

Curt Grice
Pastor's Bible Study
March 19, 2025



Citizenship in the Kingdom of Heaven

Matthew 5:1-12

2025... Flourishing Together: Rooted in Christ

Flourishing... living life as God intended

Together... in community as the people of God

Rooted (core identity) in Christ (follower of Jesus)

Most of us don't need more *information* or *inspiration*...
we need more *application* and *transformation*.

"Don't merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says!"
James 1:22

"It is not the things which I do *not* understand in the Bible which trouble me, but the things which I *do* understand." Mark Twain

"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near!"

John the Baptist (Matthew 3), Jesus (Matthew 4)

Ash Wednesday Service: "Remember that you are dust and to dust you will return. Repent and believe the good news."

Katy last week: end of Matthew 4

- calling the first disciples (Luke 5, John 1)
- Jesus teaching, preaching, healing (Matthew 9)
- "What does it mean to follow Jesus?"

Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7)

- begins with the Beatitudes (Latin: *beatus* = happy, blessed)
- ends with a stern warning (small gate/narrow path/*I never knew you*)
- "... by their fruit you will recognize them."

John Mark Comer... **Practicing the Way**

disciple = apprentice ... on the job training ... learning by doing

apprentice: not just more *facts*, but more *practice*

- Be with Jesus
- Becoming like Jesus
- Do as Jesus did

learning from Jesus how to make steady progress into the kingdom of God

What if we all agreed not to move on to the next lesson (passage of Scripture) until we had begun to faithfully apply the current lesson (passage of Scripture)?

Matthew 5 – **Life on Earth as a Citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven**

(in sharp contrast to the 1st century Jewish religious leaders)

- vs 3... poor in spirit... depending on God, not proud or self-sufficient
- vs 4... mournful... sorrowful for their own sin and the suffering of others
- vs 5... meek... true humility and gentleness with others
- vs 6... hungry and thirsty for righteousness... deep desire for divine justice
- vs 7... merciful... gracious and forgiving
- vs 8... pure in heart... constant repentance and cleansing, no malice or ill intent
- vs 9... peacemaker... ministry of reconciliation, purveyor of *shalom*
- vs 10... persecuted because of righteousness... suffering for doing what's right
- vs 11... insulted/falsely accused for following Jesus... misunderstood and criticized

Brooks Harrington... Ft. Worth lawyer, Marine, ordained Methodist minister

The Beatitudes, Discipleship, and the Justice of God

- Blessed to receive the call from God and begin to follow Jesus
- Blessed to minister in Jesus' name to those who are hurting
- Blessed to experience the hard demands of discipleship and persist
- Blessed to mourn for the pain of others
- Blessed to become merciful through suffering
- Blessed to persevere despite persecution and doubt
- Blessed to bear witness to the Kingdom of Mercy in the face of opposition

The desire for happiness is universal among humans. However, the path to true happiness is not just **counter-cultural** or **counter-intuitive**, it's **revolutionary**! Christians should live in a way that makes no sense if the Bible isn't true.

"Consider it pure joy when you face trials... the testing of your faith develops perseverance... so that you may be mature and complete." James 1:2-4

"If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men." 1 Corinthians 15:19 ["But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead!" vs 20]

In Matthew 10, as Jesus sends out the 12 disciples on their own teaching, preaching, and healing ministry, he says: "Anyone who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. *Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.*"

Our true, eternal citizenship in the Kingdom of Heaven is evidenced most fully as we faithfully love, follow, learn from, and apprentice with King Jesus.

"... praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding... that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience." Colossians 1:9-11