



Rev A

Adult Education Lesson 18

Introduction to the Sermon on the Mount

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Mt. 5:1 - 7:

Much of this tract is commentary - don't take it as Gospel. It is here to encourage meditation and study. Use your gift of discernment, to find the truth.



Glen Miller



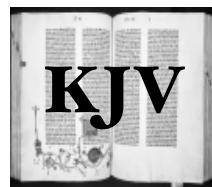
Read also the lesson on Blessed are the pure in heart to understand what blessed means.

(Curtis, Life of Webster, ii. p. 684).

Quotes from other theologians.

“And He came down with them”, may mean that He “came down to earth” and instead of teaching higher truths to unbelievers who were unable to understand His Gospel because of their hardness of heart, (i.e they had not been called by God) He healed their disease and expelled unclean spirits, and He gave them some commandments to follow.

Standing vs. sitting
Sit to teach. Stand to challenge / make a pronouncement.



Blessed are the poor

And seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain; and when He was set, His disciples came unto Him: and He opened His mouth, and taught them, saying,

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;”

(Augustin) “Here it may appear that His desire was to free Himself from the great crowds of people, and that for this reason He went up into the mountain, as if He meant to withdraw Himself from the multitudes, and seek an opportunity of speaking with His disciples alone. And this seems to be certified also by Luke, whose account is to the following effect: “

“And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called unto Him His disciples: and of them He chose twelve, whom also He named apostles; Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon, who is called Zelotes, Judas the brother of James, and Judas Scarioth, which was the traitor. And He came down with them, and stood in the plain, and the company of His disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judæa and Jerusalem, and from the sea-coast of Tyre and Sidon, which had come to hear Him, and to be healed of their diseases; and they that were vexed with unclean spirits were healed. And the whole multitude sought to touch Him; for there went virtue out of Him, and healed them all.

“He went up into a mountain” - to teach the twelve apostles spiritual truths, (He opened His mouth = Aramaic for “straight talking”) which he did not teach to the others, to whom he always spoke in parables, because their hearts were hardened by God.

*He went out into a mountain to pray ... to God. to select the twelve men who would be His apostles. (John 6:44) **No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: ...** (John 18:9) *That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which **thou gavest me** have I lost none.**

Something to think about:

God may have “made blessed” twenty or more men for Jesus. Of these, Jesus chose twelve, including the one who was to betray Him (what? - God didn't know this when He selected him?)

On the 15th of October, 1852, two weeks before he died, Daniel Webster wrote and signed his name to the following words, containing a testimony to this portion of Scripture, which he also ordered placed upon his tombstone: “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief....My heart has assured me and reassured me that the gospel of Jesus Christ must be a divine reality. The Sermon on the Mount cannot be a merely human production. This belief enters into the very depth of my conscience. The whole history of man proves it”

Augustin regarded the Sermon on the Mount as a perfect code of morals.

The Sermon on the Mount is a practical discourse. It is the fullest statement of the nature and obligations of citizenship in God's kingdom.

It deals with the motives and affections of the inner man, and so comes into comparison and contrast with the Mosaic law as well as with the Pharisaic ceremonialism of the Lord's Day.

“And there followed Him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judæa, and from beyond Jordan.

St. Augustine's commentary

And He lifted up His eyes on His disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God;". (Luke)

Here the relation permits us to understand that, after selecting on the mountain twelve disciples out of the larger body, whom He also named apostles (which incident Matthew has omitted), He then delivered that discourse which Matthew has introduced, and which Luke has left unnoticed,—that is to say, the one on the mount; and that thereafter, when He had now come down, He spoke in the plain a second discourse similar to the first, on which Matthew is silent, but which is detailed by Luke; and further, that both these sermons were concluded in the same manner.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Mt)

The kingdom of heaven shall be thine hereafter; be poor in spirit now. Wouldest thou that the kingdom of heaven should be thine hereafter? Look well to thyself whose thou art now. Be poor in spirit. You ask me, perhaps, "What is to be poor in spirit?" No one who is puffed up is poor in spirit; therefore he that is lowly is poor in spirit. The kingdom of heaven is exalted; but *"he who humbleth himself shall be exalted."*

by Augustin

References Poor humble people

Lu 6:20 And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.

Augustin equates being humble with poverty. So poor must include the idea of humbleness. Humble means also to trust God to provide everything that is needed to live.

And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

As Isaiah had said, many generations before on humility:

Isa 66:2 For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

And this, I think, describes the Apostles demeanor.

James had also described the Apostles as:

Jas 2:5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

So, the *poor* who love God, and who have *great faith*, inherit the promise of the gospel of Christ. Matthew said they must also *convert* - that is: they must turn their lives around and become different people - "*as little children*".

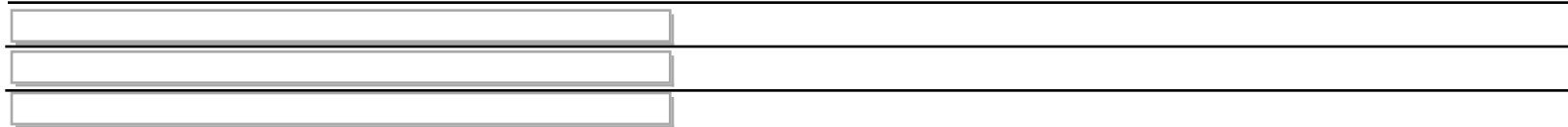
When Jesus talks directly to the disciples He calls them only "poor", (Luke) for the poor disciples were *rich in faith* (James).

Like the widow who gave her last coins to the treasury. (Matthew 6:28)

But when He talks of the multitudes in the third person, He refers to **some** of them as being "*poor in spirit.*" (Matthew), for they always *sought to touch him* and enrich their spirits, from his unlimited virtue.

Mt 18:3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

The Views expressed here are strictly those of the author and probably disagree with what you have previously thought. Read other commentaries - meditate on the original KJV.



But what does the *the kingdom of heaven* really mean?

The kingdom of Heaven is an allegory for the Christian Way (the gospel of the Kingdom of Christ, or the preaching of Christ).

*(Matthew 24:14) And this **gospel of the kingdom** shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.*

*(Mt 7:21) Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into **the kingdom of heaven**; but he that **doeth the will of my Father** which is in heaven.*

“That person is already in the Kingdom of the heavens who lives according to the virtues. Accordingly, the saying *repent for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand*, refers to deeds and disposition - not to a certain time.” *Origen c.245 quoted by Eusebius.*

(Mt 5:20) For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

(Mt 19:23) Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

The Kingdom **of God** - what does this mean

It may help to distance yourself from the thought that the kingdom of God is a place if you regard the body only as the house in which you live. That you are the spirit in this house which was created by Christ for the duration of your natural life. When you have completed all the work that God has planned for you, the natural body will be disposed of, and you will continue to live in eternal life as Christ has promised to his disciples. At some point you will receive a spiritual body, like the spiritual body that Christ had when he ascended to heaven after the resurrection.

Sounds strange to you? Well this is just another allegory for eternal life in Christ, but it may help you understand the Evangelists writings.

So, lets ponder on the idea that you are the spirit within a body.

God is Spirit, Christ is spirit, the Holy Ghost is spirit, and man is spirit. Now,

(1Co 12:27) Now ye are the body of Christ,

is understandable, for as spirits, y'all can share a life with Christ.

(Co 12:13) For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one [spiritual] body, ... and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

And again Paul said:

(1Co 15:50) Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

Now we understand what he meant. It is we, the spirits (disciples) who inherit the Kingdom of God (which must be spirit also).

The Kingdom of Heaven is not the same as the Kingdom of God.

People who followed “The Way” were later referred to as Christians in the 4th c.

(John 18:36) Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world:...

ponder = to spend time meditating about - or thinking about.

(2Co 5:6-8) Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.,

Here Paul talks about “we” being distinct from the fleshly body. Now consider this statement by Paul about an experience he had in Heaven (he writes as if it happened to another, but he is referring to himself.)

(Co 12:2) I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.

And again: When Paul writes:

(1Co 13:3) And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

He says if he gives **his body** to be burned; not **himself** to be burned. Paul seems to understand clearly that the man and the body are different .

When you understand this concept you will understand that it is you, the spirit, that enters the Kingdom of God, and it is the Kingdom of God that enters you, and you will understand the connection with Christ as you read Paul who writes about you entering into Christ and Christ entering in to you.

“Man” means spirit. It is neither male nor female.

The first mention of the Kingdom of God in the NT is:

*(Mt 6:33) But seek ye first the **kingdom of God**, and **his righteousness**; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

*(Mt 12:28) But if **I** cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the **kingdom of God** is come unto you.*

Now replace the expression *Kingdom of God* with the word “Christ”, or “Messiah”. And reread these verses.

*(Mt 6:33) But seek ye first **Christ**, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

*(Mt 12:28) But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the **Messiah** is come unto you.*

Beginning to see “the light” now?

(Mr. 4:11) And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God:...

The mystery?

That the Kingdom of God, is Jesus Christ the Messiah.

Why not say “Messiah”?

Perhaps, Jesus did not want his disciples to think of Him as the Messiah described in the scriptures (a warrior leader). He even forbade Peter and the disciples to call Him “the Messiah”, and Nathanael’s inspiration was derided by Jesus. Again:

*(Mark 9:9) And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, **till the Son of man were risen from the dead.***

*(Mr 8:29-30) And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, **Thou art the Christ.** And he charged them that they should **tell no man of him.***

(Joh 1:49-50) Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, **thou art the Son of God;** thou art the King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.

Amori Christi et Ecclesiae –
Glen C. Miller OSV

Recommended Books

ISBN

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Support for this idea from the Church Fathers

Origen said: “Christ who is all virtue, **has come**. For this reason He says that the kingdom of God is within His disciples - not here or there.”

Cyprian c. 250 said: “Dearest Brethren Christ himself may be the kingdom of God, whom we day by day desire to come ... The kingdom of God may be understood to be Himself, since in Him we will reign.”

Let us use this understanding that the Kingdom of God is Christ and unravel a difficult parable about the Kingdom of God (KOG).

(Mr. 4:30-32) And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth: But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.

Below, I have replace the KOG, and references to it, with “Christ”.

And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the Christ? or with what comparison shall we compare Christ? Christ is like a small spirit which, when first conceived, is less than all the spirits of Moses, Jacob, Elija, and Elisha, that lived on the earth: But when Christ is incarnate, He grows up and becomes greater than all the others before Him, and builds up great churches; so that the multitudes can obtain sustenance, and rest.

Now we see that the sower is a metaphor for God the Holy Spirit, the seed is a metaphor for God the Son (the KOG), and we are the fowls of the air (disciples) who feed on God the Son.

(Mt 13:4) And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and **the fowls came and devoured them up:**

(e 19:17) And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to **all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;**

In the parable it is unclear who is the sower, what is the seed, and what the fowls represent.

And here is another parable about the Kingdom of God

(Lu 13:20-21) And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

Using the same substitutions, and adding the inspiration of Augustine from his book of Sermons.

1. “The three measures of meal” of which the Lord spake, is the human race. ... That holy “woman who hid the leaven,” is Wisdom. (Sermon 61).

So the parable becomes understandable as follows:

Whereunto shall I liken Christ? He is like the yeast, which Wisdom took and hid in the human race till the whole was risen.

Consider these other passages in this new light.

(Lu 14:15) And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

We now understand: blessed is he that shall eat the bread in (of) Christ.

More Insight

Here is a longer passage:

(Lu 17:20-23) And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you. And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it. And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them.

Notice the parallel thoughts here between the phrases related to the KOG, and those related to the Son of Man.

- When will the **Kingdom of God** come // When ye shall desire to see one of the days of the **Son of man**.
- Lo here! or, lo there! // See here; or, see there.
- The Kingdom of God is within you // go not after them, nor follow them.

Now the substitution of Messiah/Christ for Kingdom of God

And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the Messiah should come, he answered them and said, **The Messiah cometh not with observation:** Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, **Christ is within you**. The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Messiah and ye shall not see it. And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them.

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