

WILL YOU HAVE WHAT HE IS LOOKING FOR?

(Matthew 5:1-10)

Matthew 5:1-10-----¹ And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. ² Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: ³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted. ⁵ Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth. ⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled. ⁷ Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy. ⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God. ⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God. ¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

You've probably never heard of Wilbert Williams. He's not famous or rich and yet, Williams received an honor normally reserved for the connected, powerful, and wealthy. On December 2, 2004, the city of Chicago designated a street as "Wilbert Williams Way." The honor was in celebration of his upcoming retirement.

What did someone as unknown as Williams do to deserve such a tribute? The question becomes even more fascinating when you realize that for nearly 40 years, Wilbert Williams has worked at the Woman's Athletic Club as a doorman. Normally, an honorary street sign goes to people who get the door held open for them—not to the one holding the door.

What set Williams apart? It had to do with the remarkable and consistent character he exhibited as he did his job over the course of 40 years. Police Officer Paul O'Donnell said this about Williams: "**In all these years, I've never heard him speak a harsh word about anyone. He's a gentleman.**" Through his kindness, attentiveness, and service to others, Williams made an impact on the people who crossed his path at the corner of Michigan and Ontario. Commenting on why he was always happy to help tourists who had lost their way, pointing them in the right direction, Williams said, "**If I was in a different city, I'd like someone to help me.**"

Right now, Chicago is the third largest city in America. It has a population of nearly three million people. If we were to compare the number of people like Wilbert Williams (who have been honored with a street named after them) to the total population of Chicago, the number would be very small (less than 1%). Honors like this are typically reserved for very special people—people like Wilbert Williams who, over the course of four decades, made his city a better place. He was honored, not because of what he did (opened and closed doors), but because of who he was. To put it in the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., he was honored because of "the content of his character."

In our text this morning, as Jesus begins His famous "Sermon on the Mount," it is interesting that the first words He speaks to His followers do not revolve around what He wants them to do, but what He wants them to be. And He is

telling us in no uncertain terms the kind of people we must be if we want to be honored one day when He rules over the entire earth in His kingdom. He shows us the high priority He places on the character qualities He wants to find in our lives when He returns so He can richly reward us. And with all of this in mind, I have worded the title of my message to you this morning in the form of a question—one of the most important questions you can ask yourself in your short time here on planet earth. And it is this:

Title: Will You Have What He is Looking For?

(Prayer)

I don't think I've ever done this before, but I would like to read a quote about our service to God and others in reverse. It is from a book I read years ago by the great Warren Wiersbe (who went home to be with the Lord just a few months ago). The quote (in reverse order) goes like this:

The model for ministry [service to God and others] is Jesus Christ.
 The power for ministry is the Holy Spirit
 The privilege of ministry is growth.
 The tools of ministry are the Word of God and prayer.
 The purpose of ministry is the glory of God.
 The measure of ministry is sacrifice.
 The motive for ministry is love.
 The nature of ministry is service.

And here is the part of the quote that I would like you to focus on, because it complements all that I will say this morning:

The foundation of ministry is character.

If the steel of a bridge is defective, no matter how great it looks on the outside, it will one day collapse. The same is true for the follower of Christ. If the inner person is defective, no matter how impressive the person looks on the outside, he or she will one day collapse.

In Matthew 5:1, we see Jesus's audience—who He is speaking to primarily in this sermon. There are **multitudes** but there are **His disciples** (His followers). It is **His disciples** that He is primarily directing His words to in this sermon.

We get a tip from our Lord about why He is talking to us about the importance of good character in vv. 3 & 10. In v. 3, Jesus says,

Matthew 5:3-----³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, **For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

And then in verse 10 He says:

Matthew 5:10-----¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, **For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

Jesus is not speaking to unsaved people. He is not teaching His listeners about how they can **ENTER** His kingdom, He is teaching them about how they can obtain great **REWARD** in His kingdom. I can prove this to you using one simple argument. In Matthew 5, 6, & 7, do you know how many times Jesus uses the phrase "your Father" in reference to His listeners? Twelve times!!!! For example:

Matthew 5:16-----¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify **your Father** in heaven.

Matthew 5:48-----⁴⁸ Therefore you shall be perfect, just as **your Father** in heaven is perfect.

(And ten other places!)

The fact that Jesus frames all eight of the Beatitudes with the phrase "theirs is the kingdom of heaven" alerts us to **WHO** He is speaking to and **WHAT** He is speaking about---having GREAT HONOR AND REWARD in His kingdom one day.

I could easily do a sermon on each of these character qualities. They are tremendous themes that we could look into. But for our purposes (which is to teach through the Sermon on the Mount by Thanksgiving), I will just give a very basic idea behind what Jesus is saying in vv. 3-10.

Will we have the character qualities He is looking for when He returns? Let's find out!

First of all, followers of Christ should not be:

1. **Full of themselves (5:3)**

Matthew 5:3-----³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Pride and arrogance is at the top of the list in Proverbs of the things that God hates.

2. **Insensitive to others (5:4)**

Matthew 5:4-----⁴ Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.

Followers of Jesus should have a deep sensitivity to awful conditions most people around them are living in as well as their desperate needs (both spiritually AND physically). The words, "I could care less about that person" should never be on our lips as followers of Christ.

3. Mean toward others (5:5)

Matthew 5:5-----⁵ Blessed *are the meek*, For they shall inherit the earth.

Followers of Christ are not to be harsh and mean toward others but gentle and considerate.

4. Passive about right and wrong (5:6)

Matthew 5:6-----⁶ Blessed *are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness*, For they shall be filled.

Notice the zeal here. They aren't lethargic, uninterested, unconcerned. They hunger and thirst for what is right. For being upright and for doing what is right. For wanting everyone to do right by each other.

5. Opposed to cutting others a break (5:7)

Matthew 5:7-----⁷ Blessed *are the merciful*, For they shall obtain mercy.

Merciful people forgive others who don't deserve it.

6. Obscene in their thoughts and desires (5:8)

Matthew 5:8-----⁸ Blessed *are the pure in heart*, For they shall see God.

Followers of Christ that refuse to deal with raunchy thoughts and habits forfeit fellowship with God and God's revelation of Himself to them.

God can deliver you from this, but will not if a person refuses to submit to His Lordship in this matter.

Do you want to continue to call the shots or will you submit to God?

7. Divisive—unwilling to get along with other believers (5:9)

Matthew 5:9-----⁹ Blessed *are the peacemakers*, For they shall be called sons of God.

Jesus prayed that we would be one, as He and the Father are.

8. Afraid to endure ridicule from others for doing what is right (5:10)

Matthew 5:10-----¹⁰ Blessed *are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake*, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

The Late Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia once said:

"God assumed from the beginning that the wise of the world would view Christians as fools—and he has not been disappointed. If I have brought any message today, it is this: Have the courage to have your wisdom regarded as stupidity. Be fools for Christ. And have the courage to suffer the contempt of the sophisticated world."

David Kraft grew up in a godly family in the San Francisco Bay area. One of the truths his father instilled in him was to **remember** God's faithfulness to him in the past so that he might always **trust** God in the future. David grew up in love with Jesus, and chose to go to Denver Seminary and major in pastoral ministry.

David was a big, athletic young man. He was six-foot-two and weighed two hundred pounds. After college, he worked with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. But at the age of 32, he was diagnosed with cancer. It wracked his body and his weight dropped from 200 to 80 lbs.

When he realized that he was close to dying, he wanted to speak with his dad. Lying there in his hospital bed, he looked up and said, "**Dad, do you remember when I was a little boy, how you used to just hold me in your arms close to your chest?**"

David's father nodded. Then David said, "**Do you think, Dad, you could do that one more time? One last time?**"

Again his father nodded. He bent down to pick up his 32-year-old six-foot two-inch, eighty-pound son, and held him close to his chest so his son's face was right next to his. They were eyeball to eyeball. Tears were streaming down both faces. Then David said to his father, "**Thank you for building the kind of character into my life that can enable me to face even a moment like this.**"

David Kraft will rule with Christ in His coming kingdom. Why? Because he was teachable. He allowed his father to teach him how an authentic follower of Christ's should live and how he should die. He was submitted to his earthly father AND his Heavenly Father and followed in the footsteps of Christ. He was a man whose character was like Christ's.

When you see Christ, will you have the kind of character He is looking for?