**Monday Evening Bible Study**

**January 23, 2023**

**Matthew 5:1-12**

**Immediate Context**

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| Matthew 3:13-17 The Baptism of Jesus | Matthew 6:22-23 The Sound Eye |
| Matthew 4:1-11 The Temptation of Jesus | Matthew 6:24 Serving Two Masters |
| Matthew 4:12-17 Jesus Begins His Ministry in Galilee | Matthew 6:25-34 Do Not Worry |
| Matthew 4:18-17 Jesus Calls the First Disciples | Matthew 7:1-5 Judging Others |
| Matthew 4:23-25 Jesus Ministers to Crowds of People | Matthew 7:6 Profaning the Holy |
| **Matthew 5:1-12 Beatitudes** | Matthew 7:7-11 Ask, Search, Knock |
| Matthew 5:13-16 Salt and Light | Matthew 7:12 The Golden Rule |
| Matthew 5:17-20 The Law and the Prophets | Matthew 7:13-14 The Narrow Gate |
| Matthew 5:21-26 Concerning Anger | Matthew 7:15-20 A Tree and Its Fruit |
| Matthew 5:27-30 Concerning Adultery | Matthew 7:21-23 Concerning Self-Deception |
| Matthew 5:31-32 Concerning Divorce | Matthew 7:24-29 Hearers and Doers |
| Matthew 5:33-37 Concerning Oaths | Matthew 8:1-4 Jesus Cleanses a Leper |
| Matthew 5:38-42 Concerning Retaliation | Matthew 8:5-13 Jesus Heals a Centurion’s Servant |
| Matthew 5:43-48 Love for Enemies | Matthew 8:14-17 Jesus heals Many at Peter’s House |
| Matthew 6:5-15 Concerning Prayer | Matthew 8:18-22 Would-Be Followers of Jesus |
| Matthew 6:16-18 Concerning Fasting | Matthew 8:23-27 Jesus Stills the Storm |
| Matthew 6:19-21 Concerning Treasures | Matthew 8:28-34 Jesus Heals the Gadarene Demoniacs |

This is the first of five discourses in the Book of Matthew, each of which end with the formulaic saying, “When Jesus had finished …” (see Matthew 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1). The teachings of Jesus are bunched together into five large blocks.

Matthew 5:1-7:28 Blessings, Entering the Kingdom

Matthew 10:5-11:1 Mission Discourse

Matthew 13:1-53 Parables of the Kingdom

Matthew 18:1-19:1 Community Discourse

Matthew 24:3-26:1 Woes, Coming Kingdom

Is Matthew presenting his Gospel as the new Pentateuch by imitating the Pentateuch’s five-book structure?

The verb sequence ‘followed’, ‘went up’, ‘began to teach’ in 4:25–5:2 returns in reverse sequence in 7:29–8:1 to create a bracket around the sermon. The sermon begins with statements formulated in the third person and then switches at 5:11 to second person, which is sustained through the sermon’s main body.

Approximately half of Matthew’s Sermon on the Mount has parallels in Luke.

Luke 6:17-49 Sermon on the Plain

Luke 11:2-4 The Lord’s Prayer

Luke 11:9-13 Ask and You will receive

Luke 11:33-36 The sound eye

Luke 22-31 Don’t worry

Luke 12:33-34 Where your treasure is

Luke 12:57-59 Settling with your opponent

Luke 13:24-27 The Narrow Door

Luke 14:34-35 Salt

Luke 16:18 Divorce

The fact that John the Baptist has been arrested (chapter 4) and Jesus then begins his ministry indicates that something important has ended and something even more important has begun. The new era has begun.

This is Jesus Inaugural Address in which he lays out his vision of life in the kingdom of heaven. In this sermon, Jesus outlines the principles by which the kingdom is ruled. The Kingdom is anyplace where God reigns. It comes near whenever a person chooses to serve God. In a world that often rewards selfish, aggressive behavior, Jesus blesses the poor in spirit, those who mourn, and the meek.

**Helpful Scriptures**

**Deuteronomy 18:15–19 (NRSV)**

*15 The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet. 16 This is what you requested of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said: “If I hear the voice of the Lord my God any more, or ever again see this great fire, I will die.” 17 Then the Lord replied to me: “They are right in what they have said. 18 I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who shall speak to them everything that I command. 19 Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable.*

**Deuteronomy 27:15–26 (NRSV)**

*15 “Cursed be anyone who makes an idol or casts an image, anything abhorrent to the Lord, the work of an artisan, and sets it up in secret.” All the people shall respond, saying, “Amen!” 16 “Cursed be anyone who dishonors father or mother.” All the people shall say, “Amen!” 17 “Cursed be anyone who moves a neighbor’s boundary marker.” All the people shall say, “Amen!” 18 “Cursed be anyone who misleads a blind person on the road.” All the people shall say, “Amen!” 19 “Cursed be anyone who deprives the alien, the orphan, and the widow of justice.” All the people shall say, “Amen!” 20 “Cursed be anyone who lies with his father’s wife, because he has violated his father’s rights.” All the people shall say, “Amen!” 21 “Cursed be anyone who lies with any animal.” All the people shall say, “Amen!” 22 “Cursed be anyone who lies with his sister, whether the daughter of his father or the daughter of his mother.” All the people shall say, “Amen!” 23 “Cursed be anyone who lies with his mother-in-law.” All the people shall say, “Amen!” 24 “Cursed be anyone who strikes down a neighbor in secret.” All the people shall say, “Amen!” 25 “Cursed be anyone who takes a bribe to shed innocent blood.” All the people shall say, “Amen!” 26 “Cursed be anyone who does not uphold the words of this law by observing them.” All the people shall say, “Amen!”*

**Deuteronomy 28:3–6 (NRSV)**

*3 Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field. 4 Blessed shall be the fruit of your womb, the fruit of your ground, and the fruit of your livestock, both the increase of your cattle and the issue of your flock. 5 Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. 6 Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.*

**Psalm 1:1-2 (NRSV)**

*1 Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers; 2 but their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night.*

**Key Words/Phrases**

**Blessed** –μακάριος – The Greek term means “happy, fortunate, blessed.” There are two Hebrew words translated as "blessed." One is the verb *barak*, meaning "to be blessed." The other is the noun אֶשֶׁר (*esher*) meaning "happy, blessed." This second word is derived from the verb אָשַׁר (*ashar*), which means "to be straight." The Hebrew people saw two types of paths, the straight path and the crooked path. The straight path is the shortest distance between two points and is easy to follow. The crooked path is the longer path filled with peril and fatigue and one can easily become lost. The "straight ones" are those who walk the straight path and are, as we would say, "happy." You find *esher* in Psalm 1:1: *“Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked…”*

In Hebrew, the most common form of the word “blessed” is the passive participle בָּר֥וּךְ (baruk). It’s related to the word ברך (barak) meaning “to bless” and the word בְּרָכָה (berakah) meaning “a blessing, good fortune.” The same root of the word can also mean “knee” and so the verb “to bless” is related to the word “to kneel” as in presenting a gift to someone as a sign of respect (see Genesis 24:11 or 2 Chronicles 6:13). From a Hebraic perspective a "blessing" is a gift (any action or object) that is presented out of respect to another.

When the object is God, the word carries the sense of “to worship or praise.” When the object is humanity or the earth, the word typically refers to a bestowal of benefits, often from God, but sometimes from other people. In the whole of scripture, blessing refers to a gift, the flourishing and the multiplication of life.

The opposite of bless is to “curse,” and the two words often occur together as in Deuteronomy 27:15-26; 28:3-6, which spell out the consequences of keeping or not keeping the covenant. Throughout scripture, the content of what constitutes “blessing” varies, but includes such good things as vitality, health, longevity, fertility, land, prosperity, honor, and numerous progeny (“curse” on the other hand, results in death, illness, childlessness, and such disasters as drought, famine, and war).

God blesses the first humans, telling them to be fruitful and multiply (Gen. 1:22). Throughout the Bible God continues to bless individuals (Gen. 24:1; Job 42:12; Judg. 13:24), groups (Exod. 32:29; Josh. 17:14), descendants (Isa. 44:3); and nations (Ps. 115:12; Jer. 4:2). God also blesses animals (Gen. 1:22; Deut. 28:4), land (Deut. 26:15), crops (7:13), houses (Prov. 3:33), and special days or times (Gen. 2:3; Exod. 20:11). People also pronounce blessings on others (Gen. 24:60; 47:7; Exod. 39:43; Lev. 9:22–23; 1 Sam. 2:20; Neh. 11:2): deathbed blessings are particularly noteworthy (Gen. 27–28; 48–49). Abraham is told that all families of the earth will be blessed through him and his descendants (Gen. 12:3). Consecration ceremonies also provide for the blessing of various objects or of animals for a sacrifice (1 Sam. 9:13). Throughout the Bible people pray for God to bless them and those they love (1 Chron. 4:10; cf. Ps. 67:7).

In Luke’s Gospel, the blessings we find in Matthew’s Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3–11) are paired with “woes” in a manner that recalls Deuteronomy’s alternation of blessings and curses (6:20–26; cf. Deut. 27:15–26; 28:3–6).

**Blessed are the poor in spirit** –Μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι – “poor in spirit” – this is a common idiom that appears only once in the New Testament and not in the Old Testament (though Psalm 34:18 is similar). It pertains to one who is humble with regard to their own capacities in relationship to God. Therefore, the phrase “Blessed are the poor in spirit” can be best translated as “blessed are those who are humble before God.” This phrase is commonly misunderstood when people take a literal translation of the Greek words. Many think it means either “lacking in the Holy Spirit” or “lacking in ambition or drive.” In order to clear up the confusion, one might translate this phrase as “Blessed are those who recognize their need for God.”

**For theirs is the kingdom of heaven –** ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστιν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν – The phrase is in the present tense and the word for “heaven” is plural.

**Blessed are those who Mourn** –μακάριοι οἱ πενθοῦντες – the Greek word πενθέω means “to experience sadness or grief as a the result of depressing circumstances or the condition of persons—to be sad, to grieve for, to weep for, sorrow, grief.” The reference here in Matthew 5:4 is not to grieving or mourning for the dead but rather sadness and grief because of wickedness and oppression.

**For they will be comforted** –ὅτι αὐτοὶ παρακληθήσονται – a future form of the verb παρακαλέω – with καλέω at it’s root. Καλέω is normally translated as “to call, name, summon.” With the prefix παρα meaning “to the side of”, παρακαλέω means “to aid, help, comfort, encourage.” Because it is used here in Matthew 5:4 with the accusative of person, it means “to encourage, to console, to comfort.”

**Blessed are the meek** –μακάριοι οἱ πραεῖς – “meek, mild, gentle, humble” — Later in Matthew, Jesus uses the same word to say, “and learn from me because I am gentle; for I am gentle and humble in heart.” (Matthew 11:29). καὶ μάθετε ἀπ̓ ἐμοῦ, ὅτι πραΰς (gentle) εἰμι καὶ ταπεινὸς (humble) τῇ καρδίᾳ.

**For they will Inherit the earth** –ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσιν τὴν γῆν – κληρονομέω is made up of the words κληρόω which means “to determine something, choose something by casting lots” and νέμω which means “to give.” The casting of lots was a method for determining the divine will. Thus it means “to be an heir, to inherit.” The word γῆν is the genitive form of the noun γῆ which means “earth, land”. The surface of the earth as the dwelling place of humanity, in contrast with the heavens above and the world below.

**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness** –μακάριοι οἱ πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες τὴν δικαιοσύνην – πεινῶντες meaning “to be hungry” and διψῶντες meaning “to be thirsty.” The object of these is δικαιοσύνην meaning “righteousness” or “the act of doing what God requires” or “doing what is right” or “conforming to all that God commands.”

**For they will be filled** –ὅτι αὐτοὶ χορτασθήσονται – Future tense of χορτάζω meaning “to feed, to fill, to satisfy” (with spiritual blessings or “righteousness” rather than actual food or drink).

**Blessed are the merciful** –μακάριοι οἱ ἐλεήμονες – “the merciful” or “those who show compassion, pity or mercy.” “Compassionate, benevolently merciful involving thought or actions.”

**For they will see receive mercy** –ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται – Future tense form of ἐλεέω meaning “to have mercy on, to show kindness or concern for someone in serious need, to show mercy.”

**Blessed are the pure in heart** –μακάριοι οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ – καθαρός meaning “clean, pure” as in “being ritually clean or pure;” “Acceptable to God” or “Pure or good in the eyes of God.” καρδίᾳ meaning “heart” from where we get the word cardiac.

**For they will see God** – ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν θεὸν ὄψονται –Future tense.The prospect of seeing God is heldout in Ps. 11:7 (‘the upright’), 17:15 (‘in righteousness’), and Job 19:26–27 (Job’s own confident expectation), and it is longed for in Ps. 42:3. But a reader of Matthew will think of 1:23: ‘Emmanuel, translated “God is with us.”

**Blessed are the peacemakers** –μακάριοι οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί – Peacemakers is made up of two words ποιεω meaning “to do, to make” and ειρηνη meaning “peace.” It refers specifically to those who come between two contending parties and try to make peace.

**They will be called children of God** –ὅτι αὐτοὶ υἱοὶ θεοῦ κληθήσονται – Future tense. They will be called υἱοὶ θεοῦ literally “sons of God”, meaning God will recognize them as God’s covenant people.

**Blessed are those persecuted for righteousness’ sake** –μακάριοι οἱ δεδιωγμένοι ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης – δεδιωγμένοι from διώκω meaning “to pursue, to persecute.” δικαιοσύνη meaning “righteousness.” Extending mercy, being pure in heart, and working for peace are among the marks of the righteousness for which one is seen as suffering here.

**Revile you** –ὀνειδίσωσιν ὑμᾶς – “to criticize harshly, revile, rebuke” or “to reproach, defame, disparage, reproach or assail with abusive words.”

**Utter all kinds of evil against you falsely** –καὶ εἴπωσιν πᾶν πονηρὸν καθʼ ὑμῶν [ψευδόμενοι] – The footnote in the text indicates that other ancient authorities lack the word ψευδόμενοι which means “falsely.” εἴπωσιν – “to say, to tell.” πονηρὸν – “evil, wicked.”

**Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you** –χαίρετε καὶ ἀγαλλιᾶσθε, ὅτι ὁ μισθὸς ὑμῶν πολὺς ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς· οὕτως γὰρ ἐδίωξαν τοὺς προφήτας τοὺς πρὸ ὑμῶν

**Rejoice** – χαίρετε – meaning “to rejoice, be glad” or “to enjoy a state of happiness and well-being.”

**Be glad** – ἀγαλλιάω – from ἀγαν “much” and ἅλλομαι “to leap” as in “Leap for joy, rejoice exceedingly.