

## Warnings

The sermon on the mount begins with Jesus speaking about the blessedness of the Kingdom and ends with warnings about how we could miss / forfeit this blessedness

- There are a number of strong warnings in this section of scripture
- Especially about not entering the Kingdom
- **Matthew 5:17-20, 7:20-27**
- He is not speaking about losing salvation
  - The law did not make anyone a Jew
  - You were born Jewish
  - The law was what you lived by as a Jew
  - In the same way, living righteously (the way of the Kingdom) does not save us – does not make us a child of God, a citizen of the Kingdom
  - We are saved when we are born again
  - Righteousness is what comes from our lives when we live out our salvation
  - It is the way we come to experience the Kingdom in the whole of our lives
- Jesus is speaking here about experiencing the blessedness of the Kingdom in this world
  - The Kingdom is theirs – present tense – something we have now
  - Even though the Kingdom is still coming
  - The warnings tell us that we can miss the promise of that reality in our lives in this world
- Jesus is also speaking about something we can anticipate receiving in future
  - As a reward in heaven from walking in the way of the Kingdom here
  - The fullness of the Kingdom

At this point Jesus is speaking to a crowd that is not yet saved

- But He speaks to them as if they are
- Why does He do this?
- He is preaching the good news of the Kingdom
- He is anticipating the day of salvation, the new birth
  - Need to be born again to see / enter the Kingdom (John 3:3-5)
  - When His law is written on their / our hearts
  - When we have the Holy Spirit leading us into all truth, reminding us of all the words of Jesus

## Why warnings?

- Because the way of the Kingdom requires wholehearted and exclusive devotion
  - This has always been true
  - But was not made possible by the law
    - **Compare (OT)**
      - Love the Lord your God with all...
      - You shall have no other gods before me
    - **With (NT)**
      - Hallowed be your name...
      - Hunger and thirst for righteousness
      - Serve one master
      - Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness...
    - His warnings highlight that the ONLY way to truly live as Kingdom people is for us to give all...
- Because blessedness comes from doing the words of Jesus and not from hearing them – **Matthew 7:24-27**
  - Those who do (obey) the words of Jesus are wise builders
  - Those who do the will of the Father – for whom Jesus is truly Lord – enter the Kingdom
  - His warnings teach us to live in true service of the King of the Kingdom
- Because walking in the way of blessedness will be a hard way at times
  - It is like a narrow gate (**Matthew 7:13-14**)
  - The flesh will fight against this
  - The devil will try to tempt, deceive, distract us
  - The world we live in will resist us (treasures, cares, ways, persecution)
  - His warnings tell us to anticipate the challenges of this way, to be ready for them and persevere
- Because we need to see that this way is not simply another version of the law
  - It is a way that fulfils the law but the law was an external constraint
    - Inhibited sin (kept it in check)
    - But did not change hearts
    - Was a temporary measure

- The way of the Kingdom (righteousness) is within us and goes much further than the law
  - We have a new heart (have been born again – are a new creation)
  - His law is written on our hearts
  - We have the Holy Spirit
    - Walk in step with Him
    - Do not grieve Him
  - He works to transform us from the inside out
  - It is the way of sanctification
  - Be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect (**Matthew 5:48**)
- Jesus is anticipating this and pointing to the shift – the new covenant
  - **From** having an external constraint that did at least point to righteousness
  - **To** a righteousness that is a matter of the heart
  - We no longer rely on the law – which was weakened by the flesh
  - Now we walk in the Spirit by faith
  - The righteousness of the Pharisees relied on the flesh
  - Faith relies on the Kingdom
- **His warnings anticipate and emphasise this momentous and crucial shift that comes with the new covenant**
- Because it is not a popular way
  - What Jesus is calling them to is very different to the Jewish culture they knew
    - As it is to the secular humanistic culture of our world that is ‘me’ centred
    - And the culture of a church that is increasingly influenced by the world
  - It is very, very different to the pagan culture they knew
    - As it is to the increasing new spirituality in our world
    - And the multi-faith mindset in our world
    - And the culture of a church that is increasingly influenced by all of this
  - Multitudes in the church today see grace as something that abolishes the law
    - It does not
    - It fulfils the law and,
    - When we walk in the Holy Spirit we discover that the righteousness of the Kingdom far exceeds the righteousness of the Pharisees

- Too many believers adopt the 'morality' of the world
  - See the Bible as old fashioned
    - But then Jesus was extremely old fashioned because what He describes here is a way beyond the requirements of the law
- Too many believers see the exclusivity of the gospel as intolerant
  - Preach a universal Gospel – God's love but not His holiness
  - Don't want to be offensive to the world
- His warnings remind us that we will find ourselves at odds with the world but also that it is the Kingdom the is the bigger context
  - The Kingdom may not yet be fully manifest in this world
  - But the Kingdom is fully manifest in heaven
- Because it will lead to persecution
  - Jesus gives us the reason to rejoice and persevere
    - We will have the Kingdom
    - His name will be glorified
    - We will store up treasure in heaven
  - His warnings remind us of the need to persist in faith
- Because there is something to be gained and, by implication, something to be lost
  - Entering the Kingdom (blessedness)
  - This is why, I think Jesus starts with speaking about the blessedness (and reward)
    - With what our allotted inheritance is
    - Parallel here with what the promised land was
    - These passages summarise how we are to 'take possession' of that
  - He is encouraging them, and us, to go after this blessedness
  - It is at the centre of how we 'hallow His name'
  - It is how we live as witnesses of the gospel we preach
    - It is what makes us the salt of the earth
    - It is what makes us the light of the world
    - It brings glory to Him when the world sees the righteousness of the Kingdom in us (good works – Matthew 5:16) and glorify Him
  - His warnings encourage us to live with eternity in mind and that the treasures in heaven far outweigh treasures on earth

### **John 3:3-5**

3 Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." 4 Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" 5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

### **Matthew 5:17-19**

17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

### **Matthew 5:20**

For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

### **Matthew 7:21**

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

### **Matthew 7:22-23**

22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' 23 And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

### **Matthew 7:24-27**

24 "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. 26 And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on

the sand. 27 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

**Luke 6:46-49**

46 "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you? 47 Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: 48 he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. 49 But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great."

**Luke 11:27-28**

27 As he said these things, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed!" 28 But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"