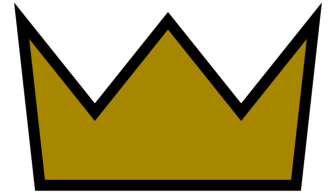


**THE KING'S BLESSING**  
**MATTHEW 5:1-12**

The last 100+ years have seen some of the most atrocious leaders and dictators in the history of the world:

- Adolf Hitler, who ruled Nazi Germany in the 1930s-40s was responsible for the incarceration or death of between 15-20 million people during the Holocaust, and responsible for a total of 50-80 million people in World War II.
- Joseph's Stalin's name meant "man of steel" and he was the epitome of harshness, responsible for somewhere around 20 million deaths in his dictatorship over the USSR in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- In four years as the leader of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, Pol Pot was responsible for the deaths of about 2.5 million people — one-fourth of the population of his country.
- Leopold II was king of Belgium from 1865–1909; under his leadership Belgium took control of Congo in Africa and he routinely tortured, amputated, and killed in his quest to amass a fortune in ivory and other natural resources. Some 10 million Congolese died during his terrible reign.
- And we haven't spoken of Vladimir Lenin, Idi Amin Dada, Kim Il-Sung, Ho Chi Minh, Saddam Hussein, Mao Zedong, Robert Mugabe, Muammar al-Qaddafi, or a host of others.

The legacy of kingship and rulers in this world is dismal. But we have a different kind of King.



The book of Matthew unfolds the presentation of **Christ as King** — he answers the questions, "what kind of King is this Messiah?" and "what kind of Kingdom will He establish?" This is Matthew's repeated emphasis; just listen to a few of the ways Matthew reveals the Kingship of Christ:

- The kingship of Christ is asserted from the very first verse: "The record of the genealogy of Jesus the *Messiah*, the *son of David*, the son of Abraham" (1:1). Cf. also **1:6, 16, 17**.
- The kingship of Christ is alluded to in nearly the last verse of the book — "All authority has been given to Me in Heaven and on earth..." (28:18) — who has all authority but the King?
- The Magi affirmed his Kingship: "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him" (2:2).
- John the Baptist declared the arrival of His kingdom: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (3:2); Jesus also would reiterate that declaration (**4:17, 23**).
- Jesus' preached His kingdom (**9:35**) and He compelled the disciples to preach the arrival of His kingdom (**10:7**).
- Israel's leaders (and ultimately all Israel, 27:17, 22) rejected the offer of Christ's kingdom saying He was a "demonic king" (**12:24**); so the ability to receive the kingdom was removed from that generation — Jesus hid the Kingdom message from them while still giving it to the disciples and those who would follow the disciples (**13:10-11**; cf. vv. 24, 31ff).

- In His transfiguration, Jesus revealed something of the glory of His kingdom (16:28–17:2ff).
- Jesus' kingdom was unique from other kingdoms because of those He invited to participate in it — the “marginalized” and “unworthy” (19:14; 21:31) and His exclusion of the so-called “worthy” and “important” people (19:23).
- The most important statement from the disciples about Jesus affirmed His Kingship: “Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’” (16:16).

Over 80x in this Gospel, Matthew refers to Jesus as Messiah/Christ (King) or to the kingdom of God. He is presenting Jesus to a Jewish audience as the promised Messiah and King of Israel and all people. Matthew's emphasis is on Jesus as the fulfillment of the covenants to Israel — so in that sense, when you read “kingdom” and “king” in Matthew, you can think “ultimate Kingdom” or “Millennial Kingdom.”

But he is also revealing what it takes for an individual (Jew) to be part of that kingdom — and how does God care for the people in His kingdom — and in that sense, this is personal and for us: how can anyone who is unrighteous be rightly related to God? And being rightly related to God, how should we live?

Over the next few weeks, we are going to look at this great King, who is infinitely better and infinitely greater than the best worldly king.

Today we start with one of Matthew's first presentations of Christ as King — which was also Christ's first recorded (and longest) sermon in Scripture — the Sermon on the Mount. We are looking specifically at the introduction to that sermon in which Jesus declares...

*CHRIST IS A KING WHO RULES TO BLESS HIS SUBJECTS.*

Of all the kings in the world, there is One who is superior and rules over them all — Christ the King. And of all the kings in the world, only this One King always lives to bless His people and subjects — Jesus Christ.

### Christ's Kingdom and “Blessing”

You are familiar with this passage (Eric Zeller preached it 3-4 months ago); the focus of the passage is the word “blessed.” The word means something like “fortunate,” “to be envied,” “blithsome,” “joyous,” and “happy.” It is the opposite of “cursed.” It is someone who has been favored with a graced position.

There are two significant differences between Jesus as King and all other men as kings. First, when other kings provide for their people, they seek to provide for their physical welfare, but these blessings are Jesus'

provision for the spiritual welfare of His people. His blessing is not for the “superficial feeling of well-being based on a circumstance” (MacArthur), but it is the provision of eternal gifts that transform our inner lives and give us permanent standing and fellowship with God. The blessing that He gives cannot be taken away and will never degrade.

But what I want you to notice a second difference between Jesus as King and all other kings — something commonly overlooked in these verses: the individual does not bless himself, but the blessing comes from someone else. The blessing is not what we do and the blessing is not even a “natural consequence” of our actions (like if I give you a birthday present you will say “thank you”). The blessing is a gift. From whom does that blessing come? It comes from Christ; it comes from God; it comes from the Father (6:9; 7:11); the blessing comes from *the King*.

And that is extraordinarily unusual. Kings don’t give blessings; they take and receive blessings. They exact taxes. They compel service. They force labor. They demand subservience. They don’t *give* anything (not really — not even when they “give” stimulus checks). Earthly kings receive and use gifts from their subjects. But King Jesus *gives*. He gives Himself and He gives gifts. This morning I want us to see some of the overwhelming gifts He gives as a blessing and grace to His people.

**CHRIST IS A KING WHO RULES TO BLESS HIS SUBJECTS.**

Jesus reveals **eight gifts** from the King for His people — eight blessings of provision for His own:

1. Our King Blesses Us with **KINGDOM** (v. 3)
2. Our King Blesses Us with **COMFORT** (v. 4)
3. Our King Blesses Us with **INHERITANCE** (v. 5)
4. Our King Blesses Us with **SATISFACTION** (v. 6)
5. Our King Blesses Us with **MERCY** (v. 7)
6. Our King Blesses Us with **GOD** (v. 8)
7. Our King Blesses Us with **SONSHIP** (v. 9)
8. Our King Blesses Us with **REWARD** (vv. 10-12)

Each of these blessings begins with an attitude or action on the part of the worshipper of God — “blessed *are those who...*” While there is value in looking at what the believer does, for our purposes this morning, I want to pay particular attention to what the King, Christ Jesus, provides to those who belong to Him.

## 1. Our King Blesses Us with **KINGDOM** (v. 3)

- When Jesus says, ***blessed are the poor in spirit***, He is not commending poverty as a virtue, though that is a common interpretation.
  - ✓ He says people are blessed when they are poor ***in spirit***. We recognize that the spirit is the inner man — the heart, soul, conscience, will, and desire of a person.
  - ✓ Blessing only comes when one realizes he is internally destitute and has a total inability to please God and be in right relationship with Him.
  - ✓ It is a realization that God's demand is perfection (6:48) and he is incapable of that standard (Eph. 2:1; Rom. 3:9-20). It is the sentiment of the hymn, "Rock of Ages:" "Nothing in my hand I bring, Simply to Thy cross I cling; Naked, come to Thee for dress, Helpless, look to Thee for grace; Foul, I to the fountain fly, Wash me, Saviour, or I die!"
- What do you do when someone asks you for a handout on the street? If you are my wife, you probably give them the bag that she has prepared that morning to give to a homeless person. Or perhaps you give a few coins or a couple of dollars. Or maybe you walk them to Whataburger and buy them a meal. If you are generous, you give "something."
- What does the King do for those who come to Him empty-handed? He gives them *everything*.
  - ✓ He gives them ***the Kingdom of Heaven***. Do you notice he says, ***theirs is...***? It is their possession. They belong to Heaven and Heaven belongs to them. "The kingdom is precisely for them." That is, Heaven was made for people just like this — broken, empty, destitute people. God gives them the infinite, unparalleled riches of glory. Jesus blesses with a Kingdom that keeps us from the King's wrath that we deserve (13:42, 50) and gives us all the treasures that belong to Him as the King. Whatever we have or don't have on earth on earth will be infinitely surpassed there (Rev. 22:4).
  - ✓ It is also their present possession — they have it *now*. All the other blessings are stated as future blessings, except vv. 3, 10 — ***theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven***. This means that this blessing and gift are secure. It cannot be taken away, but is safe and secure (Jn. 10:28-29; 1 Pt. 1:4-5).
  - ✓ Those two promises serve as a "bracket" (inclusio), which means that everything in between (vv. 4-9) can be accounted as part of the blessing of the gift of the Kingdom.
  - ✓ "The kingdom is given to the poor, not the rich; the feeble, not the mighty; to little children humble enough to accept it, not to soldiers who boast that they can obtain it by their own prowess." [Stott]
  - ✓ We have a King that showers us, when we believe in Him, with the richest of treasures that belong to Him.

## 2. Our King Blesses Us with **COMFORT** (v. 4)

- We don't have to live very long before we are acquainted with ***grief*** in this world. People die. Pets die. Relationships are broken. Loved ones get sick in untimely ways. Sins are committed against us. And we grieve over these (and hundreds more) losses. But that's not what Jesus refers to in v. 4.
- The ***mourning*** in v. 4 is a mourning and grief over one's own sin — "because I am spiritually destitute, I sin and that sin breaks my heart." And to that grief God gives comfort.
  - ✓ The greatest comfort we need is for the greatest grief over the greatest problem of our lives — sin.
  - ✓ Our comfort is not in grieving; our comfort is what we receive from God who responds to our grief.
  - ✓ While we anticipate the comfort of Christ's Kingdom and (ultimately) Heaven, we experience the comfort of forgiveness from Christ, even now (**11:28-29**).
- I don't want you to miss this — the ***comfort*** comes from *the King*. When you have grieved, friends have ministered to you, family has sat up with you, perhaps a pastor or counselor has prayed with you. But in the greatest grief of our lives, *Christ the King* comforts us.
  - ✓ The exalted second member of the Trinity came down from Heaven to take care of our problem of sin and then He administers the grace of forgiveness to us (**Mt. 27:37**).
  - ✓ And as if that is not enough, this same King sends the third member of the Trinity to be with us and in us for the particular purpose of comforting us (that's His name!). Cf. **Jn. 14:16, 26**.
  - ✓ And if that is enough, that same King sits at the right hand of the Father and intercedes for us in our prayers so that we will receive just what we need and be comforted.
  - ✓ And if that is not enough, the same King promises to return for us and take us home to be with Him eternally (Jn. 14:3; **1 Thess. 4:17-18**).
- Our problem is brokenness from sin, and the King, who is unafraid to associate with sinners, comforts us.

## 3. Our King Blesses Us with **INHERITANCE** (v. 5)

- The ***gentle*** are "meek" people — they are those who are powerful, yet quiet and tenderhearted. One Gk. dictionary explains "It is that temper of spirit in which we accept [God's] dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting; it...does not fight against God." [Vines]
- The ***gentle*** person not only recognizes his sin nature (v. 4), but his own personal sin & isn't defensive or argumentative against God — He submits to God's authority over his life. And what does God do?
- These ones ***will inherit the earth*** — perhaps a quotation from **Ps. 37:11a**.
  - ✓ Part of God's purpose in creation was that man would rule the earth (Gen. 1:28). Sin ruined that. But salvation will restore it ultimately in the Kingdom (**Rev. 20:4ff**).
  - ✓ As people born under the curse, sin was our Master (Rom. 1-3).

- ✓ As people reborn under Christ the King, we will be the masters of the world and fulfill the role God designed us to have in the original creation. The King is “sharing” His responsibility with His people.
- This is again remarkable for what the King graciously gives us — we who were rebels against His authority in our sin have been given an inheritance (implying sonship, which He will identify in v. 9) and responsibility and power in His kingdom.

#### 4. Our King Blesses Us with SATISFACTION (v. 6)

- What do you want? Some of you at 11:30 Sunday morning are starting to think about lunch — there are a few stomach growls around the room. Some of you want a little more coffee, or some water. Some of you are looking forward to work tomorrow, or a meal with friends this week.
- Most of what we want is destined to fail us — food last for 4-8 hours, water for 1-2 hours, and fellowship for a day or two. And satisfaction from our sinful desires is even shorter.
- But Jesus says we should have one great yearning — having seen our poverty, grief, and meekness, what we really long for is to ***hunger and thirst for righteousness***. We yearn for a righteousness that is outside of us and beyond us — we want to be what we cannot be by our own efforts. We ache to be right.
- And when we want full righteousness (without pretending we can provide it), God will give it to us — ***they shall be satisfied***.
  - ✓ Sometimes when we eat something it entices us to want still more — a particularly good cut of meat expertly grilled; but at some point we are satiated — “that’s enough!...”
  - ✓ But with this kind of ***satisfaction***, our desires for more are stimulated ever more and God provides more and more for us. We are perpetually satisfied with Him even while we want more of Him.
  - ✓ The King comes to “feed us” and He feeds us with Himself and that’s enough for us.
  - ✓ We need to remember that there are many God-substitutes (idols, places of refuge/comfort, desires); only Christ the King will satisfy ultimately, which is why the psalmist says that Heaven ultimately only is about the possession of God and the presence of Him (**Ps. 73:25-28**).

#### 5. Our King Blesses Us with MERCY (v. 7)

- When we are broken for sin and been satisfied with God, we will be ***merciful*** towards others. ***Mercy*** is related to grace but distinguished in that grace gives a blessing and mercy withholds wrath — to be merciful is to withhold the right to extract judgment.
- When we are merciful towards others, God blesses us, so we ***receive mercy*** as well.
  - ✓ This verse does not teach that we merit mercy — because we are merciful, God is merciful to us.
  - ✓ The argument is similar to what He will say about forgiveness in the Lord’s prayer (6:14-15).

When we are forgiven, we give evidence of forgiveness by forgiving others. Similarly, here, when we are given mercy by God, we give evidence to that reception when we are merciful to others.

- I saw an old friend this week who is a Justice of the Peace. He told me that he sometimes wears a county shirt that says, “Judge” on it; one time a person in his courtroom sarcastically asked him, “is that so you remember who you are?” He responded, “No. It’s so *you* remember who I am.”
  - ✓ Standing in front of a judge is a fearful event. Standing before the King of all kings is terrifying.
  - ✓ But this King, when we are in right relationship to Him, gives us **mercy**. He takes pity on us, is compassionate towards us, and relents from wrath and bestows grace and gifts. Such is our King.

## 6. Our King Blesses Us with **GOD** (v. 8)

- The great longing of mankind is to see God — cf. Moses (Ex. 33:12, 18), Job (19:25-27; 42:1, 5), David (Ps. 27:8), Stephen (Acts 7:56, 59), Paul (Phil. 1:21-24).
- Sin precludes us from seeing Him and seeing Him becomes a terror (Is. 6:5). But when we are **pure in heart**, He blesses us with the ability to **see God**, something no man has ever done and lived (Ex 33:20).
  - ✓ We see glimpses of what He is like now, but then we will see Him clearly (1 Cor. 13:12).
  - ✓ He has already invited us into fellowship with Him (1 Jn. 1:5-10), but the King has also promised that the One who is King is also Immanuel, “God with Us” and will be with us eternally (28:20).
- But also notice this reality in this verse: not only does the King grant us access into His presence, but He also makes us holy so that we *have ability* to come into His presence. The King has chosen the filthy peasant as an enemy and taken him to the banquet table (Rev. 19:7-8). And it gets even better...

## 7. Our King Blesses Us with **SONSHIP** (v. 9)

- When we are in Christ, we become those who pursue reconciliation with others — the God of peace sent the Prince of peace, who also sends the Spirit of peace, to give the fruit of peace to His people.
- In Christ, we become the kind of people who help others be reconciled to God and one another (Rom. 12).
- The joy of being a **peacemaker** is that it evidences sonship to God — we are **called sons of God** because that is what we have become (1 Jn. 3:1).
  - ✓ We love the truth of adoption; it is the joyous reality that we are in God’s family with all the rights and privileges that come from belonging to God (Gal. 4:5-6; Rom. 8:14-17).
  - ✓ But that adoption is not just to any family — it is to the family of the King. When RJ and I were in London a few years ago, we walked or rode past Buckingham Palace several times and wondered if “Lizzy” was in and if we could stop by and see her. Not a chance! No access.
  - ✓ But the King who is eternal and infinite in the Heavens opens wide His doors and says, “Come, family!”

## 8. Our King Blesses Us with **REWARD** (vv. 10-12)

- When we follow Christ, not everyone will rejoice with us; some will **persecute us** — they will attack us **for the sake of righteousness** — because we are righteous and they hate Christ.
- The blessing of that persecution is that **theirs is the kingdom of Heaven** — same phrase as v. 3. The present reality for sufferers of the King is that they (already) are experiencing Kingdom blessings.
- But Jesus also expands this statement — what else will come with the King's kingdom? **Reward in Heaven** (that) **is great**.
  - ✓ Jesus isn't specific about what the reward is:
    - Part of the reward is the glory of Heaven and the alleviation of our momentary and light afflictions on earth (2 Cor. 4:16-18). (Akin to the crown of salvation, 2 Tim. 4:8.)
    - Beyond that there are also individual honors and rewards (Jn. 12:26; 1 Cor. 3:14 Heb. 11:6, 24-26) — the great King gives gifts to those who are His subjects and slaves (and also His friends and Sons).

**CONCLUSION:** And now we have come full circle to where we began. Here is a remarkable King who doesn't take, but gives. Here is a sovereign who saves and adopts. Here is a potentate who is paternal. This is our God. This is our King.

- ✓ Just remember, though, that all these blessings are only for those who belong to Jesus, who have renounced faith in themselves and placed faith in Christ to save them. How do you do that? The beatitudes tell us — recognize your poverty, grieve over your sinfulness, be meek about your sins, hunger and thirst for righteousness — and He will satisfy your longing and save you by His mercy. I encourage, compel, and call you to believe in this great King today if you do not already believe.
- ✓ And if He is your King, delight in Him. Pursue the callings of kingdom living and rest in the provision of the King for you; this great King is not your enemy, will do you no harm, and is working for your benefit (which is also for His glory).

**BENEDICTION:** Ephesians 3:20-21