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Matthew 5:1-20

Meeting Jesus in Matthew: Grace Mountain

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Pre-Introduction:

1. Today we're starting Part II of *Meeting Jesus in Matthew*.
2. Part I: Who is Jesus?
3. Part II: What did Jesus teach?
4. Part III: What did Jesus do?
5. For Part II, we're studying the Sermon on the Mount.

Introduction:

1. Have any of you ever climbed a mountain?
2. In August, I hiked Mount Monadnock with several friends.
3. People take photos from the summit because the view up there is amazing.
4. The top of a mountain provides a unique change in perspective, a new vantage point.
5. In NE, people drive hours to go hiking because climbing a mountain is a great way to clear your head.
6. Problems seem far away at the top, and somehow we come back down with a fresh perspective.
7. In the sermon on the mount, Jesus takes his disciples and the crowds up a mountain.
8. He wants to give them a new perspective as he challenges their beliefs about God and life.
9. All throughout the Sermon he says, "You have heard that it was said... but I tell you..."
10. You view anger, marriage, giving, and anxiety this way, but I want you to view them this way.
11. Over a thousand years prior, the prophet Moses gave the people of Israel the Law at Mount Sinai.
12. This law told them how to live, and how to honor God, but they kept messing up so they added rules.
13. On a similar mountain, Jesus is going to redefine how to live, not with more law, but with grace.
14. God's standard is much higher than we ever imagine but his grace is much deeper than we ever thought.
15. In the Sermon on the Mount, I want to change your perspective with God's grace.

(Grace changes our perspective. This happens four ways:)

I. Followers of Jesus are surprised by grace. (v. 1-12)

(The beatitudes are all the "blessed are" statements, but they really mean "congratulations to...")

(You congratulate someone who has achieved something or received a gift.)

(Grace, simply defined, is receiving a gift we don't deserve.)

(The first four beatitudes describe how people are surprised by God's grace.)

(The next three describe how we react to the surprise.)

- (1) The first beatitude tells us the spiritually impoverished are surprised with eternal life.
 - a. To be impoverished is to be trapped in a personal and societal system of repression.
 - b. Grace is when God comes and breaks the spiritually poor free thru no effort of their own.
 - c. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (5:3)
- (2) Second, the depressed and down are surprised with true hope.
 - a. To mourn is to experience deep grief on account of heartache, death, and the reality of evil.

- b. Grace is when God solves the root issue, defeating sin, death, and Satan on the cross.
- c. "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." (5:4)

(3) Third, the humble are surprised with the highest praise.

- a. To be meek is to lay down your rights because Christ laid down his.
- b. Grace is the sure hope that one day God will enthrone every Cinderella who trusts him.
- c. "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth." (5:5)

(4) Fourth, the unsatisfied are surprised with lasting contentment.

- a. To hunger for righteousness is to have the burning desire to please God but not to know how.
- b. Grace is when Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to fill us and lead us in the paths of righteousness.
- c. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled." (5:6)

(The first four beatitudes describe how we are surprised by God's grace.)

(The next three describe how we react to the surprise.)

(One time my brother's girlfriend threw him a surprise Birthday party.)

(I drove him to the party, made excuse about needing to get inside, and then ran in before him.)

(Everyone jumped out and yelled "surprise" when I walked in... They were all looking at my face.)

(How do you respond when God surprises you with grace? Three responses...)

(1) "A." We show undeserved compassion because that's what Jesus did for us.

- a. At the cross, the Father poured out his infinite wrath on his own Son instead of on us.
- b. When we realize how much we've been forgiven, it helps us extend grace to others.
- c. "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy." (5:7)

(2) "B." We seek God at our very core because he's given us a new core that loves him.

- a. To be "pure in heart" is to love God with all your heart, mind, will and strength.
- b. The Father has cleansed our hearts so that one day we can see God face-to-face.
- c. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God." (5:8)

(3) "C." We strive to bring peace to a broken world because that's our Father's line of business

- a. We bring physical healing by serving a hurting world and caring for tangible needs.
- b. We bring spiritual healing by sharing the gospel and providing lasting hope.
- c. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." (5:9)

(The final two "blessed are" statements in v. 10-11 remind us it's not easy to be a follower of Jesus.)

(Followers of Jesus will be persecuted, insulted, and rejected by the world.)

(Even now, Jesus tells his disciples to "rejoice" and "be glad" because they have it all.)

(Normally we feel bad when we're rejected, but Christians can feel just the opposite b/c we're loved.)

(Grace changes our perspective.)

(Followers of Jesus are surprised by grace.)

II. Followers of Jesus are seasoned with grace. (Read v. 13)

A. Followers of Jesus are seasoned with grace.

- 1. Salt can act as a preservative and it also gives flavor.

2. I love adding salt to my eggs; I don't know what it is but they just make them better.
3. What if the world were to say, "I love adding Christians to my life; I don't know what it is but..."
4. As Christians, we're supposed to add flavor to the arts, sciences, politics, professions, sports, etc.
5. We're not called to suck them dry because they're not Christian enough or to overpower them.
6. We tend to take movies, music, paintings, and politics and brand them with Christianity. Why?
7. My sister-in-law is nominated for the Drama Fellowship Humanitas Award for her screenplay.
8. It's for writers who explore "the human experience in a way that both entertains and enlightens."
9. It's not a Christian piece but it is a good piece, and now she's adding flavor to the culture.
10. We're not called to abandon the world, but to leave it better than we found it.

(Grace changes our perspective.)

(Followers of Jesus are surprised by grace and seasoned with grace.)

III. Followers of Jesus shine out grace. (Read v. 14-16)

A. Followers of Jesus shine out grace.

1. The ancient world's source of lighting were clay lamps filled with spoonful of oil.
2. Like light is natural to a flame, so sharing Christ should shine naturally from Christians.
3. When we don't share the love or words of Christ, we're actually acting against our nature.
4. Methanol fuel is used to power racing cars and it doesn't emit a flame or smoke.
5. You can see Youtube clips of "invisible fires" and racing crews trying to put them out.
6. People run around frantically, and it doesn't look very serious, but they're getting burned alive.
7. When we don't shine the light of Christ, we have a way of burning others.
8. We'll say we love Christ, but act hypocritically, and turn people away from Jesus.

(Grace changes our perspective. This happens four ways:)

(Followers of Jesus are surprised by grace, seasoned with grace, and shine out grace.)

IV. Followers of Jesus are successful because of grace. (Read v. 17)

A. Followers of Jesus are successful because of grace.

1. Jesus' opponents were religious leaders who thought they knew the law better than him.
2. Jesus is teaching a new way that seems to abolish the law, but Jesus doesn't agree.
3. He takes the law more seriously than do because he doesn't pick and choose.
4. Jesus taught that you had to obey the whole law perfectly in order to please God.
5. Jesus then lives a perfect life fulfilling every aspect of the law (culmination).
6. Now as you and I approach the law, we don't approach it in fear, but respect.
7. The Ten Commandments start, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt..."
8. The beatitudes start with a similar list of blessings God has given his people.
9. We've received the fulfillment of the law as a gift on our account.
10. We seek to obey the law today because we've already obeyed it yesterday in Christ.

B. Timothy Keller explains how Jesus fulfills the beatitudes.

1. Jesus suffered as one who is poor in spirit.
2. He mourned at sin and death and evil.
3. He was perfectly meek and humble.

4. He was more hungry and thirsty for God than anyone else ever.
5. He was merciful and pure in heart and a peacemaker and even persecuted.
6. And he denied himself all the rewards he could have had.
7. He could have had the kingdom of heaven in it's fullness right then, but he didn't.
8. He could have known perfect comfort and ruled the world, but he denies himself.
9. He denies himself because he gives all these benefits to you.
10. In Christ, you become a king and queen spiritually and you are comforted.
11. In Christ, you inherit a new heaven and new earth and are called children of God.
12. In Christ, one day you will know perfect satisfaction and contentment forever.
13. Jesus fulfills the beatitudes perfectly and gives you the reward.
14. Now when the Father looks on you, he sees the deeds of his Son.
15. There is no higher motivation to love and obey Jesus than grace.

(Grace changes our perspective. This happens four ways:)

(We are surprised by grace, seasoned with grace, shine out grace, and are successful b/c of grace.)

Conclusion:

1. Grace is climbing a mountain through no effort of your own.
2. When I was a child my father took our church's youth group on hikes.
3. He could have left me home to drive my mom crazy but instead he took me along.
4. He carried me in one of those ride-along backpacks up the mountain side.
5. If you believe in Jesus, the Bible says God the Father has adopted you as his own.
6. As we grow up, we may get out of the backpack and walk a bit on our own, but we'll always be his child.
7. We will never outgrow our need for grace or for our Father's love.
8. One thing will never change, the view will always be better from our father's shoulders.
9. Grace changes our perspective.

2 Corinthians 13:14 May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. (NIV)