THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT – MATTHEW 5-7

Preparing Our Hearts for the King's Greatest Sermon: An Introduction

Faith Church of Linden By Daniel Patz on March 8, 2026

The following notes are a draft of my sermon. These are not my pulpit notes or a manuscript I use to preach with but something I type up before writing out my "pulpit notes". I hope they are helpful.

Imagine knowing a king was coming—not for ceremony, not for a parade—but to deliver the most important address of your life. You wouldn't scroll your phone. You wouldn't multitask. You would lean forward, or take notes; heart open, ready to receive.

But this is not merely history's greatest sermon. This is the **King's sermon for us**.

- "Blessed are the peacemakers."
- "You are the light of the world."
- "Turn the other cheek."
- "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name."
- "Judge not, that you be not judged."
- "Love your enemies."
- "Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them."
- "Enter by the narrow gate."

"Jesus did not give these as a bullet-point list of disconnected sayings. He did not link them together like colorful beads on a bracelet. These are so powerful because they are part of a carefully structured vision for true human flourishing." (Hunter)

This sermon in a powerful way answers two questions that haunt every human heart:

1. Where (or how) is true and lasting happiness found?
2. Why does so much Christianity look powerless—unchanged, indistinguishable from the world? What is true Christianity? What should Christians look like?

Jesus gets to the heart of these questions. Not with self-help. Not with religious performance. But with the announcement of a kingdom—and the transformation of hearts by grace.

Before we begin this slow, meditative journey through Matthew 5–7 (perhaps over many sermons), we must ask three questions:

1. Who's preaching?
2. What is this sermon about?
3. How should we listen?

1. Who's Preaching? – The King and the Great Prophet

Matthew has been building tension since chapter 1. Jesus is:

- The Son of David (Matt. 1:1).
- The One who will save His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21).
- Worshiped by kings and hunted by tyrants (Matt. 2).
- Declared by the Father, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17).
- Victorious over Satan in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1–11).

Then comes the turning point in Matthew 4:17: "From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'"

When Jesus ascends the mountain in chapter 5, Matthew wants us to feel Sinai. Moses went up the mountain to receive the law (Ex. 19–20). Jesus goes up the mountain and gives it. Moses said, "Thus says the Lord." Jesus says, "But I say to you" (six times in Matt. 5:21–48).

This is no ordinary teacher. This is the Lawgiver. This is the King. This is the promised One!

And as we saw at Christmas (Jesus as Prophet): **Jesus Is the Prophet We've Been Waiting For**.

Deuteronomy 18 promised a prophet like Moses: "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen" (Deut. 18:15). Israel waited centuries. Then Jesus came—not merely another prophet, but the final Prophet.

Hebrews 1 captures it: “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world” (Heb. 1:1–2).

When Jesus speaks in the Sermon on the Mount, God is speaking in fullness.

Jesus Isn’t Just the Deliverer of the Message—He Is the Message.

The prophets pointed forward. Jesus fulfills. The Beatitudes ultimately describe Him:

- He was truly poor in spirit.
- He was perfectly pure in heart.
- He was the ultimate peacemaker.
- He was persecuted for righteousness’ sake.

The sermon is not first a checklist. It is a portrait of the King. And it is a portrait that He is working out in His disciples.

And here is the gospel: The One who embodies this righteousness gives it freely to sinners who trust Him.

Jesus Is the Light Who Turns On the Lights.

Matthew says the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light (Matt. 4:16). This sermon turns the lights on. It exposes anger as murder (Matt. 5:21–22), lust as adultery (Matt. 5:27–28), hypocrisy (Matt. 6:1–18), false religion, and divided loyalty (Matt. 6:24).

When the lights come on, we see our poverty. And that’s why the first word is: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:3).

The King begins by showing us we are bankrupt—not to shame us, but to prepare us for grace.

Jesus Keeps Speaking.

This sermon is not frozen in history. The risen Christ still speaks through His Word and by His Spirit. The same authority that astonished the crowds—“And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes” (Matt. 7:28–29)—addresses us today.

And this King who speaks with authority is also the Savior who says: “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28).

The One who warns, “I never knew you” (Matt. 7:23), is the same One who stretched out His hands on a cross to bear judgment for sinners.

When we approach this sermon, we are not hearing a motivational speaker. We are hearing the crucified and risen King.

2. What Is the Sermon About?

The sermon has an introduction (5:3–16), a body (5:17–7:12), and a conclusion (7:13–27). In fact, this sermon has a series of threes in it.

I want to point out at least four themes that pulse throughout:

A. The Kingdom of Heaven

The kingdom is not first a place. It is God’s reign breaking into a rebellious world. It is already present in Christ (Matt. 4:17; 12:28) but not yet fully consummated (persecution remains until He returns). Jesus is the King bringing the Kingdom of God into a broken and wicked world.

The Beatitudes describe kingdom citizens—not how to earn entry, but what grace produces. We do not become poor in spirit to qualify. We come because we are poor. The kingdom belongs to those who receive mercy (Matt. 5:7).

We are to pray for the Kingdom to come and we are to seek His Kingdom…

We will be and I want to do so right now – what Kingdom do we live for? What kingdom – what rule, what King or authority are we living for and submitting to?

Is it self or God? Is it Money or the Lord Jesus Christ? Is it the praise of man or our Father?

B. God-Centered Flourishing

“Blessed” means flourishing, deeply happy. But Jesus overturns the world’s definition. The world says: Blessed are the powerful. Blessed are the self-sufficient.

Jesus says: Blessed are the bankrupt. Blessed are the meek. Blessed are the persecuted.

We will see this, but “Blessed” is probably an unhelpful translation – “flourishing…happy…” Jesus says blessed are the poor in spirit and mourning…what does he mean?

True flourishing is found in relationship with the Father. The Lord’s Prayer stands at the center: “Our Father in heaven…” (Matt. 6:9). We learn to know and live a life trusting and living in delight in a Father who knows all and cares for us.

The long question of what will make me happy and keep me happy – is an question the wisdom literature of the OT and the Greek philosophers sought to answer. What made a blessed or flourishing life. Jesus answers!

This echoes the wisdom of Psalm 1, which Jesus draws on:

“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers” (Ps. 1:1–3).

The blessed person flourishes like a thriving tree—rooted in God’s Word and ways. In the Sermon on the Mount, that flourishing is God-centered dependence, not self-exaltation.

I know you want to be happy. Are you growing to enjoy the God-centered flourishing of soul and heart that Christ brings? “I have come that I may bring life, and bring it abundantly.” John 10:10

C. Whole-Hearted Righteousness

Jesus says: “Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:20).

That should unsettle us. Then: “You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matt. 5:48). What does he really mean?

If we hear that as a ladder to climb to earn heaven, it will crush us. Because none of us meet it. Only Christ did.

Here is the gospel:

- His perfect righteousness is credited to us by faith (Rom. 3:21–26; Phil. 3:9).

- His Spirit begins forming that righteousness in us (Gal. 5:22–23; Ezek. 36:26–27).

The sermon is not a way to earn salvation. It is the description of the life that flows from salvation—not root, but fruit; not cause, but evidence.

This sermon calls us to wholeness…singlemindedness, purity of heart, serving one master…a wholehearted obedience that obeys outwardly and inwardly.

So much misery comes to us because our loyalties are divided. Do you know that you were made to be whole and perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect?

D. The Danger of Hypocrisy and Judgment

This sermon bluntly nails us between the eyes or heart. It calls us hypocrites…it warns us of a living that does the right thing on the outside but not from the heart.

> As to 'caring for' the Sermon on the Mount, if 'caring for' here means 'liking' or enjoying, I suppose no one 'cares for' it. Who can like being knocked flat on his face by a sledgehammer? I can hardly imagine a more deadly spiritual condition than that of a man who can read that passage with tranquil pleasure. (C. S. Lewis)

And it calls us to a decisiveness – there are only two ways. Only two Masters…only two possible foundations you are building on.

Jesus ends with warnings: a wide gate leading to destruction (Matt. 7:13), false prophets (Matt. 7:15), "Lord, Lord" without obedience (Matt. 7:21–23), houses built on sand (Matt. 7:26–27).

The most terrifying words: "I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness" (Matt. 7:23).

Christianity is not performance. It is union with Christ. Many admire Jesus. Few surrender to Him. The sermon exposes false assurance—but drives us to true refuge in Christ.

3. How Should We Listen?

Jesus often says: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear" (e.g., Matt. 11:15; 13:9). How we receive this sermon will determine everything.

Four ways we must listen:

1. **Listen to Meditate** Not skim. Not rush. Psalm 1 says the blessed man “delights in the law of the Lord and meditates on his law day and night” (Ps. 1:2). We will move slowly. We will memorize. We will pray these truths back to God.
2. **Listen to Obey** Jesus ends with the wise man who hears and does: “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock” (Matt. 7:24). Not hearers only. Doers. Obedience does not earn the kingdom. But it proves we belong to it (James 1:22–25).
3. **Listen to Be Transformed** The Spirit uses the Word to change us (2 Cor. 3:18). Do not say: “This is impossible.” Say: “Lord, make me this kind of person.” He delights to answer that prayer.
4. **Listen Expectantly** Our Father rewards secret faithfulness (Matt. 6:4, 6, 18). The life Jesus describes is not misery. It is the good life. The life you were made for.

Gospel Clarification

Let me be very clear: If you try to use the Sermon on the Mount to earn heaven, it will crush you. If you receive Christ by faith, it will transform you.

We enter the kingdom by grace alone, through faith alone, because of Christ alone. The One who demands righteousness provides righteousness. The One who warns of judgment bears judgment. The One who calls for perfection gives His perfection as a gift. And then, by His Spirit, begins shaping us into His image (Rom. 8:29).

Conclusion

Faith Church, before we attempt to live this sermon, we must bow before the Preacher.

The One who says, “Blessed are the poor in spirit,” became poor so we might become rich (2 Cor. 8:9).

The One who warns of judgment was judged in our place (Isa. 53:5–6).

The One who demands righteousness gives righteousness freely.

Over the coming months, this sermon will either expose you, transform you, or reveal you were building on sand. The King has spoken. Let us build on the Rock.