making it happen.

The second thing that we should notice is that those that are blessed have already received. The words say, “blessed are.” That is past tense. This means that because of their way of living, they already ARE blessed and are going to be further blessed. This is important to understand that these people are already blessed.

You noticed that Jesus said to his disciples, “You are the light of the world.” This shows that these people depicted in these beatitudes are already in the Kingdom of heaven; so, these beatitudes are descriptions or illustrations of people that have been blessed already.

Why is it important to see this?

We know this because there is some commonality in these various attitudes that bring blessings. **What is common among them?** It is that the people depicted here are giving, merciful, self-sacrificing and not looking out for themselves, but rather they are focused on others and on God.

As Christians, we know how this happens: It is because God has shown us mercy, therefore we can be merciful to others. Because they know God, they can mourn over sin and injustice and not be overwhelmed, because they know there is hope and comfort in God.

Because they know that Jesus died for them for their sins, rather than asserting his own innocence; he was “meek” trusting himself to God and he was crucified on a cross. He did not use his power to get what he wanted, or prevent what he did not want, but instead, refused to use his power and submitting to God’s will was crucified on a cross so that our sins could be forgiven.

Because Jesus was meek, those people that are already saved by him are “blessed” with the same attitude; an attitude that trusts God to make things right and equal, so that they do not have to do that for themselves. Nine times it says, “Blessed are.” They are already blessed.

It is also important to see this so that we are not trying to earn our way to heaven based upon trying to be like the people depicted here. As Christians, we know that no one is worthy of a place in the Kingdom of Heaven. It is given as a gift and not because we are good enough or earned a right

standing with God. A Christian understands that it is despite of who they are that they are in the Kingdom of Heaven. It is by God's mercy and grace that he gives the free gift.

We receive the free gift of forgiveness when we put our faith in Christ who died for us. So, this is essential to understand this first when looking at the descriptions of the blessed people; that they are not earning favor because of it, they have been already changed because of God's favor towards them!

Jesus said this,

John 3:16–17 (ESV)

¹⁶“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

God takes the initiative to save people. These beatitudes show what people “be like” after they are saved by Jesus Christ.

But now that we have a few things out of the way, we need to focus on what Jesus is saying to us in these beatitudes. I cannot do better than what Jesus has already spoken to us. It is written down for us to read and meditate upon. All that I can do is maybe clarify a few things. But the beatitudes are for us to meditate upon. (printed copies...)

SHOW HOW TO LIVE WITH GOD AND MAN

The beatitudes show how to live with God and man.

There are eight beautiful attitudes (thus “beatitudes”) that exemplify Christ and those people that have been changed by him. The world has its own attitudes; we could call them the “ug” attitudes (or ugly attitudes) because

they are opposite of beauty. We are very familiar with them because we all live them to various degrees.

(slide #5 & 6)

Ugattitude #1 Happy are the proud in spirit for they do not have to see their real need. But, Jesus says, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

A person “poor in spirit” is not talking about physical poverty – but a person that sees their spiritual poverty. They know that have nothing to offer and no way to change themselves. That is a difficult place to be until you know that God gives grace to the humble. These poor in spirit have called out for God’s mercy, and he has heard them.

Luke 18:9–14 (ESV) (Jesus)

⁹He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: ¹⁰“Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ ¹³But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ ¹⁴I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

This is what it means to be poor in spirit.

(slide #7 & 8)

Ugattitude #2: Happy are those that are pleased with themselves for they do not need any comfort, but Jesus says, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”

A person saved by Christ mourns over their sin. They know they have been forgiven, but the vestiges of sin remain, and they long for righteousness and that day when God will remove all sin from them. They mourn because they know that God is dishonored. But they also know of the comfort of God’s compassionate heart,

Isaiah 40:1a–2a (ESV) (summary)

¹Comfort, comfort my people, says your God ... [your] iniquity is pardoned.

(slide #9 & 10)

Ugattitude #3: Happy are those that assert themselves for they shall get what they think they want but, Jesus says, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”

Psalms 37:7–9 (ESV) (fragments)

⁷Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him...

⁸Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! ... those who wait for the LORD shall inherit the land.

A meek person is one that is self-controlled. They could take what they want, but instead they leave that to the Lord. Meek people wait for the Lord and take shelter in him.

As an example of “meekness” we can look at the life of the one that wrote that psalm that I just read – David. God had promised to David that he

would be king. God had rejected King Saul and Saul was chasing and trying to kill David. There was more than one opportunity for David to have killed Saul, but he knew that would be taking matters into his own hand and that he would not “touch” the Lord’s anointed. He waited for God to take Saul out of the way, and it took years of hardship first.

That is what it looks like when someone is meek. It takes a lot of strength.

(slide #11 & 12)

Ugattitude #4: Happy are those that are self-righteous for they will not be satisfied until all are canceled, but Jesus says, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”

Righteousness is the quality of doing all that God wants. It is the positive side of being sinless. Not merely sinless, but having done all the good works that God has planned.

It is God who transforms the heart so that it longs for what God wants. We understand what God says in

Ephesians 2:10 (ESV)

¹⁰For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

A righteous person is not just a sinless person, but one who actively does God’s will.

(slide #13 & 14)

Ugattitude #5: Happy are those that exact justice for they shall get what is fair but Jesus says, “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.”

You don’t want what is fair from God. If you get what is fair, you will be in hell. A merciful person knows that they are the problem. They ask God for

mercy and not what is fair. It is not fair that Jesus died for us on the cross, but it was merciful.

We don't try to force change on others, but rather forgive as we have been forgiven. (pause...)

We could continue with the Ugatitudes, but you already know how the world thinks, because we are part of the world and think that way too. But Jesus forgives and cleanses us when we succumb to those ways again.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."

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

Those that are already in the Kingdom of Heaven, do for others what God has done for them!

SHOW HOW TO ENDURE

Jesus showed the principles for how to live with God and man and he also **shows us how to endure.**

In verse 10 of chapter 5,

¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Jesus had to show his followers that they would be persecuted. There would be people spreading false information about them.

Jesus showed his followers that they would be blessed in heaven just like the prophets that came before them. I think they were impressed at some level that they were to be counted as equals with the prophets. To the degree that a person is persecuted for their faith, they are counted in with the prophets and given a prophet's blessing.

The writer of Hebrews reviews the lives of people of faith in the Old Testament.

Hebrews 11:13–14, 16 (ESV)

¹³These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. ¹⁴For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland.

¹⁶But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

SHOW HOW TO BRING CHANGE TO OTHERS

Jesus has done several things in his teaching in the passage. Jesus showed the principles for **how to live with God and man** and he also **showed us how to endure**.

And now he is going to show how to bring change to others.

After the beatitudes, Jesus continues his teaching, in verse 13,

¹³*"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. ¹⁴"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it*

gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Changed people change people. (2x)

A Christian is one who reflects the light that God has shone on him or her. We are like the moon, that has no light of its own, it just reflects what is shone on it by the sun.

We are a city; Jesus was speaking to the disciples. They collectively, or the Church is the city set on a hill. The church is supposed to be the light of the world. We need to be out there, in the world, giving light to all that need it.

CONCLUSION

Changed people change people.

In conclusion, let me illustrate this with my own life. In high school, I was a pretty lonely kid. I was like some of the Gen Z kids that we saw in the video. High School can be part of the hardest time of life, College too. We need to have a lot of compassion on students as they try to figure life out.

But I was quite lonely because I used to stutter when I spoke and so I avoided doing much because I could not really initiate very well. By the time that High School was over, I started having some friends and one invited me to church. My family had dropped out of church years before and I felt guilty, because I knew God was important.

In any case, I went to church with them on Sunday nights so that I could be with some friends. One night something happened that I will never forget. Two of my friends were talking to one another after the service a few rows ahead of me. They were girls and apparently had some sort of argument, but one of the girls went up to her friend and apologized to her and said that she loved her.

I was stunned because I could see that they were mature well beyond their age of about 16. I knew it was because of their faith in Christ that they could do something so genuine and loving. I had never seen that, especially in people so young. I was undone.

Now later, in talking to this young lady, probably blubbering along, she was insightful enough to know that I needed Jesus in my life. She shared the gospel with me.

I think she shared John 3:16 first.

John 3:16 (ESV)

¹⁶“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Then she took me through a little journey in the book of Romans.

Romans 3:23 (ESV)

²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

And also

Romans 6:23 (ESV)

²³For the wages of sin is death, [I sure knew that I felt like I was dead to God]

but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

When she said that I got it. I knew where this was going somehow. That eternal life with God must be a gift... no one could earn it.

Romans 5:7–8 (ESV)

⁷For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— ⁸but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

And finally,

Romans 10:9–10 (ESV)

⁹because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

¹⁰For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

Then she asked me the most profound question ever, ‘David have you ever asked Jesus into your life?’

I knew that if I did I would be putting my trust and faith in Christ and what he did for me. I said “no.” She said would you like to? “Yes” was my answer.

Then she said, then pray after me...

Lord Jesus, forgive me because I know that I have sinned against you. Please forgive my sin and come into my life. Give me eternal life as a free gift. Make me into the person you want me to be. Amen.

I prayed that prayer and I knew that I was saved. Not because of my own virtue but despite my sin. That is when I knew that I was a real Christian.

You see, **changed people change people**. I am so glad for the change God made in my friend that led me to Christ.

Please pray with me.