

Intro – Matt. 5:1-12

We are in week three of this series, *The Kingdom Project*. If you have missed any of the messages in this series, I hope that you will go back and catch back up because each of these messages really do build on one another.

Just as a quick review for those that may be visiting for the first time, we are discussing in this series:

- what the Kingdom of God/Kingdom of Heaven is – this is the subject that Jesus talked about more than any other subject, so we need to know what it is AND how to enter it! This was week one in the series...
- Then last week we talked about why our lives should revolve around the kingdom. Jesus said, “seek FIRST the Kingdom and described the kingdom in a parable as being like a treasure that is worth selling everything in order to have...
- Ultimately we are headed to talking about what our specific role in the kingdom is. What part do we play in all this.

I’ve said before this series is a dream. It’s a dream to get every member of Champion Forest thinking about the kingdom...seeking first the kingdom...living for the kingdom...and living for the kingdom starts with having a heart for the kingdom.

This is what the message today is all about. If you’re taking notes, I’m calling the message: **A Kingdom Heart**

Before we ever talk about what we can DO FOR the Lord to advance his Kingdom...before we ever talk about ANY action we take as citizens of the kingdom, we first must look inwardly and talk about our heart.

What God wants MORE than our work...MORE than our service...MORE than our time...MORE than our giving...is our heart!

We’re going to look at Jesus’s first sermon today – the first part of it. It’s called the Sermon on the Mount. And if you read the Sermon on the Mount, you will see the thrust of the very first message he brings...while it has A LOT to do with outward activity, what Jesus MOST wants is inward renewal that comes from the heart.

Jesus knew what was MOST important in living the Kingdom life, was having a Kingdom heart. He knew if he could get our heart in the right place, the actions and work and service we would render in advancing his kingdom would take care of itself AND be done with the right motive and in the right spirit.

And so MUCH of the Sermon on the Mount is juxtaposing how Jesus wanted his kingdom citizens to live verses how the religious leaders were living who THOUGHT they were kingdom citizens.

And listen: Their actions and work for the most part was pretty spot on especially as it related to the law. What was off was their heart!

This is why when Jesus spoke the words in **Matt. 5:20** – **“For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”**

This sentence alone would have blown their minds! “What do you mean my righteousness EXCEED that of the Pharisees and scribes?! They know the law backward and forward...they do everything right! How can my righteousness EVER exceed theirs?”

And the answer is...for Jesus, it’s about the heart. What we DO is important, but WHY we do what we do...our attitude and spirit while doing it...our motives...that’s what matters! The root system behind WHY we do WHAT we do, matters!

The religious leaders, their actions were typically spot on!

- They went to church...
- They recited the law...
- They attended all the religious festivals...
- They observed the holy days...
- They tithed...

They did what they were supposed to do, BUT their heart wasn’t in the right place.

At one point in scripture (NOT in the Sermon on the Mount) Jesus tells them (Matt. 23) “You religious leaders are like the inside of a dirty cup. On the outside, you look great, but on the inside? You are dirty, dirty, dirty.”

What Jesus was after THEN...and what Jesus is after NOW is our heart. He wants to us to make a difference for his kingdom! We were created with a kingdom purpose in mind and given talents, abilities, and even a supernatural gift to help advance his kingdom!

We’re going to talk about this in detail in weeks to come...however:

- before we talk about what we are to DO to advance the Kingdom...
- before we talk about any kingdom action we are to take or behavior we are to implement...

We have to make sure that the root system from which all these actions and behaviors flow comes from a pure and right place. For Jesus, what was MOST important in living a Kingdom life was having a Kingdom heart.

And so, let's talk about what a Kingdom heart looks like. And we begin right where Jesus started in his Sermon on the Mount, and that is with what has been called, the Beatitudes.

When we make our trips to Israel we go to the traditional site where we believe this took place...we brought some footage to show you. It's just beautiful! (**SHOW CLIP**)

Matt. 5:1-12 – “Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

² And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. ⁵“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

⁶ “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. ⁷ “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. ⁸ “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. ⁹ “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. ¹⁰ “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

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

The amount of ink that has been spilled covering the Beatitudes is staggering. I'm talking volumes for days...sermon series that go in depth on each of these character traits listed out in (v. 2-12). We're going to cover ALL of them today AND still get you out of here on time!

Now, the Beatitudes...each begin with this word, “Blessed”. Any research into what this word means and you get synonyms like fortunate, content, blissful, joyful, happy.

Illus. Duck Dynasty - Probably the best way I can describe the word is to use the words from Phil Robertson on Duck Dynasty.

When we caught a great fish or accomplished a good hunt or ate a great meal, he'd say he was “happy, happy, happy”. That's probably the best way to translate the word.

“happy, happy, happy” is the person who has this Kingdom heart - and the kingdom heart looks a certain way.

Illus. Heart – We had a great member of our church recently that had some heart issues. And it's protocol, you go in having heart issues, they put you through all kinds of tests and for this young man, they made him take all kinds of tests. He had an x-ray...an MRI...and echocardiogram (sonogram of the heart). They want to see the heart as clearly as they could so they could determine what's going on in and around it and find out what the issue is!

Well, the Beatitudes is like taking a spiritual echocardiogram. If you want to know whether or not you have a kingdom heart, these eight attributes or characteristics will tell you.

As we look at them, we'll be able to determine exactly how heart healthy you are. We're going to take them one at a time and what you need to know about the Beatitudes is that while they are eight seemingly different statements, they build on one another...they are progressive.

One commentator, **Stuart Weber** put it like this: **“Treating the internal character (the heart) of the kingdom servant, these Beatitudes are not separate, little statements intended to be hung on wall plaques in our homes. They are so much more than cute, memorable phrases. They are rock solid truths for living. While each Beatitude stands on its own, each is linked progressively to the one following it. Like pearls in a necklace, they are strung together; each builds on the previous one.”**

So, let's take them one at a time...let's have a spiritual echocardiogram done and determine, “Do we have a Kingdom heart?”

Matt. 5:3 – “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Now, notice up front here, the end of (v. 3) AND the end of (v. 10) – **Matt. 5:10b – “...for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”**

This is what is called in theology an “inclusion”. That is this grouping of verses that begins AND ends with the same phrasing or terminology.

What it means is that everything within those two bookends are included in that theme.

So, again, this is the character traits...the heart of the Kingdom. And those with a kingdom heart WILL as this bookend says, have the kingdom of heaven!

Now, remember while there is an element to the kingdom of heaven being far off in the future, in his ultimate kingdom to come...because of Christ living in us, we can live the kingdom life TODAY and give people a foretaste of the future kingdom as we live under his rule and reign in the here and now!

The kingdom life rightly lived out flows from a kingdom heart and this kingdom heart, Jesus says here can be reflected in one who is first, “poor in spirit”.

To be poor in spirit has NOTHING to do with finances. It has NOTHING to do with the Holy Spirit specifically.

To be poor in spirit is to have an awareness of WHO we are before God. It's an understanding that the world doesn't revolve around us AND it's comprehending the reality of our own spiritual bankruptcy in and of ourselves.

Without God, we are helpless...needy...ill-equipped to handle what life throws our way. Without God, we are a broken people – and being aware of this...realizing this is what it means to be poor in spirit.

Perhaps the best word to encapsulate all that this means is the word: **Humble**

Humble people are the ones that will receive the kingdom and advance the kingdom. I'm reminded of the time that the disciples were arguing about who was going to be the first and greatest IN the kingdom.

Do you remember the lesson Jesus taught them that day?

Matt. 18:1-4 – “At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”² And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them³ and said

“Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.⁴ Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

The kingdom of heaven...the rule and reign of God only comes to and through those who have a humble heart. A kingdom heart is a humble heart.

Being humble is NOT self-abasement OR self-hate...it's NOT groveling in this “woe is me” attitude. Again, it's simply an awareness, that without God, we are nothing and can do nothing!

Let's move to the next Beatitude. **Matt. 5:4 – “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”**

Now, as mentioned while these Beatitudes can stand alone, they do build on one another. And one who is humble and is deeply aware of who he/she is before God, will be burdened...will be broken when places in their own life don't reflect the King they are subject to.

These type of people mourn when they see the kingdom of darkness prevailing and causing others to stumble.

Just a reminder here, Jesus is speaking to citizens of the Kingdom...his followers...and isn't it interesting that second on the list of Beatitudes is a “happy, happy, happy are those who mourn...”

Happy are those who are...let's use this word: **Broken**

Broken over our sin...broken over the sin of others...broken over the curveballs that life throws our way. Hey, we as Christians – you cut us, we bleed just like everyone else.

- We get our feelings hurt...
- We lose loved ones...
- We go through pain and job loss...
- We have sickness and go through illnesses of all kinds...
- We have long hospital stays...

This verse right here is proof positive that Jesus never promises a problem free life to those who follow him.

What he DOES promise is that as citizens of his kingdom, when we do mourn, we will be comforted by his VERY presence AND this is why we can be “happy, happy, happy” – blessed – because the God of all comfort is MOST known when we are broken!

Illus. Microphone testimony – most down times in life when closest...nearest...been comforted!

Isaiah 57:15 – “For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.”

Psalm 34:17-18 – “When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. ¹⁸ The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.”

A.W. Tozer - “It is doubtful whether God can bless a man greatly until he has hurt him deeply. God actually rises up storms of conflict in relationships at times in order to accomplish that deeper work in our character. We cannot love our enemies in our own strength. This is graduate-level grace. Are you willing to enter this school? Are you willing to take the test? If you pass, you can expect to be elevated to a new level in the Kingdom. For He brings us through these tests as preparation for greater use in the Kingdom. You must pass the test first.”

It's an upside-down kingdom! We don't value brokenness because of the pain associated with it, but Jesus is attracted like a magnet to brokenness and this is why his followers are blessed because WHEN we go through it, we are comforted.

We're taking an echocardiogram of the Kingdom heart today. What does it look like...or what SHOULD it look like? It's humble. It's broken. It's also: **Gentle**

Some of your bibles translate (v. 5) this way. Let's look at it:

Matt. 5:5 – “Blessed are the meek (the gentle), for they shall inherit the earth.”

Meekness or gentleness is NOT weakness. It's actually just the opposite. It is strength under control.

Illus. Flair/Bama – those horses were strong, but so incredibly gentle.

This is the picture of someone who is meek. They are not a doormat or indecisive or timid. Instead, they are those who are self-controlled and servant-minded.

Moses is called in Numbers 12:3, the meekest man on the face of the earth. Jesus is described later in Matthew's gospel as "meek and lowly" of heart.

We're talking about a man in Moses who confronted Pharaoh, the most powerful man in the world. We're talking about Jesus who called out Pharisees as "vipers and blind guides", and overturned tables in the Temple when he saw the common people of the day being taken advantage of here.

Gentleness is NOT weakness. Like a bridled thoroughbred, it is strength under control, and Jesus says these type of people will inherit the earth!

To inherit the earth is a promise OF living in the future kingdom which is heaven on earth – that's the NOT yet! But the already part of it is that you get to tap into that inheritance now!

This is why you are blessed...this is why you can be happy and content. As a gentle person, you're not raging...you're not trying to prove yourself. You are secure in your identity and therefore the "abundance of life" Jesus promised is yours in the here and now.

Moving along! **Matt. 5:6 – "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."**

The crowds listening to Jesus that day for the most part were very poor. Remember, this is Galilee...this is rural...this is not the big city of Jerusalem. And those listening to Jesus didn't have that much.

You read the Sermon on the Mount and Jesus talked to them about how he will provide the basics...the necessities of life. He tells them not to worry about food and clothing. You know why they were worried about it?

Because they didn't have it. They would have known a little something about hunger and thirst...and being satisfied.

Jesus takes a physical need here and applies it spiritually. He says, a kingdom heart will hunger and thirst for righteous.

Here it is in one word, a kingdom heart is a: **Holy** heart.

If someone hungers and thirsts for holiness, Jesus says, "they will be satisfied...and full!"

illus. Pancho's – raise the flag, you'll be full. You'll be hurting after! Feasting on his righteousness and goodness is different than feasting on Pancho's goodness.

With Jesus you won't hurt – you'll be satisfied and can keep coming back for more!

People with a kingdom heart, will be those that have God's positional holiness (in a right relationship with him) and as a result they crave...the desire...they long for a practical holiness!

As citizens of his kingdom, they want to reflect and live out in their decisions and relationships the King they live to serve and so they hunger and thirst for righteousness! This can be seen in their:

- Desire to spend time with God...
- Desire to invest in their fellow believers...
- Desire to learn and grow...
- Desire to be put in the game and serve...

Those that hunger and thirst for holiness...God's holiness will be satisfied. So, let's see what the echocardiogram is showing us about the Kingdom heart. We see it is:

- Humble...
- Broken...
- Gentle...
- Holy...

Next, I'd give you this word: **Tender**

Matt. 5:7 - "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy."

This is a heart that doesn't just see need, but it's a heart that is moved to action. It more than feeling pity or empathy or simply having compassion. It's seeing a need and having a heart that will stop beating if it doesn't meet that need.

I'm reminded of the words of the apostle, John in **1 John 3:17** – **"But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?"**

This is a faith that HAS works as James writes about! And again, remember what we are talking about in this series- the kingdom of heaven!

We are to live in such a way that we give people a foretaste of the kingdom to come. What gives them this appetizer...this foretaste more than anything? Is it not acts of mercy?! Is it not acts of kindness and grace expressed and flowing from a heart that has been shown great mercy by Jesus?

So, just think with me! When we SHOW mercy...and we meet a need:

- It could be bringing food for the CMC! Simply when we add an item to our grocery list and drop it by, the kingdom of God is advanced and this seemingly small act of mercy could give people who are food insecure, a taste of the kingdom to come because they are loved and a need is met...

- It could be a school teacher or coach in here, taking the extra time to tutor a kid or speak words of life over him/her that they may not be getting at home and that act of mercy in helping them succeed is advancing the kingdom...

Illus. DMV/Tax Accessor's office – It was just a kind word at a place like that...I said to Debbie, the kingdom of God advanced through that lady. She was someone shown mercy showing mercy. People that do this are “happy, happy, happy” and in showing others mercy they prove they have a kingdom heart.

Very quickly, let's look at a few others:

Matt. 5:8 - “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

This has to do with moral cleanness...uprightness. One could say having integrity falls in this Beatitude. It's someone who lives in such a way that they live with a clean conscious.

Say, is there anything better than that? Is there anything better than laying your pillow on your head at night knowing that there is wholeness. WHO you are in public is the same as WHO you are in private...no ghosts in the closet!

Illus. With purity, there is power!

Stuart Weber – “Any distracting or corrupting influence a kingdom servant allows into his or heart makes that person less effective as servant. The kingdom servant has a heart that is undivided and unalloyed.”

Those whose heart is: **Pure** – pure is the word, Jesus says, you'll see God!

What he means is you will experience him to a greater level! The greater your purity is, the MORE you will see God. And of course, this carries with it the idea that in the future kingdom, it's those who are pure that will be there...because NOTHING defiled will be in the future kingdom of God.

Eph. 5:5 – “For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.”

(Rev 22, 1 Cor. 6, Gal. 5 and Heb 12) all speak to this idea that impurities are outside the kingdom...they are not making it in. Only the pure will see God.

Next up is the heart that can be characterized as: **Peaceful**

Matt. 5:9 – “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”

A Kingdom heart will be a heart that loves peace and watch this...LOVES to MAKE peace.

I remind you, our King was called the “Prince of Peace”. In his death he has made peace between us and God and has given us according to (2 Cor. 5:19-20) the ministry of reconciliation.

How the world needs more peacemakers! One who doesn’t stoke the fires of controversy...one who doesn’t thrive on division and creating dissention. A peacemaker seeks resolution and works toward restoration where there has been a breach in fellowship or relationship.

Peacemakers are called “sons” of God. In Jewish thought life, to be called a “son” means to be a partaker of the character of someone – think of it like this: We may use the terminology “chip off the old block”.

Someone who is a peacemaker, is a “chip off the old block”...they are sons and daughters of God.

? – Does this describe you? Are you a peacemaker OR are you always stirring something up?

Illus. middle child – I knew how to stir stuff up! Some of you are the middle children of the family of God and we need to grow up and mature.

The eighth and final Beatitude is found in (v. 10). Let’s look at it. It will be the final image we look at as we take a picture of the Kingdom heart.

Matt. 5:10-12 – “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (verse eleven is not typically viewed as a separate and unique Beatitude but rather an expansion of this last one we read) ¹¹ **“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”**

Just as there is a kingdom of light...there is a kingdom of darkness. And what we know is that darkness (as the Scripture says) hates the light. Because light exposes the darkness.

You better believe when we live as citizens of the kingdom bringing light to darkness (v. 14-16)...when we’re the salt we’re supposed to be (v. 13), it’s going to agitate...and burn...and rub people who don’t serve our King in the wrong way.

And as a result, we will be persecuted...we will suffer. Notice what our response is to be though! It’s not cry, “Foul”! It’s not “get even”. It’s to REJOICE because those that are persecuted get to live under the rule and reign of God (WHY they are being persecuted in the first place) finally and fully in the kingdom to come, which IS our reward.

I say this kind of Kingdom heart is a heart that is: **Resolute**

So, put it all together. The echocardiogram of the heart. And as you look at this, let the Holy Spirit be the doctor and diagnose how well your heart is functioning.

- Does it look right?
- Is it working right?

If so, your heart will be: **Humble, Broken, Gentle, Holy, Tender, Pure, Peaceful and Resolute**
(SHOW IMAGE)

And I promise you this...if this is your heart, it will produce in you a kingdom life and THIS is the way to a blessed life. You foster a kingdom heart and you will be “happy, happy, happy”.

Let's pray.

Please Note: This document is not meant to be a published, cited, annotated research paper. It is simply a transcript of a spoken message, provided as a resource. Many commentaries, articles, and other sermon helps were likely studied and contributed to the forming of this message.