

LIVING THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT: POSSIBLE IMPOSSIBLE

FROM SUNDAY JUNE 17, 2015 | SPEAKER: PASTOR BRIAN SCRAMLIN

Ice Breaker: What is something in your life you have done that you once may have said was impossible?

Read Scripture: Matthew 4:25 – 5:16

BACKGROUND

The back drop of the scene is that this is something new happening in Israel. As big as the Ten Commandments and Moses.

- Moses and Christ
- Mount Sinai in the rocky wilderness, and the Mount of Beatitudes in the midst, of a populous district in the Holy Land.
- Moses alone, concealed from view by the clouds of an awful thunder-storm; Christ surrounded by His disciples, and sitting among them.
- Mount Sinai, with boundaries set about it, and the people at a distance; the Mount of Beatitudes encompassed by multitudes.
- In the one case, the people fleeing from the mountain; in the other, crowding toward its summit, and waiting on its ridge.
- The Law of Moses written upon tablets of stone, the word of Christ on the hearts of His disciples.
- The Law of Moses contains Ten Commandments. For Jews, ten is the number of the world. The Sermon of Christ contains seven blessings. For Jews, seven is the number of the sanctuary and completeness.
- The law terrifies the people, and makes them flee; the Sermon on the Mount addresses itself to their hearts, and draws them to the Lord.

What does this contrast reveal about Christianity as a religion?

The Sermon itself is broken into three sections:

- Section One (5:1-16): the nature, character, and result of the Kingdom of Heaven Life
- Section Two (5:17-7:6): the explanation of how the character of the New Kingdom is a fulfillment of the old one which only preserved the letter of the law, but not the spirit or heart of God.
- Section Three (7:7-23): how to avoid the false religion and choose the Kingdom Life

Let's take a closer look at Section One then. This is sort of the Sermon on the Mount in a nutshell—getting across the fact that external letter-of-the-law religion is out and a religion by relationship is in. The section is divided in the following way:

- Seven Beatitudes, or blessings consisting of a state of the heart and the result of it.
- An eighth blessing which results from the seven.
- A change from Jesus teaching *about* the Kingdom Life in general to applying it to the disciples and crowd. He begins to say “you...” instead of “they...”
- Finally, Jesus crowns this section by putting imagery to the life of a believer in the New Kingdom: Salt and Light to the world.

Any thoughts or reflections on the background of the Beatitudes?

THE BEATITUDES

For each Beatitude answer the following: What does Jesus mean by His word choice? What is the resulting blessing? How does this apply to your life today?

- Beatitude One: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- Beatitude Two: Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
- Beatitude Three: Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.
- Beatitude Four: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
- Beatitude Five: Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.
- Beatitude Six: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
- Beatitude Seven: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.
- Resulting Beatitude: Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

TRANSITION TO “YOU”

Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

It is a privilege to be counted with the prophets of old. Can you name a time you have ever been “persecuted”?

You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

How is salt a good metaphor for Christians?

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

How is light a good metaphor for Christians?