



The King's Ransom

Matthew 20:28

Text

Matthew 5:1-12

Topic

Jesus retreated from the multitudes, went up on a mountain, and taught His closest disciples the virtues of the kingdom

Title

"He'll Be Teachin' on the Mountain When He Comes"

Introduction

Tour guides got together and came up with the following titles and characteristics of citizens from the following countries:

- The Ugly American: super-patriotic, obese, loud, clueless about local culture and language... but a good tipper.
- The Arrogant French: unabashed snob, easily put on the defensive about country of origin, cheap.
- The Rude Russian: obsessed with luxury, boastful and borderline obscene (men).

- The Brassy Brit: worst-dressed of the lot, anxious to drink to excess and acquire brain-melting sunburns.
- The Merry Australian: Vegemite in the backpack, life of the party, always down for a hike or surf, possible chip on shoulder.
- The Calm Canadian: maple leaf tattoo, keen to debunk perception that Canada is a frigid wasteland and de facto colony of America, incredibly polite to a fault.

For a moment let's forget about our own countries of origin and consider the 'country' we are all headed to as believers in Jesus Christ. As citizens of Heaven, just passing through on the earth, **do we have certain characteristics?**

Why, yes; yes, we do. They are revealed to us by Jesus in what is commonly called His Sermon on the Mount.

As the King teaches His kingdom manifesto, He reveals to us the traits each and every citizen of Heaven is to manifest on the earth.

I'll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 The Teaching Of The King's Manifesto Has Been Given To You, and #2 The Traits Of The Kingdom Are To Be Manifested By You.

#1 The Teaching Of The King's Manifesto Has Been Given To You

(v1-2)

A 'manifesto' is a published or verbal declaration of principles and goals, especially of a government.

It's not a word we use everyday so allow me to suggest something else that might make more sense to us.

Whether your politics are conservative or liberal you are probably familiar with the movement in our country to return to the principles and virtues set out by the founding fathers in the Constitution of the United States. The argument is that we have gotten away from what it means to be an American.

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount sets forth the principles and virtues of the kingdom of Heaven. As He describes the traits of a citizen of the kingdom we can determine if we have gotten away from what it means to be a Christian.

Mat 5:1 And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him.

Jesus had set up headquarters in Capernaum in the region of Galilee. He had been teaching in synagogues, preaching in the open, and healing *everyone of everything*, whether the causes were physical, supernatural, or a combination of both.

He retreated up a mountain from "the multitudes" who were following Him and took a seat. It was the posture a rabbi assumed when He was about to teach His closest "disciples."

Jesus had not yet chosen His apostles so we can assume that this group of "disciples" included them but was larger than the twelve. We can also assume that many from the "multitude" climbed the mount and heard these words.

They heard the words, but the words were not meant for them.

Only someone who is a believer can manifest these traits. They require the supernatural enabling of God the Holy Spirit.

You must be indwelt by the Holy Spirit; you must be born-again to manifest these traits.

They are not a *prescription* for becoming righteous; they are a *description* of those who have been declared righteous by God.

One commentator called them "effective words of grace," meaning that they are the effective cause of that which they teach. As we like to put it, they are themselves, as God's Words, God's enabling to those who are born-again.

Mat 5:2 Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:

The particular use of the word "taught," especially its verb tense, indicates this was a typical teaching Jesus repeatedly gave. Yes, there was a day in which He gave **the** Sermon on the Mount. But He repeated it, in part or in full, as He went about preaching.

These next three chapters are the heart of Jesus' teaching on being a citizen of the kingdom of Heaven. The kingdom of Heaven is going to be a real, future, one thousand year reign by Jesus over the earth. But it is also true to say that we are citizens of His kingdom right now.

Think of it as the government of our lives by God. Wherever we are, in whatever earthly kingdom, at whatever time in history, we are citizens of the kingdom of Heaven who are to be governed by God.

We're going to see what a citizen of the kingdom of Heaven looks like in just a moment. But before we do we need to be sure we are in the group of disciples and not just in the multitude.

Have you been born-again? Does God the Holy Spirit live within you? Because if you have not, and if He does not - ***you cannot exhibit any of the traits we are going to discuss.*** It is impossible because they are all produced by the grace of God operating in the hearts of believers.

A few verses earlier Jesus said, "Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand." When you repent and believe, you leave the multitude and join His disciples.

#2 The Traits Of The Kingdom Are To Be Manifested By You

(v3-12)

Let's say you **are** a disciple in the broad sense that you believe in Jesus and are born-again. It's important we get started in our understanding of these traits on the right foot.

These traits (commonly called "the beatitudes") **are things we already possess.** They are part of the new nature we received when we were saved.

At the same time, we should aspire to grow in these traits. And, as I suggested earlier, we can by self-examination realize we have gotten away from what it means to be a Christian and want to get back to them.

They are the Lord's description of every single believer. This is what we are all to be like by His enabling grace.

This isn't a description of certain super-saints. It is the everyday expectation of the average Christian.

All of us are to manifest **all** of these characteristics. Unlike the gifts of the Holy Spirit, in which we each have differing gifts, every one of these traits are to be in our lives.

Mat 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed" is not so easily translated. It means something like, *O how happy and to be envied*. Get that set in your mind right from the start. These traits, which on the surface, from the world's perspective, seem unenviable, are characteristics of those who are to be envied, who are 'happy' in the truest spiritual sense of that word.

Starting His talk with the word "blessed" puts us on notice that it is our Lord's intention to build us up, to give our lives meaning and purpose, to help us to discover why we were put on this earth in the first place.

Beyond all that, this word "blessed" has a future component, too. We're not only blessed now - we will be blessed in eternity.

The first trait is to be "poor in spirit." There are many words translated into English "poor." This one is the most extreme. It was used of a beggar who had absolutely nothing.

From here commentators launch out in a thousand different directions in their applications of the beatitudes - many of them profitable for our spiritual growth.

I want to do something slightly different. **I want to see how our Lord, Jesus Christ, as the foremost citizen of the kingdom of Heaven, manifested each of these traits as a man.**

True, Jesus was and is God. But He was and is our example, our model, and therefore He **must**, as a man on the earth, exhibit and example these very traits He calls upon His disciples to manifest.

He was certainly not "poor in spirit" the way we are. **He made Himself that way to show us kingdom living.**

How can it be said, that Jesus was "poor in spirit?" Remember what we said about the word "poor." It was used of a beggar. Now what does a beggar do? He begs; or we could say, he *asks*.

Jesus can be described as "poor in spirit" because, as a man, He set aside His own will and always **asked** His Father in Heaven what He was to say, where He was to go, and what He was to do.

Jesus said, "by Myself I can do nothing" (John 5:30). He said, "the words I speak are not My own... the Father has told Me what to say" John 12:49).

You see the Lord – fully God yet fully man – praying, seeking His Father's will and permission. He modeled for us total dependence upon God.

Jesus wasn't poor in spirit because He was somehow *deficient*, but because He was totally *dependent*. He totally, 100%, submitted Himself to His Father and followed the Holy Spirit.

Am I totally dependent upon God? I started that way; we all did, when we got saved.

It was a recognition of total spiritual poverty and dependence upon God to save us that gained us entrance to "the kingdom of Heaven."

Since I was once thus submitted and surrendered, *I can be again*. Or, at least, I can recognize where I might have abandoned this trait to follow my own leadings; I can repent and return to doing God's will.

Only then, totally dependent upon my God and Savior, will I be truly, wonderfully "blessed." I will appreciate "the kingdom of Heaven" because, wherever I am on the earth, I am being ruled by God.

Mat 5:4 Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.

The particular word for "mourn" is a very intense word. It described mourning for the dead.

Jesus, we are told, was "a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief."

- He mourned with tears outside the tomb of His friend, Lazarus.
- He mourned with tears over the plight of the city of Jerusalem.

Suffering and sin inspired Jesus to "mourn." In His case, having no sin, He mourned for the sin of others, and for sin in general.

Do I mourn over sin? I did when I first got saved. I mourned over my own sin - for its heinousness, for its evil, for its destruction of my life and the lives of others.

Do I mourn still? It's a question we each must answer, but I'd say for most of us, most of the time, the answer is, "Not so much."

Since I once thus mourned, I can again; and when I do, I am "comforted" by God the Holy Spirit that for those sins Christ died.

O how happy and to be envied are we when sin is confessed and we are restored to fellowship with God.

Then, as a citizen of the kingdom of Heaven, I will mourn over the sins of others and, like my Lord, seek to announce to them that the spiritual comfort of His forgiveness is available to them.

In fact, the Comforter - God the Holy Spirit - will come and live within them.

Mat 5:5 Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.

Adam Clarke wrote,

Our word meek comes from the old Anglo-saxon [word] meaning "a companion or an equal," because he who is of a meek or gentle spirit, **is ever ready to associate with the meanest of those who fear God...**

Jesus said of Himself, "I am **meek** and lowly in heart" (Matthew 11:29). He lived it out by coming to earth, as a man, to associate with and identify with 'the meanest of us' in order to save us.

What was the result of His becoming human? He went to the Cross and there became the Savior of all mankind - especially those who believe. They became His spiritual inheritance.

I am happy and to be envied when I associate with everyone, especially the needy, to speak to them of a glorious inheritance awaiting them in Heaven.

But I must do more than speak of it; I must in some small or great way lay down my own life for them.

For that we will have an inheritance waiting for us in Heaven - incorruptible, eternal, wonderful.

Mat 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.

Jesus was 100% righteous; He couldn't get any more righteous. He was so righteous that John the Baptist didn't want to baptize Him, but Jesus convinced him to do it so that He would fully identify with us in our humanity.

Even though He was righteous Jesus was able to model for us hungering and thirsting for righteousness.

- Just a few verses earlier we saw Him, on the brink of starvation after a forty-day fast, tell the devil that man does not live by bread alone. His hunger and thirst were for God.
- Jesus often went without sleep to spend all night in prayer with His Father. He denied physical appetites in favor of spiritual ones.

As a brand-new believer, I experienced this kind of hunger and thirst. Remember the phrase, "no Bible, no breakfast?"

You'll never be "filled" by snacking or gorging yourself on the things of this world. All true satisfaction is spiritual. O how happy and to be envied are you when spiritual appetites are your priority.

Mat 5:7 Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.

As He went about Jesus was in the business of being merciful. Jesus often heard someone cry out to Him, "Have mercy on me."

And He would; He would heal them and save them. He would "obtain mercy" for them by asking His Father to help them.

When did Jesus ever "obtain mercy" for Himself? I suggest one time was on the Cross. While on the Cross Jesus directed us to look at Psalm 22 when He cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Later in that psalm we read, "when He cried to Him, He heard" (v24). The Father was merciful to His Son and would not allow His body to see corruption; He raised Him from the dead.

Is our first thought to show mercy, remembering that we have received, and still receive, mercy from God? Is our focus to "obtain mercy" by asking our Father to heal those who are afflicted? It should be since we are citizens of the kingdom of Heaven.

Mat 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.

Among the myriad of things that "pure in heart" can mean, one is to have an *undivided* love for God. It is to love The Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength.

Jesus had an undivided love for God and He modeled it for us.

He also promised to wash and cleanse us in order to present us pure before our Father. We "shall see God," and be thankful that when we do, Jesus has made us ready.

Am I happy and to be envied about His preparation? Or do I try to divide my heart so as to hold onto other things? These things may not be evil; they may not be sin. But are they *wings*, or are they *weights*, in terms of my running the race to win the prize?

Mat 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.

Jesus was sent to earth on a peacemaking mission. Men were at war with God, but God sent His only begotten Son to make peace with them. It happened on the Cross, at the height of mankind's hatred. Jesus gave Himself so that you and I might have peace with God.

How can we resemble that trait? Jesus humbled Himself, set aside His deity, gave up His rights, in order to minister God's peace to others. So must we, as the Holy Spirit enables us.

It doesn't mean we must become pacifists or that we can never exercise our rights as citizens of our earthly nation.

It means our first priority ought to be to want to see our situation bring others into peace with God. It means that we recognize there is always something more going on, something spiritual, when there is conflict. It should be to humble ourselves and let God work through us as His peacemakers.

If making peace was the mission of the Son of God, it must be ours as God's sons and daughters.

Mat 5:10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Being "persecuted for righteousness sake" isn't a trait we are to manifest. Live like Jesus lived, manifesting these traits, and you *will* be persecuted. It is a promise The Lord Himself made when He said,

Joh 15:18 "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.

Joh 15:19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

Which brings us to Jesus' commentary on being persecuted in verses eleven and twelve.

Mat 5:11 "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.

Mat 5:12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Jesus seemed to think that the kingdom of Heaven was in a cosmic conflict with the kingdoms of this world, going back thousands of years.

The successive kingdoms of this world, ruled as they were and are by the god of this world, seem to be victorious. They "persecuted the prophets"; they would persecute Jesus; and they will "revile and persecute you."

O how happy and to be envied are you if you are thus persecuted! It is proof, concrete proof, you are a citizen of Heaven and that the kingdom of Heaven is breaking through the kingdom of darkness.

"Great is your reward in Heaven." We need to think more about Heaven, especially about Who and what is waiting for us there upon our entrance. It will be Jesus ready to reward us.

Never say you don't care for rewards, as if it makes you seem more spiritual. You want them because Jesus delights to give them.

Make sure He has a bushel full for you so that *His* joy will be increased!