

**Title:** Upside Down: Introducing the Greatest Sermon in History

**Text:** Matthew 5:1-2

**Date:** Sept 13, 2020

## INTRO.

**Matthew 4 ends with this picture:** the large crowds (multitudes) heard about Jesus. All of Jerusalem and Galilee and Syria were filled with news about Him.

This is who they brought to Him: *the diseased, sick, suffering pain, demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics.*

- Many people...with different problems...
- But they are ALL the same.
- And Jesus healed them!

Many needs...but one healer!

World-wide brokenness. And into this broken world God sent one solution from heaven.

**Now Matthew 5 begins the Sermon on the Mount. →**

It's been called the greatest sermon, by the greatest preacher, in history (Jesus Christ).

The question the sermon is answering is → how shall the many now live in light of the One?

John Stott on the SOM – “probably the best-known part of the teaching of Jesus...”

- “Arguably the least understood...certainly the least obeyed.”

It's Jesus's manifesto...it's the heartbeat/essence of all he came to teach.

It's Jesus's authoritative teaching about the way believers should live today.

In two words:

- Christian counterculture.
- Upside down living.

**IRONY of the SOM** → Jesus is calling us to a standard of living that we cannot achieve without Him!

- We must repent of our sins and put faith in Him.
- We must daily depend on Him.
- This is the only way to live “upside down” – counter culture in the world today.

**What do you mean, counter culture? Upside down living?**

5:11, you are blessed when people persecute you because of me.

5:20, unless your righteousness surpasses the scribes/Pharisees you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

5:21-22, Moses says to you, do not murder...I say to you...do not even get angry.

5:27, Moses says to you, do not commit adultery...I say to you...if you even lust in your heart, you are already guilty of adultery...and you should pluck out your eyes, cut off your hands...

5:38, Moses said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth...I say to you...if anyone slaps you, turn the other cheek.

- If one wants your shirt, give him your jacket as well.
- If one forces you to walk one mile, walk two miles.

5:43, You've heard it said, love your neighbor...but I tell you...love your enemies as well...and pray for those who do harm to you.

6:19, Don't store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven...

6:27, Don't worry about your life...who can add one moment to his life-span by worrying? God takes care of birds/flowers...God will take care of you.

7:3. Why do you look at the splinter in your brother's eye, but don't notice the beam of wood that is protruding out of your own eye? (for you will be judged by the same standard/spirit that you judge others...)

7:7, Ask, seek, and knock – keep on praying to your Father in heaven. If your earthly Father knows what to do...imagine how much more your heavenly Father?

- If you ask for bread, would he give you a stone?
- If you ask for a fish, will you give him a snake?
- Your Father in heaven longs to give you the good gifts of heaven.

7:14, Wide is the gate that leads to destruction...many go there. Narrow/difficult is the gate that leads to life...and few find it.

7:21, Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord" will enter the kingdom of heaven.

- Lord, didn't we prophesy, and cast out demons, and do miracles?
- Jesus says, "Depart from me, you lawbreakers, I never knew you."

7:24, Jesus concludes the sermon with the illustration of the two foundations:

- If you hear/act on this sermon → wise man, builds on a rock.
- If you hear/ignore this sermon → foolish man, who builds on the sand.

**FACT:** this was Jesus's famous sermon...but what I intend to preach on the next 8 weeks is the introduction to this sermon, called "The Beatitudes."

*David L. Turner, The Beatitudes describe the divinely approved lifestyle of those who have repented at the arrival of the rule of God in Jesus's words and works.*

**This is very important** → the Beatitudes are the character qualities of those who are in Christ, and not of this world.

- This is true Kingdom character (counter-cultural) (upside down).
- It means: you are *in* this world, but you are not *of* this world.

**This is also very important** → we do not do these things (Beatitudes) to be saved – the Beatitudes are not a legal requirement for salvation.

- Instead, we seek this Beatitude-character, we do these things, because we are saved.
- Seeking to have this Christ-like character is our grateful, worshipful response to Christ in light of the salvation He has bestowed upon us.

The SOM is a message for those who have already responded to the Good News of the Gospel – "This is what life in God's Kingdom is all about."

**Well, to whom was Jesus speaking this sermon?**

*4:25, crowds were everywhere...flocking to Jesus.*

*5:1, he ascends a hill and speaks to the disciples.*

Jesus doesn't just want to fix their bodies...or to meet their needs...No!  
Jesus also wants to transform their hearts and train their minds.

- Some think he was speaking to the main four (Andrew, Peter, James, John).
- Some think he was speaking to the full Twelve.
- Some think the "disciples" are representative of the wider circle of his growing followers...moving from crowd to disciples.
- Some think he was speaking to his inner circle (disciples)...but mindful of the fact that the larger circle could overhear the conversation.

**FACT.** He was speaking to all who want Jesus's heart to transform their hearts.

**FACT.** Yes, he was speaking to his present disciples, but yes, he was also speaking to his potential disciples.

- **ILLUS:** Sometimes I'm speaking to Zeke, but I'm mindful of the fact that Madie and Abe are also listening.

**Where did Jesus speak these words to them?** (*From the summit of a mountain/hill*).

**FACT.** Special things happen on mountains.

- Physically – above the noise.
- Spiritually – above the distractions/noise.

Just remember the significance of “mountains” in the Bible – Abraham/Moriah...Elijah/Carmel...Moses/Sinai...Jerusalem/hill...Jesus/Calvary.

**FACT.** Jesus wants us to withdraw to a quiet environment to learn of Him.  
(ILLUS: spiritual mountaintop experiences.)

Jesus spoke to them on a mountain – the northwest side of the Sea of Galilee.

- It’s a beautiful, scenic view.
- ILLUS: May 2019 I heard Pastor Johnny read the SOM there, unreal! So moving!

**How did Jesus speak this sermon to them?**

*“When he had sat down, he opened his mouth and taught them...”*

**Notice:** Jesus is seated. When we think of preaching – we think standing/lecturing.

But in Jesus’s day – the rabbis taught while seated.

- Authority, honor...it signified complete knowledge of the subject.

*And from his seated position – he opened his mouth and taught...*

- This is an OT idiom to introduce a significant announcement (listen up!)
- Here, the seated, reigning King of Kings is about to impart to them the words of life!

**FACT.** The word “**Beatitude**” is related to the Latin word that means, “Blessed.”

- It means to receive God’s approval, favor, endorsement, his smile.
- Max Lucado calls it, “The applause of heaven.”

**Why the Beatitudes?**

Because God, through Christ, has graciously descended (blessed us) from heaven to save us. We respond to God’s initiative by blessing God with praise and obedient living.

**What was Jesus’s most upside-down, countercultural message?**

Blessed are the poor in spirit.

- Yes, delight in the fact that you are spiritually bankrupt without God’s grace.

Blessed are those who mourn.

- Deep grief over your sin is worth it because you know only God’s grace can comfort you.

Blessed are the meek.

- You happily depend on God, and submit to God.
- You are happier about God's strength than you are your own strength.

Blessed are those who hunger/thirst for righteousness.

- You have a deep longing for God...you know God is the Satisfier of your Soul.

Blessed are the merciful.

- You want to mercifully forgive/help others...because that's what Christ did for you.

Blessed are the pure in heart.

- You want a clean/holy heart – this opens the door for special intimacy with God.

Blessed are the peacemakers.

- You seek peace/unity with others – this is evidence God is in charge of your life.

Blessed are those persecuted for righteousness sake.

- They hated Jesus.
- They persecuted the prophets and the apostles.
- The world will despise you – yet you are content to live for an Audience of One!

Blessed are the poor in spirit – **OR** – take pride in yourself!

Blessed are those who mourn – **OR** – you are unbothered by your sin.

Blessed are the meek – **OR** – be assertive...show aggression if you don't get your way.

Blessed are those who hunger/thirst – **OR** – you lust for entertainment/gratification.

Blessed are the merciful – **OR** -- don't get mad, get even; take vengeance.

Blessed are the pure in heart – **OR** – be stubborn, be self-righteous, and who cares?

Blessed are the peacemakers – **OR** – be an agitator, be a bully, don't apologize.

Blessed are those who are persecuted – **OR** – celebrated because of your political correctness.

### **This is radical!**

- If you live like this...you will be different!
- If you live like this...it will be a clear testimony to Christ!

### **The only thing more radical than the SOM/Beatitudes is this:**

- That I was a rotten sinner, unable to save myself.
- But Jesus the perfect, righteous One – stepped in on my behalf.

Dear Lord, since you saved me...since you own me...since you are the Lord →

Oh Lord, may all of me, for all of my life, reflect your glorious grace!

Dear Lord, I long for your smile upon my life. So please open my heart to the meaning of the Beatitudes. Shine your truth upon me, and change me. Establish your Kingdom character in me. For your glory, King Jesus, I pray this. Amen.