

Sermon on the Mount – The Mountain of God

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MAIN VERSES

[Deuteronomy 8](#) • [Deuteronomy 18:15](#) • [Jeremiah 31](#) • [Matthew 5:2](#) • [Matthew 5](#) • [Exodus 19](#)

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. If you guys ever know what would happen if there was like an emergency and we needed to get out real quick, we know we're going to a place of peace after, right? So it'll be fun.

Sermon on the Mount

So again, we're continuing our series on the Sermon on the Mount. The foundational ethic of King Yeshua for his kingdom and his followers to follow. And today I wanted to kind of jump into the mountain of God since it was Sermon on the Mount. And we're going to dip into probably the first beatitude. The first of the blessings. But stories—stories are amazing. Anyone like film? Everyone likes film. I love film. Film's great. It's a visual way of telling a story. And you can do so much with film. You can change the camera angles. You can mess with the audio. You can add effects in. Everyone who produces a film does it just very uniquely, right? With their fingerprints on it.

And telling a story is powerful. Throughout time, it's always been such a powerful means of communication. Because when you tell a story, you're not just saying stuff, right? You are articulating things in a certain way as to invite the audience to join in as the spectators of the story. Or even inviting them to be a part of the story. And different people will tell a story differently based on what they want the point to be, right? Sometimes, stories will have different details or elements based on the narrative truth.

And before services started, I kind of did a little experiment. And it was interesting. Not quite as vibrant as I thought it would be, but that's okay. I went around and asked people, hey, what's the Bible about? And I love it when you put someone on the spot with a religious question, it's always scarier than, say, what's the boiling temperature of water or something? People just freeze.

Gospel Accounts

I got several different answers. Oh, it's about new creation. It's about a type of restoration that comes forth, how God's blessing is always to blossom with goodness. It's awesome. Someone else said, oh, it's a story of redemption. Kind of like the same theme as new creation, but fallen mankind, and there's hope for a new rebirth of humanity to come forth as God's kingdom. Awesome. What else? There were a couple more. Someone else said it's a story of defeating evil. It's good. Story of God's love. Different people see different things that are impactful in stories. And the way that we go on and tell those stories changes depending on what we see that we think is most significant.

John, for example—you guys ever read the Bible and see maybe there's a retelling of the same story in two different places and you notice that there's a detail that is different in both stories, but you cannot acknowledge it. You cannot admit that. You can't bring it up because then the Bible is contradicting itself or the Bible is wrong or something, right? Anyone else? Like, no, we just kind of ignore it and keep going forward. Okay, it happens. Guys, if you ever find something in the Bible that someone would accuse of being contradictory, therefore the Bible's not real—and this is a broad statement, and I'll make it anyway—that's not the case. If there's a detail that's in two different parts of the Bible that's different, it's supposed to be like that, even if it doesn't make sense to you. It should not threaten the entirety of your faith. Read the story that was passed down, that we believe was inspired by the Holy Spirit to be what it is right now.

One of those places where this does occur, though, is in the gospel accounts. You have Matthew, Mark, Luke, John—these gospel accounts, which are retelling accounts from different individuals of the story of Yeshua and his ministry. And these are not letters trying to make an argument like you would find in Paul. These are narrative accounts. There are details that the authors, the directors, put in the stories that may be different than other authors for a specific purpose.

John's Gospel

For example, John. John. Everybody's favorite. The black sheep of the Gospels. John wants you to understand when he's writing that the weight behind the idea of Yeshua being the temple of God. The place where heaven is crashing into earth. The place where God's glory has finally fully manifested, shining light outward. That's one of John's big themes in his gospel account. And so John begins his account with the story of Yeshua. First things first, turning water into wine because we've got to get the party started, right? First thing Yeshua does, turns water into wine. And it says, this is the first of many signs. The first sign was turning water into wine. Wasn't there another place in the Bible where the first sign was turning water into something else that's red? Oh yeah, that's right, back in the Exodus. It's intentional. It says the first of many signs that would come. The first of many signs in the Exodus, turning water into blood, was the predecessor of God's judgment on those who oppressed his people, right?

Very next thing that Yeshua does is proclaim the systemic structure of power being bolstered in the name of God as evil. He does this in the middle of the temple courts as he vandalizes the headquarters of the servants of Mammon. John starts his story out declaring that the temple is not the place where God is trapped behind the sins of the corrupt. He is going to rebuild the temple, and Yeshua is talking about himself as being the place where man will convene with God. Now, that makes sense that John would start his gospel account this way because that's the theme he wants you to take away. It's a big theme.

Matthew's Greater Exodus

Matthew, on the other hand, places the flipping of the tables at the temple at the end of his story when he goes into Jerusalem to die. But Matthew's objective was not to frame Yeshua as the new forever temple of God's presence. Matthew wanted to show Yeshua as the fulfillment of the biblical story, this climactic ending. Matthew wants you to leave with the impression that, wow, the most significant story of God in the Old Testament, as it relates to Israel, has finally reached its conclusion or its fulfillment in Yeshua. Specifically, the big story in the Old Testament. What is the most significant story in the Old Testament that is mentioned the most, directly or indirectly, that happened to Israel? It's the Exodus story. Everyone recognizes this. With Moses. And that's the lens, one of the lenses, that Matthew presents his story through. He wants you to walk away and see, wow, this is the greater Moses that has come. This is the greater Exodus that has come.

In [Deuteronomy 18](#), 15, it speaks prophetically of this greater Moses that would come and lead his people to righteousness once and for all. It's something that Israel had looked forward to throughout the entire story of their rise and fall in the Old Testament. You could call it the

greater exodus, when this greater Moses is going to come, as the prophets proclaim, and free them not from slavery to Pharaoh in Egypt, but to slavery of sin and death. And this is the theme. This is the lens that Matthew really wants you to take away. That's why he starts his story and frames and structures his gospel account of Yeshua a certain way, paralleling the life of Moses.

I mean, think about it. Moses is born under an evil king that would justify slaughtering innocent children in the name of national power and security. Yeshua was born under an evil king that would justify slaughtering innocent children in the name of national power and security. The midwives in Egypt trick Pharaoh so that Moses can escape. The Magi trick King Herod so that Yeshua could escape. Moses was hidden within Egypt to save him, and so was Yeshua. Moses goes through the waters as a form of baptism at the Red Sea. Yeshua goes through the waters of his baptism at the Jordan River, the place where Israel entered into God's rest, symbolically of the land.

Moses ventures into the wilderness where Israel's loyalty is tested. Right after Yeshua goes through the waters, he ventures into the wilderness where he himself is tested in the same way that Israel was in Matthew's account. Moses arrives to the mountain of God where he teaches the revelation of God to his people. And in Matthew's account, right after all these things take place, Yeshua arrives at the mountain of God where he teaches the revelation to his people. Here Yeshua stands as a new and greater Moses, giving the pure revelation of God and what it looks like to be a people of the new renewed covenant of [Jeremiah 31](#). A people that would actually live out the ethic of God in a way that makes an impact and ushers in God's kingdom instead of their own.

In Matthew chapter 5, when Yeshua goes, it says that he goes up on a mount in some translations. It kind of brushes over it. But in the Greek, it's interesting. In the Greek, Matthew stresses the mountain. So when you read it, it's not just a mountain. It's a specific, intentional mountain where Yeshua goes up and he calls his disciples up with him. And he sits down and speaks and teaches. He teaches this is what it will look like for someone to enter into the kingdom of God. This is one of Matthew's indirect ways of, again, echoing Moses going up to the mountain to teach.

Now in Luke, Yeshua is depicted as going up on a mountain, choosing his 12 disciples, and then coming down from the mountain and finding himself in a plain below, a level place.

And there he teaches his sermon. Still this Mosaic imagery of Moses going up and coming down and teaching his people the oracles of God. Isn't that just neat? Matthew sat down and

articulated the structure and frame of how he wanted his story to be told so that it was bigger than just words. It was encapsulating the entirety of the story of God.

And the Sermon on the Mount starts in [Matthew 5](#), verse 2. And it says, "Isn't that the most religious terminology you've ever seen? Blessed are the poor in spirit." We've heard that so many times, right? And we just kind of, oh, yeah, that's right. What's it called? It just becomes so casual sometimes. It loses its meaning.

Love how Young's literal translation says something about this poor in spirit. This is how Yeshua begins the foundational ethic of his kingdom. The Magna Carta, the constitution of abiding in the reign of Yeshua. This verse is number one, the first part.

And of course, we know this section at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount is called the Beatitudes, right? The blessings. Or Beatitude can also mean happy. The happies. I like that. The happies.

Or a more secular usage of the term is congratulations, right? Congratulations, poor in spirit.

The blessings of the Beatitudes are really for people ready for the kingdom's coming. They're describing the type of person that is going to experience and cross over that threshold. Blessed are those who are poor in spirit. What is poor in spirit, right? There are two main views.

One is blessed are those who are not overly confident in themselves, that they forget to find their dependence in God. This could be an affluent person who finds themselves at the top, having wealth, having security, having the things they feel like they've earned by climbing the social class ladder. That could be someone that's not poor in spirit, right? But it could also be riffing off of [Deuteronomy 8](#). Don't forget the Lord your God who has brought you out of this place of bondage, who has given you all of these blessings. Don't forget the Lord your God that I saved you. Don't forget and be blinded by your own greed. Don't forget and be blinded by your own pride and bitterness. Don't forget and feel entitled and have a thirst to get to the top.

Blessed are those who are poor in spirit. This passage articulates what kingdom-ready people should be like. Not a people with a farce resume of power that they feel they're entitled to. Not a people that have enough so that their wants and desires replace dependence on God. And the calling to be humble. They are also not those who try to force God's will on a world unprepared for it. They don't take things by force, these people, right? Blessed are the meek, they will inherit the world by being meek, not grasping for power.

I heard someone phrase it like this. He says, it's a pretty ambiguous phrase, but blessed are those who are poor at being spiritual, for you are included too.

And it kind of follows the same train of thought. Have you ever been part of a community or maybe a church or an event where the structure and atmosphere catered to the spiritual elite?

A couple. Okay. You never know. I have my past experiences.

The spiritual elite, the SSF, the spiritual special forces. And I'm speaking about this characteristic of wearing a spiritual mask in a way that gives you a leg up on everyone else, right?

This would be someone that would say, "Oh, you didn't wash your hands before you eat?" I did, because I'm close to God and more spiritual. Thankfully, we have no examples anywhere of anyone ever doing that. Or it could be someone that whenever they get into a conflict, there is no other explanation except that the other party is possessed by demons. These are people who are trying to get to the top of the pyramid. So they can be over others and control others.

And it's not just within religious realms, of course not. It's something I feel like all of us are tempted by every single day in different structures of power, in different systems or different relationships that we're in. You do something that threatens their perception of control and then you're told you're compromising in your faith.

I was told by someone who believed that taking medicine was a sign of depending on man instead of God. It's amazing how you can phrase something and it sounds so good, right? Like, yeah, yeah, I won't take my insulin. That's fine. I don't want to. I was told that if I take medicine, I'm not depending on God. And if I chose to do that, I was compromising my faith by taking medicine. And it was more because they made a decision on God's behalf about medication.

Spiritual elitism also tends to foster pride and arrogance, which is reinforced by controlling others with their stipulations and opinions, which they feel are authoritative because they're part of the SSF.

And if there's one thing that intimidates me when I read the account of Yeshua and the things that he taught, is that heaven, the heaven that Yeshua is bringing is not for the spiritual elite. It's not.

A Kingdom Revolution

Another view on this verse is, quite simply, it means blessed are the dispirited. Those who have been beaten down. Those who have been shoved to the bottom of the pyramid in the name of others climbing to the top. Those who have no hope left. Nothing. Maybe these people have been so beaten down that they're anti-pious. They're not pious anymore. Maybe they've even

walked away from the faith because there's no more hope left. Because that's what the world has taught them. No more hope left.

Dispossessed, abandoned by the people of the world. Yours is the promise of a surprising reversal of your condition.

I thought both views were pretty neat in trying to tackle what this is. Because what's it say? The first will be...

And that's really exciting for everyone who is not middle-class American.

See, here Yeshua is saying, repent, shift your mind, change it, change it in how you view sin. But not only that, change it in how you view sin. The kingdom of God is here. It is near, it is in your midst. And you're going to have to shift your mind if you want to reign in the kingdom of God.

Luke's version is one that is not really quoted a lot because Luke wanted to start trouble. Luke was ready for a revolution. I mean, yeah, he was ready to go because he doesn't phrase it as "blessed are the poor in spirit." We love the cushion of, oh, it's spiritual.

Luke says, "blessed are the poor." Well, I mean... I don't know if I'm that poor. Am I not blessed? What does that mean?

Well, Luke tells you what it means because Luke follows that up with, "but woe to you who are rich for you've already received your comfort."

Let's go back to Matthew. Luke is presenting Yeshua as starting a revolution. That's what Luke's doing. It's beautiful. That's what Yeshua was crucified for as being a revolutionary, disrupting the system.

Winners and Losers

The world... specifically in the West, specifically our great nation, ingrains in us that we have to be winners, right? That's what we in the USA have to be, right? Someone has to be, and it's definitely us, right? That's what our country was founded on, and that's the foundation of everything our country launched from.

And so this idea, followed by something called the American Dream, the pursuit of money as a means of happiness, it very easily slips into dog-eat-dog mentality. If I want to be happy or successful, I need to outdo everyone else as I climb this pyramid. And it becomes an us versus

them, a winners and losers, two classifications, rights and wrongs, good and bad is how you identify people.

And we spend our daily lives going out in the world, sizing up every single person we meet to evaluate whether or not they're going to be a threat to us climbing whatever pyramid we feel like we need to in our life.

Are you with me a little bit? It's a real thing. It's a real thing on how our brains are trained.

And unfortunately, our nation has done a great job in leveraging the Christian faith to reinforce that pursuit.

An Oppressed People

Happy are the poor in spirit. Theirs is the reign of the heavens. Remember, whenever there's a pyramid, there's always less space at the top than at the bottom.

So if we're working in a pyramid infrastructure of social classes that existed in the first century, very much so in the Roman Empire, climbing to the top requires that others fill the vacuum below.

In the Roman Empire, you had a more complex social structure than we even have here, but it's based around the same thing, wealth. And depending on your income level and your power, political power, you would rise to the top. The Judeans, the Jews of the first century, majority of them were slave class as far as the Roman Empire goes. It didn't have a lot of significance. It didn't have a lot of value or worth to anyone.

Hey, if a Roman guard comes and asks you to carry his stuff, why would they ever do that? Oh, because you're a Judean. You're a Jew because that's what you do. That's what you do. They were an oppressed people. And every day they walked outside and they saw the Romans walking around, controlling everything, controlling their lives.

And it wasn't just the Romans. Before the Romans, it was the Greeks. Before the Greeks, it was the Persians. Before the Persians, it was the Babylonians. It was, it was, it was. Will we ever find rest? Will we ever find freedom? That was the question.

And so when Yeshua says, blessed are the poor, which is fascinating because that word in Greek doesn't just mean poor. Like, I'm struggling to pay Verizon bill this month. No, it's poor, poor. Poor, poor. Blessed are the poor, poor. Those who have nothing and are forced to rely on God and trust in God for his redemption.

The Kingdom's Threat

It's a big deal. Big deal. And all of a sudden, when we realize what Yeshua is actually talking about here, when we get through all the religious language that we love to repeat because it sounds good—Blessed are—we come to realize that maybe the announcement of the kingdom of God isn't such a happy thing for some of us, right? Because if a new kingdom is coming and you're excited about it, that means that you understand that the way things are is not okay. Not okay at all. But what if you're happy with the way things are? This is a threat to my way of life. Because if the first will be last, then the pyramid is going to be flipped upside down, and then where will you be?

In Luke, he directly ties this to your financial class and how you manage your money. And Matthew puts a deeper spiritual spin on it, whereas with Matthew, it's not as simple as a dollar amount in your bank account. It goes much deeper. If you don't have money, you may still carry a fat wallet of pride and arrogance. And if you have a lot of money, you may distribute it wisely through the lens of humility and wisdom and not like the oppressive ruling class.

And it's an intimidating list Yeshua gives to begin his teaching about God and his teaching about who belongs to God. The revelation of God given to the greater Moses, the pure ethic of God being articulated by the king himself on the mountain. It's intimidating to some, but to others... it's a promise that brings hope and relief.

So what do we choose? Because there is a choice, the way that Matthew, Luke, and Mark present this.

Poor in Spirit

In Exodus chapter 19, all of Israel has left Egypt. They've gone through the water. They've arrived at the mountain. And Moses is up in the mountain speaking with God. And in [Exodus 19](#), God came down and he told Moses, go warn the people. Go warn the people not to use force to get ahead to come see the Lord. Because they won't make it. Tell them to stand back. Tell them to be humble. Tell them to restrain themselves. Do not forcefully make your way to the Lord. That's what it says.

And in the same way, we need to check ourselves and our hearts at times. Where do we fall in the status of being poor in spirit? Is that a phrase of hope? Have you found yourself beaten down by this world? Having others... telling you, even in the name of God, that you're not worthy. Have you lost hope in yourself, in your faith maybe, in humanity? Do you find yourself

at a place where you are truly dependent on God because who else can you depend on? Not living your life in a dog-eat-dog world. I must be a winner mentality. Congratulations. Yours is the reign of the heavens.

The Cost of Comfort

But maybe we find ourselves in a place where your happiness and contentment is only determined in how much you take and consume, how much you acquire. Maybe the pursuit in your life is not to have the reign of justice and peace overtake the world, but your pursuit is a world where you're the winner. You have that invisible number in your mind that you will finally have contentment if you were using your money in a way that would shine the light on God's kingdom, but instead it's being hoarded as if it's the only thing that can ever make you feel safe.

According to Yeshua, in his first line of his ethic, of revelation from God about God's kingdom and new humanity and how the new humanity of God and all of the fulfillments of the promises of God as they're unleashed on earth—the first verse—that's not the type of person that's going to be able to step in to that reign of heaven on earth. And unless they repent, change, break the walls of where their mind is at and where they've placed their identity and structured power in their life, unless they recognize that, the best they can do is convince themselves that they're closer to God than everyone else because of earthly status. And they can wear a t-shirt with some Hebrew on it, and they can show up to church and check that off the list for the week, and they can go home and wonder: what does the peace of God actually feel like?

An Upside-Down Kingdom

Those are the choices that Yeshua is teaching his disciples about what they're supposed to embody and how radical it is. And it doesn't make sense, and it doesn't seem logical. And to be honest, it just seems like such an upside-down thing to do in this world. And that's exactly everything that Yeshua taught. God's kingdom will look like it's upside-down when it's manifested in this world. But the reality is, we don't realize how much blood has gone to our heads because we've been stuck upside-down this whole time. And that's intimidating to think about.

So this week, I encourage you: meditate on the Word. What does it mean to be poor in spirit? What does it mean to be dispirited? And where is Yeshua calling you to make adjustments and repent in your mind, change in your mind? Because it doesn't always happen overnight. We've

been trained a certain way, humanity, but we can make baby steps, right? And so focus on that this week. Meditate on that. What does it mean to be poor in spirit? And what does that look like in this world? Amen?

Please stand. We'll go ahead and conclude services with worship. During this time, I invite you to praise, worship. You can pray at your seat, you can meditate. If you need prayer today, we'll have a prayer team on either side of the stage and take advantage of that. God is calling a people to represent his kingdom, to represent his reign on earth. And we're by no means perfect, but we can still push forward for progress. Amen.

Don't Leave With the Moss

Jeff, do you have something to say? Excuse me, guys. I was so nervous I forgot to do my closing. We covered the eighth plague. I forgot the ninth and the tenth. See, if we don't clean our gardens out from the moss, does anybody know what the ninth plague was? Darkness. There's no such thing as darkness. Darkness is absent of light. That means there'll be no Yeshua in my garden if I don't clean the moss out. There'll be no light. And then what was the last plague? There's going to be a cry in the darkness in Egypt and my trials and tribulations that's never been heard before.

So please, as they're about to sing, you've had time to think. If you've got some locusts, some canker worms, some palm worms, we all have the moss. I was up here 20 minutes before service started praying, getting the moss out of my garden. Don't leave with the moss. Don't end up with me where all you have is just a little thread. Keep your robe.

Closing Blessing

Alvina Malkinu, our Father, our King. Father, we thank you for this day that we're reminded of what your rest and comfort feels like. And we thank you for the challenge of your word, the challenge of not to compromise, the challenge to push forward, even with baby steps, that we would be blessed and called happy in your reign. We thank you, Father, for your Holy Spirit that is within us even now. And we ask that it would continue to empower us to be the salt of the earth and the light. In Yeshua's name we pray. Amen.

Let's sing the Shema here. Shema Yisrael. Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one. Blessed is the name of his glorious kingdom for all of eternity. May the Lord also cause you to increase and overflow in love for one another and for all people in order to strengthen your hearts as blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Yeshua

with all his Kedoshim. And may the Lord bless you and may he keep you. And may the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord lift up his countenance toward you and give you his peace, his shalom. Amen. Amen.

Shabbat Shalom, family.

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