

# WHAT IT'S LIKE TO LIVE LIKE A KING

BY DR. JERRY VINES

*By the Book*™ A Chapter by  
Chapter Bible Study Series  
from **Jerry Vines Ministries**  
2295 Towne Lake Parkway  
Suite 116 #249  
Woodstock, GA 30189

## Let's Begin

*Jesus preached the greatest sermon ever because he was the greatest preacher ever. The theme running through the sermon is the character and conduct of Kingdom people. He spoke to the "multitudes...his disciples" (v. 1). Yet, while the sermon was spoken to His disciples, it was overheard by the world. Thus, the sermon Jesus preached here becomes as relevant today as when He first uttered it on the hillside.*

*The key verse in understanding chapter five is verse twenty: "except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees..." Our study today is divided into two parts. First, let's look at:*

- I. Character: The Beauty of Kingdom Life (vv. 1-12)**
- II. Conduct: The Duty of Kingdom Life (vv. 13-48)**

## I. Character: The Beauty of Kingdom Life (vv. 1-12)

**Character is the identity of who we are, but conduct is what we do.** Character comes first and conduct flows from it. Behavior follows belief. In these "beatitudes" nine times Jesus uses the term translated "Blessed." It means "happy" or "to be congratulated" and is even used of God (cf. 1 Timothy 1:11). "Beatitudes" displays the beauty of Kingdom life.

**First, we are told how to enter the Kingdom** (vv. 3-5). Kingdom entrance begins on the inside of us and thus deals with inward attitudes. Jesus speaks of those who are "poor in spirit" (v. 3), those who "mourn" (v. 4) and those who are "meek" (v. 5), all of which speak primarily of attitudes.

(1) *Our Attitude toward Self* (v. 3). Surely this is not expected. "Poor" is "absolute poverty" in the ancient world and often used of beggars. Our utter spiritual poverty is awakened in our heart by the Holy Spirit. This poverty of spirit is the first step toward salvation. The Holy Spirit leaves us humbled in the presence of God.

(2) *Our Attitude toward Sin* (v. 4). Once again we are startled. Jesus usually does not speak to our fancies. Why would He say "Happy" are those who "mourn"? After all, he is not speaking in terms of mourning over the loss of a loved one. Rather, He speaks concerning our sorrow for sin.

People want joy apart from conviction of sin. But conviction of sin precedes conversion from sin; joy of forgiveness follows repentant sorrow.

(3) *Our Attitude toward the Savior* (v. 5). Jesus says the "meek" shall "inherit the earth". The word "meek" in no way implies "weak" (cf. Numbers 12:3; Matthew 11:29). Meekness is not a virtue the world admires. The world sees virtue in self-assertion. "Meek" was used in the ancient world for horses broken to obey the rider's commands. It implied submission or a yielded spirit. The "meek" man is a submitted man—one yielded to God.

**Second, we are told how to express the Kingdom** (vv. 6-8) Entering the Kingdom begins a beautiful journey with God. Now we may move on to

*Kingdom entrance begins on the inside of us and thus deals with inward attitudes.*



### Reflection Connection

*How significant is character when looking at a leader? Do you think character should be a trait of our government officials? Explain.*

expressing the beauty of living as a citizen of the Kingdom. To do so, we observe the citizen's threefold attitude which reflects his entrance into Kingdom life.

(1) *An Upward Attitude* (v. 6). Those who "hunger" and "thirst" after "righteousness". We know the pain of hunger and strong desires we have when thirsty. The "happy" believer possesses equally strong desires to be like God, to desire "righteousness" of God. Our whole being craves to be right with God (Psalm 42:1-2; James 4:8).

(2) *An Outward Attitude* (v. 7). Jesus says "Happy" are the "merciful". Entering the Kingdom begins a beautiful journey with God. Now we may move on to expressing the beauty of living as a citizen of the Kingdom. To do so, we observe the citizen's threefold attitude which reflects his entrance into Kingdom life. This reveals tenderness toward others; feelings of sympathy toward others' misery. This does not mean there is apathy about sin. It means we hate sin but not the sinner. Note also, the ones who are "merciful" are the ones who "obtain mercy". To be forgiven, I must forgive. My attitude toward others must be mercy and grace.

## *We hate sin but not the sinner.*

(3) *An Inward Attitude* (v. 8). The heart is our moral center, so Jesus says "Happy" are the "pure in heart".

The word means "washed" or "unmixed". It implies to be clean within, deep down where all actions spring up. The Jews had outward purity but Jesus spoke of inward purity (cf. v. 20; Hebrews 12:14). The result is the Kingdom citizen will "see God". This is future: "we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2).

*Finally, we are to enjoy the Kingdom* (vv. 9-12). Kingdom citizens enjoy the Kingdom life. How? Note in particular the three ways below.

**First, we enjoy Kingdom life by eliminating strife** (v. 9). Jesus talks about "peacemakers". Sin brought conflict; the Christian brings calmness. Some people are the center of conflict. "Peacemakers" are called "children of God."

**Second, we enjoy Kingdom life by expecting spite** (v. 10). The "persecuted" are "happy"! Jesus knew Kingdom life to be unpopular (compare John 15:20). However the persecution must be "for righteousness sake" or, in other words, persecuted "falsely." For those who are persecuted, "theirs is the Kingdom of heaven."

**Finally, we enjoy Kingdom life by experiencing splendor** (vv. 11-12). "Rejoice" Jesus says! That is, Christians are to be "exceedingly glad." How could the persecuted do such a thing? Not only are they Kingdom citizens now, "theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." Rejoicing in the midst of persecution is proof of who you are and where you are going.

## II. Conduct: The Duty of Kingdom Life (vv. 13-48)

We **first** note the duty of **permeation** (v. 13). Jesus moves from *inward character to outward conduct; from attitude to action; belief to behavior*. In doing so, He piles image upon image and deals with numerous moral issues in the process. Jesus offers us two over-arching duties of Kingdom life and then we will note their

### Reflection Connection

*What do you think about when the phrase "poor in spirit" is used?*



### Reflection Connection

*Explain the difference, if any, between “joy” and “happiness.” Do you think either characterizes the Church today? Why or why not?*

### Reflection Connection

*Looking at our culture, do you think there is widespread persecution toward people of faith? How about in other countries? If you know a missionary, contact them and ask for a testimonial.*

### Reflection Connection

*Why must righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees? What kind of righteousness will God accept?*

application to certain moral behaviors. Jesus says we are to be “salt”. Salt is a miracle made of two poisons: sodium and chloride. But together salt is safe. It is used as a preservative, for seasoning and even as medicine. The main quality is that of preserving, however.

Here Jesus is saying Kingdom citizens preserve the society in which we live. Every realm is affected: political, religious, family and cultural. The worst thing that could happen, Jesus warns, is “salt that’s lost its savor.” Christians permeate society.

Next, we observe the duty of *illumination* (v. 16). Salt permeates society, preserving it; light radiates in society illuminating it. Salt purifies from the world’s corruption; *light illumines the world’s confusion and offers the Truth, Jesus Christ*.

Third, let us look at the duty of *application* (vv. 17-48). While the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was self-centered, the righteousness that exceeded theirs is completely from Christ and by nature “*heart righteousness*,” (v. 20; cp. 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 10:4). Jesus, the original Lawgiver, expounds perfectly the Law before them.

*Action flows  
from the  
heart*

Jesus expounds the **Law of Human Life** (vv. 21-26). Jesus

said “Thou shalt not kill.” The religious leaders taught only about the act itself. Jesus moves the act to its source—the heart. Recall that action flows from the heart. The Law says there is to be no murder. Jesus says anger in the heart is murder in the making. Of course, not all anger is wrong (cf. Ephesians 4:26). But the point is, *uncontrolled anger leads to devastating consequences*.

Jesus expounds the **Law of Sinful Lust** (vv. 27-30). Jesus speaks here of God’s law about sexual purity. In essence, this is a law about marriage and the sanctity of the wedding vows. It’s God drawing a **circle of protection around marriage**.

The scribes and Pharisees attempted to obey the letter of the law. Jesus is saying it doesn’t make you guiltless even if you never physically break the wedding vows. He who “looketh on a woman to lust after her” commits adultery in his heart. This means a “lingering, deliberate look”; a look with desire for her. Jesus becomes graphic. If our eye causes us to “offend”, we are to poke it out! Not literally. He is merely saying we should deal severely with our sin (vv. 29-30).

Jesus expounds the **Law of Marriage Vows** (vv. 31-32). This portion deals with the problem of defaulting marriages. Jesus teaches marriage creates a union not to be dissolved. Two shall be one (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:16-18). One sin dissolves marriage—“fornication”.

Jesus expounds the **Law of Swearing** (vv. 33-37). At the time, people were only required to keep oaths (that is, promises) they made in God’s name. Jesus said not swear by God, heaven, or anything else. Instead, let your yes be yes and your no be no — anything more comes from evil.



### Reflection Connection

*Do you think Jesus was doing away with the Old Testament Law? Explain.*

Jesus expounds the **Law of Retaliation** (vv. 38-42). This portion deals with the problem of revenge. No one, according to the Old Testament Law, could personally pursue justice. The government officials had that responsibility.

Jesus expounds the **Law of Love** (vv. 43-48). Jesus sums up Kingdom life with the greatest of all commandments: the commandment to love. Without love — even love toward one's enemies — our lives remain vacuous of Kingdom purpose (cp. 1 Cor. 13).

### Golden Greek Nugget

Jesus twice used the term *scandalizo*, translated “offend” in chapter five (vv. 29, 30). It is the word from which we get our word “scandalize”. Originally, the term had to do with a snare for catching small edible animals. Hence, it evolved to mean to entrap someone or to “trip them up”. Jesus warns those who would allow their senses like sight or touch to “trip them up” or to “offend” by leading them into sin.

### Wrap Up

*The Sermon on the Mount is the greatest message ever preached. In it, Jesus informed His people how to live like Kingdom people. He gives us a glimpse of what life would be like if there were no sin, no evil in this world. Christians must take to heart what our Lord taught here. May our life reflect the Kingdom life Jesus desires.*

