

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT (Part I)

References :

Notes for Servants :

Objectives :

General:

Specific:

Instructions:

1. Review last week's lesson.
- 2.
- 3.

Bible Verse:

And seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain: and when He was set, His disciples came unto Him: and He opened His mouth and taught them saying@

[Mat 5:1,2]

Lesson :

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT (Part I)

Our Lord Jesus Christ is found of mountains:

Fourty days on the mountain praying and fasting to teach us, then tempted and defeating the devil.

From the mount of temptation to the mount of Olives where He used to pray to the Father.

The sermon, the New Testament=s constitution (or new commandments) given on a mountain, as the Ten Commandments were delivered to Moses on mount Sinai in the Old Testament.

Transfiguration happened on mount Tabour.

The mount of Golgotha where our Lord and Saviour redeemed mankind by the shedding of His pure blood on the Cross.

It is believed that the mount of Olives is the mountain from which the Lord ascended to Heaven after His resurrection.

On a mountain:

- + The world seems distant and small.
- + Away from daily business and routine.
- + Surrounded by the nature and the sky.
- + In essence, the senses are elevated and distraction is minimal. only the Lord is seen and heard.

Jesus Aopened His mouth@ because previously He used to speak in parables and examples (St John Chrysostom). He also used to speak through the prophets, but now: *AGod, Who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son.*@ [Heb 1:1,2]

Beatitude = happy + blessed

Some translations omit half of the meaning.

***ABlessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*@**

[Mat 5:3]

Poor in spirit:

Poor in spirit means humble and someone who does not think highly of himself but mindful of his weaknesses and therefore is humble:

- + Poor before God: in prayer we entreat God and humbly ask for His mercy. Some people adopt the attitude of Aclaiming@ their sonship rights as heirs with Christ!
- + Poor before oneself: it is manifested in the person=s awareness of his own weaknesses and when he asks for peoples prayers and blessing he means it; when he asks for forgiveness, he also means it and does not go through the motions and appearance of a humble person. He chooses to be last in rank and gives everybody precedence and honour before himself.
- + Poor before others: a person=s features show in his behaviour, in the way he speaks with the others, the way he talks, the way he sits, the way he listens, in all his behaviour you can tell if a person is haughty or humble.
- + Poor before the devil and the demons: the devils cannot stand humility. Their pride was the reason behind their fall, therefore humility burns them. Once the devil appeared to St. Maccarius the great and said to him: AWhat deed can you do and we cannot? You fast and we do not eat, you pass your night awake in vigil and we do not

sleep, you live in the desert and in the wilderness and we do the same thing. One thing with which you overcome us.@ When St Maccarius asked what was that thing, he answered: AYou overcome us with your humility@

One time, St Anthony the great saw the traps of the devils spread over the whole earth, and he cried to God saying: AOh Lord! Who can escape from these traps?@ A voice came to him from Heaven saying: AThe humble can escape from them.@

For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven:

The reward of carrying the cross of humility is eternal life! The dignity we dispose of on earth is kept for us in Heaven. Our Lord wanted the people who were listening to Him and still are to turn their thoughts and hearts to Heaven because on earth, we have no eternal dwelling, and later in the sermon He said: *ALay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*@ [Mat 6:19,21]

Our Lord Jesus Christ gave many analogies to the Kingdom of Heaven so that we can focus on striving to enter it. In [Mat 13], the Kingdom of Heaven was likened to:

- + a treasure hidden in a field
- + a man who sowed good seed
- + a mustard seed
- + a great net thrown into the sea
- + a teacher of law who brings out of his store-room new as well as old treasures

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. [Mat 5:4]

Does this mean that Christianity promotes sadness and lamentations? No, because in other verses we learn to be joyful:

AAnd ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.@ [Joh 16:22]

ARejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.@ [Phil 4:4]

Furthermore, one of the fruits of the Spirit is joy [Gal 5:22].

Christianity calls for both spiritual joy and spiritual sorrow:

+ Joy in the Lord. Joy for repentance and victory over sin. Joy for a repentant sinner, as the heavens rejoice for the repentance of one sinner.

+ Similarly sorrow and tears are useful in our struggle on earth against sin. Tears for repentance. Tears for the fall of a brother and not judgment; for he fell today and has a chance to repent but I may fall tomorrow and never get a chance to repent.

+ *AFor godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.*@ [2Cor 7:10]

Shedding tears is a main characteristic in the life of the saints and true sons of God for their own sins and the sins of others:

+ David the king and prophet: *AAll night I flodd my bed with weeping and drench*

my couch with tears.@ [Ps 6]. *AMy tears have been my food day and night*@ [PS 42:3]. *Al mingled my drink with tears.*@ [Ps 102:9].

+ Jeremiah [Lamentations], Ezra [Ez 10:1], Nehemiah [Neh 1].

+ Christ wept [Joh 11:35] at the tomb of Lazarus because of the status to which man, who was created on God=s image, was reduced to: he stinketh [Joh 11:39].

+ The desert fathers wept and tears were their companion all their life. St Arsanius, St Isiziros, St Pephnotius and many other saints were given the gift of tears during prayer for repentance or just for their extreme sensitivity towards the loving nature of our Father. *ATurn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me.*@ [Songs 6:5]

+ Among the things that prevent tears are cruelty, harshness and judging people. The life of pleasure and delight in sin also prevent tears and true repentance. Seeking tears for their own prevents them. Pride, haughtiness and love of dignity exterminate tears as well.

+ Temptations and tribulations bring tears. Also the remembrance of death and sins bring tears.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. [Mat 5:5]

+ The meek is the person whose temper is calm (not cold). *ATake My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*@ [Mat 11:29]

+ *AHe shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.*@ [Mat 12:19]

+ The meek is a good hearted one. He likes to please all the people and be in a good relationship with all. His calmness is both internal and external.

+ The meek does not defend himself, but people defend him. He is not revengeful [Rom12:19]. He does not even ask God to take vengeance for him.

+ With the meek, mutual understanding is very easy. If you get into discussion or conversation with him, you will find him simple and plain. In meetings, he sometimes sits silent. No one feels his presence. He would not give his opinion unless he is asked to. His silence does not mean that he is self-absorbed. The self-absorbed person does not know how to deal with the members of the society. Thus he is self-centered and displeased with anyone or anything around him.

+ Virtues complete each other, a truly meek person is also a truly humble person who does everything out of love.

AInherit the earth@:

1. It is the land of the living [Ps 27:13]. It is the new land that Saint John described in Revelation.

2. The same earth on which we currently live. In addition to the heavenly inheritance, he is loved by all who live on this earth because of his meekness.

3. Both this earth and the new one: he will earn both the blessings of those who live on this earth and the companionship of those who departed this life to the land of the living.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. [Mat 5:6]

+AO God, thou art my God; early will I seek Thee: my soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is@ [Ps 63:1]. Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness are those who long for God with all their hearts. The whole world seems for them as a dry desert where there is nothing that can sustain or please them.

+Examples: St Arsenius used to pray from sun-set to sun-rise and nothing would satisfy his hunger and longing for God and spending all his time with Him. David the king, who had all worldly affairs to take care of and access to all pleasures had one thing that he earnestly longed for: *AOne thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple@* [Ps27:4].

+Eternity will not be enough for reaching perfection in the knowledge of the Lord. The righteous will always thirst and hunger for God, and the more God satisfies them the more they long for Him!

Conclusion