

Folly – A Message on the Beatitudes

Matthew Vander Els • 2021-04-24 • foundedintruth.com

MAIN VERSES

[Matthew 5:3](#) • [Matthew 5:4](#) • [Matthew 5:5](#) • [Matthew 5:39](#) • [Matthew 5:41](#) • [Luke 18:9-14](#) • [1 Timothy 1:15](#) • [Isaiah 61](#) • [Mark 1:15](#) • [John 18:36](#) • [Hebrews 1](#) • [1 Corinthians 1:18](#)

Shabbat Shalom! Let's worship!

Praise the eternal, praise the eternal, praise the immortal, for you are holy God. And you are with me, you are moving, for you are holy God. Sing that again! Praise the eternal, praise the immortal, for you are holy God. And you are with me, you are moving, for you are holy God. Praise the eternal, praise the immortal, God, and you are with me, you are moving, for you are holy, hallelujah!

Light of the world and the heart deep crying rising up above: Praise the eternal, praise the immortal, for you are holy God. And you are with me and you are moving, for you are holy God. Your splendor and your majesty, Father—you and you alone. In the evening at the end we thank you, Father. You are worthy of all our praise. You are holy. We truly enter and tremble before your throne, before your righteousness, so honored and blessed that you call us your own. You are worthy, God.

Sing: worthy, worthy of every song we could ever sing, worthy of all the praise we could ever bring, worthy of every breath we could ever breathe. We live for you, Yeshua. Yeshua, the name above every other name. Yeshua, the one who could ever save. Worthy of every breath we could ever breathe, we live for you, Yeshua.

There Is No One Like You

There is no one like you. There is none beside you. Open up my eyes and show me. Fill me with your heart and your love to those around me. Every breath we could ever breathe, Yeshua, Yeshua.

It is a firm foundation. I will put my trust in you alone and I will not be shaken by life's temptation. I will put my trust in you. I will build upon foundations. There is no one like you. There is none beside you. Open up my eyes and show me who you are and fill me with your heart and your love to those around me. There is no one like you. There is none beside you.

Sing: I will build my life upon your love. It is a firm foundation. I will put my trust in you alone. Do not be shaken. Do not be shaken, God. We will not be shaken. Your holiness. We won't be shaken. You hold us in the storm. You're all that we need.

Listen as he sings over you: I go before you. I stand beside you. Though you feel I'm far, I'm closer than your breath. And with more than you know, your peace. No evil will conquer you. Steady now your heart and mind. Come into my rest. Oh, let your faith arise. Lift up your wings. I am with you. Come to me. Cause I'm all you. Cause I'm all you. Come to fill your heart and flesh. Cause I'm all. Come to, I'm everything. Come to all you. Come to, I'm everything.

Keep Your Eyes on Me

Don't look to the right or to the left. Keep your eyes on me. I'll be your strength, your shield. I'm all that you need. You're all that we need, God. You and you are our steadfast. We won't be afraid. Though our heart and flesh may fail, you're our faithful strength. You slowly come. You're all.

Declare it and confess it before him. We come to thee for everything. Grander earth is quaked before, moved by the sound of his voice. Seas that are shaken and stirred can be calmed and broken for my regards. Even when my eyes can't see what's in front, hallelujah! Be prone into the midst of the sea. Give him praise and try, and still know his name. It is what my soul, it is what with my soul, it is what my soul through it all. And it is well through it all, through it all, through it all, it is well on you with me. It is well with me. Even when I can't see, I trust in you.

Come and Consume

We love you, Father. We thank you, Abba. Our heart is for you. We desire, Father, for you to consume everything that is not of you out of our lives, Father. Because it is truly well with us when we are completely surrendered. Come and consume, God. We give you permission. Our hearts are yours. We want you. Come and consume. Come and consume, God. Oh, we give you permission. Our hearts are yours. We want you. We want you. Come and consume, God. Oh, we give you permission. Our hearts are yours. We want you. Want you. We love you. We'll never stop. Can't let you out. We want you to consume, God. Oh, we give you permission. Our hearts

are yours. We want you to consume, God. We give you permission. Our hearts are yours. We want you.

When you walk into the room, everything changes. Darkness starts to trample that you bring, walk into the room. Every heart starts burning. Nothing matters more than just to sit here at your feet and worship you. When you walk into the room, sickness starts to vanish. Every hopeless situation ceases to exist. And when you walk into the room, the dead begin to rise cause there's resurrection life of you, Yeshua, and we can't get in. All of this is for you, Yeshua. Can't live without. We want you. We want you. Come and consume, God. We give you permission. Hearts are yours. We want you. We want you. We want you.

All it is, all it is, is through it all, through it all. All it is, all it is, is through it all, through it all. All it is, all it is, is through it all, through it all. All it is, all it is, is through it all, through it all. All it is, all it is, is through it all, through it all. All it is, all it is, is through it all, through it all. All it is, all it is, is through it all, through it all. All it is, all it is, is through it all, through it all. All it is, all it is, is through it all, through it all. All it is, all it is, is through it all, through it all. All it is, all it is, is through it all, through it all. All it is, all it is, is through it all, through it all. All it is, all it is, is through it all, through it all. All it is, all it is, is through it all, through it all. All it is, all it is, is through it all, through it all. All it is, all it is, is through it all, through it all.

We are grateful for your presence with us. May you receive all honor and glory. Yours is the power. Yours is the kingdom forever. And we worship you and you alone, Yeshua. In your name we pray.

It's good to be together today. Shabbat shalom. You can be seated.

Introducing Our Department Leaders

We have a different kind of announcements today. Anybody feel like they're growing in 2021? Anybody feel like they're learning some things, maturing, maybe? Anyone enjoy it? Amen. Amen.

As a fellowship, God has truly taken us on a journey over the past year. And of course, last November, he kind of opened the door for us to have this nice space. And everything that came with this nice space propelled us forward with such momentum that we had to go back and visit different areas and actually form a leadership structure.

You know, for such a long time, we have been able to run the community and the fellowship and all the little areas that we need to manage with a few people. A few people were able to reach out and just kind of micromanage and manage the little things. And guess what 2021 has taught us? You are incapable of doing that anymore at the scale of how the fellowship has grown and evolved. It's awesome.

And so with that being said, guys, I want to introduce you to the leaders of the different departments over Founded in Truth Fellowship. These are people who have taken complete ownership over these areas. And I want to bring them up here. I want you to see them face-to-face. I want you to learn their names if you don't already know them. I'm going to let them talk for anywhere from five seconds to a minute, whatever it takes for you to introduce your department. Department leads, this is your time to shine on your department. And so if you're looking for volunteers, sell it. But also, in a serious note, I also want you guys to see the people who are operating in the authority here at the fellowship over these departments, and I feel like that's very important. So you know if there's an issue or if there's an idea that you have, you know who to go to who has the authority over those departments to make those decisions.

And so without further ado, I would like to call up, and I'm going to call up in groups because we have a lot because God is good. And so I'm going to call up Jason Gonzalez, Al and Char McCarn, and Karen Vander Ailes for our first group of department leads here at Founding a Truth Fellowship. Come on, yes!

Is there a special? Look at that. Awesome, awesome. Well, you're ready to go. Everybody, please welcome Jason Gonzalez, who is lead over worship. Thank you. Awesome. Can you hear me? Hello? Yeah. Okay. Good, good. First of all, just an honor to be able to help and lead in this department.

We have an awesome, amazing worship team—people that just have a heart for worship. And I've got a few things I want to say, but before I go any further, I just want to acknowledge my brother Gideon and the Munoz family for serving in this department for the last five, six years. They've faithfully served, and he's been an awesome friend, awesome brother. They are an amazing family. And from our worship team, from leadership, from FIT, from everybody that streams—yeah, you guys are a blessing. And we love you guys. So, an honor. Just so excited to be here. Just to have leaders and leadership that recognize the importance of praise and worship and allowing the Spirit of God to move in this place. I can speak on behalf of our worship team: we have so many leaders that can lead. And I'm excited to see what he's going to be doing through this team.

And if you guys—anybody that's interested—first of all, if you're a musician, a vocalist, but most importantly if you have a heart to worship. This is not a place for performance or to get on a stage. This is a place to really cultivate an atmosphere of worship. And so if anybody has that heart and wants to be involved, come see me. We have a schedule. And Sal was amazing helping with the scheduling. And we have an awesome team. And I'm excited to see what he's going to do through all of this. So love you guys.

A Heart for Worship

And guys, please welcome Al. It says Al and Char. Why are you over there? Oh, okay. You can keep the baby over there. That's fine. Al and Char McCarn. And they are the leads over prayer and the prayer warrior team. Tell us a little bit about it.

Well, first of all, it was an honor. It's an honor and a privilege to be asked to head up prayer. How do you head up something that all the disciples of Yeshua are supposed to be doing? But anyway, my wife, Char, and there's my grandson, Eliezer. He's going to be a man of prayer, too. He'll be three months old next week. Okay.

So the prayer department, prayer effort initiative of Founded in Truth is in two parts. First of all, we have the prayer team, and that's who you see here on Shabbat services. And we're the ones standing up front ready to pray with and for anyone who has need. Charlene is the one who coordinates that, and I appreciate her administrative skills because she keeps me straight. Then we have the prayer warriors, and this is more of an intercessory prayer group. This is where our online community can get involved. And I want to thank Tracy Becker of Saratoga, New York for helping us to understand this. She is one of our key online members here, but we meet on Tuesday nights right now on Zoom to talk over and pray through the needs of our community, both here in Carolina and also online.

Prayer Warriors and Intercession

Now, in addition to that, we have a prayer wall at FIT. So you can go to the website, foundedintruth.com. You can put your prayers up there on the prayer wall. These things will all be reviewed, monitored, and prayed over online, and then followed up on as the Lord gives us understanding for that. And then there are other things that happen outside of those scheduled or regulated things—like Heather Duncan over here who prays through the building on Fridays. So if you would like to be involved, if you feel led to pray through things about this congregation, about our leadership, about our online community, and it is a community, then

please contact me. I think it's all at foundedintruth.com. And we will be very glad to put you to work.

And we have a very special woman, my mom. You can stand here.

Thank you, son.

Yes, ma'am. Karen is the... Did he turn it off on you? Check. I don't know. Karen is the administrator here at Founded in Truth Fellowship. The weight of that title is so deep, so heavy, so many things. And she's also the lead over the greeting team, which is a vital department here at Founded in Truth as a community. But I'm going to allow her to tell you a little bit more about those areas.

Leadership in Community

Thank you, Matthew.

So I get to follow the baby. Yes, I am administrator. I run the office and pretty much have my hands in just about everything at FIT. I am over the greeters, so if you would like to help us and be on the greeting team, please let me know. I'm Karen at foundintruth.com. I was given about five minutes notice on this. I just really appreciate and am blessed to be able to work with this lovely community that I really love. It has been my passion for a long time and I appreciate it.

Thank you.

One more thing, one more thing. We need to get a step for this stage. Step for the stage would be under maintenance, so I'd like to call Tim Knighton as well as Amy Knighton and, let's see, Mike Kanin and Rick, you as well. That's right. So Amy—Amy is our lead volunteer coordinator and church cleanup. That's what's written. That's the official title. So tell us about yourself, what you need, and what people can give to you.

It's very bright up here.

It is.

Hello, hello.

Oh, hey, okay. I'm Amy. For those of you that don't know me, I head up all of those lovely people that you see cleaning after services. So I organize that, but I'm also the volunteer coordinator, which means that I often have the privilege to serve this fellowship by finding people and delegating and telling them what to do to help keep everything running. So I want to

share with you that I have loved stepping in and having the privilege to serve. But I don't want to hog that for myself, so all of you that are watching either at home or here, if you just feel like maybe all of the honor shouldn't be on me, feel free to sign up.

Serving Together

We have lots of areas where we need help. Maintenance, because I think that maybe our maintenance leader gets tired of the volunteer coordinator telling him what to do all the time. Hospitality, clean up—not just clean up in general after services, but when we have things like our breakfast beforehand, that has to be cleaned up too. But our volunteer list looks very robust, but it's actually a lot of the same people in a bunch of different categories. So don't feel like you'll ever be burdening me by volunteering or like I won't be able to find something for you to do because if we're covered, I will make something up so that you can serve and feel appreciated and like a contributing member of the volunteer team. So that's all I got for you.

And now the lead over maintenance, which would be Tim. Isn't Tim great? Tim's awesome.

Hey, guys. I'm Tim Knighton. As you clearly heard, I'm overseeing maintenance, so... The step that needs to be made, that'll be me. Sorry, so I'll get that taken care of. Anything else you happen to notice walking around the building—classic maintenance like door handles, painting, drywall, all that fun stuff. Plumbing, something's wrong in the bathroom, something's broken. I'm the person, I'm their man. If I don't know how to do it, I know somebody or some volunteers who can do it for me. So that's my job, and I'm honored and privileged to do it. That's all I got. Thanks.

Thank you, Tim.

Rick, come on up, guys. The lead over grounds and landscaping, which is kind of a big deal if you've looked outside and seen all that. Rick, tell us if you need any volunteers or what you do.

Taking the lead in landscaping and making it look pretty outside, planting flowers. So I will need some help with that. So any volunteers, let me know. You probably got neither on a water system out there.

That's it.

Thank you, Rick and Mike. Everybody, I'd like to introduce you to the lead of our outreach and in-reach hospitality department. How'd you guys like breakfast this morning? Some of y'all showed up a little bit early—for the first time in FIT history—and you got to have a bagel and

some donuts and stuff. It was awesome, right? This is the man responsible. So Mike, tell us a little bit about yourself and what you need from us.

Hospitality and Outreach

Hello, I'm Mike. I am blessed to be a steward of the hospitality slash in-reach slash outreach team. One of the first things we did was lay out a little spread out there. We pray that was a blessing to you. That is something we'll look to do probably every other week, maybe eventually as we get a little more help every week. But today I definitely want to honor my wife, Amber, who was gracious enough to help me with that. I couldn't have done it without her. Thank you so much. Huge blessing.

The hospitality team is a very dedicated set of responsibilities and we definitely don't want to burn people out—even though they're specific, they'll overlap with some of the other areas. But we don't want to burn out people who are already volunteering in those areas, so Amy covered that definitely. If you're currently not a member of another committee, we would love to have you come check us out and be a part of what we're doing here. Again, it's a blessing and a privilege to be able to do this. And I thank you all also for welcoming us as a new family. This is kind of our way to get to know you guys as well. So it's kind of selfish as well as selfless. So we're blessed to be able to do that. Thanks.

That's good.

Thank you, Mike.

Thank you.

All right, we need Zach Jarvis, Ashley Wilson, and Ben and Catherine Cohen. Please report to the stage. Come on, Zach.

Hey, everybody.

Men's Bible Study

This is Zach, and he is our lead over the monthly and possibly more than monthly men's meetings. So, Zach, tell us about yourself and what you do.

My name is Zach Jarvis. So the men's Bible study is starting once a month on the second Tuesday of every month. And we're starting it slow like that because a lot of you guys have families, and we want to be really sensitive to that and the needs and commitments that we

have first to our families. And so the idea is hopefully we get started doing it more often, hopefully once a week at some point, but we want to have time for us all to adjust to that.

This is multifaceted. For now, it's kind of a food and fellowship thing to get us started, comfortable and confident alongside each other as brothers, kind of meeting each other face to face and just being together, breaking bread. Hopefully that will evolve as time goes on, as we're all ready for it into more intimate studies and prayer. And hopefully we can overlap with Al and some stuff like that. But please join us. The second Tuesday of every month is the Men's Bible Study. We've been going to Empire Pizza, but we're open to suggestions. If you have a better venue that is more comfortable, you can relax a little more, please just tell me or Pete. I put everything through Pete. So that way we're well coordinated. And he used to do this before me, so I'm kind of taking ideas from him as we go. But thank you so much, and I'm really looking forward to the next men's fellowship.

Women's Bible Study and Nursery

That's right. Ashley? So everybody, if you don't know who Ashley Wilson is, she's awesome. She is the lead over the weekly women's Bible study as well as nursery. So tell us about you and what you do and what you need.

Hey, everybody. I'm Ashley Wilson. So first of all, nursery. The Lord has given me a heart for babies and their mamas and their families. And I found that one of the best ways to serve families, and we are a family fellowship, is to help their children to feel welcomed and loved. And so it is a passion of mine to be in that nursery week after week and love on these babies, give them a familiar face to see. But I'm always looking for volunteers, looking for people to help be backup in the nursery for when I can't be there or when we have a large group, and it's always good to have a second set of hands around.

I would encourage you, even if you are not a parent of a nursery-age child, which is zero to three, come and play with the babies. It's a lot of fun. We eat snacks, and we snuggle, and we sing songs, and we play with toys, and it's just a joy to be able to serve families in that way.

Now, women's Bible study. We've been meeting consistently for the last few months, but every Wednesday night we meet at 6:30 here at the church for fellowship time and then at 7 o'clock we begin our study. We're currently working through the armor of God and it has been incredible. It has been an absolutely incredible study. If you have not been coming and you would like to join us, it's not too late. We still have about 10 weeks left of this study before we will be moving on to something else. It has just been such an incredible time. It's been so

convicting and edifying and encouraging. And the Holy Spirit is just so present. And this group of women is so incredible. And please consider coming and joining us Wednesday nights if you're able.

If you can't be in person, you can also join us online. We've been able to set that up through Zoom so that you can interact and we can chat and you can be a part of the study. We have Tracy, who's in New York. We have Audra, many of you all know her, who's also in New York. We have Eva Hungo, who's back and forth from Miami to the Carolinas. We have a great online presence as well. So come and see me or email me, ashley at foundedintruth.com if you would like to talk to me about volunteering or showing up for either of those things.

Young Adults and Foster Care Ministry

Thank you, Ashley. And let me introduce Ben and Catherine Cohen. Guys, these are the leads for our robust young adults ministry here at Founder Truth, as well as a ministry very dear to my heart, which is our foster care ministry.

Hey guys, I'm Ben Cohen, my wife Catherine, and our son Eliezer is over there. We're very happy to be back here for the first time since his birth. So we have a foster and adoption ministry at FIT. Raise your hand if you knew that, please. Okay, more than I thought. Awesome. So FITFAM is that ministry. It stands for Founding a Truth Foster and Adoption Ministry.

So back in, I believe it was 2019, maybe late 2018, FIT partnered with a local nonprofit here in York County that really sees the church as the solution to the foster crisis in York County and hopefully throughout the United States. Guys, fostering is hard work. Did you know that 50% of foster families quit within the first year of fostering? You give them a care community, a support team to surround them, 90% continue after the first year. This is what the model that we have implemented at this church seeks to do, and we've done it successfully so far. We have surrounded three families so far with care communities. We have volunteers in the audience right now. Thank you if you are volunteering, and thank you if you have volunteered.

But the needs are great, and we have really exciting opportunities coming up. If you think that you can cook a meal once a month, maybe do some childcare, do some laundry, yard work. We have a family who began fostering within their first year of marriage. They currently have five children. One is a biological child. Three of them were adopted. And the fifth one is a sibling of the first three who were adopted, but is currently a foster child. They have about three therapies a week. Mom is super busy. Dad works full time. They need a lot of help. And we're going to build a care community for them. We're going to serve them. We're going to show them what it

looks like when the body of Messiah surrounds other believers and we go out into the world and we make an impact.

So if that interests you, if you're ready to serve, just email me, ben at [foundedintruth.com](mailto:ben@foundedintruth.com). Just speak with me after service. We have a job for you if you're willing. Thank you.

So I am Katherine Cohen, and the other ministry that Ben and I are a part of is the Young Adults Ministry. So we try to get together about once a month just to hang out, to fellowship. It could be anything like going on a hike, sharing a meal, having a campfire, kind of whatever sounds good that month. And we have people from all over, really. We'll have anywhere from maybe 5 to 10, 15 people come and hang out.

So if you are interested in joining us, reach out to us either at—what is your name, Ben? Ben at FoundedInTruth.com. Or chat with us. We have a Facebook messenger group where we share the dates that we are hanging out. Our next one is May 2nd. May 2nd, we are getting lunch at Mod Pizza in Steel Creek. So come hang out with us. Fellowship is just a great place for us to get to know one another, share the love that we have for our Savior, and just support each other. Let us know that we're not alone in this walk.

So guys, one more hand of applause for those who have stepped up to fill these roles. Thank you. Super excited about what God is doing within this community. I'm a little nervous, but apparently that's just how God works when you read the Bible. We're gonna do this. So we're doing it, which is awesome. So thankful to be a part of this community alongside you.

Torah Portion: After Death and Holy

And without anything further, I'd like to welcome Ashley Wilson back to the platform for this week's Torah portion.

Hello again. It is my honor and privilege to bring the Torah portion this week. This week is a double portion. It is Akurai Mot Kedoshim, which means after death and holy. This is Leviticus chapter 16 verse 1 through chapter 20 verse 27.

Now up until last night, I knew what I was going to say to you guys. I knew what I was going to talk about today. And then the Lord woke me up at 3 a.m. with what I thought was just going to be some edits, but it turned out to be a rewrite. So we've had the conversation. We both know I'm growing a person here, Lord. I need my sleep, but he knows that daylight hours just don't work. I have too many other kids. I can't hear him quite as well. So 3 a.m. it is. And he focused

me on one particular verse that on the surface seems almost like a silly, super simple instruction and how it might just actually be one of the hardest.

So first, though, let's do a quick overview of the portion. Leviticus chapter 16 is instructions for the Day of Atonement, instructions for the high priest, instructions about the bull and the goats. Then we go into chapter 17. And this talks about the locations where sacrifices are to be made and laws against the consumption of blood. Leviticus chapter 18 covers sexual immorality. Leviticus chapter 19, we're talking about the Lord's holiness. And then we're also talking about loving your neighbor as yourself. And we're going to circle back to that. Continuing through 19, we have some more instructions for righteous living. And then chapter 20, we learn about the punishments for child sacrifice, sexual immorality, and it closes with another reminder that our God is holy, and we are to be holy as he is holy, set apart for him.

So we're going to circle back to [Leviticus 19](#), the part about loving your neighbor. I'm going to read that quickly. Let me pull it up on my phone. Here we go. When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner. I am the Lord your God. You shall not steal. You shall not deal falsely. You shall not lie to one another. You shall not swear by my name falsely and so profane the name of your God. I am the Lord. You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired worker shall not remain with you all night until the morning. You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall fear your God. I am the Lord." You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor. You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life of your neighbor. I am the Lord.

The Stumbling Block

Now there's a verse that whenever I come across statements like this in the Torah, I wonder: why does that even need to be in there? It's verse 14. You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall fear your God. I am the Lord. In a surface reading of that, to me, what kind of person would put a stumbling block in front of a blind person? Who would do that? You'd have to be a terrible human being to do that. But me, I am that terrible human being. And if you're honest with yourself, you've probably been that terrible human being too.

In women's Bible study, we've been talking about the armor of God. I was going to give a shameless plug, but I realize I did that already, so I'll spare you now. But a couple of weeks ago, we were talking about the breastplate of righteousness, specifically about the different kinds of righteousness. There's perfect righteousness, which is only God. There's impugned righteousness, which is credited to us by the Father through the Son, and it's what allows us to walk in holiness. And then there's comparative righteousness.

Righteousness and the Image of God

And this is the kind of righteousness that can either cause us to feel less than or unworthy or useless, or it can cause us to be prideful and judgmental and self-righteous. It is the comparative righteousness that curses the deaf and puts stumbling blocks in front of the blind. For starters, why do any of us act surprised when the world behaves like the world? Because until and unless the Father gives them ears to hear and eyes to see, removes their deafness and their blindness, they can't. They cannot hear and see. The world doesn't need us out there pointing fingers and telling them just how wrong they are. They need us to love them so well that Yeshua is more appealing to them than whatever the world has to offer. It is his loving kindness that draws us to repentance. And if we are to be image bearers, then we have to be that loving kindness that draws people to the Father.

We Are Not the Lord

Another way that we put stumbling blocks in front of the blind and curse the deaf is this thing that we do that causes other people to stumble. We are so self-centered that we assume if the Lord has convicted us of something, if he's spoken a word to us, something for us to hear, or he's opened our eyes to something, unblinded us for something in our lives, something new to see, we assume that's for everybody else, not just for us. And we assume we have to tell them and show them the same thing. And so we hurt people. We hurt people with our opinions. We hurt people with our beliefs—deeply seated beliefs that may be based on our own life experiences. We trip them up in their own walk because we don't trust the Holy Spirit to be the Holy Spirit. We feel we need to do his job for him. Paul tells us to run the race set before you. If you get in the lane of the runner next to you, somebody's going to get hurt. You can't run their race for them. You can't tell them how to run their race. God's in charge of that. He's got it and he can handle it.

Not one of us is righteous or holy or good apart from Messiah. It is a gift, this impugned righteousness that he's given. It's a credit to us. And we have to stop cursing and tripping up

those who are in a different place in their walk with the Lord. Verse 14 says, I am the Lord your God. We need that reminder. He is the Lord. We are not the Lord. It's not our job. Now, I don't think any person in this room would stick their foot out to trip up a blind person. So we have to stop doing that to our brothers and sisters, to whom the Lord has shown different things, to whom he is taking on a different path. And please, let's stop doing it to those who have not yet come to know the life-changing love of their Savior.

Shabbat shalom. Thank you so much, Ashley. Tell you what, there sure is a lot of conviction in the Torah. All right, so a couple of announcements.

Announcements and Community

Thank you for that encouragement. Welcome everybody to Founders Youth Fellowship. We're so glad you're here. Again, how was that breakfast? Wasn't it great to sip on some coffee again and eat some bagels? And for those who came early, did you get some of that salmon? What do they call that? Lox? Is that what it is? It was good on the bagel. But that was great. It's a great time of fellowship. So I think we're pushing for that. Where's Mike? Every week? Every other weekend. Guys, come early and fellowship and hang out with us and let's eat some bagels. Thank you guys for facilitating that.

Let's see here. Leadership announcement. Welcome everybody online. Colorado group's back on this week. Shabbat shalom, guys. To all you guys over there. Everyone else joining us. Women's Bible study will meet this Wednesday, April 28th, in the fellowship hall, the lobby, or fellowship area. Fellowship time begins at 6.30, Bible study at 7 o'clock. Children and teens classes, guys, we are still... We'll be right back.

Let's see here. Don't forget, if you need prayer, consider sharing your prayer requests and praises on the Fit Prayer Wall, which is on the website. It's at foundonintruth.com/prayer. We have people that are dedicated to going on there. Leadership goes on there. We have a prayer team that goes on there. They pray for every prayer request on there. And you can do the same. See here, Shavuot, May 23rd. It's going to be on a Sunday. It's going to be awesome. That's when we're going to have our celebration to come together. So mark your calendars and the announcement will be coming out soon with all the details.

After services today, please remember to pick up your children from their classes immediately. That way the teachers can get to cleaning up and get back to their families. I think that's about it.

Offerings and Giving

Offerings, guys, thank you so much for your generosity towards Founding a Truth. Your financial offerings and donations to this community are the reason why we're here. I mean, that's a given. It's a reason why we're able to rent the building. It's a reason why we're able to continue doing online services. It's the reason why we're able to walk through the doors that continue to open very rapidly over the past few months for different ministries and different opportunities that we feel God is calling us into. And so thank you. Thank you for your generosity and thank you for your faithfulness to this community.

If you'd like to make a donation, there is a box out in the lobby fellowship area. You can put a check in that or you can give online at foundinthetruth.com slash give or text any amount to 704-275-0752. Thank you everybody who continues to support Fit with their energy, their time, their finances, and their prayers.

Blessing the Children

All right, let's bless the kids. Do we have enough people for two chuppahs this week? We need at least four to eight individuals to hold the corners of the chuppah, and please stand. So each and every week, we have a tradition here at Founding a Truth where we gather the children up and the youth, and we say a blessing over them, and we thank God for the greatest asset of the community, and that is the next generation and the opportunities to mentor them and teach them about God's love. And so if you're watching from home and you'd like to participate in this, if you have children of your own, we invite you to lay your hands on their heads. And if you don't have children at home right now, we'd still love for you to be involved in this by raising your hands symbolically with us.

All right, everybody ready? All right. Alvino Malkeinu, our Father, our King, Father, we thank you for this Sabbath, this one day of the week that you've carved out of creation and given to us as a sign, as a signet of the eternal rest that is only found in your Son. Father, I ask that you would bless the young men here today as Ephraim and Manasseh, that they would be fruitful in all they pursue, even as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the patriarchs of our faith, that you would instill in them a sense of wisdom and courage to carry your banner throughout the next generation, and the young ladies, that you would bless them as Rachel and as Leah, as Sarah and Rebecca, that you would instill in them discernment and courage like Deborah to stand up where there is no light and be that light in those areas.

The Lord's Prayer

That they would carry the banner of your kingdom forward. And the youth—Father, I ask that you would instill in them the same spirit of Joshua and Caleb as they go into the land. They go into the strange place, but they remember and they proclaim your promises. They do not have any fear where they are going and where you're sending them. That they would establish your kingdom through all of their thoughts, actions, and words and everything that they pursue. And that they would be the salt and the light of the world, representing Yeshua, our King. We thank you, Father, for this opportunity to come together. In the name of Yeshua, we pray. Amen.

All right, guys, so we're now going to say the Lord's Prayer, and I would invite everybody to say it with us. We're teaching our children this, how to say the short but impactful prayer of our King. Everybody ready? We're good?

Our Father, who is in heaven, holy is your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

All right, guys. Good job. Children's classes are...

Do you ever find yourself searching for something bigger than you? For a community to be a part of? A place founded on truth and love. A place to worship the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and the Son of God. Welcome to Founded in Truth, where we're more than just a fellowship. We're a family, so welcome home.

Starting a New Series on the Teachings of Yeshua

Let's dive into his word. Like I said last week, and kind of the week before with Pete, we wanted to steer into a series that focuses on Yeshua and what Yeshua actually came to teach. And you know, in Messianic circles, that's kind of an easy question. We get so excited about learning and reading the Old Testament and the grand narrative that sets up Yeshua coming onto the scene. And so in Messianic circles, when someone asks us, "Hey, what did Yeshua teach?" What do we say? The Torah, right? Of course. And Yeshua taught the Torah, and that's not a wrong answer. But the issue with that answer is it's ambiguous. Yes, Yeshua taught God's law, but a better question to ask is, how did Yeshua teach God's law? Because in the first century, when Yeshua steps onto the scene, there was no shortage of Torah teachers running around. But only one of

them was the exact representation of God, and therefore his interpretation of the Torah is the only way to live it out. And so when Yeshua teaches, it's kind of a big deal, right?

And so we're going to spend the next few weeks looking at Yeshua's teachings and kind of the things that he teaches in the Sermon of the Mount, because, you know, I feel it's extremely important to revisit what Yeshua actually said and called his followers to be before we jump into the Revelation study, the book of Revelation.

And the reason why I find this so vital is, in many church traditions, Revelation is looked at as this kind of scary end-of-the-world book—big monsters are going to come out of the ground, stingers are going to hit people, rocks are going to fall on people, and it's just blood. Things are going to fall from the sky, and then all the water is going to turn to blood. We're seeing the same curses in the Torah, by the way—they just manifest in the narratives in the Torah. But it's not really like the fun, loving book that you'd want to jump into, like Proverbs or the Song of Solomon. Revelation is definitely not your comfort food, generally speaking—at least how I was taught to read it.

And I've come to realize, after sitting down and reading it and really meditating and dedicating myself to it, I think the book of Revelation was written to be that comfort food—not only to the Christians in the first century, but to the believers who lived on after.

The Apocalypse of Yeshua

So what I'm going to be proposing when we jump into our study of Revelation is that the revelation of Yeshua that John has and gives is meant to give hope. I mean, spoiler alert: the book is about Jesus won. That's it. And the book is about, very specifically, no matter what's going on, no matter what you think you're facing, no matter what the world looks like, there's going to be an apocalypse.

The word apocalypse means kind of like an unveiling—pull back the curtain. What you see going on right now is not actually what's going on. So we're going to pull back the curtain and see, oh look, what's actually going on, and look how God is still in control, and look how you do not need to fear. Stay dedicated to the mission.

But before we jump into that, I wanted to discuss a little bit more about what Yeshua actually taught, how Yeshua lived, and how Yeshua taught his disciples and followers to live. And it's so hard because it's so radical—because the things that Yeshua, that Jesus, taught were so upside down compared to what this world would have us believe about how we're supposed to live. So that's what we're trying to do in this series.

And we have this Yeshua who is teaching about the all-consuming love of God that can and will overtake sin and defeat death, and this all-consuming character of God that yearns to bring healing to everyone. And like I said, many of us likely grew up with a revelation that portrays Yeshua as something different than that.

And guys, I have a radical message from the Bible and from the gospel accounts, and that message is: God wants your enemies to experience his love. This Yeshua, this Jesus, teaches us about a God who loves and died for the people we think he shouldn't have. And his teachings are, like I said, crazy radical. Some would even call them foolish—some did call them foolish. Because sometimes the more uncomfortable they are, the more we struggle with how exactly to represent them in such a culture that does not.

The Exact Representation of God

So I wanted to jump into one of my favorite verses, because before we jump into the words of Yeshua, let's see what the Bible says about this Yeshua. It's in Hebrews chapter 1. I love the potency of the author here of the book of Hebrews—let's just read it together. I love that translation, verse 3. Oh, I love the weight of just the...

I love this verse because it's saying that God has spoken through the prophets, and God has spoken to us through many various ways, but now he speaks to us through his son Yeshua. And why is that any different? Because Yeshua is the exact fullness representation of everything that God truly is. There's no—not to take a verse out of context—there's no "through a glass darkly" when we look at Yeshua and try to find the character of God. There's no smudges on the glass. It's not that type of glass you can't quite see through—this is the exact representation of who God is. He is the radiance of God's glory, the absolute side of Yahweh. And that means when we hear the teachings of Yeshua, we are hearing the exact, full, clear directives of God.

There may have been a time when we heard from God through the prophets, and that was authentic—that's what the author of Hebrews is saying. But the author here is saying that now we have the clearest picture of the message of God given to us. And if you can understand the weight of that message—that's incredible. So now we jump into this clear, exact teaching of God.

The Kingdom Has Come

The scene is set. We have the rabbi from Nazareth, and now he's in Galilee, and he is proclaiming the good news. And what is the good news? Is it that when you die, you go to

heaven, if you said a prayer? No. It's Mark chapter 115, and it tells us that the good news is that the kingdom of God is near. The kingdom of God has come. Repent. Turn. Turn around. Change the way that you view everything. Repent. The kingdom has arrived. That's the good news, according to Mark, according to the Gospels.

The time that has been long awaited for God's kingship to become manifest in the darkness of the world—this time when God's kingdom collides with creation and flips everything upside down, this time when God rules, and his kingdom is poured out in the form of his kingdom reign to overtake this broken world. Rejoice! Repent! It is here! That's the gospel, according to Yeshua.

And Yeshua makes disciples to teach them how to live that kingdom out. The kingdom's here—here's how you live it out. That's our calling: to experience new creation, to experience eternal life, to experience God's kingdom now, and to be ambassadors of it. It's such a potent thing that it even transcends death, but it begins here and now. And we live it out so that the entire world can also experience it. So Yeshua is teaching us how to live that out.

A Kingdom That Dies to Grow

And when he teaches, it is so radical that people end up hating it. They don't like it—it's difficult. It's so radical because it looks so foolish compared to how we deal with things in the world. His teachings, and the way that he did things, got him killed. That's what happened.

In the world, a ruler builds his empire by use of military power and strength. He or she goes and dominates, kills, destroys, exploits weaker nations around them to yield even more power and compound it. But not Yeshua. Instead of Yeshua killing other nations to grow his kingdom, he dies for other nations to grow his kingdom. That's what Yeshua told—that's what Jesus told Pilate: If my kingdom were of this world, my disciples would have already killed you.

His Kingdom Is Not of This World

If my kingdom was of this world, they wouldn't have let you take me. But that's not how my kingdom works. [John 18:36](#). My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.

See, the world teaches us to become the biggest and the baddest we can possibly be. So we can climb over everybody else to succeed in fame or riches or security in our life. And Yeshua says,

no, no, that's never going to get you the fame or the riches or the security that's actually worth anything. Give it away. Give it away. And live sacrificially for the sake of others.

The world says that person over there that you don't like is your enemy. What do you do with your enemies? We talked about sides last week. Only one side can what? Win. Win. So you must defeat your enemies. They must be the losers in whatever capacity that is. Most of us, it's probably a violent capacity. The world would be better off if my enemy did not exist. No one's ever thought that? Yeshua says, no, no, no.

So the way that my kingdom works is you're going to spend more time praying for God's blessing in their life than you are for the people that you're friends with.

The Kingdom Message Was a Revolution

The kingdom message was a revolution. People didn't know what to do with these Christians, these Christ followers. When you develop or show your allegiance to a side, by default, everyone who is not on that side is where? On the other side, right? Automatically, they're on the other side, even if they're not. That is how the world has taught us to size people up. By what side they're on. Because if you don't fit in the identity I've built around myself, obviously you're against it and therefore you're against me.

And Christians, like the early Yeshua followers, got themselves in a pickle very quickly, because they were on Yeshua's side. And there were people who wanted the believers to fight for their conflict against their enemies. You need to pick up a sword and come kill my enemies. And as we'll see probably in the next few messages, the early believers refused. Like, no, that's not our calling. We're not going to pick up swords and go and fight this other nation because you think that they... Like, no, those are people we love too. God loves them too. That's not what we're called to do. We're not going to use violence because it contradicts what Yeshua told us and showed us by example of how we're to further the kingdom of God.

You see an enemy and we see a broken person in need of a savior. Right? Seriously, at the time, in the first century, you have Judeans that were against Rome. By the time the first century rolls around, you can't sit next to a Gentile at the table because they're not on your side if you're a Judean, if you're a Jew. You can't talk to a Samaritan. No, no, because that's not our side. You can't talk to Romans. They're the enemy. They're the oppressors during this time. They're not on our side.

And then here comes these Yeshua followers walking in, upsetting everybody, shredding every wall that has been put up to make God's love and power exclusive. Revolution.

God's Kingdom Transforms Through Service, Not Force

And it's not like the world's revolutions because every revolution is about the same. You have someone that wants to break free with independence and so they use a form of violence to do that and then they grow in power and then someone wants to break off from them and it's just a cycling of power. That's exactly what happened with the Maccabees. The Greeks came in, the Hasmoneans raised up, they wanted to rebel and push the Greeks out, so they formed an army, and they succeeded in pushing them out. And less than one generation later, the Hasmoneans set themselves up as kings over Judea, and they were so oppressive that the people reached back out to the Greeks and said, please come back and rule over us because we can't stand this.

Worldly revolutions, violence upon violence upon taking, taking, taking. This revolution of Yeshua is not of this world. It's not violent. It does not transform through force. It transforms through service, humility, and beauty.

And we're going to notice something here with the blessings that Yeshua gives on the Sermon on the Mount, the Beatitudes. The things the kingdom calls blessed don't look like blessings. You'll notice that. It's almost backwards. It's upside down. It's the opposite of this world.

On the Mountain

And we come to Matthew chapter 5, and he sits down among his disciples like any good teacher should do, and he begins this powerful message that spans several chapters, and it's radical, and it's messy, and it's hard. And so right here, Matthew chapter 5, verse 1, this is the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount.

Seeing the crowds, he went up the mountain. Everybody say, the mountain. Nerd card's going to get played. And when he sat down, his disciples came to him, and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying...

So where did Yeshua sit down? On a mountain? No. On the mountain. I love that. On the mountain. Yeshua is about to speak the words of God on behalf of God. On the mountain. God's revelation is about to be poured out, and according to Matthew, it is on the mountain. Why does that sound familiar? God's revelation being poured out on the mountain. Where else did that happen? Mount Sinai. Right?

What's neat is Matthew here intentionally uses a definite article. It's not a mountain. He intentionally puts in there the mountain. We've talked before about messages about how Matthew really portrays Yeshua as the greater Moses that comes, giving the greater revelation or

the clear revelation of God. I believe 1,000% that Matthew here did that on purpose to force the image of Mount Sinai in your mind. The mountain of God where Moses went up after Egypt and spoke on behalf of God. He gave the Torah. This is where the covenant was made after God brought them out of Egypt. And here in Matthew chapter 5, it's set in the stage to show us not Moses, but the greater one. The greater Moses. Giving a greater, deeper message from God. Oh, it's bold what Matthew's doing here. But he wants you to know that this is important, which is why he sets it up this way.

Matthew is divided up into five different sections, by the way. Also, I believe this is intentional to display kind of the relation to the five books of Moses. Matthew is just a Bible nerd, and he's awesome, and he has a cool name. Because the Torah is a big deal, of course, especially to the first century Judeans. The Torah was given as their marching orders. This is how you are to live in a community that displays the values of God.

And here Matthew's pointing out that this is the Torah being given to you. These are your marching orders from the exact representation of God. This is how he wants us to live out this law of the kingdom. And unlike how the Torah is typically regarded, the Sermon on the Mount is not just a rule book. It's not. It's not a whole bunch of checklist things you just mark off, like these are the do's and don'ts you check off to get to heaven.

No, I think it's a demonstration of a way of life, a way of kingdom life that we're to strive for, a way of life that exhibits the kingdom living. These are the road signs that lead you to manifesting God's rule and reign, his kingdom on earth. This is what it looks like. This is what God's kingdom looks like when it's lived out.

And the first generation of believers really put this into practice from what we see and what we have written. They did it. And they didn't care what the cost was of doing it. And everyone hated them for doing it because, I mean, you're not on my side. You're not on their side. Whose side are you on? Are you going to fight for us? Are you going to be? No, I'm on the side of my king and his kingdom. And it got them killed. Absolutely got them killed.

The Sermon on the Mount Is Hard

They did the Sermon on the Mount, and I'm sure we'll talk about that soon. And, of course, a lot of things changed during the time of Constantine, right? Constantine, a very key figure in Christian history, he gets a bad rap for a lot of stuff he didn't do. People blame him for changing the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday, and the reality is he just signed into law what the churches had already begun doing.

That being said, he did bring Christianity into a political environment, a political arena. He invited Christianity to be the religion of Rome, and he continued to run an empire just like the rest of the world. But now he had crosses slapped on his flag or his statues or his shields. So any decisions that he made or people that died, it's okay because, well, Jesus, we're a Christian empire now. And you can't blame the guy. Like how many of us today do the same thing with our political beliefs? We just slap Jesus on it and call it kosher, right?

But that's the thing. The Sermon on the Mount is hard. And it's hard because the world as we know it is not designed for it. And so throughout history, we have Christians, believers, struggling with how do we actually do the Sermon on the Mount? Because it's easy to say that's face value. But what about when it enters a political arena? Like what if war breaks out? Where do the Christians stand then? Do they just kind of put a pause on the Sermon on the Mount to carry out in this different arena? It's a legitimate concern. It's a legitimate struggle.

And so we have people like St. Augustine who struggled with this same thing. He attempted to reconcile how to live out the teachings of Jesus and also how to live within a worldly government framework.

The City of God and the City of Man

He coined a teaching called the two kingdoms, or the two cities. In reality, there's two cities. There's the city of God, and then there's the city of man. Of course, the city of God is filled with love and kindness and mercy and grace and forgiveness. And the city of man is filled with everything that is self-centered and violence and taking and deceitfulness. One brings peace and love, one brings violence and war. His point in framing these teachings is that even though there's two cities, God still runs them both. And he still uses them both to accomplish his will. In studying this, it was an attempt to allow believers to transition between the two cities when they needed to, when it was appropriate. In other words, you live in the city of God until you need to show up for work for the empire. And then you shift your mindset. You put the other hat on. Because God is in control either way, right?

The Struggle of Hard Teachings

Martin Luther struggled with the same type of thing in the Peasants' War. How do we practice the Sermon on the Mount and loving people who don't love us? And living out the Sermon on the Mount is hard. It's not fair. If someone pulls a sword and starts running towards me, trying to take over my country, what am I supposed to do?

In the 19th century, dispensationalism really got a foothold in Christianity. If you're unfamiliar with it, dispensationalism is the idea that God works throughout the timeline of the world in dispensations. There's six or seven dispensations, or chapters, that take place throughout the biblical timeline and going into the future. And when one chapter closes, a new chapter opens. And God moves into this new time period where he's acting and communing with humanity. When it comes to these different dispensations or chapters of how God works, once God closes a chapter or a dispensation, it kind of resets. He doesn't communicate the same way that he did in the past. In Christianity, this is how people use dispensationalism to help reconcile the differences between the Old Testament and the New Testament. According to dispensationalism, there are different dispensations throughout the Old Testament, especially going into the New Testament, where God closes a chapter. He doesn't work that way anymore. But now he's going to do things differently. And that's just where it comes from.

And so the dispensational view of the Sermon on the Mount is fascinating because the belief is that there's going to be a future dispensation of the grand kingdom of God. There will be a time when all the chapters close and this last chapter is the eternal kingdom of God. And because this is their view, because the Sermon on the Mount is kingdom ethics and kingdom living, they only apply when we get there. Right? Man, isn't that so easy? Can I say that? Oh, just easy. I like it because of that, but I don't actually believe that.

Who the Sermon on the Mount Is For

Throughout Christian history, there were times when, as it says in [Matthew 5](#), verse 1, there are some—

So at first glance, it seems like the crowds, the lay people, were left down off the mount, and the only people that actually got this teaching were his closest disciples. That's one reading of this, which I disagree with because at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, it's very clear that the whole crowd is there.

But because of this verse right here, there are some that said throughout Christian history that the Sermon on the Mount is really only for the more religious, like the monks in the monasteries. They're the only ones who have to actually apply the Sermon on the Mount. For all the lay people, it's not for you. You didn't come up on the hill. You stay down below. It's not for you.

So you can see very quickly why people would empathize with the struggle of these hard teachings that Yeshua says—this is how you experience and you live out and you perpetuate and

you're an ambassador of the God of creation and his kingdom. You could see why people would try to do gymnastics when life got hard, when there were hard situations. And I'm not going to try to lessen that blow. I do believe it at face value. I do believe the Sermon on the Mount is for everybody. I think it's for all of us.

Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit

And Yeshua starts out in Matthew chapter five with the Beatitudes. And this is where we turn on our religious vocabulary. Because how many of you guys know that sometimes we turn on a switch of religious vocabulary that we would never, ever, ever use in our everyday life? So here we go. Matthew chapter five, verse three. What's that first word there? Blessed.

It's that religious word. We never say blessed. God blessed you. I mean, no one does that. But in the tradition, we say, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

The poor in spirit. So many times we see this and we think poverty. And according to Luke, that's what Luke says—poor. But Matthew tends to have this addition here. He says poor in spirit. It's not simply being poor. It's not simply being in poverty. One scholar put forth this definition: to be poor in spirit means to be without pretense, to be someone who understands their full reliance on God, who understands that everything they have belongs to and comes from God. Someone who isn't wrapped up in their own efforts, their own self-made security, their own life apart from God. No, this is a person who understands all good things come from above and there's nothing I can truly do without God. This is someone who understands the fullness I want to feel in my life can only come through a relationship with this king. It's like being poor in spirit is the opposite of being secure in your own doing. It's the lack of security in things that really don't bring it.

Security in the Things That Fade

Money is the most tempting of all these things, right? Everything we do turns into the value of money some way in our life. Don't we feel more secure when we have a stacked-up 401k, some money in the savings account, right? Dave Ramsey, that's what he says. Security. Nevermind.

Don't you feel more secure when you've worked really, really, really hard and you get that big house? Don't you feel more secure when you live in a country that has the most powerful military in the world, right? Security. No, if you're poor in spirit, you may have a nice 401k, you may have the big house, and you may live in a country that provides some awesome military security, but someone who's poor in spirit sees the shallowness of it all. Because all of that

security you find in this life fades away. It doesn't last. It will not last. But through God, you grasp the eternal security that dwarfs everything else and frees you to be used by God. Someone who is poor in spirit is the opposite of someone who is constantly comparing themselves to others to size them up, right? No. I may not be the sharpest crayon in the box, but at least I am not like Jason. Constantly confident in your unrighteousness. You understand that it's through God's grace that allows you to stand before him and it's nothing about you.

The Pharisee and the Tax Collector

Yeshua illustrates this in Luke chapter 18 in this famous story that we read all the time. And it's so convicting because everything Yeshua does was so tactful, strategic in getting to the heart of the matter. [Luke 18](#), verse 9. It's a familiar story about a tax collector and a Pharisee.

And here's how it goes: "To some who were confident in their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable. Two men went up to the temple to pray. One, a Pharisee, and the other, a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed, 'God, I thank you that I'm not like other people. I'm not like the robbers or the evildoers or the adulterers or even like that tax collector way over there.' The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed these things. 'God, I fast twice a week and I give a tenth of all that I get. I'm a tither.' But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but he beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God, for all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

Justified before God. You have two men. One is a Torah-keeping, God-praying Pharisee, and then you have the tax collector.

The Corruption of Rome's Tax Collectors

Now, tax collectors were not the good guys in the first century. They worked for Caesar. They collected taxes from other Judeans, their own people, and they were allowed to up the tax and scoop some off the top if they wanted to. It was a racket. That's exactly what it was. It was a racket. And Rome didn't care. I mean, you go to complain to Rome, they don't care as long as... That's why we employed the tax collector. Deal with it. It was bad. It was bad.

Imagine if some insurgents came over, took over the U.S., and put us under their thumb. And we're oppressed and they took our land and our livelihood. And most of us are now slave status to them. And they require us to pay taxes to them in honor of their leader. And so how do they

get these taxes? Well, they hire people like you and you and you. And they say, hey, we're gonna give you a bunch of money so that you can enforce your own people paying us taxes.

The Tax Collector and the Pharisee

You know what? You can jack up the taxes every once in a while if you want, take some off the top, just make sure we get our money. How would that make you feel if your friend was a tax collector for ISIS in this country? Like, do you have any respect for him? Would you call them a traitor? Would you even consider them part of your people anymore? Like, no, this guy's a jerk. He's betrayed everything that it means to be family and a tribe. That's the setup here. And Yeshua says, "ISIS working member from Founded in Truth Fellowship walked away from this situation justified." That tax collector walked away justified. And you have a Pharisee. And the thing about the Pharisee is the Pharisee wasn't showing off or trying to be arrogant, right? He was alone. It's not like he was showing off to anybody. "Ah, Todd, look at me. Who? There's no one there." It's him and God. He was praying to God. He was sincere. A sincere man praising God. And Yeshua holds this man up as the example of what not to be like. Sincerely thanking God for not making him like a tax collector. Thanking God for not making him broken like them. But the thing is, even though he was praying to God, he was not confident in God. His entire prayer was crafted about his own doing. "I tithe, I fast twice a week." He's confident in his own doing and not really allowing God to be a source of security. By contrast, the tax collector, he stands far off. He won't even come in. Doesn't even feel worthy to lift his eyes to heaven. Doesn't feel like he can enter in before this holy God. The tax collector does not talk about the things he does. "I tithe, I keep Shabbat, I do good things." No, the tax collector does not compare or contrast himself with anyone while standing before God. He just beats his breast. "God, forgive me for I am a sinner." And Yeshua says he went home justified rather than the first.

The Trap of Self-Righteousness

And how many of us read this story, and we can be honest—if we can be honest. We read this story and we're like, "Man, that poor little boy. You were not invited." We always look at this tax collector and we kind of feel a little bad for him. Like, obviously, because he's the poor good guy, right? He's a good guy. Yeshua told him he's a good guy. He's justified. He's definitely not the bad guy. He's humble. He's repentant. Nice guy. But then we have the Pharisee. And when we paint these characters in our head, does anyone ever paint the Pharisee like not a nice-looking guy? He's kind of an arrogant guy, right? Maybe, maybe not—just me. At the end of the story,

we're looking at these two. And has anyone ever read this story and looked at the tax collector and looked at the Pharisee and said, "Thank God I'm not like the Pharisee"? Got him, look at that. Yeshua got him. It's a trap. It's a trap in the Bible. "Thank God I'm not like that Pharisee." You've just become the Pharisee by comparing and contrasting yourself to him. Oh, biblical authors are so cool. Yeshua is just amazing. And I'm so excited that we just have this book of God's word to reflect on. It goes back to having an us versus them mentality. "I'm righteous and they're not," for whatever reasons. "I have God because I have worked for it and they haven't." This is the type of person that is so zealous to point out other people's sins, but never address their own. And I know none of us have ever struggled with that, but there are people that will hold their biblical moral standards up as their billboard instead of a message of grace portrayed on the cross.

Pointing Out Others' Sins

Here's why it's radical. Has anyone ever been preoccupied with someone else's sin or moral depravity? Someone you know or someone you don't know. Groups of people. But someone gets so preoccupied with someone else's sin, they talk about it, it's likely become politicized—social media posts, absolutely. "This is what you are against now." But all the while, the root of your zeal was never that the sin would disappear from the world or people would be saved or experience God. No, the zeal for pointing out someone else's sin is simply so you can feel secure in your own relationship with God. Anybody know what I'm talking about? It's so easy to maximize someone else's failure or decisions or sin in life so that you can dwarf your own sin. "It's not that bad. We don't even need to talk about it. Let's start a revolution against their sin or their downfall or their decisions that they've made in their life." Gosh, maybe this dispensational thing has something to it. This is hard. "Gosh, if we're not like them, then whatever sin we have has to be minute enough. It doesn't even have to be addressed." Coming before our holy God without pretense—if you want to be in right relationship with God, you don't do it by making claims. What orients you to the right standing relationship with God is full dependency. It's you crying out and saying, "I need you." That's the example that Yeshua gives. "Poor in spirit, theirs is the kingdom of God."

The Community of Tax Collectors

The community of God is supposed to look like the tax collectors. Isn't that weird? The tax collectors. Like I said, the tax collectors were at the bottom of the barrel, right? Everybody looked down on them. They had no respect from the Jewish community and from the Romans

as well because obviously they don't have a strong allegiance to anybody. They'll turn over their own people, right? Bottom of the barrel. You cannot get any lower on the respect totem pole in the first century as a tax collector. You can't. But that's the thing about being at the bottom. It's really hard for you to look down on other people, isn't it? That's the attitude Yeshua is saying we are supposed to have when we claim to be kingdom people. You get down off that high horse and you stop pretending like you're better, like you're in need of a physician. Paul gives this fantastic example in [1 Timothy 1:15](#) where he says this. He says, "Hey guys, I got something I want you to learn about. There is a trustworthy saying that deserves acceptance by all of you. What is that trustworthy saying that everybody should know? 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the worst.'" This is a saying that the Apostle Paul says deserves acceptance. He's instructing you. The Bible author who was inspired by the Holy Spirit of God said you need to memorize and accept this statement. You need to say this statement. You need to remind yourself of this statement. What's that do? "I am the worst sinner." And the reality is you may not be. It could be Pete. It could be Mike. I don't know. Could be all y'all. But the point is, you need to put yourself, truly put yourself, at the bottom where there is no room to look around and contrast yourself as any better than anyone else.

The Beatitudes

What people in your life, individuals or groups of people, do you automatically find comfort in knowing they struggle with certain sins because it means you don't have to acknowledge the brokenness in your own life? Verse four in Matthew chapter five, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." In [Isaiah 61](#), there's a messianic prophecy speaking to the mourners who are mourning the exile in Babylon. They're mourning their fellow Israelites and the loss of Jerusalem. And the entire chapter is framed about God's coming kingdom again and his restoration and new creation coming upon his people where he's going to comfort those who mourn. They shall be comforted. Go to the third one, verse five. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the land," or "inherit the earth." Now this one's almost synonymous with the first beatitude, the first blessing. The meek are those who have suffered and have been humbled. They do not seek revenge, but instead they seek God's glory and the welfare of others. They trust God's timing. They trust in God's security.

Rome and Messianic Expectations

Think about the timing of what's going on. Blessed are the meek. So what's the scenario going on when Yeshua says this? Again, Rome is not in a great light with the Judeans in the first

century. All right, we're good with that. Everyone's caught up with that history. You have Rome that is oppressing all the Jews in Judea. Israel is fed up with Roman occupation. Man, you don't like that. No, this government has politics I don't like and don't agree with. So you have this people that hasn't been truly free since Babylon, since Solomon—let's say a few after Solomon—before the split. What type of attitude do these people have? They're expecting a Messiah to come as a warlord to kill everybody, right? Free them through violence. What do you think this people is ready to do? Well, they're ready to get their guns and start a militia, right? Well, that's the American thing to do, right? That's what they're ready to do. And they did.

The Zealots

A group of Judeans formed known as the Zealots. We spoke about them a little bit last week. The Zealots. And this was an insurgency that used guerrilla warfare to attack the Romans. They would drop in and attack Roman soldiers in small groups and kill them in public places and then disappear. It was unlike what Rome was used to in fighting. They'd disappear like ghosts, and Rome hated that. These were revolutionaries. Rome crucified a lot of people, right? And do you know who crucifixion was really for? Who they really crucified the most was revolutionaries. Talk about all the crosses everywhere with crucified people on them. It was these guys, the zealots, the ones who opposed Rome, the ones who tried to usurp Rome, the ones who tried to conquer Rome.

It was these guys, the revolutionaries against the Roman way of life of conquering the world, who were put on crosses. Most of the time it was these guys. Barabbas was on trial at the same time as Yeshua. Why? He was a killer. Some suggest he was a zealot. Likely. He was a killer—someone who likely stood up for the people of Judea in the form of a sword. He showed that he would be willing to fight and kill to bring about the kingdom of Israel. And the people chose him over Jesus.

What were the meek promised? The earth. The land. That's a huge deal in the first century because who owned the land of Israel? It wasn't the Jews. It was the Romans. What was the goal of the zealots? Was it to simply kill all the Romans? I mean, that would have been a nice fantasy for them, I'm sure. No, their goal was the same as the Maccabees, the Hasmoneans. It was to push the Romans out so that they could take back their land. That was the point. Radical Tom. Yeah, that's not how you get it.

The Meek Will Inherit the Earth

The meek, those who don't fight, those who don't act superior to others, those who are non-judgmental, those who don't seek revenge—they are the ones that will inherit the earth. In the first century, land was taken by force. One way or another, it was taken through violence, theft, anger, wrath, or corrupt politics. And I love this hard quote from scholar Scott McKnight in his commentary of the Sermon on the Mount. He says: "The meek will inherit the earth." So [Psalms 37](#) speaks of the same phrase. The Qumran community thought that verse applied to them. They really loved that verse because they're just out in their own thing and they're going to inherit the earth by being meek.

When we put these three blessings or beatitudes together, we see Yeshua blessing the oppressed and those who have been humbled for their powerful trust in God. He blesses their willingness to wait on God for justice and the kingdom. And he blesses them for their devotion that runs so deep to him. They mourn over the condition of the world. These are the types of people who are and will be in the kingdom. Guys, this is the manifesto of God's kingdom.

When Life Gets Hard

And so many times we like to say we agree with it, until life gets hard, until something unjust happens to us, until we are attacked or persecuted. And I mean, let's be honest. That's just how it is. It's so easy to say, "You know what? I'm no longer going to stay allegiant to this. I'm going to walk into the city of man over here. I'm going to put on a different hat for this scenario."

How do the rest of them go? Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you...

Can I be real? That's not comforting. Gosh.

Yeshua is the embodiment of the Beatitudes. And as his followers, we should also embody them. But how many times do we agree with meekness, nod our heads? How many times do we absorb offense? How many times do we choose not to get revenge in one way or another? How many times do we allow the persecution to just take place? Staying pure in heart, thirsting for righteousness. What does that even mean to thirst for righteousness?

Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness

It means that your hunger and your drive is not for self-satisfying things. It's not for food and drink. The things that drive you come at a cost to you and they always benefit others. We love to agree that these are good virtues, but how quickly do they fly out the window for us?

What does it take for us to abandon the calling of Yeshua? Is it someone calling you a name? Is it someone saying something hurtful to you at church? Is it another country claiming they're gonna go to war with your country? Is it a celebrity making themselves an easy target with some big announcement on the news? Is it someone stealing from you? What is it that makes it so easy for us to abandon the core teachings of our King?

The Radical Message

When Paul preached the radical message of Yeshua to the world, they thought he was crazy, like cray-cray-crazy. He noted something in his letter to Corinth. Oh, it's not those lights. This is this light. That's fine. Devil can't stop me. I'm gonna preach. He noted something in his message to Corinth that was so radical: This lifestyle, this way of life that births God's kingdom is here and now. And to most folks, it looks like folly. It looks like foolishness.

Only someone who is not in touch with the actual world outside and how things actually run would be foolish, stupid enough to believe they can live a life like that. When Rome oppresses this country, that is not the time to be meek. That is not the time to let them push you around. That is not the time to absorb it. And Yeshua says you'll never see God's kingdom if you don't.

Here we go. So in Paul's letter to Corinth, here's what he says. And I think it's a bit of a longer slide, but we'll get through it.

"For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God." Verse 1.

Who's Paul writing to? He's writing to the Corinthians. And what he's saying is that the entire empire is telling you to put your faith and allegiance in Caesar, this divine man-god figure who overtakes the world and the power that he has. Believe in the peace of Rome. That was a big thing in Pax Romana. It was a big thing in the first century, leaning on the peace of Rome because Rome was the ultimate giver of peace. Wherever they went, there was always peace in the aftermath. I mean, after they killed everybody who didn't want peace. That's how they saw the big, big theme in Revelation. That's how they solved it.

You want peace? Pay your taxes. No? Stab. Now we have peace. Right?

The Cross Versus Caesar

And what Paul is saying is: listen, quit putting your faith in him. Tear down your allegiance from him. And I want you to give all of your allegiance to the one who is crucified. Let that sink in. The big, bad Caesar who has the armies, commands the attentions of the gods in Roman mythology. The man who has all the power. The man who goes into battle, brings back trophies. Yeah, so my guy, my king, I don't call him Curios Lord. I call my king Curios Lord. And he's more powerful than him. And your king, the one who died on a cross, naked and whipped. Yes, folly. It looks like folly, like foolishness to the world.

Here goes Paul. It would look like foolishness to a world that's still in darkness and doesn't understand the true wisdom of God. God will use this pseudo-foolishness to turn the world upside down. God's power in this alleged foolishness will destroy the Roman Empire. That'll never happen. You can't topple empires through this Christ-following teachings, outlived and outmatched till this day, the way of the king.

My king is Yeshua, and he rules by dying on the cross, by enduring violence, by forgiving in the midst of persecution, by absorbing the worst things the world could throw at him. And he taught his people to do the same. Absolute foolishness. Who would do that? To the world, it's folly. Blessed are the meek? What? Blessed are the poor in spirit? That's not how you obtain any essence of what the world calls a blessing, but that is the calling of the kingdom.

Turn the Other Cheek

Now, be honest. Do you think it's stupid to turn the other cheek if someone slaps you? Would you?

Now, I know, I know, I know. We've got lots of messages here about the context of the Sermon on the Mount, what the slapping was, honor, shame. Forget all that. Someone slaps you. Forget the context. Someone slaps you as an offense towards you. Would you turn the other cheek in a real-life situation? I know no one goes to bars, but Applebee's. I don't know. Someone slaps you. What do you do? What do you do?

Someone insults you. A bully throws his heavy backpack on you, hurts you, and then forces you to carry it for a mile. Come on. You're nothing to me. You're beneath me. Get up. Carry this. What do you do? Thank you, Lord. Do you do it with a smile, emanating the peace of God outwardly? And then when you've walked that mile and he's like, all right, I'll take it from here,

you say, no, no. I will show you the sacrificial love by carrying it another mile. Who does that? Like, really, who does that?

It's no wonder that we have so many different church fathers or characters throughout history struggling with this. I mean, certainly he didn't mean to do that all the time. Certainly he didn't mean to live like that all the time. When there's a war between you and your enemy, do you pray for them instead of shooting at them? It's something we have documented that the early Christians did. They understood that they weren't fighting an enemy of flesh and blood. They understood that there were dark forces that were controlling and had enslaved other humans like they once were that they needed to pray against to free their enemy. Foolishness, folly. It doesn't make sense.

Who really thirsts for righteousness? Who really cares more about doing for others than feeding themselves? This is what the community of Yeshua is supposed to look like. What do we need to do to make it happen? What do we need to do?

Worship team, you guys can come up as we conclude.

A Heavy Piece of Wood

Guys, as we go through this series, I hope it's hard to read the teachings of Yeshua. I hope you struggle with trying to say, yeah, I'm going through this situation in my life and I don't know how to implement these teachings. I hope your heart convicts you of ways that you can do the unthinkable, the most foolish-looking thing to the world, but it's exactly what Yeshua says to do. We're called to change the world. We're called to be part of a revolution. And it's not described as something easy. It's described as a heavy piece of wood that burdens your shoulder as you drag it down the street.

And so I don't know where you're at today. Are you at a place where God calls you to let go of trying to intentionally blind yourself to your own brokenness by looking at everyone else's around you? Are you at a place where anger and bitterness have consumed the parts of your heart where you cannot even come to sincerely pray for your enemy? Are you at a place where you refuse to realize that person that hurt you is just as broken as you are as they stand before a holy God? He is calling his kingdom, and the Sermon on the Mount is the ethic of it. And are you willing to live sacrificially, that whole living sacrifice thing?

What do sacrifices do? They brought God and man together. You're called to be that in whatever capacity God has put you.

So please stand as we close in worship and prayer. And if you're at a place in your life where you need prayer for anything, guys, we have a prayer team that is devoted to stand with you and pray with you. Take advantage of that. It's such an amazing opportunity and blessing that we have here.

The Holy Spirit's Conviction

Avinu Malkeinu, our father, our king, we thank you for this time together as we read the words of our king, the hard words of our king, that even the wisest teachers before us have struggled with how we actually keep these things in the world that we live in. God, I ask that the Holy Spirit that you have promised and have given us would do its job right now and convict and bring to mind the things in our life that maybe we don't want to acknowledge we're broken in. Maybe we don't want to acknowledge our big deals, that the Holy Spirit would bring the things to mind right now where we should be implementing the things that we read in the Sermon on the Mount, the attitude we should have towards others. That the Holy Spirit would also give us your solutions for how to handle the problems and the conflicts that we encounter, the problems and the offenses that we deal with. How do we handle those as members and citizens of the kingdom of heaven, not as those who are allegiant to the world?

We thank you, Father, for this time, and we praise you. In the name of Yeshua, we pray, amen.

Worship and the Shema

In your hand we go. Oh sir, make a stand to follow you. Every word that you speak will stand forever. Speak now to me. I'm waiting here for you. Open the heavens. Let your glory come down. My heart burns for you, Yeshua, for your presence, for your holy—my dreams, my perfect land, surrender. One touch and all I ask: every word that you speak will stand forever. Speak now to me, waiting here for you. Open the heavens. Let your glory come down. My heart burns for you, Yeshua, for your presence, for your holy fire. Open the heavens. Let your glory. My heart burns for you, Yeshua, for your presence, for your holy fire. And console your fears. Yeah, console me. My heart burns for you, Yeshua, for your presence, for your holy fire. Open the heaven. Let your glory down. I praise for you, Yeshua, for your presence. So consume with your fire. Burn for you. Yeah, consume me with your fire. Burn for you. Burn for you. Oh, we burn for you. We thank you, Father.

Let's sing the Shema together. Shema Yisrael, Shema Yisrael, Shema Yisrael, Shema Yisrael. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Blessed is the name of his glorious kingdom

for all eternity. Amen.

Shabbat Shalom, everyone. I'm Matthew Vanderells and I hope you enjoyed this message.

Giving and Connection

Founded in Truth exists to build a community that bears the image of God and lives the redeemed life only Yeshua gives. If this message impacted you or if this ministry has been a blessing to you, we invite you to take part in making sure the message of Yeshua and the truth of God's word continues to reach others. To make sure this happens, you can donate through our online giving portal at [Foundedintruth.com/give](https://foundedintruth.com/give) or by texting any amount to 704-275-0752. Don't forget to like and subscribe for new content every single week. And we thank you for your continued support. And we look forward to seeing you next time. Shalom.

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