



Adult Bible Class
prepared by
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**Sermon on the Mount
Outline / Syllabus
Matthew 5 - 7**

Lesson 1- Preparation and Prolog, 3:13 - 4:25

- A. Jesus' Baptism, 3:13-17
- B. Jesus' Temptation, 4:1-11
- C. Final Preparations, 4:12-22
- D. Proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom, 4:23-25

Lesson 2- The Beatitudes, 5:1-9

- A. The Beatitudes Generally, vv.1-2
- B. The Beatitudes Specifically, vv.3-9

Lesson 3- Salt and Light, 5:10-16

- A. Blessed are the Persecuted, vv.10-12
- B. Salt of the Earth, v.13
- C. Light of the World, vv.14-16

Lesson 4- The Law and the Gospel, 5:17-20

- A. Fulfilling the Law, vv.17-18
- B. Least or Great in the Kingdom, v.19
- C. Surpassing Righteousness, v.20

Lesson 5- "But I Say to You" Part 1, 5:21-32

- A. Murder and Anger, vv.21-22
- B. Adultery and Lust, vv.27-28
- C. Divorce and Adultery, vv.31-32

Lesson 6- "But I Say to You" Part 2, 5:33-48

- A. False Vows and Oath-Making, vv.33-37
- B. Eye for Eye or Non-Retaliation, vv.38-42
- C. Hating or Loving Those Who Don't Love You, vv.43-48

Lesson 7- Practicing Righteousness Part 1, 6:1-18

- A. Giving Alms, vv.2-4
- B. Praying, vv.5-15
- C. Fasting, vv.16-18

Lesson 8- Practicing Righteousness Part 2, 6:19-34

- A. Treasures on Earth or in Heaven, vv.19-21
- B. Clear Vision, vv.22-23
- C. Choose Your Master, v.24

- D. Anxiety or Faith, vv.25-32
- E. Seek First His Kingdom and Righteousness, vv.33-34

Lesson 9- Practicing Righteousness Part 3, 7:1-12

- A. Judging Others, vv.1-6
- B. Asking, Knocking, and Seeking, vv.7-11
- C. The Golden Rules and the Law and Prophets, v.12

Lesson 10- Practicing Righteousness Part 4, 7:13-23

- A. The Narrow Gate, vv.13-14
- B. Wolves in Sheep's Clothing, vv.15-16
- C. Trees and Fruit, vv.17-20
- D. Doing the Will of the Father, vv.21-23

Lesson 11- "Everyone Who Hears and Acts," 7:24-29

- A. The Wise and the Foolish, vv.24-27
- B. Epilog, vv.28-29

Please Note

All Scripture references, unless otherwise specified, are in Matthew, and taken from the NASB. Though the other Synoptic accounts of Jesus' sermon may be brought into view from time to time for collaboration or comparison purposes, the primary focus will be decidedly upon Matthew's account.

The materials that follow are prepared for Personal or public Adult Bible Class study, and are meant to be used as a mere foundation for deeper exploration and further discussion of this great discourse. It is not copyrighted, and is freely given to all who wish to use it to aid their efforts to *see, hear, and understand* the words of the Savior, cf. 13:13-17. All I ask is that the material is not edited, and is properly credited, when used publically.

Abbreviations as used in this material:

v. – *verse*

vv. – *verses*

v.1a – *verse 1, the first part; with v.1b indicating the second part of the verse, etc.*

cf. - *confer*

cp. – *compare*

SOTM – *Sermon on the Mount*

Scripture references will be underlined; Scripture quotations will be *italicized*.

A final word: Please remember that though taken almost entirely from his account, this is a study of the SOTM rather than an exegetical study of the gospel according to Matthew. Therefore, we will be focusing on passages outside of 5:1 – 7:29 only as they pertain to, and shed light on, Jesus' SOTM.

-PCS

Lesson 1- Preparation and Prolog, Matt.3:13 – 4:25

The “Sermon on the Mount” (SOTM, hereafter) is the longest public discourse of Jesus recorded by the Holy Spirit. Its importance cannot be overstated. Though it does not contain all of “*the gospel of the kingdom*” (4:23; cp. 28:19-20), it does embody its core, and its heart. Though this great sermon defies encapsulation, Jesus identifies the *characteristics, attitudes, dispositions*, and in large measure, the *practices* of citizens of His kingdom. It is *preparatory* preaching, preparing His audience for the day when His apostles will use the “*keys*” He has given them to open doors of the kingdom for all who will *see, hear, understand, and obey* to enter, cf. 16:18-19; John 3:3-5; Acts 2. Paul Earnhart, in his book, Invitation to a Spiritual Revolution, described it this way:

“Jesus’ discourse up a Galilean mountainside is in reality no mere sermon. It more approximates a manifesto of the kingdom of God. There is more to Jesus’ teaching than this, but here we feel the very heartbeat of kingdom truth, and will neglect it at our peril. Because it deals with attitudes, the sermon stands both at the entrance of God’s kingdom and on its more exalted planes. It is not just meat for the mature, but a challenge to one who makes his first approach to heaven’s rule and righteousness.” (p.3)

This is the mountain we hope to climb and mine, however shallowly, to garner what we may of its eternal riches.

A. Jesus’ Baptism, 3:13-17

1. Why did Jesus insist on being baptized by John (which was a baptism of *repentance* for which Jesus obviously had no need, cf. vv.2,6,8; 1Pet.2:21-22)?

Jesus’ words of v.15 have been variously interpreted (and surely misinterpreted as well). John’s baptism was for penitent sinners. Jesus obviously had no sins of which He needed to repent, 1Pet.2:22. But remember that it was by the sign of the dove at the baptism which would unmistakably identify the Messiah to John, cf. John 1:31-33; and would thus allow him to fulfill the second aspect of his role- that of bearing witness “*that this is the Son of God,*” John 1:34. John had a two-fold mission: 1) prepare the way for the Messiah, John 1:23; Matt.3:3; and 2) identify Him as such to the people, John 1:29.

It is also possible, but more speculative, that Jesus wanted to be baptized to identify Himself with the people whom He came to save, Isa.53:12; Matt.21:25-26; Heb.2:14-17.

Above all else, consider carefully the two reasons that Jesus provided to John as to why he should baptize Him: 1) “*Permit it at this time*”- Now, it was appropriate for John to be in the superior role of baptizer and for Jesus to be in the submissive role of being baptized. Soon, in fact immediately following, these roles would reverse into the form John already admitted was right- though he did not know altogether why at the time, cp. v.14 and John 3:26-30. 2) “*For in this way*” (through John baptizing Jesus) “*it is fitting*” (proper) “*for us*” (though decidedly different, each had a role/ministry from God) “*to fulfill all righteousness.*” Ask yourself this question: How would *all righteousness* be fulfilled? Only through the perfect sacrifice of the Son of God upon the cross,

right? Of course. But for such to occur, what all had to happen first? Jesus had to live a sinless life. Jesus had to proclaim “*the gospel of the kingdom.*” Jesus had to be *introduced* or *identified* to the masses. Jesus had to be *identified* as the Son of God. Now, how was John to *identify* the Messiah for whom he had *prepared the way*? The answer is in John 1:31-34. For them to “*fulfill all righteousness,*” Jesus had to be baptized by John!

2. How is this related or important to the SOTM?

Jesus’ *purpose* for coming to earth and “*being found in the appearance (or form) as a man*” (Phil.2:8) is clearly stated by Him in Luke 19:10, “*For the Son of Man has come to seek and save that which is lost.*” Though certainly not His first or initial “*proclaiming (of) the gospel of the kingdom*” (cf. 4:23-25), the SOTM was the first recorded major manifestation of the *true nature* of this kingdom and its citizens. But before He could be crowned as its *King* (ultimately through His *death, burial, resurrection, and ascension* to the throne), He had to deliver its *law*. And to deliver its *law*, He had to be recognized as its *Lawgiver* and *Messiah* (cf. 4:23;17:2-5; Luke 16:16; 24:44-45). As seen in the answer to the previous question, His baptism was an integral step in the process because it allowed John to recognize and identify Him as such to the masses, cf. John 1:31-36.

Thus, His baptism *introduced* Jesus to the public as “*the Lamb of God*” who would through sacrificing Himself deliver the world from “*the domain of darkness*” in which they had been held captive by Satan and sin, and allow them to be “*transferred... to the kingdom of His beloved Son,*” Col.1:13. **It identified Him as the teacher with authority,** cf. 7:29.

B. Jesus’ Temptation, 4:1-11

3. If God does not *tempt* anyone (and He doesn’t, cf. Jas.1:13), why was Jesus “*led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted...*”?

As clearly stated by James, God does not tempt anyone. But He does *allow* (as in the case of Job, cf. Job 1:8-12) us to be tempted, and He even puts or *leads* us to places and circumstances in which we may be tempt (as in the case of Abraham, cf. Gen.22:1ff).

God *tests* us with commands (positive or negative- *do this* and/or *don’t do that*). He allows us to undergo *trials* (circumstances which may make the commands more difficult). But *temptation* is our reaction or overreaction to the circumstances rather than His commands. By these *trials*, we are *tested* to see if we will persevere and remain faithful or be *tempted* and fail, Jas.1:2-16. Through this process, we learn *endurance*, and are made “*perfect and complete,*” Jas.1:4. As a *man*, Jesus had to “*partake of the same*” to “*learn obedience*” and thus “*sympathize with our weaknesses,*” cf. Heb.2:14-15; 4:14-15; 5:8.

4. How is this related or important to the SOTM?

To be crowned “*King*” of a kingdom consisting of the *poor in spirit, the gentle, the merciful, and the pure in heart*, He not only was “*made*” of the same “*flesh and blood,*” He needed to *experience* what they *experienced*- and *temptation* was a necessary part of the total, Heb.2:17 – 3:6. **It prepared Him to teach and save.**

C. Final Preparations, 4:12-22

5. Why did Jesus *withdraw* “into Galilee”- was He afraid after Herod imprisoned John the Baptist? Please explain.

It is hard to see how the Creator of the Universe (Col.1:15-16) and Son of God (cf. Matt.26:53) could be afraid of any man- even a ruthless despot. Surely, the news of John’s imprisonment was personally troubling to Him, but it was not a fear of suffering a similar fate at the hands of Herod that caused Him to “*withdraw to Galilee.*” Besides, Galilee was also under the control of Antipas.

Consider as well that His departure from the region follows on the heels of His withstanding *the ruler of this world*, cf.4:1-10; John 12:31. If He did not fear, and was able to rebuff Satan, He certainly wasn’t afraid of Herod. Instead of these motivations, Jesus’ move into Galilee just happened to coincide chronologically with John’s arrest. Galilee was an important region of Israel. It was the most northernmost and densely populated, and Jesus needed to give the people there the opportunity to see and know Him and hear His gospel of salvation as much as any other area of Palestine. However, it is also possible that Jesus’ oft-repeated words, “*My time is not yet come*” may have played a part in His relocation. If He remained in Judea, it could incited the Jewish leadership to arrest and try Him *before* He could preach and teach His gospel and kingdom elsewhere.

6. Why did Jesus *settle in*, and apparently use as a base of operation, *Capernaum* rather than His hometown of Nazareth?

The reason given by Matthew is the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah 9:1-12 as quoted in vv.15-16. This is the seventh time that Matthew has connected a specific event in Jesus’ life with an OT prophecy (cf. 1:22; 2:5-6,15,17,23; 3:3).

But Luke provides the additional information that “*no prophet is welcome in his home town*” (v.24). Jesus uttered these words in prediction of the townspeople’s rejection of Him, which, of course, came true exactly as He predicted, vv.28-29.

7. What are the first recorded words of Jesus’ public *preaching* and *teaching*? What is the significance of these words?

At least in our primary text from Matthew, they are “*Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,*” 4:17. The verse begins, “*From that time...*” meaning from the time Jesus settled in Capernaum, 4:13.

The significance seems to be that “*Galilee of the Gentiles*” was a place of particular *spiritual “darkness... who were sitting in the land and shadow of death,”* and thus desperately needed to *prepare themselves* for the imminent *dawning of the Light of the world* and His kingdom, cf. 4:17; John 8:12.

Although John had vigorously preached these same words, he had done so primarily in *Judea*, its *wilderness*, and the *district around the Jordan*, cf. 3:1; Mark 3:5; and Luke 3:3; but NOT in Galilee where Jesus now heralded this message of *preparation through repentance*.

8. For *how long* and *predominantly where* had Jesus been “teaching in their synagogues” and “proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom” prior to the SOTM?

The *predominantly where* part of the question is easily answered by v.23’s “in all Galilee,” cf. Luke 4:13-16,31,38; 5:1,12,17. But the “for *how long*” part is a bit more difficult to discern. Luke’s account of the SOTM (by linking it with the selection of the 12 as does Matt.4:18-22; 5:1ff; and Luke 5:3-10) locates it chronologically in the **second year** of Jesus’ public preaching, cf. Luke 6:12-49. This information might come as a surprise to those of us who, largely by Matthew’s account, assume the SOTM was at the very first of Jesus’ public preaching/teaching. But remember, Luke had as a purpose of his gospel to “write it out in consecutive order” (Luke 1:3). Matthew did not share this particular objective in his account.

9. What is the connection between Jesus *healing all the diseases* of the people and His “proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom”? Why or how is the *first* important to the *second*?

Consider that, despite his popularity and effectiveness as a *forerunner* for Jesus and *preparer of the way* for Him and His kingdom, John “performed no sign(s)” (John 10:41). Jesus, however, used *signs* to “manifest His glory,” and as a result, “His disciples believed in Him,” John 2:11. John’s mission required no demonstrative illustration of power. He could “restore the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers” (cf. Mal.4:6) in preparation for the coming Messiah and kingdom without miraculous demonstration. But the Messiah Himself, as prophesied, would *open the eyes of the blind, unstop the ears of the deaf, make the lame leap like deer, and loosen the tongue of the dumb* so that they *shouted for joy*, cf. 11:2-6; Isa.35:5. These miraculous *signs* would then allow Him to “bring good news to the afflicted... bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners” of sin, Isa.61:1ff. Such would provide the unmistakable *proof* of His divinity (Matt.11:2-6), and therefore His *authority*, 7:28; 9:6 (only God can forgive sins)!

10. What is significant about the description in v.25 of all of the places from which people *followed Him*?

Not only did Jesus attract *disciples* from the Jewish areas *Galilee, Jerusalem, and Judea*, He also drew them from *Decapolis* and *from beyond the Jordan* that were predominantly Gentile locales. This, too, fulfilled prophecy, cp. 4:15; Isa.9:1-2. This Messiah would not be *just* the “King of the Jews” (cf. John 18:33; 19:19), but “the King of kings” (1Tim.6:15) and *Savior of the world*, John 3:16!

Lesson 2- The Beatitudes, Matt.5:1-10

To grasp the full magnitude of the SOTM, we must understand something of the mindset of its primary audience. Since John appeared *preparing the way* for Jesus and His kingdom, the corruption of Judaism was/is readily apparent, cf. 3:5-12. This was especially true of its *leadership*, though the perversion certainly trickled down to and influenced even those who truly sought God through it. Reliance on *physical heritage* (3:9; John 8:33,39), and *earthly/national expectations* of the coming Messiah and His kingdom (cf. Luke 17:20; Acts 1:6), set the stage for the SOTM to *amaze* (7:28) and be *revolutionary* (5:21-22, 27-28, 31-32, 33-34, 38-39, 43-44) to its hearers.

This new kingdom would not be the “bigger and better” version of the *earthly* kingdom they anticipated and yearned for, it would be the *spiritual* (“*not of this world*,” John 18:36) kingdom that practically no one expected. Its citizens would not be the wealthy and piously elite who “*trusted in themselves that they were righteous and viewed others with contempt*” (Luke 18:9), loved “*the place of honor at banquets, and chief seats in the synagogues, and respectful greetings in the marketplace*” (23:6-7), and “*did their deeds to be seen of men*” (6:2,5,16). Instead, it would be populated by the *tax-gatherers, harlots, and sinners* (cf. 9:11; 11:19) who were “*poor in spirit*,” that “*mourned*” for their sins, and *hungered and thirsted for true righteousness*. This kingdom wouldn’t be about *physical* things like land, borders, nationalism, and human acceptance or acclaim. Instead, it would be a *spiritual* kingdom that resided in and consisted of human hearts dedicated to pleasing God by acknowledging and *mourning unworthiness*, becoming *merciful and gentle*, and striving for *purity in heart* and deed. The SOTM was revolutionary indeed to hearts, minds, and lives that had strayed so far from God’s intentions and ways. And the Beatitudes surely served as a shocking opening salvo for the barrage of truth that followed to an audience so completely unprepared for it by 400 years of silence from God and their own spiritual degradation and corruption!

Introductory Considerations

1. Is Matthew’s account of the SOTM the same occasion as Luke’s so-called “Sermon on the Plain” (cf. Luke 6:12-49)? If “yes,” how do you account for the differences? If “no,” how do you account for the similarities?

Though some may disagree, my answer is “Yes, they are the same.” There are notable differences (number of *Beatitudes*, Luke adds warnings of “*woe*”), but these can, by and large, be accounted for through the differences of intended audiences (Matthew to Jews, while Luke wrote primarily to Gentiles). But the primary evidence to indicate commonality is that the chronology of both accounts have it followed by the healing of the centurion’s servant, cp. Matt.8:5-13 and Luke 7:1-10, which seems to indicate that though substantially different in some ways, they are versions of the same sermon.

2. Read the SOTM (5:1 – 7:29) through without stopping at least a couple of times. What is the primary point of this discourse? In other words, summarize Jesus’ overall point (preferably in one sentence).

The SOTM is an explanation of the true nature of the kingdom in that Jesus, in *preparatory* fashion, identifies the *characteristics, attitudes, dispositions*, and in large measure, the *practices* of its citizens.

3. Since the Jews (and even believing Gentiles) were looking forward to, and expected there to be considerable “blessings” in, the coming kingdom, why was the SOTM so *revolutionary* and *amazing* (cf. 7:28) to its primary audience?

Though the audience, at the conclusion of the SOTM, was *amazed* at the tenor of His teaching (“*as one having authority*”), they were surely equally astonished at its *content*. This *kingdom* that Jesus proclaimed was not a *physical* one for the *deserving* Jew on the basis of his ancestral ties to Abraham, nor even one provided as *reparations* for generations of suffering at the hands of other nations. Instead, it would be *spiritual* kingdom reserved for those who truly *desired* a repaired relationship with God; those who *mourned* for their sins, longingly *hungered* and *thirsted for righteousness*, all the while in *meekness* acknowledging their *unworthiness* (true *poverty of spirit*). In these ways, this kingdom was not AT ALL what they expected... and in large measure, desired.

A. The Beatitudes Generally, vv.1-2

4. What is a “beatitude,” and what does “*blessed*” mean?

Beatitude is from the Latin *beatus*, which means “blessed.” These pronouncements of *blessedness* (Luke 6:20-22 only records four beatitudes, but adds four *woes* in vv.24-26) mark out the character and disposition of members of Christ’s kingdom, as well as the benefits that are incumbent to them.

However, “*blessed*” is sometimes thought of as “happy.” Though that may be a good working definition in some contexts, it misses the mark here. How can one be “happy” and be “*poor in spirit*” and “*mourn*” (vv.3-4) at the same time? Instead, we need to understand “*blessed*” in the fuller context of what follows in the SOTM. Jesus is not providing a recipe for “happiness” in life. He is enumerating those who will be “*blessed*” (*blest* rather than *bles-ed*) by God! With these “beatitudes” He is identifying the true members of God’s kingdom, and therefore, indicating those whom God will bless.

5. Are the beatitudes describing different types of people within the kingdom, and the blessings that result from being that type of person; or, are they describing aggregate characteristics that are to be found in each member of the kingdom, and the results of possessing them all? Please explain.

It is, in my view, a mistake to view these “beatitudes” *individually* rather than *collectively*. In total, they comprise the composition of kingdom citizens. It is not then a matter of “if you are” or “do this,” then “you will get that,” but a composite picture of the citizenry of those whom God will *accept*, and therefore *bless*, in His kingdom, cf. Ps.15; 24:3-6.

6. How many beatitudes are there? (Hint: 7,8, or 9) Please explain your answer.

Admittedly, the answer to this particular question does not really matter in regards to the overall importance of the Beatitudes in total. But it does cause us

to examine closely the differences between them, and therefore help to shape our understanding of them.

My answer *now* (I've gone back and forth on this for years!) is **seven**, vv.3-9. My reasoning is as follows. Vv.3-9 state requirements and pronounce blessings. They are teaching the primary and secondary audiences what *they* must *be* and *do*. But v.10 is somewhat different. It explains that *state* of "*those*" of the *past* who have possessed and demonstrated "*righteousness*." Additionally, v.11 *foretells* the contrasting *reactions* of *men* and *God* to those who chose to *live* as kingdom citizens. For these reasons, and though they similarly begin with "*Blessed...*", I do count them as "Beatitudes"- at least not in the same vein as the *seven* of vv.3-8.

7. Are these beatitudes possessed *naturally*, or by *deliberate choice* and *dedicated effort*? Please explain.

No adult is *naturally* a citizen of God's kingdom. This is precisely why the SOTM generally and these "Beatitudes" specifically are so revolutionary to an audience that assumed they were *God's people by natural birth*.

Additionally, these *qualities* of disposition, character, and conduct are not only impossible to *inherit* by physical birth, they are somewhat *unnatural* to humanity in general. They must be acquired by deliberate choice and dedication. It is somewhat *against human nature* to be "*poor in spirit*" rather than arrogant and self-assured; to judge oneself honestly or accurately and thus *mourn* for one's sins; to restrain or control one's strength in *meekness* when possessing the ability to do otherwise; to be *merciful* rather than demanding justice when wronged; to *hunger and thirst for righteousness* more than for physical food and drink; etc. No, these qualities, characteristics, and dispositions do not *come naturally* to any of us. They are, if truly possessed, the product of the careful, deliberate, and dedicated *suppression* and *submission* of "self" and its desires and pursuits for that which *pleases*, and will be "*blessed*" by God!

B. The Beatitudes Specifically, vv.3-9

8. Luke 6:20 says just "*poor*" rather than "*poor in spirit*" (v.3). Why? What, if anything, is the connection between *poverty* and being "*poor in spirit*"?

There is no more virtue in poverty than vice in riches. However, one who is rich has the added burden of the tendency to *trust in self* rather than in God, cf. Luke 12:16-21. The poor man, on the other hand, has through his poverty, the impetus to learn the opposite- that he is completely dependent upon God's gracious provision for all things, cf. Acts 14:17. Still yet, the poor can be stubbornly arrogant in his poverty, and the rich can be humble and gracious in and with his wealth.

But Jesus is not referencing mere *financial poverty*; what ever may be its spiritual advantage or disadvantage. Instead, He pronounces God's *blessing* upon those who are "*poor in spirit*"- those who, whether they possess *little* or *much* financially, have a deep and true sense of their own **spiritual** destitution, cf. 8:8; Luke 5:8; 17:10; 18:10-13; 1Tim.2:15. We miss the point of Luke 16:19-31 if we

conclude that *Lazarus* was in *Paradise* simply because he was *poor* and *mourned* his plight in life, or that the *rich man* was *in agony* only because he lived *gaily in splendor* during his earthly sojourn!

9. What *kind* of “*mourning*” is meant in v.4? How do you know?

There is no doubt or dispute that *physical* mourning caused by the inevitable tragedies and necessary *subjection* of humanity to the *futilities* of “*life*” (cf. Rom.8:20ff) can provide opportunities for increased *spiritual* understanding and dedication. David makes such abundantly clear in Psa.119:67,71. But these things notwithstanding, Jesus isn’t declaring that those who *mourn* over these *physical tragedies* in life will, simply because they *mourn*, be *comforted*.

Remember that these *beatitudes*, and the *blessings* attached to them, come as a result of deliberate choice and dedication rather than by genetics or mere circumstance(s). Jesus speaks, therefore, of those who *decide to mourn*- not over the inescapable realities of physical life that everyone must endure, but over the deliberate spiritual choices we’ve made (or failed to make) that resulted in sin, cp. 2Cor.7:9-10!

10. Please define *gentleness/meekness* as used in v.5. And, if it is not part of *natural disposition*, how do we learn or develop it?

The Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon defines and explains *praus* (*gentle* in NASV or *meek* in KJV) as: “mildness of disposition, gentleness of spirit, meekness. *Additional Information*: Meekness toward God is that disposition of spirit in which we accept His dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting. In the OT, the meek are those wholly relying on God rather than their own strength to defend them against injustice... Gentleness or meekness is the opposite to self-assertiveness and self-interest. It stems from trust in God’s goodness and control over the situation. The gentle person is not occupied with self at all. This is a work of the Holy Spirit, not of the human will. (Gal. 5:23)”

A less technical definition, but one that is nonetheless accurate, is “strength under control.” The Lord exemplifies and personifies it in 26:53ff. This, like the other dispositions, is adopted rather than born of natural means. Neither is it *forced upon* one who has no other recourse; *i.e.* like a *slave*. Instead, *gentleness/meekness* is the deliberate subjugation of *strength* in the process of *emptying self* (cf. Phil.2:7) of pride and self-assertiveness for the greater good of the object of our actions. Jesus stayed on the cross not because He lacked the power to do otherwise and *save Himself*, but in order to *save us*.

We learn *meekness/gentleness* by His example, and through a more complete understanding of how it has been shown to us, cf. 18:21-35; Eph.2:1-11ff; 1John 4:19.

11. Generally, for what did the audience of the SOTM “*hunger and thirst*”? Why is this important?

On this occasion, it wasn’t the physical *loaves to fill their bellies* that others sought (cf. John 6:26)- for Jesus did not feed them, that motivated the *multitude* to come to Him. But it may well have been the physical *healing* He had been

providing, cf. 4:23-25. Lest we become too critical of their motivations, remember what meager alternatives then existed for easing or removing *sickness and disease*.

But, also recognize a parallel. As Jesus provided *physical bread* in order to supply the *spiritual bread of life* to the audience of John 6, He here has *healed their physical diseases* by miracle in order to be able to *heal their spiritual disease* of sin by doctrine. The prescriptive antidote for the latter was “*the gospel of the kingdom*,” 4:23; 5:1 – 7:27! For this “*medicine*” to accomplish its purpose, the “*patients*” would have to “*hunger and thirst for righteousness*” more than for physical bread or healing enough to understand and take it!

12. What is the difference between “showing mercy” and *being “merciful”*? Why is this distinction critical?

One can *show mercy*, at least on specific occasions, without being truly *merciful*; an *act of mercy* may have other motivations, cf. Luke 18:2-5. But the one who is truly *merciful*- possessing that inward quality and disposition of *mercy*, will always act in accord with it outwardly, cp. 15:11,18-19.

The distinction is critical because “showing mercy” (without being truly *merciful*) **only** benefits the recipient in the short-term, but *being “merciful”* benefits both parties on the occasion (cf. Acts 20:35), and the *giver* eternally, v.7; cf. 18:35 and Jas.2:13.

13. What does it mean to be “*pure in heart*”?

J.B. Phillips, in his translation, renders *katharos kardia* as “*utterly sincere*” (The New Testament in Modern English, p.9). *Pure* refers to that which is *clean, pure, free from corruption*. And “*in heart*” provides the location of this purity. This is especially important given the inspired wisdom of Prov.4:23, and the words of Jesus in 15:11,18-19 and John 15:3.

But, it is also vital to realize that the “*purity in heart*” to which Jesus refers is not, and indeed cannot be, *perfect righteousness* in life. How could it be, given what has already been stated in vv.3,4? And as Paul Earnhart points out, “it is unlikely that it refers principally to the purity of a forgiven heart” either (Invitation to a Spiritual Revolution; p.12). Instead, *purity in heart* more likely refers to the *single-minded* devotion of 6:24 combined with the *single-eyed* perception of 6:22 (KJV); that *purity, undiluted and uncontaminated* by corruption, allows our *hearts* to truly “*hunger and thirst for righteousness*” in a way that allows them to be *filled*, cf. v.6 and Jas.4:8. Without such *internal purity*, one can never truly “*see*” God (Psa.24:3-4), or His kingdom (John 3:3).

14. To what kind of “*peacemakers*” does Jesus refer? Is He referencing those who *break up fights*, those who will make *peace at any price*, or something else?

Hopefully even by now in the infancy of our study of the SOTM, we have come to realize that these beatitudes neither emanate from, nor find their fulfillment primarily in, the *physical* but *spiritual* realm. This realization eliminates the two options presented in the question. So, *spiritual “peacemakers”* are under consideration in this beatitude, rather than those who have a talent for resolving

conflict through the avenues of negotiation and compromise. How could One who claims to have brought *not* “*peace, but a sword*” mean such, cf. 10:34? So what does Jesus mean?

Given that these beatitudes address *spiritual* concerns and rewards, think of “*peace*” being *made* in the same vein. By sin, *peace* with God is destroyed, Isa.59:1-2ff. But the “*Prince of peace*” (Isa.9:6) came bearing the *sword of truth* (Eph.6:17) that by it “*the thoughts and intentions of the heart*” of men would be *laid bare* (Heb.4:12-13), *purified* (1Pet.1:22), and thus *reconciled to God in peace* (Eph.2:11-22). This is no mere *resolver of fistcuffs* to which Jesus refers as “*peacemakers,*” but those who take an active role in *reconciling man to God in peace* through the gospel!

15. Does God *bless* all who are *persecuted*? Why, or why not?

There are men who are *persecuted as murderers, thieves, evil-doers, and troublesome meddlers*, cf. Luke 23:39-41a; 1Pet.4:15. By no means is Jesus suggesting that “*theirs is the kingdom of heaven*” on that basis! The modifying phrase “*for the sake of righteousness*” indicates what *kind of persecuted* to whom He has reference. Additionally, we should probably link v.10 with v.9 to gain a fuller view of Jesus’ meaning. Those who become *peacemakers* through sharing the *gospel of peace* with others (v.9), will, at least on occasion and despite their intentions and efforts, become the object of *persecution* by those who reject it, v.10; cf. 10:16-18,24-25; 2Tim.2:2. But, whether in the *past, present, or future*, those so treated *by men* (and for *that reason*) will be “*blessed*” by God!