

3 An address from the king (Matthew 5–6)

Matthew 5–7 is *The Sermon on the Mount*. It's not really a sermon: Jesus was not addressing a church. He was speaking to the wider community on a hill to the north of the Sea of Galilee. He spoke as their God-anointed king (Messiah). A better title might be *The King's Address*.

In this address, the king elect sets out his kingdom vision. It's his kingdom manifesto, a declaration of what life is like under God's reign, an explanation of how to live as citizens of the kingdom of heaven.

God's reign sets everything right. Everyone gets a fair go. The citizens care for each other (Matthew 5), trusting God's care for us (Matthew 6), following the one to whom God has given authority (Matthew 7).



Mountain slope, north of Galilee. Photo by Allen Browne, 2014.

3.1 Living under God's anointed (Matthew 5)

Do you have questions to explore in Chapter 5? If not, here's some to consider:

1. What are the Beatitudes? Are they telling us how to get God's blessing?
2. Was Jesus asking us to oppose social evils when he called us *salt* and *light*?
3. Was Jesus implying we should keep all the Old Testament laws when he mentioned three examples (murder, adultery, and bearing false witness)?
4. Can we fight back in self-defence? What did Jesus mean by *turning the other cheek* and *loving our enemies*?

Beatitudes (5:3-12)

As a child, I was taught to read Scripture with an open heart, to find what it says to me. I thought the Beatitudes were telling me what sort of person I should try to be:

1. I need to be *poor*, so I can have *the kingdom* (verse 3).
2. I need to be *sorry* for my sins, so I can have God's forgiveness (verse 4).
3. I need to be more *humble*, so I can inherit *the earth* (verse 5).
4. I need to be desperate for God to give me his *righteousness*, because mine isn't good enough (verse 6).

The flaw in reading like that is putting *me* at the centre of what God is doing. Jesus never said he'd give *me* his kingdom: it's his community, not mine. Jesus never promised *I* would inherit the earth: it's a place we have to share.

The poor, the mourning, the meek, the hungry—these are people who have not been treated well because they don't have the power to assert themselves. I've missed the whole point when I read with a me-focus. Our king was not handing out advice on personal piety. He was describing society when God reigns and everyone matters.

The good news of God's anointed changes everything. The kingdom of God comes to the people who've been missing out. It's good news for the poor, for those who've suffered loss, for the powerless, for those who never get justice. To paraphrase:

1. **Blessing** for the **poor**! Those who've been crushed by a spirit of poverty will receive their place—citizens of the kingdom as God intends (verse 3).
2. **Blessing** for those locked in **grief**! Those who've lost so much and could not recover from the cycle of grief will be comforted, restored into the joy of community as God intends (verse 4).
3. **Blessing** for the **powerless**! Those who are always at the bottom of the pecking order in a dog-eat-dog world will be released to receive their full inheritance—the whole world shared with everyone as God intends (verse 5).
4. **Blessing** for those who have been desperate for things to be set right but were never able to get **justice**. They will finally be satisfied when God sets things right (verse 6).

The king is announcing good news for God's world. God's liberating reign overturns every oppressive form of evil.

So what does this mean for the rich and powerful who have the resources to buy justice and happiness for themselves? Is the gospel good news for them? Or will they be "unblessed" if they must relinquish their wealth and power? (Hint: Luke 6:20-26).

God's reign is not good news for everyone. But it's not a forced revolution. God starts with responsive people and gradually expands his kingdom from there. The king calls his people to join him in bearing away the sin of the world:

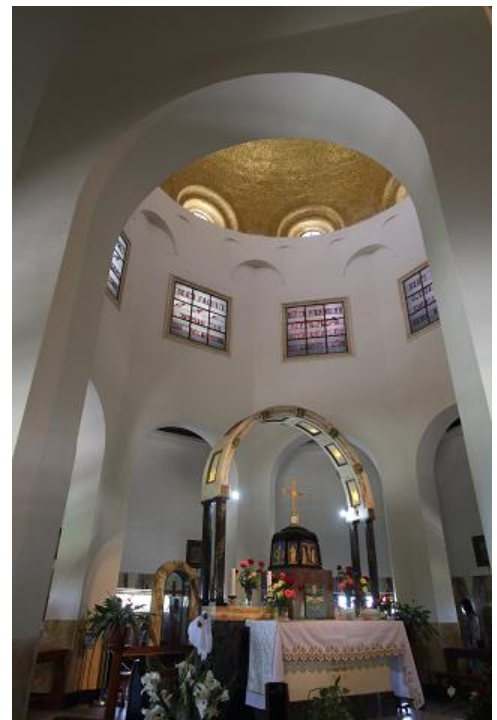
5. The **blessed** society comes from sharing **mercy**, not demanding retribution (verse 7).
6. The **blessed** society comes from **seeing God** in each other, rather than seeing you as a target to get what I want (verse 8).
7. The **blessed** society comes from **making peace** with the human family, imitating our Father (verse 9).
8. The **blessed** society begins with the servants of the king **absorbing the hurt** as our king does (verse 10).

Suffering to remove evil? It's what God has always asked his people to do. Prison, propaganda, and persecution from those in power—the prophets knew all about it!

Jesus expected the same for himself (Matthew 23:37), and for all of us who follow him in this way of being the kingdom of God (verses 11-12). This is God's *blessing*, for this is how heaven's reign is restored to earth:

Matthew 5:10-12 (paraphrased)

"Blessed are those who are hunted down for representing what's right; they already have heaven's reign. You have the blessing when people mock you, and hunt you down, and spread fake news about you



Church of the Beatitudes. Allen Browne, 2017

because you represent me. Celebrate and party! Heaven's reign is more than enough compensation. They've always hunted down those who speak for the heavenly king."

Salt and light (5:13-16)

So what is our role in society? Many groups encourage Christians to become involved as salt and light. Salt is a preservative, so Christians must stop society from going bad.

But that image doesn't really work. If you find some fish that stinks to high heaven, you don't say, "Quick! Bring the salt. This is putrid, and we have to stop it going bad." It's too late for that. From God's point of view, human society went bad long ago.

Jesus isn't talking about the flavour of society but the flavour of the *salt*. Pure salt doesn't lose its flavour, but if it's mixed with calcium and the salt leaches out, all you have left is the tasteless calcium, good only for making a path:

Matthew 5:13 (my translation)

"You (collectively) are the earth's salt.

But if the salt is foolish, with what can it be salted?

It's capable of nothing but being thrown out and trampled by people."

That's what had happened to the kingdom of God before Jesus' time. It had been exiled (thrown out), trodden underfoot by the nations. But the Old Testament never said, "The problem is with the nations." It accused God's people of losing their distinctiveness.

The whole point of the Abraham project was for God's people to be *the God-flavours of the earth* (5:13, *The Message*), or as Isaiah put it, *a light to the nations* (Isaiah 42:6; 49:6; 51:4; 60:3).

God intentionally set his people up to show the brilliance of his reign to his world:

Matthew 5:14-16

¹⁴ "You (collectively) are the world's light. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ You don't light a lamp and place it under a bucket; you put it on the lampstand where it gives light to everyone in the household.

¹⁶ In the same way, your light is to shine for people, so they might see the good things you do and give honour to your Father in the heavens."

Why would a city try to hide? When Roman armies marched on Galilee in the decades before Jesus was born, a city on a hill could not say, "Nothing to see here. Move on!" God has made us visible to the invaders of his world. God has set us up for the benefit of the nations, the whole human family that belongs in God's household.

Our king calls us to live brilliantly, so people see us living for the good of others and recognize the character of our Father who reigns in the heavens over all the people of the earth.

Often, that's not how the world has heard the church. They've heard the church condemning them in order to make them come begging for forgiveness. That's not the role our King gave us.

Fulfilling the Law (5:17-20)

Some in Jesus' audience thought he was sidelining obedience to God's Law (Torah):

Matthew 5:17

"Don't imagine I have come to annul the **Torah** or the Prophets;
I have not come to annul them but to **fulfil** them."

Who thought that? They're identified in verse 20: *Pharisees and Torah teachers*.

The **Pharisees** wanted the kingdom of God too, but they believed God would only restore it when his people were obedient enough. That's why they spent so much energy trying to control the communal life of the towns in Galilee. They pressured people to do better by naming and shaming people's failures. Jesus didn't, so they pressured him too: accusing him of sidelining God's Law, teaching people to ignore it.

Jesus assured his Jewish audience that he had not come to teach them to ignore the laws God had set down for Israel in the Sinai covenant (verses 18-19). But neither had he come to make their captivity worse by condemning them for their failures (Matthew 23:4). That approach would never restore the kingdom (verse 20). The king had come to **fulfil** the requirements of *the Law* for his people.

And the Prophets! The prophets promised the anointed king would restore the failed kingdom. Jesus was fulfilling the entire revelation of God: *the Law and the Prophets!* The Christ was fulfilling the entire narrative of Scripture for his people, restoring to the earth everything heaven intended.

The royal law (5:21-48)

So what does the king expect of his kingdom? Jesus answers that question with five examples. Despite what he has just said, Jesus sounds like he is redefining the Law: *You have heard that it was said ... But I tell you ...* (verses 21, 27, 31 and 33, 38, 43).

The first three cases don't change the heart of the commands, but the final two radically overturn the entire basis for justice in the Sinai Law.

King Jesus is setting out what he expects of his kingdom. He denied the accusation that he had taught Israel to disobey the Sinai Law, but the Sinai Law is not the basis for life under his leadership. There are some similarities (his first three cases) and some radical changes (the final two). But the authority is not the Sinai covenant God made with Israel (*You have heard...*); **the authority is the king himself** (*I tell you ...*).

The Sinai covenant established the relationship between Israel (God's kingdom) and the LORD (their king). That kingdom fell, so the prophets promised a new covenant:

Jeremiah 31:31–33 (NIV)

³¹ "The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah.

³² It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD.

³³ "This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people."

The new covenant arrives in the anointed king (the Christ). It's broader than the old one, for his authority brings all the earth into God's kingship. The new covenant is not like the previous Law that held people in check. It transforms us: minds and hearts.

Radical reinterpretation (5:21-37)

Jesus begins by explaining what this transformation looks like for three of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:13-16 || Deuteronomy 5:17-20):

- **Murder** rises out of unresolved anger (as in Genesis 4:6). The intent to harm gets expressed in words, and damages our sense of being family. It's better to take the initiative to restore relationship than to expect human courts to give us justice (5:21-26).
- **Adultery** rises out of the longing to possess another. It's better to deny part of your anatomy than to lose the identity we share in faithful relationships. Discarding a partner was legal under Sinai Law (Deuteronomy 24:1-4), but is not an expression of the faithfulness of kingdom life (5:27-32).
- **Lying** rises out of a desire to gain an advantage at someone's expense. Our King calls us to relationships that are always true because we're living under the heavenly king in his earthly realm (5:33-37).

Jesus calls his kingdom to do right because we want the best mutual life together, not merely because it's mandated in law. Anyone who genuinely cares for others in their neighbourhood is not doing them harm. It's what the king's brother called *the royal law*, "Love your neighbour as yourself" (James 2:8, quoting Leviticus 19:18). When each of us takes care of our neighbour's needs rather than prioritizing the self as "number one," the heart of heaven redefines everything on earth.

Radical transformation (5:38-42)

Releasing someone who deserves punishment is countercultural! We want to make people pay for their crime. We feel they should suffer a penalty that matches the harm they've done to us.

That sense of justice was foundational to the Sinai Law:

If there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise (**Exodus 21:23-25 NIV**).

Anyone who injures their neighbour is to be injured in the same manner: fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. The one who has inflicted the injury must suffer the same injury (**Leviticus 24:19-20 NIV**)

Show no pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot (**Deuteronomy 19:21 NIV**).

But the kingdom of God established in the Christ does not rest on the principle of the same harm being done to the offender. Our king calls us to end the harm by absorbing the loss, whether it's physical, financial, enforced, or out of need (38-42).

This is the only thing that changes the world. Gandhi observed, "If we practice an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, soon the whole world will be blind and toothless." Revenge (*a life for a life*) doesn't bring your loved one back.

The only way to break the cycle of violence is the way of the cross: following what our king does when those in power condemn him to death.

Transformed community (5:43-48)

The Sinai Law said, “Love your neighbour” (Leviticus 19:18). “Hate your enemy” was not a command, but it was how the Law was practiced. Moses fought their enemies. So did Joshua, the judges, Saul, David and the other kings before the exile.

After the exile the Jews celebrated when the Persians gave them the right to kill their enemies (Esther 9:5). Sometimes their enemies were other Jews, such as the fight between John Hyrcanus II and Judah Aristobolus II in the first century BC.³ Even today, Israel fights its enemies.

Jesus' kingdom does not support this dichotomy: God's people versus enemies. God's kingship covers all people, even those who behave as enemies of Christ. He does not treat them as enemies because God gives him all authority in heaven and on earth, so our king is calling all nations under his command (28:18-19). And since the king treats no one as his enemy, his kingdom cannot treat anyone as an enemy either.

Jesus believes God has always taken this approach. God extends his providence to all people, *causing his sun to rise on the evil and the good, sending rain on the righteous and the unrighteous* (verse 45).

For Christ-followers, there is no “us” and “them.” The mafia use that mindset to protect their own: “You toucha my family, I smasha your face.” We're called to reflect not a mafia godfather but our Father God (verses 46-48).

This is the gospel of the kingdom, where Christ is king:

Jesus's command to “love your enemies” (Matt. 5:44) was quoted by ten different writers in twenty-eight different passages, making it *the* most cited passage by early Christian writers before Constantine. Loving one's enemies was the ethical heartbeat of early Christianity. It's what separated Christians from everyone else, according to Tertullian.⁴

How does this sit with you? How do we love when there is so much need?

What would you do to protect yourself, your family, or your church?⁵

3.2 Living under heaven (Matthew 6)

What questions would you like us to address in Chapter 6? Suggestions:

1. Jesus just told us to show people our heavenly Father's love (5:46-48), so what's wrong with doing good things for others to see? (6:1)
2. How does The Lord's Prayer help our prayer lives? (6:9-13)

³ Adam Kolman Marshak, “From Pompey to Hadrian,” in *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism* (Eerdmans, 2010), 40.

⁴ Preston M. Sprinkle, *Fight: A Christian Case for Non-Violence*, Electronic Ed. (David C Cook, 2013).

⁵ Aaron Earls, [Most US Pastors Use Armed Congregants as Church Security](#). Lifeway Research, reported by Christianity Today, 2023-06-07. Accessed 2023-06-22.

3. Should I fast? Is it an important spiritual discipline? (6:16-18)
4. Why is “serving money” the alternative to “serving God”? (6:24)
5. How do we seek God's kingdom, as our priority? (6:34)

Acting for the wrong audience (6:1-4)

We've just seen Jesus calling us to care for everyone: neighbours and enemies, those we consider our family and those we consider outsiders. We do that because our Father treats everyone as family, no one as outsiders (5:43-48).

But those who show love to gain social recognition already have their reward. Genuine love is not motivated by recognition. It's enough that our Father sees his beautiful image reflected in us. (6:1-4).

Jesus labels those who crave human recognition as *hypocrites* (6:2, 5, 16; 7:5). That's a Greek word we've imported into English: a *hypokritēs* was an actor.

Actors play a role that's not them. They love the applause at the end of the show. Actors like Dwayne Johnson or Scarlett Johansson are some of the most recognizable faces, some of the most highly valued people in our society. It's kind of weird really: their main ability is to be someone they're not.

“Don't be like the actors,” Jesus says. “They make sure everyone is watching when they give. They pray at the intersection at the centre of town so everyone hears them. Well, they have their audience; God knows they're not talking to him” (6:2-5).

Approaching God (6:5-8)

Did you notice how Jesus presents God as *your Father*? (5:16, 45; 6:1, 4, 6, 8, 15, 18; 7:11, 21). In Jesus' world, no one spoke of God like that. Very few Old Testament passages used that metaphor.⁶ So why was “Father” Jesus' main word for God?

Jesus does have a unique relationship with God as Father:

Matthew 3:17 (Scot McKnight's translation)⁷

Look! A voice from the heavens, saying,

“This is my royal **Son**, the one loved, in him I was delighted.”

That explains why Jesus refers to God as *my Father* (7:21; 8:21; 10:32-33; 11:27; 12:50; 16:17; 18:10, 19; 20:23, 25:34; 26:39, 42, 53). He was the regally appointed Son.

Since he is the one whom the Father anointed to lead his people, **we participate in his Father/Son relationship**. The kingdom exists in the Son appointed by God. The Son shares with us his relationship with God: *your Father* too.

We're his brothers, in his Father's family. That's what Jesus said after the resurrection:

⁶ The relationship between God as Father and Israel as his son is implied in Exodus 4:22, echoed in Hosea 11:1, and applied to the Messiah in Matthew 2:15. God was Father to the anointed king in 2 Samuel 7:14, echoed in Psalm 2:7, and applied to Jesus in Matthew 16:16. Deuteronomy 32:6 names the LORD as the Father of his people, as did some later texts such as Sirach 23:1.

⁷ Scot McKnight, *The Second Testament: A New Translation*. (IVP Academic, 2023).

John 20:17 (NIV)

“Go to my *brothers* and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my *Father* and your *Father*, to my God and your God.’”

It's on that basis that we ask *our Father* to restore heaven's reign over us on earth.

Talking with God (6:9-18)

The Lord's Prayer is an impassioned plea for our Father to complete in us what he has begun. There's no question about the Father's willingness to provide for his family: he sent his Son! The question is whether we trust our lives to our Father.

That was the problem with the Sinai covenant. God delivered Israel from Pharaoh's reign, but they did not trust God to lead them into the Land where they would be the kingdom of God. That first faithless generation died in the wilderness. Jesus was very aware that he too lived in a *faithless generation* that would not recognize the Son (12:39-45; 16:4; 17:17).

Our Lord's prayer therefore calls the family to faithful allegiance to our Father:

- We ask that your majestic name receives the reverent recognition you deserve, so earth lives in loyalty to our heavenly sovereign's name (verse 9).
- We ask for your kingship be restored to the whole world. May your purposes be fulfilled on earth, just as happens in your heavenly realm (verse 10).
- We ask you, Father, to provide fresh bread each day for your family, as you did so faithfully for the faithless generation in the wilderness (verse 11).
- We ask you to release us from our unfulfilled obligations to you. Because we trust you, we have already released each other from the unfulfilled obligations we've held against each other in the family (verse 12).
- We ask you not to lead us into testing times where we could turn from trusting you as the wilderness generation did. We ask you to deliver us from the power of evil, as you delivered them from slavery, so we live under your governance where we belong (verse 13).



How does that sit with you? Can we pray like this as the expression of our relationship with the Father and the Son?

Some later copies of Matthew's Gospel conclude by adding phrases from David's kingdom prayer in 1 Chronicles 29:11.

Then Jesus explains why forgiving each other is so crucial to the kingdom's arrival:

Matthew 6:14-15 (paraphrased)

¹⁴ “For if you together release people from their obligations when they wrong you, your sovereign father who rules in the heavens will also release you all from your obligations. ¹⁵ But if you together don't release people, your sovereign father won't release you all either.”

That's troubling if you read it at a personal level, about your personal salvation. It makes no sense to say that whether God lets me into heaven depends on my works, whether I have successfully forgiven everybody else. That is not the gospel.

But it makes perfect sense if we hear it corporately. We cannot experience community under God (God's kingdom) unless we release each other from the obligations that keep us imprisoned to each other.

Fasting has an interesting history. In the Torah, God never asked Israel to fast. He asked them to feast! Several times a year they were to meet for the big celebrations.

Fasting came later, when things went wrong (Judges 20:26; 1 Samuel 7:6; 31:13 etc). Regular communal fasts became the norm when they went into exile: when the feast days came and they had no temple, they would fast (Zechariah 7:3).

God provides food for his people, so when God's people went without food they were signalling that something was wrong. The prophets asked them to check that the problem was not their failure to care for each other, or their failure to release each other from unfulfilled obligations (Isaiah 58:4-7).

In Jesus' time, the Pharisees nominated weekly fast days. Then they dressed as if they were stressed and starving to remind the community to fulfil their obligation to fast—an obligation they had imposed. Jesus says they were not fasting for the restoration of God's reign, merely to impose their own rule (verses 16-18).

Serving God (6:19-33)

It's all about who is in control. Powerful people serve themselves, hoarding resources while others starve. The richest 1% of the world's population own almost half the resources.⁸

That's criminal! God provides enough for the whole family, but some of his children starve while others stuff themselves. It furthers criminal activity, *where thieves break in and steal*. When the wealthy store the food for themselves, it feeds *moths and vermin* instead of people (verses 19-20).

We spend our lives on what we value (verse 21). For many, that's making money. But wealth accumulation is socially devastating. It's as bad a slave-master as Pharaoh ever was, sustaining the same inequality. God's reign calls us to a different social structure, for *no one can serve both God and money* (verse 24).

So, what would it look like to serve God instead? Jesus asks us to learn from creation:

- You've never seen birds building barns to store up wealth for the future. They fly free, *and yet your heavenly Father feeds them*. Can't we trust the value our Father gives his children? (verses 25-27)
- You've never seen flowers enhancing their value by dressing more beautifully than the others. The rich and famous don't come close to how God dresses the

⁸ Khanyi Mlaba, *The Richest 1% Own Almost Half the World's Wealth & 9 Other Mind-Blowing Facts on Wealth Inequality*, <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/wealth-inequality-oxfam-billionaires-elon-musk/> 2023, accessed 2023-06-24.

wildflowers, fleeting as they are. What could be more beautiful than the human community reflecting our Father's character, living in his image? (verses 28-30)

- When we stress over how to feed ourselves and look superior, we're playing god. When we don't trust our Father to provide for his family, we need to overpower each other. Jesus asks us to stop trying to control the world. Control-freaks stress about tomorrow instead of enjoying today (verses 31-34).

Jesus gave us one priority, one thing to live for:

Matthew 6:33-34

"Live first for God's kingdom, his reign that sets everything right. Everything will be provided to you."

Everything Jesus is saying boils down to this: live under God's reign. Spend our energy pursuing the restoration of God's management of the earth, what God sees as right for us all. Ultimately there is no better existence than living as the community that recognizes how God designed the world to work, and lives accordingly. Everything we need falls into place when we put God at the top.

This is so countercultural! *Seeking the kingdom* is the opposite of seeking the self. It's natural for people who do not honour their heavenly Father to seek their own honour. It's natural for people who do not recognize God's power to seek power over others.

What does *seeking the kingdom* mean? Well, if you're seeking it for yourself, consider these examples from a Greek biographer (Plutarch) and a Roman historian (Livy):

Plutarch, *Alexander* 6.5:

His father, as we are told, actually shed tears of joy, and when Alexander [the Great] had dismounted, kissed him, saying: 'My son, seek *thee out a kingdom* equal to thyself; Macedonia has not room for thee.'

Livy, 40 11.7-8:

'My elder brother' says Demetrius [brother of Alexander the Great], 'stands in my way, to whom the kingdom belongs by law and also by our father's wish. Let him be removed: I shall not have been the first to seek *a kingdom* by murdering a brother.'

Jesus was not seeking a kingdom for himself! He was seeking the kingdom of God—the reign of heaven, for all the people of the earth. His Father had anointed him to reign, but he was waiting for the Father to reveal it to others instead of pushing himself forward (16:17). Heaven's reign arrives as people acknowledge him (10:32).

3.3 Conclusion

Jesus was right: *seeking the kingdom* is the antidote to all that's wrong.

Jesus was right: *the pagans run after all these things* (verse 32).

Jesus was right: *no one can serve two masters* (verse 24).

Jesus was right: we invite God's reign, so God's will is done on earth (verse 9).



Jesus was right: seeking God's reign is our number one priority, the one thing worth devoting our lives to (verse 33).

Your thoughts?

For more commentary on these chapters, see:

Mat 5 – 6	<u>Whose honour?</u>
Mat 5 – 7	<u>Instruction from the king (aka Sermon on the Mount)</u>
Mat 5:3-6	<u>Blessed</u>
Mat 5:3-6	<u>The other side of “blessed”</u>
Mat 5:3-6	<u>Beatitudes: blessings from the king (podcast)</u>
Mat 5:3-12	<u>Jesus’ kingdom manifesto</u>
Mat 5:3-12	<u>The best way to understand Jesus</u>
Mat 5:3-12	<u>Humanity untwisted: the joy of the Beatitudes</u>
Mat 5:3-12	<u>What’s the value of God’s reign?</u>
Mat 5:7-12	<u>How does the kingdom come?</u>
Mat 5:10-12	<u>Conflict of kingdoms</u>
Mat 5:13	<u>Salt of the earth</u>
Mat 5:13-16	<u>Are Christians the moral police?</u>
Mat 5:13-16	<u>Distinctively God’s kingdom: salt and light</u>
Mat 5:14-16	<u>Who is the light of the world?</u>
Mat 5:17-20	<u>Why wasn’t Jesus demanding obedience?</u>
Mat 5:17-20	<u>Do the Ten Commandments apply to Christians?</u>
Mat 5:21-22	<u>If you’re angry, are you a killer?</u>
Mat 5:22-30	<u>What does the Bible say about hell?</u>
Mat 5:23-26	<u>Reconciliation or retribution? What do you want?</u>
Mat 5:27-28	<u>Feeling guilty</u>
Mat 5:29	<u>Why the right eye?</u>
Mat 5:29-30	<u>Ripping out an eye?</u>
Mat 5:31-32	<u>Divorce</u>
Mat 5:33-37	<u>As true as our king</u>
Mat 5:38-42	<u>Retribution versus justice</u>
Mat 5:43	<u>Who is our enemy?</u>
Mat 5:43-48	<u>His kingdom in a violent world</u>
Mat 5:43-48	<u>God as Father</u>
Mat 5:43-48	<u>Enemy love</u>
Mat 6	<u>Authentic or acting?</u>
Mat 6:1-4	<u>A generous kingdom</u>
Mat 6:5-8	<u>What is prayer?</u>

Mat 6:9-13	The Lord's Prayer as Jesus' kingdom vision
Mat 6:9-15	The Lord's Prayer
Mat 6:14-15	Unconditional forgiveness?
Mat 6:16-18	Fasting
Mat 6:19-24	The focus of your life
Mat 6:24-33	The sci-fi dream
Mat 6:25-34	Stressed about your social standing?
Mat 6:33	What is seeking the kingdom?
Mat 6:33	When the church doesn't get the kingdom

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In preparation for our next session, read Matthew 7–8.