***Session 27 – THE KINGDOM ETHIC AND COMMUNITY***

1. **THE NEW, GREATER MOSES AND THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT**

A. The background to the Sermon on the Mount is found in the progression of Matthew’s Gospel that provides a narrative to both remind the reader of Moses and his leading the Children of Israel out of Exile from Egypt, and to point to Jesus as the New Moses leading not only Israel but also all of humanity out of the Domain of Darkness and its Exile.

B *Matthew 1* shows us a picture of Genesis and recalls Genesis 5:1 as a template Matthew uses for Jesus’ genealogy and His direct relationship with both Abraham and David and the One who would end the Babylonian Exile. *Matthew 2* shows a picture of the birth of Moses and the exodus from Egypt as Jesus is born, escapes both the spiritual assault seen in Revelation 12 and its manifestation in Herod’s attempt to kill the Christ Child, is carried to Egypt and then returns. *Matthew 3* shows a picture of the New Moses in the Red Sea crossing as the Heavens are Split and He is anointed for His calling. *Matthew 4* is the New Moses in the Wilderness as He succeeds in the liminal state and demonstrates His willingness to obey His Father. *Matthew 5* then naturally leads us to the New Moses on the Mountain handing down to His people Yahweh’s Torah.

 The Sermon on the Mount following this string of Moses-like events looks remarkably like a new Mount Sinai. The introduction, therefore, casts Jesus as the Redeemer like Moses and sets the stage for us to understand Jesus as the lawgiver like Moses.[[1]](#footnote-1) But the comparison gives way to the contrast because Jesus is Greater than Moses and Mount Zion is superior to Mount Sinai. One is the shadow, the other the reality.

 3For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses – as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself…5Now Moses was faithful in all God’s house as a servant…6but Christ is faithful over God’s house as a son, and we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope. (Heb. 3:1-6)

C. Luke 4 has already shown us prior to Matthew 5 Jesus proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom and its framework around Isaiah 61. After setting men and women free from sickness, disease, demons, and all of the power of the enemy, He now reveals *how* they are to live in His Kingdom. It looks a lot like the Torah Moses handed down. But it goes farther.

D. It doesn’t take Jesus long to address the Torah in His Sermon. Matthew 5:17 says,

 “Do not think I have come to abolish the Law (Torah) or the Prophets (Nevi’im); I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.” The *abolishing* means exactly what the translators say, “to do away with, to invalidate, to make invalid.” Jesus did not come to *do away with* the Torah, in fact He is going to *fulfill* it.

E. When we say something is *fulfilled,* we tend to think of that as no longer having a purpose beyond what was intended. A prophecy can be fulfilled and we view that as an end point of the prophecy, though the effects of that fulfillment may continue. Webster’s dictionary actually provides *this* definition for fulfill:

1. a. to put into effect; b. to meet the requirements of; c. to measure up to (satisfy); d. ***to bring to an end***.
2. b. to convert into reality[[2]](#footnote-2)

The Greek *pleroo* (fulfilled) here means, “to give the true or complete meaning to something—‘to give the true meaning to, to provide the real significance of.’”[[3]](#footnote-3)

 If there was a moment where Jesus would give the definitive answer to how His followers related to the Torah, now was His best opportunity. And what did He say?

 He upholds the [Torah], telling the crowds that every commandment matters and that entrance to God’s kingdom requires a righteousness even greater than that of the current Jewish religious leaders.

 He raises the bar by returning to the original intent of the Sinai instructions. “You have heard that it was said . . . but I tell you.” I tell you not even to be angry; not ever to let conflict go unreconciled; not even to look with lust; not to divorce except in extreme circumstances; not to swear oaths at all; not to resist an evil person; not to hate your enemy, but rather to love them. Jesus does not do away with the Old Testament law. He calls people back to it. And he holds them to it.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Jesus is not simply a conduit of God’s teachings the way Moses was. He is the source of those teachings. He possesses authority that Moses and the other prophets never had. Moses was only a messenger. Jesus is both the sender and deliverer of the message. Jesus is Yahweh in the flesh. He doesn’t say “thus says the Lord.” His teaching comes from within: “I tell you.”[[5]](#footnote-5)

F. Paul in His Letters to the Church (Romans, Galatians, 1-2 Corinthians, Ephesians, etc.) nearly always addresses the relationship of the New Covenant Believer to the *Law* and distinguishes between the Torah of the Spirit of Life, that is the Torah written in our hearts, contrasted with the Law or decree of sin and death, that is condemned in the flesh or carnal man. Romans 6-7 gives a master class in how this plays out and how Paul defines this relationship.

**II. THE KINGDOM ETHIC – HOW TO LIVE IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD AS COVENANT PEOPLE**

A. What is an *ethic*? It is a moral or character trait or action that defines right and wrong. It is an adopted standard by a person or group of people (a society) that is an agreed upon defining of right and wrong behavior. This definition also provides the word *ethos* which mean, “The moral character, nature, disposition and customs of a people or culture… conduct—a conception of right and wrong, of virtues and of vices.”[[6]](#footnote-6)

B. The Kingdom of God has an *ethos* and it is found within the Sermon on the Mount and everything else in the Torah, Prophets, Writings, and New Testament. But the Sermon on the Mount is a condensed version of *how* we are to live before God and in relationship with other New Covenant Believers.

C. We can look back at Moses, the Exodus, and the Sinai Event to show a comparison to what Jesus is doing in Matthew 5-7. Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt, out of exile, through the Red Sea, into the Wilderness, to the Mountain. They were delivered from the bondage of slavery and now they needed to know *how to live in relationship with Yahweh and with each other.*

D. We see then the same truth playing out in reality in Jesus. Having declared Isaiah 61 and the end of exile and the parade of those being set free from the ravages of the domain of darkness and brought into His glorious kingdom, He brings them to His Mountain and tells them *how to live in relationship with Yahweh and each other.*

E. This also has far-reaching, eschatological meaning as well. The question we can ask is, “How do people/we live in the Age to Come? In the Millennial Kingdom and the Eternal Ages?” They/We live out the reality of the Sermon on the Mount, though somewhat modified, the truths contained are going to be lived out fully for eternity. This *ethos* of the future kingdom age has broken into the present evil age as not only counter-culture, but the inevitable conquering ethic that will define life now and forever. Jesus has guaranteed it. (See 1 Peter for a full break down of an Apostolic voice of *how* believers are to live in their relationship to God and to each other)

 5 For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, 7and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. 8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:5-8)

 What does the word *virtue* mean? The Greek *arete* means, “the quality of moral excellence—‘outstanding goodness, virtue.’[[7]](#footnote-7)

 Notice though, the way into this way of life of virtue is found in verses 3-4

 3His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, 4by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature…(2 Peter 1:3-4)

 It is then by and through the Power of the Holy Spirit, i.e., *divine power* or *anointing* we have a grant of authority to walk in all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus. (\*Thus, we pray Ephesians 1:17-22)

 Louw-Nida makes this observation of arete,

 It is possible, however, that ἀρετή in 2 Pe 1:3 denotes the manifestation of (divine) power (see 76.14)[[8]](#footnote-8)

 76.14 ἀρετήb, ῆς f: a manifestation of power characterized by excellence—‘wonderful act, powerful deed, wonderful deed.’ ὅπως τὰς ἀρετὰς ἐξαγγείλητε ‘so that you may proclaim the wonderful deeds (of God)’1 Pe 2:9.[[9]](#footnote-9)

 This *divine power* then or virtue is God’s power expressed in *both* excellence of character and excellence of the wonderful power demonstrations of His kingdom. This is the essence of the Sermon on the Mount.

**III. THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT – THE BEATITUDES (1-3)**

A. Keep in mind Jesus has been preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom and demonstrating His power over sickness, sin, demons, and death. The central message was Isaiah 61 and the ending of exile and brining living water to a dry and thirsty land.

B. We will see then Isaiah 61 and other Old Testament references help form the beatitudes which serve as commentary on these Old Testament passages.

C. The first two beatitudes deal with the *poor* in spirit and those who *mourn*. These are two groups Jesus identifies in Isaiah 61. Luke 4:18 and Isaiah 61:2-3.

 *Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*.

 *The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor*.

The poor of Isaiah 61 and Luke 4 then are *poor in spirit*. As we observed in a previous session, this poverty extends well beyond the lack of material wealth or means. It is poverty that is a result of Adam’s transgression: first spiritual poverty as death came to Adam’s spirit and with it separation from Yahweh’s presence. Then material poverty as he and Eve were exiled from the Garden. Now the Second Adam has come to reopen Eden and restore Man’s fellowship with Yahweh, spiritually and materially.

 The *poor in spirit* recognize their poverty. They are beggars. They require *help from outside of themselves* to live.

 What, then, does “poor in spirit” mean? The history of the Greek word for “poor,” ptochos , provides some insight. It comes from a verbal root that denotes “to cower and cringe like a beggar.” In classical Greek ptochos came to mean “someone who crouches about, wretchedly begging.” In the New Testament it bears something of this idea because it denotes a poverty so deep that the person must obtain his living by begging. He is fully dependent on the giving of others. He cannot survive without help from the outside. Thus an excellent translation is “ beggarly poor.”[[10]](#footnote-10)

 The poor in spirit that come to Jesus however are *blessed*. They realize the dependence on Him to end their exile from Eden. They need a Savior and He is that Savior. They need a Good and Righteous King to rule over them and their world, and Jesus is that King. And this is exactly what they receive, the Kingdom of God. Jesus is their King and He rules and reigns. He brings them out of darkness into His blessed Kingdom and gives them access to the power of the age to come.

 Contrast the Laodicean Assembly of Believers with the poor in spirit. Jesus says to them:

 17 ‘Because you say, “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,” and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, 18 I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become right, and white garment so that you may clothe yourself, and that the same of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes that you may see…20 ‘Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.” (Rev. 3:17-20)

 The believers confessed a good confession, “I am rich, I am wealthy, I have need of nothing.” This confession betrayed what was in their hearts. Kenneth E. Hagin prophesied on April 28, 1983 concerning minsters God had sent and used mightily by His Spirit,

 *“But many [people] just looked at them and lifted them up, and some of them were lifted up in pride and the anointing left them. And some became money minded and lost the anointing.”*

 This is the opposite of being *poor in spirit*. Certainly, we must confess a good confession! That’s not the point Jesus is making with Laodicea. He is identifying their spiritual state. They were materially wealthy at the expense of their spiritual condition. They viewed themselves as blessed because of the material wealth. This is up-side-down. Adam’s poverty began with his spiritual rebellion and led to his material poverty. The spiritual condition must be dealt with first. And that is what Jesus is addressing. They sought to go around *poverty of spirit* as a pre-requisite to entrance into the Rule and Reign of God in His Messiah, Yeshua.

 Notice how in the initial vision Christ was attired with a golden girdle, His hair was white like wool, and His eyes were like flaming fire, which correspond strikingly to the three products mentioned in this verse. The gold, the white garments, and the eyesalve all point to one thing — Christ. Their illness can be remedied only through a renewed relationship with Christ, by buying true spiritual resources from Him (**cf. Isa. 55:1-3!**). Only in Christ are true riches, clothing, and insight. Indeed, Jesus himself established the fount of all true wealth through His own faithful witness in the midst of the suffering of the cross.[[11]](#footnote-11)

 The first step in repentance and turning to Jesus is to allow Him entrance to the heart. “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come *in to him* and will dine with him, and he with Me.”

 Jesus has promised to those who will hear his voice to open up and dine with Him. It is here the business arrangement can be made to purchase gold (kingdom reality), white garments (priestly reality), and eye salve (prophetic reality). How do they purchase these kingdom realities? Eating and dining with Him. Fellowshipping with Him at *His Table*. Blessed are those who are poor in spirit, that open the door to the King and allow him to enter. Theirs is the experience of the Kingdom of God. (Ps. 23:7-10 LXX)

D. “Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted.” The context from Isaiah reads,

 2…to comfort all who mourn, 3 to grant those who mourn in Zion, giving them **a garland** instead of ashes, **the oil of gladness** instead of mourning, **the mantle of praise** instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called **oaks of righteousness**, the planting of Yahweh, that He may be gloried. (Isa. 61:2-3)

 The Hebrew translated “comfort” is nhm (nahem) which corresponds to the NT Greek *parakaleo* meaning, “encourage; exhort; comfort.” The Prophet Nahum (*nhm*) also means comforter.

 The exiles sat down and wept by the waters of Babylon when they remembered Zion. (Ps. 137:1) The herald of Good News and the Message of the Kingdom of God is now at hand, or breaking into present reality. And with it comfort or encouragement, exhortation, and edification or building up for those who mourn in captivity – because the Messiah has come with the anointing of God’s Spirit to set them free.

 Mourning is not only related to the reality of loss, but also directly a position of a repentant heart, individually and corporately.

 Zechariah 3:8-9; 12:10, 13:1; Joel 1:13; 2:12-14; Jeremiah 29:12-14

 Repentance or *t’shuva* is the *first* part of the introduction of the Gospel of the Kingdom.

17From that time Jesus began to preach saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matt. 4:17)

Those who *return* to Yahweh with fasting, weeping, and with *mourning*; those who rend their hearts and return to Him in Joel 2 are those who Jeremiah 29 *call upon Him* and seek for Him with all of their heart. They will find Him, and He will restore their fortunes and gather them from the nations (sounds like the end of exile and the start of Jubilee).

Both of these instances of mourning (the mourning of loss and the mourning of repentance – because of loss) are in view in Isaiah 61. Blessed are those, who like the poor in spirit, recognize their condition before Yahweh. These who mourn in repentance because of their loss in exile will receive *parakelo*.

 We see Isaiah’s prophecy doing what the New Testament gift of prophecy does: edification, encouragement, and consolation (1 Cor. 14:3). The Messiah is going to comfort the mourners by replacing their *dust (loose soil) crumbling on their heads* (Heb. eper) into a *garland* or *head-dress, or turban* (Heb. per) The head-dress is beautiful in contrast to the dust. The word is derived from the verbal root “to be beautiful, glorify,” which appeared frequently in [Isaiah] chap. 60. This noun probably denotes a glorious **crown**, in some ways comparable to the glorious **headpiece of a bride** (61:10) or a **priest** (Exod 39:28; Ezek 44:18).[[12]](#footnote-12)

 \*Compare Isaiah 52:1-2 and Ephesians 5:14: Here it is the call to awaken from sleep which Paul says is directly related to *resurrection* from the dead. Upon the standing up into life, the Light of the Messiah will shine on you. That light is the expression of His life (John 1:4 where *zoe* (the life of God) = light = glory (2 Cor. 4:3-4)) Standing up in the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus positions us to receive the *crown*, the *bridal adornment*, and the *priestly turban*. Notice the identification – the kingly, priestly, and bridal relationship with Jesus. This is a call back to Exodus 19 when Israel was betrothed to Yahweh at Sinai as His prized possession (*segulah*) and called a *kingdom of priests* (Exodus 19:5-6

 It is the prophetic reality is for the exiled to replace dirt with beauty as a covering as a bride prepared for her Bridegroom King. Not only a beautiful headdress, but also a linen *turban* (Heb. misnepet) that the high priest would wear in ministering before Yahweh.

 Instead of *mourning*, a word associated with mourning rituals during funeral ceremonies, in other words the mourning experienced during the time of great loss comparable to a friend or loved one; instead of that, the Messiah (the *Anointed One*) will Himself anoint with the *oil of gladness*. This is the *oil of gladness and joy* that He Himself has been anointed with and reflects the anointing of the Holy Spirit for His reign in righteousness. These point to Psalm 45:6-9 which the write of Hebrews attributes to the Son, Jesus the Messiah.

 6Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness; 7you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions; 8your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia. From ivory palaces stringed instruments make you glad; 9daughters of kings are among your ladies of honor; at your right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir. (Ps. 45:6-9 ESV)

 The mantle or outer garment or covering of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. Here we have contrasted an external garment and spirit (ruach) and praise and fainting. Looking at Psalm 45:8 we see the anointing of gladness is related to myrrh and cassia *and* stringed instruments (worship) as well as the bridal identity. The myrrh and cassia work together as the holy anointing oil used in the tabernacle and the priests.

 The myrrh is the anointing of the death to the old, carnal man. The cassia is the anointing to life in the resurrection. How do we know this? Paul tells us:

 14 But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. 15For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; 16 to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. (2 Cor. 2:14-16)

 Our *garment of praise (tehillah*) creates the place for Yahweh to be enthroned as King. (Ps. 22:3) For *praise* is an outward expression. It is an *outer* garment. It is an *outward* perfume or fragrance.

 1Sing for joy in the LORD, O you righteous ones; Praise is becoming to the upright. (Ps. 33:1)

 This *tehillah* is contrasted with a *ruach* of *fainting* where the word means colorless, disheartened and dim. The word *ruach* obviously means *breath* so there is an element here contrasting the *Spirit of Yahweh’s Anointing* from Isaiah 61:1 gives *breath* for praise instead of no breath and colorless, disheartenment.

 We see then, a priestly garment with holy anointing oil and gladness of heart leading to praise to Yahweh in our bridal identity contrasted with a spirit of mourning with no color, no life, disheartened, and no praise.

 The result is these who now have a reestablished identity in the Messiah as His bride, and who are arrayed in holy garments (Ps. 110:3) offering praise to God in Christ Jesus, who have stood up in the light of His resurrection life, they are called *Oaks of Righteousness*.

 Kings and Trees are part of ANE[[13]](#footnote-13)thought and iconography, especially Egyptian and Persian kings are frequently seen in carvings with trees above or below them and symbolized the reign of the king would be long and productive. The trees in the middle east are usually found in higher elevations where the temperatures are cooler than in the lower desert regions.

 “And [with higher elevation] you get these beautiful forests and creeks and streams. So it’s kind of strange for us sometimes to think that going up is actually encountering the forest, while going down could possibly drive you into the Arabian desert or somewhere that’s incredibly hot and dry with little source of life. And so for the ancient Israelites specifically, to go up to Jerusalem was to walk up into the central highlands of the Levant. It’s forested; it’s very green. And so there was very much this idea in the ancient world that where there were trees, there was life. There was shade, there was water.[[14]](#footnote-14)”

 “And many of the tree images that we encounter in the Bible are connected to the source of water… Think about the classic example in Psalm 1: a tree planted by streams of water. In the ancient world, they didn’t think that trees just sprung up out of nowhere. They oftentimes associated that tree with its water source. And that water source becomes quite theological in and of itself, being a metaphorical portrayal of Yahweh and his blessing—of those ways that Yahweh would sustain that individual.”[[15]](#footnote-15)

 You also have the Tree of Life growing on both sides of the River of Life flowing from the Temple in Ezekiel 47:7 (*on the bank of the river there were very many trees on the one side and on the other*) and Revelation 22:1-2 (*Then he showed me a river of the water of life…on either side of the river was the tree of life*).

 To be an Oak of Rightousness means to be a mighty tree. The Hebrew means *strong, robust*, and is used of mighty ones, leaders, nobles of a state, Ex. 15:15; Eze. 17:13; 2 Ki. 24:15.[[16]](#footnote-16)

 And these *Oaks of Righteousness* are the *planting* (think *garden*) of Yahweh, that He may be glorified.

 When we see then Jesus say, “Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted,” He is giving the headline of a much deeper and richer commentary on Isaiah 61:2-3. Are we sure about all of this pointing us to a renewed bridal identity and kingdom of priests?

 *6But you will be called the priests of Yahweh; you will be spoken of as ministers of our God. You will eat the wealth of the nations, and in their riches you will boast...10I will rejoice greatly in Yahweh, my soul will exult in my God; For He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me in a robe of righteousness, as a Bridegroom decks himself with a garland and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. 11For the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes the things sown in it to spring up, So Adonai Yahweh will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations. (Isa. 61:6, 10-11)*

E. And this leads directly to the next beatitude: *Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth*.

7Instead of shame you will have a double portion, and instead of humiliation they will shout for joy over their portion. Therefore they will possess a double portion in their land, everlasting joy will be theirs. (Isaiah 61:7)

Meekness we know is best defined as controlled power or power that is reigned in and directed intentionally in a positive way. The opposite is uncontrolled power and that can lead to destructive and chaotic forces and outcomes. One is related to humility, the other pride. One is gentle and kind, the other anger. Those who can bring their power into control, will inherit the land.

We see the continuation of the end of Exile and the Great Jubilee in the return and repossession of the land. Jesus uses land inheritance as the blessing of the meek.

When Isaiah wrote of those captives who are set free by the Messiah in Isaiah 61:7, Jesus identifies them as *the meek*. And it calls back to Genesis 1:28 and the original Adam Mandate:

28God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over…every living thing that moves on the earth.” Adam’s dominion over the earth as king that was lost has now returned in the Second Adam, the Heavenly Man. And He is ending the exile from Eden and the earth.

The *land* or *earth* first speaks of the believer’s own body, being made from the earth. James Moffatt translates Romans 6:4 as

*4Our baptism in his death made us share his burial, so that, as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live and move in* ***the new sphere of Life****. (Rom. 6:4 Moffatt)*

The *sphere of life* is the world in which we live. It is composed first of the believer and their immaterial (spirit and soul) and their material (body) domain or sphere. It then encompasses All of the associated areas within each; fellowship with God through His Spirit in the spirit of the believer; sanctification in the soul; and as seen in Romans 6, a renewal in how the body is used in relation to sin and righteousness.

The *sphere of life* then reaches into the external places where the believer comes in contact with other people and resources. This being relationships with family, friends, other believers (i.e., *the church*), vocationally/professionally. It also includes resources such as money, homes, clothes, vehicles, property, land.

In a spiritual microcosm extending into the physical and material the way of meekness begins with communion with Jesus through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Zechariah 9:9 says “Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble (Gr. *praus*, ‘meek’ in Matt. 5:5)…”

The way of the King then is Justice, Salvation, and Meekness. To *behold* His meekness is the way of being transformed into the same image of meekness.

Next, as we are *transformed* and our minds renewed leading to further transformation (Rom. 12:2), we act in faith on James 3:1-12 with the key points focusing on using our words to rein in our bodies, or bridle them in meekness.

2If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man (mature; complete), able to bridle the whole body as well. 3Now if we put the bits in the horses’ mouths so they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well. (James 3:2-3)

He goes on to describe how the rudder of a ship, small that it is, has the power to change the course of the ship wherever the pilot desires it to go.

With a renewed mind, a renewed language, we then act on our thoughts and words which will form our reality of meekness (or anything else we need transformed in; see Deut. 30:11-14 and the way of *doing* is having the *word* in your heart and in your mouth*, to hear and to do*). The effect of meekness positions us in God’s will to receive the inheritance of the land.

11\*But the meek will *inherit* the land, and they will *delight* in the multitude of peace. (Ps. 36:11 LXX)

Notice the meek *inherit* and *delight*. The word *inherit* (Gr. *kleronomeo*) means, “to receive something of considerable value which ahs not been earned – ‘to receive, to be given, to gain possession of.’

The word *delight* (Gr. *katatryphao*) from the Hebrew ‘ngand means, “pamper or refresh oneself; take one’s pleasure in; make merry; delight)

Taken together the meek are Blessed! They are happy! They make merry and delight! In the end of exile from the domain of darkness into God’s blessed Kingdom, the meek receive and gain possession of the earth. Their earth, and the earth around them, with which they are to enjoy and take delight in, and the multitude of peace that comes with it. It is the reality of *entering into the rest of God*, into the *land of promise*. (See Hebrews 3:12-4:11)

7So they will inherit (*kleronomeo*) the earth ⌊a second time⌋, and eternal (*aionios*) joy (*euphrosyne*) will be upon their head. (Isa. 61:7 LXX)

The meek will inherit the earth a second time. An obvious and direct reference to the *return* out of exile. And in that inheritance and possession they will have the joy of the age to come upon their head.

F. In summary, the Beatitudes set the stage for the rest of the Sermon on the Mount. They are not simply nice *blessings* for believers who obey and put effort into being poor in spirit, repentant for sin, meek, peace makers, etc. Rather, these are realities of power and promise from another age that have broken into this present evil age. They serve as the introduction of the inheritance or possession of the kingdom of God.

G. The first beatitude and the last says, “theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” In other words, God’s rule and reign in Christ Jesus has broken in to this present evil age for these who are poor in spirit and who as a result of His counter-culture and society known as the Church are persecuted for righteousness sake. “Great is your reward in heaven (or the kingdom of heaven)”

 32And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— 33who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. 35Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. 36Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. 37They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated— 38 of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. 39 And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, 40 since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect. (Heb. 11:32-40)

H. This persecution is naturally a result of Kingdom of God’s assault on the domain of darkness. Satan, demons, and wicked spirits are opposed to the conquest of God’s righteousness in Christ Jesus. And as such will stir up persecution among those whose minds are darkened by the spirit of this present evil age. This persecution is the result of the declaration of war initiated by Jesus as He stepped into this age and began His rule and reign.

 18If the world hates you, know that is has hated me before it hated you…20…If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you…23Whoever hates me hates my Father also*.* (John 15:18-27)

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