



The Sermon on the Mount (Part 1)

Discuss – What do you think are the hallmarks of a true Christian?

How do you think a person will change if they are truly born again?

Introduction – This sermon, that Jesus preached, was to explain to people what characteristics God's true people would have through the Son. These verses are the Kingdom manifesto regarding the children of God and their behaviour. Jesus makes it clear in Matthew Ch 5 v 20 that for a Christian the Righteousness we should have in lifestyle and attitude should exceed that of even the Pharisees in practical and daily living.

The core characteristics of a true Christian are found in the first 12 verses. Everything else in the sermon is expounding practical on these core values and attributes.

Read – Matthew Ch 5 v 1 – 12

Discuss – what are your first impressions of what you hear / what really grabs you from these verses?

The first part of Jesus teaching turns the world's idea of happiness upside down. There is a real promise that for a Christian, God is sovereign in all situations and will bless you whatever the circumstances. The way to true happiness does not lie in the superficial comforts of the world it rests in a life changed and blessed by God. you can have everything in the world and yet have nothing – or have nothing and yet have everything that is of great worth.

Discuss – even though we know that true security / happiness and fulfilment rest in the things of the Kingdom – why do we still get seduced into trusting in the things of the world?

What can we practically do to overcome this tendency?

Let us look at the characteristics of a Christian's behaviour. These should be in evidence in increasing degrees as we grow in submission to the Spirit and in the Fruit.

Verse 3 – **Poor in Spirit** – theirs is the Kingdom of heaven

This refers to people who recognise that without Christ they have nothing. It is to understand that all things are rubbish compared to know God and His love for you. To be poor in spirit is to depend upon God's provision and to rely upon Him for the enrichment of your souls. The promise we are given is that if we recognise our poverty, trust in God for His daily provision then the Kingdom of heaven and its blessings are ours.

Verse 4 – **Those who Mourn** – they will be comforted.

This is not only talking about mourning the loss of a loved one but goes much deeper than this. It's focus is on the mourning of the sins we have committed to God. being deeply stirred by our own sin and this then leading to genuine repentance. The whole idea is about a sensitive conscience before God that feels His reaction to both personal sin and the sin of the nation and is motivated to repentance and intercession

Discuss – do you feel that you are deeply moved by your own sin / sins of the nation?

How do you think we can develop a sensitive conscience before God?

Verse 5 – **The Meek** – they shall inherit the earth.

The idea of being meek is not about being weak but is about being controlled in how you use your strength. It is about being humble before people and self disciplined in life. The root of this comes from learning to be submissive to God, gentle towards other people and slow to get angry. The result of this behaviour is that you will be blessed on this earth today –for God loves those who are meek.

Verse 6 – **Hunger and thirst for Righteousness** – they shall be filled.

This is all about having a passion for God and a holy life. It is a desire to see God manifested in your life and His daily blessings a living reality. This is what separates religious people from those who are truly in love with God and His ways. Just like a physical appetite for food, this desire manifests itself in a hunger which seeks to be satisfied and when it is, soon hungers again for more of God and His ways. It results in a living passion for Jesus and His ways. The promise here is that those who hunger and thirst for such things will be fully satisfied by God. As they seek God with all their hearts so He will reveal Himself to us in deeper and more intimate ways. Doesn't matter how long we have been a Christian God delights in showing us more of Himself through powerful Revelations!!

Verse 7 – **the Merciful** – they shall obtain mercy

This characteristic is based on the expressed mercy of God which is given to us the sinner through His Son. The mark of a true Christian is that they are changed to become more and more merciful and forgiving towards others. The mercy that is talked about here is a dynamic mercy that expresses itself in action. Jesus again makes it clear to show mercy towards others will result in mercy being shown to you.

Verse 8 – **Pure in Heart** – they shall see God.

Simple fact found in the bible is that without holiness no-one will see – experience God. Jesus makes this clear in this statement about the pure in heart. To be pure in heart is to seek after holiness by making the right decisions for God. it is important to remember that holiness is not only about moral purity but it is also about being set apart for God's special purposes. True faith lies in the heart and produces a pure heart and Godly lifestyle. Through the blood of Jesus and the Spirit purity of heart can be ours. If we truly seek after purity then we will increasingly see and experience the presence of God in our daily lives.

Verse 9 – **the peacemakers** – they shall be called sons of God.

To be a peacemaker is to seek to live in peace with God. by doing this we are led into peaceful actions towards others.

This is not to say that we do not stand up for what is right but we do so with respect and love towards others.

Verse 10 – 11 – **the persecuted** – for theirs is the Kingdom of God.

This is about suffering for following Jesus and doing what is right. The result is that you are sharing in the suffering of Christ and as a result we should rejoice and be glad because we will also share in His glorification.