

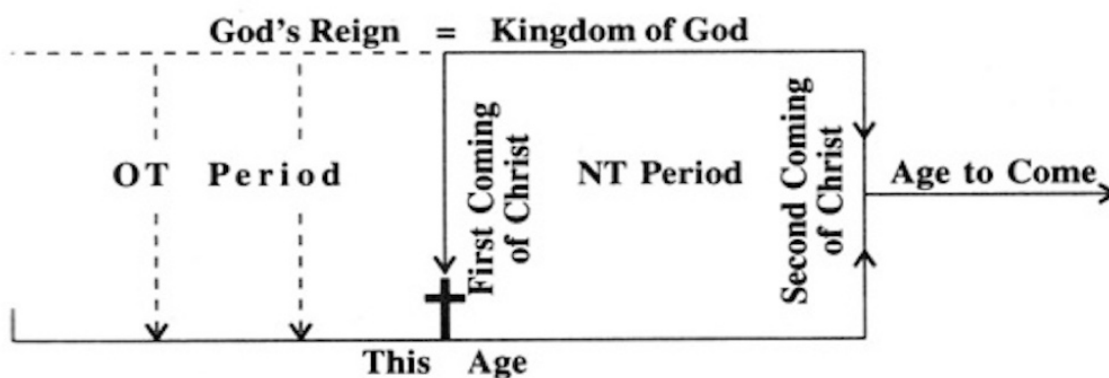


Sweet Surrender – Matthew 5:3

I. INTRO

A. Matthew 3:2 says, “*Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.*” There are about 10 other similar commands scattered throughout the early chapters of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. What does that mean? Most of us are familiar with the basic concept of repentance but fewer people are familiar with a good understanding of what it means for the **kingdom of heaven (or KOG) to be near**—so, let’s start there.

1. Last June (6th) was the 75th anniversary/commemoration of the successful invasion of the Allied troops on the beaches of Normandy. That successful invasion meant that the back of Hitler’s army was broken, and the end of WW 2 was inevitable.
2. But it was another 11 months before the end of the war (V-E Day May 8, 1945). And some of the fiercest fighting of the war occurred during that 11-month period—like the Battle of the Bulge...
3. Those historical facts can be likened to the KOG. When Jesus came the first time, He **established** the KOG on the earth—and the back of Satan’s army was broken, with the end of the war with evil being inevitable. When He comes the second time, He will **consummate** the KOG.



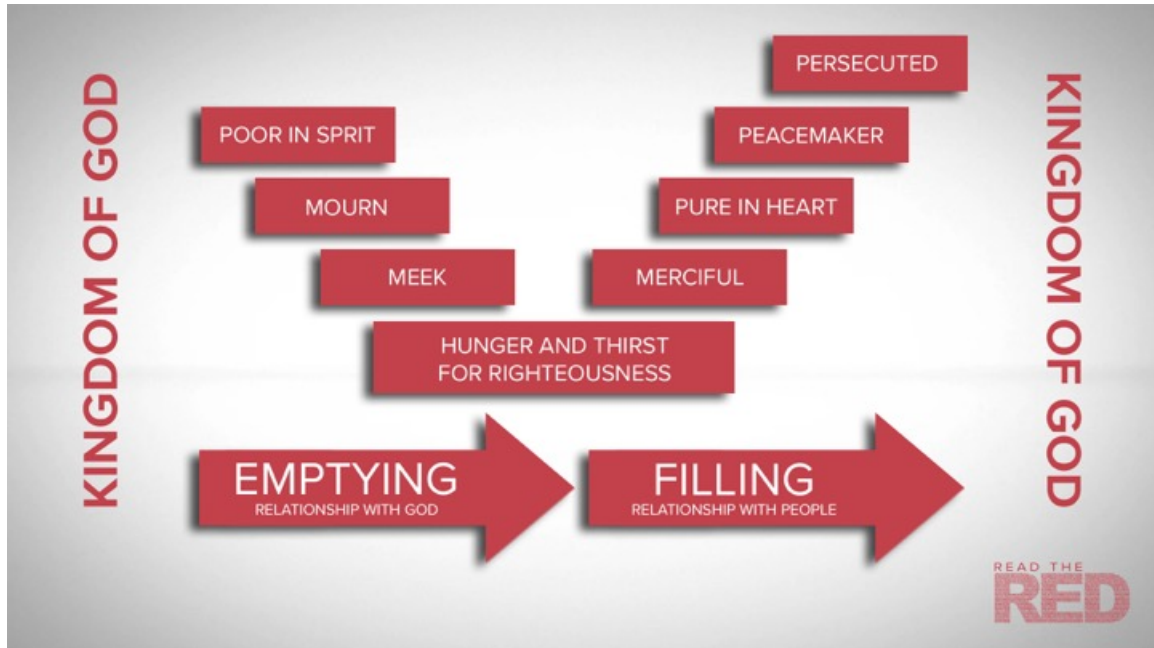
4. You and I have both the privilege and the responsibility of living in the “overlapping age” between the establishment of the KOG and the consummation of the KOG. Theologians refer to this overlapping age as the “already but not yet.”
5. **It’s as if Jesus, in establishing the KOG, reached into eternity and pulled eternity into the present and staked it into the ground with the cross.** The

implications of the establishment of the KOG on the earth are that you and I have access to the presence and power of God.

6. George Ladd in classic book *The Gospel of the Kingdom* defines the Kingdom of God as the **"rule and reign of God."** The kingdom was proclaimed by Christ in the NT (Matt. 4:17). His teaching that the Kingdom had come was central to his ministry. There were **WORDS** designed to tell us how to enter the Kingdom (Matt. 5:20; 7:21), and **WORKS** that demonstrated the Kingdom had come (Matt. 12:28). His **parables** taught the mysteries of the Kingdom of God (Matt. 13:11); his **prayers** taught the disciples to desire the coming (in-breaking) of the Kingdom (Matt. 6:10). You and I, living in this "already but not yet" timeframe, are being raised up to be instruments of the Kingdom.
 7. The KOG is a revolutionary message with revolutionary implications. If it's true it changes everything, right? God wants you to be an instrument of His kingdom, speaking His words and doing His works. That changes our understanding of the Lord's Prayer in Mat 6, doesn't it? We're praying for God's kingdom life, and presence, and power to break in afresh in our lives, in our families, in our church, and in our world.
- B. This **revolutionary message** makes Jesus the most revolutionary person who ever lived—and the purpose of His coming was to **initiate a revolution**. When Jesus Christ showed up, He announces the old kingdom (the kingdom of this world) is going to crumble and that He has come to establish a new kingdom.
- C. This brings us to Matthew 5-7, what called **The Sermon on the Mount**. We can think of the SOTM as the **kingdom manifesto** of Jesus the revolutionary.
1. What's a manifesto? It's a published declaration of the intentions, motives, or views of the issuer. The 10 Commandments is a manifesto. Our Declaration of Independence is a manifesto, Martin Luther King's I Have a Dream Speech is a manifesto. You've heard about the Communist Manifesto.
 2. At its core, Christianity is a **counter-intuitive** and **subversive revolution**—and the SOTM is the KOG manifesto. It is the declaration that with the coming of Jesus, the KOG has been established on the earth and it is seen through the eyes of faith.
 3. Here's what John Stott the late pastor, author, and missiologist has said about the SOTM: **"The Sermon on the Mount is probably the best-known part of the teaching of Jesus, though arguably it is the least understood...It is the nearest thing to a manifesto that he ever uttered, for it is his own description of what he wanted his followers to be and to do."** --John Stott
- D. The SOTM is only 109 verses and takes about 10-15 minutes to read so it's widely thought that Matthew is giving us the "Cliff Notes" version (highlights) of Jesus' sermon.

E. This brings us to the Beatitudes, vs. 3-12 of Mat 5, which serve as the introduction to the SOTM. We're going to take the next 8-weeks and take an in-depth look at each Beatitude. [bookmark]

1. **The Beatitudes are some of the most important words in the NT because they tell us how we are to **enter** into the KOG.
2. I have come to see the Beatitudes as, *Our surrendered response to the "gospel of the kingdom of God."* This is a graphic that we will see every week for the next 8-weeks...



3. The Beatitudes provide for us a **step-by-step spiritual formation process** that moves us toward a counter intuitive and revolutionary gospel joy, spiritual depth, and emotionally healthy maturity (i.e., integrating emotional health into the discipleship process).
 - a. The Beatitudes become the in-working AND the outworking of the gospel - **in** and **through** our lives that, I hope, will launch a church-wide revolution.
 - b. The Beatitudes, then are the counterintuitive and “unlikely route to joy¹” ...
 - c. In his seminal work, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, the 20th century preacher Martyn Lloyd-Jones said: “**We are not told in the SOTM, ‘Live**

¹ Adapted from Dan Allender’s book, *The Wounded Heart*, NavPress 1992.

like this and you will be a Christian;’ rather we are told, ‘Because you are a Christian [it is possible to] live like this.’”² --D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

F. Today we will be looking at the first Beatitude: (p. 802) *“God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for Him.”* --Matthew 5:3 Here are some other translations/paraphrases...

1. *“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”* –Mathew 5:3 (ESV)
2. *“How blessed are those who are destitute in spirit, because the kingdom from heaven belongs to them!”* (ISV)
3. *“You’re blessed when you’re at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more of God and his rule.”* (MSG)

II. BODY

A. In the rest of our time I would like us to consider two obvious yet extremely important concepts:

1. *What it means to be blessed.*
2. *What it means to be poor in spirit.*

B. And then we will close by considering the implications of this verse.

C. Let’s look at them one at a time:

1. *What it means to be blessed:*
 - a. The word *beatitude* comes from the Latin word meaning “blessed.” The word carries the idea of *Being graced with divine favor.*
 - b. More specifically the word beatitude (or blessed) means **exalted joy**, or **true happiness**. In modern culture we sometimes confuse “joy” with “happiness” so it’s important that we understand the difference.
 - c. While happiness and joy share some overlapping similarities, ‘happiness’ and ‘joy’ are really **quite distinctive**...
 - 1) ‘Happiness’ comes from the same root word as ‘happenstance’ and is related primarily to our circumstances. The prefix ‘hap’ means luck.
 - 2) Joy, on the other hand, is an **orientation of the heart**.
 - i. Joy is a settled state of contentment, confidence, and hope. It’s residential and NOT dependent on our outward circumstances.

² D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. *Studies In the SOTM*, Eerdmans; 1 v. ed edition 1997:16.

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- ii. Joy is something (or Someone) that provides the **source of happiness**.
- iii. Happiness is external while JOY is internal (calm delight).
- iv. *“Peace as joy at rest and joy as peace on its feet.”*³

2. *What it means to be poor in spirit.*

- a. The Greek word for spirit is *pneuma* and it is used in a variety of ways throughout the NT. In this context it is speaking of the **center, or source, of human affection, emotion, and desire**.
- b. The word for *poor* used in the ancient Greek text is *ptōchós*, which literally means to crouch or to cower.
 - 1) The word describes someone who’s poverty, or infirmity, is **so deep that all they can do is beg**. They are utterly dependent in every way on someone else.
 - 2) ****Everything comes to this person from an outside source.**
- c. To be poor in spirit means several things. Here are some bullet points:
 - 1) **A growing awareness of utter dependence on God to overcome our spiritual poverty, bankruptcy, and helplessness before God.**
 - 2) **A growing awareness of our powerlessness to accomplish anything of eternal value.**
 - 3) **A growing awareness of our moral and ethical impurity before God.**
 - 4) **A growing sense that if we are to experience true happiness or exalted joy, it will have to be God’s doing.**
- d. As you can see, these are counter-intuitive in our culture—and if we’re honest, these tend to be counter-intuitive to us as well.
- e. Here’s what Bible teacher and author John MacArthur says about being *“poor in spirit*, **“Because [being poor in spirit] is the fundamental characteristic of the Christian...All other characteristics flow from this one. This is where everything starts.”** --John MacArthur ⁴
- f. Lloyd-Jones continually refers to our need to “keep showing up at Mat 5:3.”⁵

III. CONCLUSION

³ Ann Lamott. *Plan B: Further Thoughts on Faith*:7.

⁴ Sermon: *The Only Way to Happiness: Be Poor in Spirit*, April 26, 1998.

⁵ D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. *Studies In the SOTM*, Eerdmans; 1 v. ed edition 1997:17.

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- A. Big idea: “Sweet Surrender” is admitting that I do not have the spiritual resources necessary to carry out God’s requirements. And that I need God’s free generosity at the cross to liberate my soul to love and to live the way God intends.
- B. If you’re already a Christian maybe you need to recalibrate today. If you are not a Christian, I would say that today is a great day to join God’s family.
- C. Here’s an example of a prayer: “Heavenly Father, I admit that I am weaker and more sinful than I ever before believed, but through your Son Jesus I can be more loved and accepted than I ever dared to hope. I thank you that Jesus lived the life I should have lived and paid the debt and punishment I owed. Receive me now for His sake. I turn from my sins and receive Jesus Christ as Savior. Amen.”
- D. The essence of the Christian life—and what separates Christianity from every other religion or philosophy of life, is that authentic Christians are both humble and bold. We’re humble because we’re sinners and we’re bold because we’re loved.