

# *“Who Are You?”*

## **A Sermon for the Family of God**

Matthew 5:1-16

Pastor Jeff Stivason

September 29, 2017

**Jeff:** Don, why don't you lead us into prayer? (*Music*)

Our heavenly Father, we are so thankful that You live and reign, and that we live and move and have our being in You. And Father, we're thankful for the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ who indeed is Your Son from all eternity, but who took upon Himself flesh, that we might have life in His name, not through His Incarnation but through His perfect life and resurrection, His ascension and the outpouring of the Spirit that makes Him known to us. For these things we thank You and give You praise. And as we come before You today, we're mindful of how much we need You. We know that You loved us first, and that's why we love You. But we come here today, Father, seeking You out, listening to You because You have spoken in Your inscripturated Word. We come before You now asking that as we hear You would give us the ability to do so, and that You would change us by having been under Your word. Make us different. Do things in us that will last for all eternity and bless us.

But not only us. Bless all of us together, Father, as we gather here in this place, not only to listen to the Word individually, but to listen to it as a group. Father, our hearts go out to our brothers. We think about Bruce and his difficulty and pray, Father, that You would bless him in the midst of such intense pain. Father, we pray that You would draw him ever closer to You. We pray, Father, that although he is in the midst of much difficulty, that you would swallow that experience up in joy with Your presence. Father, we pray for the Bloom family and their tragic loss, and we would ask that Your hand would be upon them, that You would minister to them. Father, we certainly pray for Bill and his difficult situation and ask that You would see him through it. And Father, we pray and ask for Tony, that Your mercies would be granted to him in the midst of his life's difficulties.

And Father, we're so thankful that You've blessed Jason and the Silver Ring Thing. We pray that they would continue to be blessed. We pray that the people who are experiencing their ministry would see the goodness of God at work in them. Father, we also pray for Mike and the retreat that is upcoming. We ask that it would be a good time. We pray that it would be blessed by Your hand and that the men who come would experience the presence of Your Spirit upon them. Father, we pray that You would make it fruitful not only for them but for Your kingdom at large. Father, we pray all of these things in the precious name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Men:** Amen.

**Jeff:** Okay. Well let me first of all just ask you. Did everybody get the second outline? Did anybody miss that and need it? No? Okay, good.

Why don't you turn with me to Matthew's Gospel this morning? And what we're going to do is we're going to start a six-week series on The Sermon on the Mount. And

## “Who Are You?”

what we’re going to do is we’re going to give that sermon something of an overview, a birds-eye look.

Now I just want to prepare you for this. That means that we will not look at every passage in The Sermon on the Mount in detail. So we won’t stop and pick everything apart.

What I’m really concerned for you to see as we look at The Sermon on the Mount is how it’s put together and some of the specific teaching that is there. But we won’t look at everything. And I think that when you come out of looking at The Sermon on the Mount the way that we’re going to look at The Sermon on the Mount, I hope that you’ll have the same experience that I did when I studied it. I hope that you come out thinking, “Wow, I knew this!” Maybe the best way I can describe it is that maybe you’ll come out like Job. Once my eyes had seen, but now my ears have heard. Maybe I have that reversed. Hopefully you’ll have a better grasp on The Sermon on the Mount, though I’m stumbling to try to help you to see what I hope for you. *(Laughter)* So let’s get to it.

And let’s get to it by opening your Bibles to Matthew.

Today I want us to read the Beatitudes. So let me just do that for us as we start. But we’re not going to remain here for the bulk of our time. What we’re going to do is something a little bit different and I’ll show you that when I get there. So let’s look at Matthew chapter 5. I’ll start our reading in verse 1 and I’ll read down through 16.

Brothers, this is the word of God. And one of the joys in my life as a minister of the Gospel is to remind people of what it is that they’re hearing before I read the Word. It’s not a formality. What I’m telling you is the absolute truth. It’s something that is a burden to me. It’s a great conviction upon my heart. This is a safe place to stand. It is the word of God without compromise and I want you to hear it as it’s read to you this morning.

Matthew chapter 5. *“Seeing the crowds He went up on the mountain. And when He sat down His disciples came to Him. And He opened His mouth and taught them, saying, ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you, and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on My account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

*“‘You are the salt of the earth. But if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works, and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.’”* All right.

**Participant:** This is the word of the Lord.

**Jeff:** It is.

## “Who Are You?”

**Men:** Thanks be to God.

**Jeff:** All right. Let me give you a brief overview of how we’re going to look at The Sermon on the Mount. We’re going to look today at an overview of Matthew’s Gospel, and then we’re going to look at the Beatitudes near the end. And this is the basic flow of the sermon, and I’m going to show you this later. But basically our class outline follows the basic breakdown of The Sermon on the Mount. We’re going to have a lesson on loving others, then on loving God, then on loving God revisited, then on loving others.

Notice what that is. That’s a chiasm, and I think that obviously that’s intentional, right? The chiasm goes A., B., B., A. So there’s an intentional structuring of the material. Why? Well because it gives us two important things. The two A.s, A. and A., are loving others. But right in the center of the chiasm is the central point—loving God. And one of the things that we ought to see when we look at this chiasm is that The Sermon on the Mount is built upon the two greatest commandments. And so this is the way we’re going to break down our time together.

And then in our last class we’re going to look at some concluding material. Just like we looked at the Beatitudes, we’ll look at some of the material that comes in the end. And I’ll talk to you about that in just a minute when we get to that particular outline. But that’s the basic overview for the next six weeks that we’re going to look at.

Let’s look at today’s outline. Today we’re going to think about an introduction, some introductory material. That’s kind of what we’re doing now. We’re going to look at an overview of Matthew’s Gospel. We’re going to look at the Beati-whats? The Beatitudes! I thought that was funny. (*Laughter*) Talk about a response to The Sermon on the Mount!

So let’s look at an introduction and overview. As I can see it, this is basically the way in which it is helpful for us to break down Matthew’s Gospel.

Now one of the things that I’ve been saying to you is this. When you look at this breakdown of Matthew’s Gospel, you are not going to see what is traditionally used as the focal point of the breakdown. What I mean by that is this. Oftentimes, what people will do is use the five discourses of Matthew’s Gospel in order to break it down. I’m not going to do that. And you’re going to see why I’m not going to do that in just a minute.

What I’m going to do is look at the breakdown of the entire Gospel through the lens of family. Now you say to me, “Are you imposing that?” I don’t think I am. I think that theme emerges from the Gospel of Matthew in such a way that it demands that we look through Matthew’s Gospel with that lens in mind.

Now let me say this to you. If you were to pin me in a corner and say, “Well do you think this is what Matthew actually wants us to see rather than the five discourses?”, I’d say, “Well, I think he wants us to see the five discourses. And I think he wants us to see each one as a family.” I hope that I’m understanding it rightly when I break it down structurally for you. But there are all kinds of people who wrestle and wrangle with the structure of Matthew’s Gospel. This is just one offering. I want you to understand that.

So if you can’t see this all the way in the back, we’re going to look at 1:1-4:22, 4:23-9:35—that’s a pretty big chunk!—9:36-12:50, Matthew 13:1-16:20, 16:21-20:34, 21:1-25:46, and then 26:1-28:20.

## “Who Are You?”

I do want to say this as well. Since we’re not going to look at all of Matthew, I’m not going to spend a great deal of time explaining some of these things that are in that portion of Matthew’s Gospel. I think I want to basically mainly give you this side, so as to explain to you the general way in which I’m pitching that you understand Matthew’s Gospel, and then to help you to see The Sermon on the Mount within it. Maybe some other time we can look at Matthew’s Gospel in a little more detail if time permits and providence has it that way for us.

So let’s look at this outline of Matthew’s Gospel. Let’s get started with the birth narratives. I now want you to turn with me to Matthew chapter 1. And one of the things that you’re going to notice about Matthew chapter 1—and I’ll just say this—one of the things that you’re going to notice is that this is very much like a creation account. You’ve probably heard this before. Matthew is built very symmetrically with Genesis 1 and 2.

Why do I say that? Well in Genesis 1 and 2 what do you have? You have a general creation account. You remember how that goes. On day 1 God made this, on day 2 God made this. But then, when you get to the latter part of chapter 1, what you’re going to find is that you’re going to find that God gives us a very specific creation account in chapter 2, verses 1-3, a very specific account. He focuses in, narrows it down.

Now let me just say this to you. I think that what we have here in Matthew’s Gospel is a parallel to that. What do you have? You have a general creation account of, or the genealogy of Christ. And then what do you have in 21-25 of Chapter 1? You have a very specific account of Jesus coming into the world. And so there is a sense in which the genealogy of Jesus is very much like the genealogy that we find of creation itself.

There’s something else, though, that I really want you to pay attention to when you look at Matthew’s Gospel. When you look at Matthew’s Gospel in chapter 1, one of the things that you ought to pay careful attention to is what’s said in verse 21 and then in verse 25. And it’s something of an inclusion that has something right in the middle.

Now look at what it says in 21. *“She will bear a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus.”* And then verse 25, in the middle of the verse. *“She had given birth to a Son. And he called His name Jesus.”* And then look right in the middle of that inverse 23, and what do you have? You have the prophetic account of the birth of a Son. *“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which means ‘God with us.’”*

Now why am I pointing that out to you? I’m pointing that out to you because what we are focusing in on—and I’m not taking the time to talk to you about some of what we see in the genealogy—but it’s there. And what I’m telling you is that the Sonship of Christ comes into preeminent focus when we look at the opening chapter of Matthew’s Gospel.

What Matthew, under the inspiration of the Spirit, wants to tell us is that Jesus is a Son. He’s the Son of David. There’s the genealogy. But more importantly, in the more specific account, He is the Son of God.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Jeff:** Okay? So He’s the Son. So when we look at the birth narratives, that’s what we see.

## **“Who Are You?”**

Now here is what I like to call the pillar passages. I want you to look at two pillar passages with me. The first one is 2:1-11, and then the second one is 4:12-22.

**Transcriber’s Note:** Matthew 2:1-11. The account of the Wise Men or Magi. Matthew 4:12-22. Beginning of Jesus’ public ministry.

**Jeff:** Now we don’t have time to go into a great deal of exegetical work here. But I want to show you something really fascinating. First of all, I want to show you that what you have in 2:1-11 is what? Micah chapter 5 verse 2, read in verse 6 of Matthew chapter 2. And noticed to whom that’s addressed. *“And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah are by no means least among the rulers of Judah, for from you shall come a Ruler who will shepherd My people Israel.”* That is a prophecy that is addressed to the people of Israel.

But notice in this account, 2:1-11. Who is it that comes? It’s the Gentiles.

Now go to 4:12-22. And there what do you find? You find the prophecy from Isaiah 9 about the coming of Christ. And look at what it says in verse 15. *“The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the Sea beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. The people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and the shadow of death, on them a light has dawned.”*

Now here’s the question. Who comes in verse 18? This is addressed to Gentiles, isn’t it? In this prophecy who comes to Him? Jewish disciples come to Him. That’s a fascinating structure when you think about these two texts in parallel fashion.

Now I know what you’re saying to me. “Why, Pastor Jeff, are you saying this? Why are you saying that we have two pillar passages, one prophecy addressed to Israelites and the Gentiles come, one pillar passage on the other side addressed to Gentiles and the Jews come? And both passages are birth accounts. What makes the big deal?”

Well they are pillar passages because in between those two passages what do we find? First of all we find in 2:12-23 that Israel is the son of God, but that Jesus is the true Israel. He is what is called the typological Son of God. He is the fulfillment. He is the Antitype of the type, Israel.

And then what do we find? We find that He’s tempted in the wilderness. And Satan twice addresses Him. *“If You are the Son of God.”* I’m sorry; that’s not right. It’s the baptism. 3:1-17 is the baptism. And God says of His Son—what does He say? “This is My Son.” He is what we would call the ontological Son of God.

And so here we have the antitypical Son of God. He’s the true Israel. And here we have God confessing that He is His ontological Son. And then what do we have? Now we have the temptation. And what do we have here? We have what we might call the protological Son, or the second Adam, who completed what the first Adam failed to complete.

Isn’t this great? (*Laughter*) You have Sonship in chapter 1, right? And then two pillar passages. Both of them have the birth narratives on either side—Gentiles, Jews called, and then My three sons in the middle. (*Laughter*) He’s the typical Son. He’s the ontological Son. And He is what. He is the protological Son, the second Adam.

You know, if somebody came up to you on the street and said to you, “Do you know what I was thinking? I wonder what chapters 1-4 of Matthew’s Gospel are all about. Can

## “Who Are You?”

you tell me what that’s all about?” You ought to say, “Well I can tell you that. It’s about the Sonship of Jesus.” It’s about His birth. It’s about Him fulfilling prophecy. It’s about His Sonship. Right?

**Participant:** Amen.

**Jeff:** Amen! (*Laughter*) All right! So now, here’s the deal. You say to me, “Well, expect more Sonship, right?” Uh-uh. No. There’s a transition now in Matthew’s Gospel.

Now we are at the beginning of The Sermon on the Mount. Now I want to show you something. I didn’t read this to you. But in 4:23, listen to this. “*And He went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.*”

Then go to 9:35. And in 9:35 what do you find? “*And Jesus went through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every affliction.*” It’s the same passage. I think there are one or two words that are actually different in the Greek. But it’s the same passage.

And what do we find? Remember, it’s what we would call an inclusio, or book ends. And what Matthew is doing, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is that he is bookending from 4:23-9:35.

Now I know what you’re asking. You’re saying to me, “Well wait a minute! Why is he doing that?” And here’s what I’m going to tell you. What do we find here? What we find is the answer to the question. What is he doing here?

The first thing we find in 4:24-8:1 is The Sermon on the Mount. What you find between 4:24 and 8:1 is that Jesus goes up on the mountain. He sits down. He opens His mouth. The crowds are there following Him. When you get to 8:1, He closes His mouth. He gets up. He goes down the mountain. The crowds follow Him, right? There is the context in which The Sermon on the Mount takes place.

But then, after the sermon, what you find is 8:2-9:35. Now I just want to walk through this and show you the transition from Sonship to something else, and then answer the question why? Okay, let’s look at it.

I gave you this because I knew you wouldn’t be able to see this. It just didn’t work out very well and I apologize for that. But I gave it to you on a sheet of paper. If you notice, this really begins The Sermon on the Mount in 5:16, and it ends The Sermon on the Mount in 7:21. At least those are the parameters of these references. How many do we have? We have 17 references to the Father. The pinnacle is *Our Father*”, and you can see on the outline that I’ve not done all the work to sort of work out how best to understand all of these references. But you can see that I do have one chiasm in there on your outline. I have a copy of this. You notice that I have one chiasm there—6:1, 7:11, 5:45, 6:26.

**Transcriber’s Note:** Matthew 6:1, ESV. “*Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them.*”

Matthew 7:11 Matthew 7:11, NKJV. “*If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!*”

Matthew 5:45, NKJV. “*that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.*”

## **“Who Are You?”**

Matthew 6:26, NKJV. *“Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?”*

**Jeff:** And there’s a sense in which I think that it’s interesting that He begins by saying *“Your Father who is in heaven.”* He goes to the pinnacle, which is *“Our Father”*, and then *“My Father.”* It’s just kind of an interesting way. But I think the pinnacle of the references is *“Our Father.”*

But here’s my point. The point is this. What’s The Sermon on the Mount about when you look at it from this reference point? It’s about fatherhood. It’s not just the Lord’s Prayer that’s about fatherhood. The Sermon on the Mount has fatherhood as its central focus.

Now if that’s true, if it’s about Sonship, and then it’s about Fatherhood, then I think a central thing that we ought to be asking ourselves is what does The Sermon on the Mount purport to do? Well, the Beatitudes are special at this point because the Beatitudes tell us how a person might transition from sonship to fatherhood, and so be an adopted son through the eternal Son come to represent the Father to us. And so the Beatitudes become very key in helping us to understand that transition for us who stand outside the eternal family of God to be adopted into it.

Now let me show you what I mean by that. The reason why I think that 4:23 and 9:35 are enclosed together is because you get two stories, at least two stories. And notice what happens.

They’re about becoming a child of the Father. Why do I say that? Well look at chapter 9. This is that story of the paralytic, right? The paralytic is brought by his four friends. He’s brought to Peter’s mother-in-law’s house. They take him up to the roof. And remember, they can’t get to Jesus because it’s crowded even to the door. They take him up to the roof. They dig the hole in the roof. You know what Peter’s mother-in-law is saying to him. *“You are going to fix that!”* (*Laughter*) Right? So what we have here is that we have the paralytic being let down.

Now you know the story. What I want to do is to cut to the chase. Look at what Jesus says to him. *“Take courage, son; your sins are forgiven you.”*

Now what do you get next? Let’s look a little further. In the next part you get 9:18.

**Transcriber’s Note:** Matthew 9:18, NKJV. *“While He spoke these things to them, behold, a ruler came and worshiped Him, saying, ‘My daughter has just died, but come and lay Your hand on her and she will live.’”*

**Jeff:** The ruler comes to Him, right? This is our story from last time—the woman with the issue of blood. And the woman with the issue of blood comes to Him. And you know the story. What does He say to her? Get a load of this. *“Daughter, take courage! Your faith has made you well.”*

Wow! All of a sudden, we start to understand that what we see in the Beatitudes is worked out in this man’s life and in this woman’s life. And Jesus addresses them in the familial language of son and daughter. And there’s the family theme that’s beginning to take root when we look at Matthew 1-9:35.

## “Who Are You?”

We see the Sonship of the Son. What did He come to do? He came to bring us into the family of God. We see that through the Beatitudes. We see then that once we come into the family of God, God becomes our Father. That’s the pinnacle of The Sermon on the Mount, the very high point when we look at all the references to the Father. God becomes our Father through the Lord Jesus Christ.

And then the two stories after remind us or illustrate for us what that actually looks like. Through the forgiveness of sins we’re called sons and daughters of the Most High God.

I don’t know about you, but that’s just—whew! Okay. *(Laughter)* Yeah. You know what I’m saying to you? All right.

So we’re going to buzz through some of this other stuff. This is great. A new family is constituted in 9:36, remember?

**Transcriber’s Note:** Matthew 9:36, NKJV. *“But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.”*

**Jeff:** It’s not replacement theology. What it is is that it’s extension theology, right? And what do I mean by that? He appoints the twelve disciples now, the twelve apostles. And get a load of this. In 10:16 He says that the new family will be persecuted.

**Transcriber’s Note:** Matthew 10:16, NKJV. *“Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.”*

**Jeff:** Because if they persecuted the Master of the house, the Head of the house, then they’re going to persecute you. That’s what He says. And then what? Get a load of this. At the very end of this section—12:46-50—guess what? His biological family comes in and says, “Jesus, we’ve heard that You’re nuts. It’s time to take you home.”

**Transcriber’s Note:** Matthew 12:46-50, ESV. *“While He was still speaking to the people, behold, His mother and His brothers stood outside, asking to speak to Him. But He replied to the man who told Him, ‘Who is My mother and who are My brothers?’ And stretching out His hand toward His disciples He said, ‘Here are My mother and My brothers. For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.’”*

**Jeff:** And what does He say? He points to His disciples and He says, “These are my mother and my brothers and my sisters.” And you go, “Whoa! That is the new family constituted around the disciples.” They’re going to be persecuted because He’s persecuted. And He identifies them at the end of this section. He says, “This is My family now.” Oh man! That’s what I’m talking about!

All right. 13:1-16:20. The basic question is who is this Founder of the new family? The next question is what did Jesus do in order to found the family? In 21:1-25:46 there’s the rejection of the old family. That’s heavy theology. We’re going to let that go, because the new family has come.

And then in 26:1-28:20 we have the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, the foundation upon which all of this sits. So we’re just going to speed through that right now. Any questions on that right now? *(Laughter)* Yes?

## **“Who Are You?”**

**Participant:** I had a thought regarding that Scripture, when He said, “*Who is My mother and who are My brothers?*” “*And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, ‘Here are My mother and My brothers. For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.’*” Even in that He wasn’t excluding them from being a part of the family.

**Jeff:** Oh, yes. Right. They’re invited. But they’re invited through Him.

**Participant:** Right.

**Jeff:** Yes, absolutely. Yes? There was another hand.

**Participant:** Some time it may be helpful—and I don’t know if you want to do it—to talk about this process of Matthew putting together his Gospel, because I think that many of us have come into this saying, “Well Matthew heard some stuff and he used some stuff, and he just started writing some stuff down kind of in a historical narrative.” But you’re talking about a very intentional arranging of the material.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Participant:** So what you’re presenting is your style, and there’s the other style that says that the mother says, “You’ve got to fix that hole,” and the whole sermon goes off on fixing holes and roofs. (*Laughter*) Do you know what I’m saying?

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Participant:** There are huge amounts of things that you’re here to talk about, but you can obviously only pick out certain things.

**Jeff:** Right.

**Participant:** And then the question is that when he picked those things, was he in the Spirit and he just kind of wrote them down, or was he actually trying to sort all this out to put it into a humanly logical order?

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Participant:** I mean it has to do with two understandings of how the Scripture was put together.

**Jeff:** Yes, it really does. And with ten minutes left, (*laughter*), Ted, that’s an excellent question. Maybe we ought to take some time to think about that sometime and do sort of a miniseries on that.

**Participant:** What it’s telling me, though, is that Matthew is a work of art.

**Jeff:** Oh, yeah!

**Participant:** We’ve never looked at it that way.

**Jeff:** Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah!

**Participant:** Any great esthetic piece, whether it’s poetry or music, has structure. And this has all of the kind of resemblance of structure that any great work of art would have.

**Jeff:** Oh yes, absolutely.

**Participant:** God is so phenomenal!

**Jeff:** Yes, absolutely. Jim?

**Jim:** I just want to say that both of those things speak to the inspiration of Scripture.

**Jeff:** Oh yea, yeah, yeah.

**Jim:** How does some first-century guy do this who is supposedly nobody but a tax collector?

## “Who Are You?”

**Jeff:** Yeah, right. It’s in the writings of the fishermen, too.

**Participant:** Those of us from the Reformed faith believe that life comes before faith.

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Participant:** So when He calls these two “son” and “daughter,” they’ve already been born again.

**Jeff:** Yes, right. That’s right. Was Sig indicating that it was your Reformed theology that was screwed up? (*Laughter*) Okay. I didn’t realize that. (*Laughter*) Wow! I didn’t hear you, Ted.

**Ted:** Brother Fitzgerald would say that it wasn’t simply Matthew. It was the church, the body of Christ and Matthew who did this. It wasn’t him going off as an independent writer. It was in the context of the body. Matthew didn’t work on a low church—

**Jeff:** I knew that was coming! (*Laughter*) Anybody else? Okay.

So let’s look at the Beatitudes. But let’s do it from this perspective. Here’s what I want you to see. There’s the structure you have. It’s on the flip side so you can bring it in back with you or slip it in your Bibles.

What do you have? You have an intro. You have the Beatitudes or the blessings. You have the Law and the Prophets, which is an introductory statement. You have love your neighbor, love God, love your neighbor. Then you have the Law and the Prophets again in 7:12. That phrase *the Law and the Prophets* forms an inclusion for the body of the sermon itself. Outside the body you have the blessings, and then you have the curses of this sermon. Interesting! And then, parallel to that, you have the conclusion, which I’ve already mentioned. So that’s the structure of the sermon.

Let’s look at what happens after the temptation, but before the sermon. What happens? In Luke 4:14 Jesus goes into the synagogue and He reads this. He says, “*The Spirit of the LORD God is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to bring good news to the afflicted. He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and freedom to the prisoners, to proclaim the favorable year of the LORD.*”

One of the things that I would say to you is this. Isaiah 61 is being fulfilled in what Jesus is doing. And so the blessings of Christ’s coming are experienced by those who belong to the family of God. That’s the way in which we’ve got to see this.

So the Beatitudes are blessings. They are both now and not yet. I’ve explained that to you at different times before. And the blessing is about Sonship.

So the important aspect that we have to catch—and we may make this a two parter—but here’s the important thing that we have to catch. How does this Sonship happen? Well, it happens. You know as well as I do that it’s expressed in different ways in the Scriptures.

For instance, what are we told in Romans? We’re told that the righteousness of God has appeared for the salvation of men. Why? Because men suppressed righteousness in their unrighteousness. God had to reveal a righteous solution because men were fundamentally unrighteous. That’s the way Romans puts it. No one is righteous, and therefore God had to supply the righteousness.

In Isaiah, if you look back at Isaiah 59, one of the things you find in the Old Testament is that God looks upon His people and says, that there is “*no one to intercede for My*

## *“Who Are You?”*

*people.”* And it’s a mess. And so what does the text say? It says that His own arm upheld Him, and that He put on righteousness. Why did He put on righteousness and why did His own arm uphold Him? We might expect it to say that His arm upheld His people. But it doesn’t say that. I’ll tell you why it says that. It says that because God dons righteousness in His Son to become our righteousness. And that’s what 2 Corinthians 5:21 says. *“He made Him who knew no sin to be made sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”*

That’s all Isaiah 59 is saying as it’s explained through the lens of the New Testament. And so what we have is God bringing the solution of righteousness to an unrighteous people.

Having that in mind, notice this. Two examples. First of all, Matthew 3:1-17. Jesus goes to John the Baptist. And John the Baptist says, “No, no, no. I shouldn’t be baptizing you. You should be baptizing me.” And what does Jesus say? “Let’s do this now, that all righteousness may be fulfilled.”

Why? Because in 9:10-13 what does it say? In 9:10-13 Jesus says, *“He reclined at the table in the house. And behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to the disciples, ‘Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?’*

*“But when He heard it, He said, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.’”* In other words, “I came for those who recognize that they are sinners.”

Now that is a perfect lead-in to the Beatitudes. And I want to show this to you. Let’s just try to work through this.

*“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”* What does He mean when He says, *“poor in spirit?”* I’ll tell you what He means. He means those who recognize that they’re sinners.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Jeff:** That’s what He means. And what happens when they recognize that they’re poor in spirit? They mourn for their condition. That’s the second Beatitude.

And then what do they do? They are gentle, or they humble themselves. And then why do they do that? Because they hunger and thirst for what? Righteousness. And when they hunger and thirst for righteousness, they shall be what? Filled.

And then what happens? The next four Beatitudes are about the change that takes place because of the righteousness that they now have that is not their own, or alien to them, but imputed to them by Jesus Christ. They are merciful. They extend mercy. They’re pure in heart. They’re peacemakers. They are going to be persecuted. Why? For the sake of righteousness. That’s the last Beatitude.

So the fourth Beatitude is about an alien righteousness that they’re given. The eighth Beatitude is that they are going to suffer for having been given this righteousness. And that really takes you back to the family theme. If they persecuted the head of the house, they’re going to persecute the sons and daughters of the house. It’s just built into the Beatitudes themselves, okay?

## “Who Are You?”

So how should we live? I’m going to race through this. We have two minutes.  
(*Laughter*) No, that’s good, that’s good. It’s okay.

So there are aspects of family life or assuming our role as sons and daughters that we ought to take on board here. What can we expect as a child of God?

Well, verse 11. And I’m going to skip over this. I’ve explained to you before that it’s a tag. And in this case it’s a tag from the Beatitudes that will fall out in the next set of verses.

“*Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.*” What’s the principle? The principle is that if they persecuted Jesus, they’re going to persecute you. We saw that in Matthew chapter 10.

How should we respond? By knowing that it’s not about us. There is going to be an eschatological reckoning, and we’re not alone. All of that falls out of that verse right afterwards. You can see that later.

But here’s the question. What is our function in the world? These are two final things that I want you to see.

*We’re to be salt.* Now this is a perplexing verse. The next one is not. I want you to look at Matthew chapter 5, and look at what it says. “*You are the salt of the earth. But if salt has lost its saltiness, how shall its saltiness be restored?*”

Here’s the difficulty. The difficulty is that if you look at that phrase “*lost its taste*”, I want you to know what that is. That word in the Greek is *becomes a moron*. He becomes moronic. (*Laughter*) That’s where we get our word *moron*. It comes from the Greek.

“*You are the salt of the earth.*” But if salt has become moronic, how shall its saltiness be restored? Now that’s an interpretive mood to say “lost its taste.”

So all of a sudden, you have to ask yourself, “Well, wait a minute! What is salt?” And a lot of people will say, “Well salt is a preservative.” I challenge you to find that consistent theme represented throughout the Bible. There are all kinds of different uses for salt in the Bible. But I’m going to give you how I understand this, okay? This is not dogmatic. I’m just going to tell you. There are some times when I’m really dogmatic. This is not one of them. I’m going to tell you what I think. If you don’t like it, it’s okay with me.

I think that one of the things that salt was used as was that it was used as a metaphor for wisdom. And I think that if you read this with that in mind, it makes a lot of sense. You are the wisdom of the earth. But if wisdom has become moronic, how shall its wisdom be restored? I’ll read that again because that was broken. You are the wisdom of the earth. But if wisdom has become moronic, how shall its wisdom be restored?

In other words, you are the wisdom of the earth because you have the gospel. You have the righteousness of God revealed in you. But if that’s lost, how will it be regained?

So what is our function in the world? To be the wisdom of God to the world.

And then what’s next? *Light*. And light is explained in the text. He tells us what light is. It’s good works. And so when you think about it like that, one of the things that’s striking is this. What is He telling us to do? Well, He’s telling us to be salty. To have salty gospel wisdom, and to let the good works of our lives shine. What is He telling us? He’s telling us to think the gospel, speak the gospel and do the gospel.

## ***“Who Are You?”***

**Participant:** Amen.

**Jeff:** He’s saying this. If you have received the righteousness that we’re talking about in the Beatitudes, if you’re now a son or a daughter of God, therefore speak and think and act the wisdom of the gospel. And let the light of the wisdom of the gospel proceed from your life.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Jeff:** I’m really sorry that this was such a whirlwind. If you want to start with questions next time, I’d welcome that. But it’s a lot of material to cover. That’s all I have. Do you have any questions? *(Laughter)*

**Participant:** This isn’t a question, but this is where I might disagree. It doesn’t say that we are to be salt and light.

**Jeff:** We are. Sure. Yes, we are the wisdom of God. I knew that’s what you were going for.

Well let me pray for us and then we’ll adjourn. Father in heaven, thank You so much for this day. Bless this day to us. Lord, help us each and every moment. Bless those who we prayed for earlier. Be with them, Lord, through the difficulties. And Lord, we ask it in Christ’s name. Amen.

**Men:** Amen. *(Applause)*