

# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

*by Jesus Christ*

*To obey is better than sacrifice  
( 1 Samuel 15:22 )*

*Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord",  
will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he  
who does the will of My Father who is in heaven  
( Matthew 7:21 )*

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## A MOUNTAIN OF FAITH

In 1994 I visited the *Mount of Beattitudes* near the town of Capernaum on the northern shores of the Sea of Galilee in Israel. On the sides of these sloping hills overlooking the fertile valleys of Galilee, Jesus Christ, somewhere between 30 and 33 AD, delivered His sermon on the Kingdom of God. Surrounded by a multitude of people, He singled out His disciples, sat them down in the grass and on the rocks, and taught them the greatest secret of human existence - the Kingdom of God.

The message of the Kingdom of God was not a new message. It had been Israel's hope for thousands of years. Everyone looked forward to the fulfillment of the prophets who spoke of a Mighty Deliverer. That Deliverer would set Israel free and launch her eternal Golden Age as it was in the days of King David. Only this Golden Age would last beyond a millennium. Common belief in Jesus' days was in a Kingdom of God that would overthrow the current oppressors of Rome. Many would ask themselves, "*Is this Jesus the One? Is He the Mighty Deliverer?*" The air seemed pregnant with anticipation as this man from Galilee began His public teaching ministry. Mighty signs and wonders affirmed that this Jesus was not some ordinary prophet seeking to find a following for His cause. For three years Jesus taught the Kingdom of God.

For three years even His closest disciples, the chosen twelve, did not understand. They simply could not rid their minds of a hope in an earthly kingdom. Even though Jesus would say many times, "*My Kingdom is not of this earth*", His followers chose to ignore the *not* in Jesus' words. In vain they tried to hail Him as King during an impromptu entry into Jerusalem. In vain they asked again and again, "*Is this the moment we've been waiting for? Is the time finally here to overthrow the wicked Herod, and the rid the land of Rome's legions? Here Lord, let me show You how to deal with the oppressors. I'll cut off one of his ears if he tries to touch you. Look Jesus, Your popularity is at an all time high; grab the moment!*" But Jesus did not hear their mistaken notions of an earthly kingdom. Instead He patiently continued to lay a foundation for a heavenly kingdom. Little did people know that this heavenly kingdom called the Kingdom of God would one day be the only rule over heaven and earth.

But first there had to be a complete turn-around of people's thoughts and faith. In fact, to really understand what Jesus was talking about you need the mind of Jesus Himself. To have the mind of Jesus, that is His understanding, His knowledge and wisdom, you need the Spirit of Jesus. God had promised that this Spirit, the Holy Spirit, would be poured out on all mankind. To those who believe in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit will reveal the mysteries of the Kingdom. Not until Pentecost in 33AD, shortly after Jesus had returned to the Father to prepare the final stages of the Kingdom's eternal rule, was the promise of the Spirit fulfilled. Suddenly the minds and hearts of the disciples of Jesus were opened to understand what Jesus had taught them for three intense years. The task ahead was formidable. Would all of Israel believe? Would even the whole world believe? No, they would not. And why not? Because the error of understanding the Kingdom of God continued from the days of the apostles and into the early church.

Even today, that same error has permeated the beliefs of many. To understand the Kingdom of God, you **must** believe that Kingdom **has come**. You must believe that Jesus taught a *heavenly* Kingdom, whose government begins *on earth in the hearts of believers*. You must believe that the rule of that Kingdom is *a change of heart*, not to be confused with an automatic change of circumstances. Only a change of heart in submission to the Kingdom rule of Jesus will bring lasting change. That lasting change is **YOU**, not the people, events and governments around you. As **YOU** live to give evidence of a changed heart by faith in Jesus Christ through love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, through all kinds of trials, temptations, and unchanged adverse circumstances, will others catch a glimpse of the Kingdom of God in you.

Modern man has changed the requirements of the Kingdom to suit their belief in earthly change. Righteousness is the requirement of the Kingdom. Man has changed *righteousness* to earthly *reward*, when in fact the reward of righteousness is heavenly. Faith will change circumstances. Faith will change events. But faith is not the object of your affections or the subject of your worship. Obedience is. The *obedience of faith* is submission to the rule of Jesus in your heart and the hope and trust that He will return to establish this Kingdom on earth as well. Even though the Kingdom of God **has come** in the hearts of believers, it is still **to come** over all the peoples and nations of the world. Your reward **now** is complete **assurance** that you are a partaker of that eternal Kingdom to come because you believe that same Kingdom has already begun in your heart the moment you heard the Good News and believed in Jesus Christ. It is **assurance** that carries you through difficult times, seemingly unanswered prayer, dashed hopes and disappointments. Your reward **to come** is every blessing ever promised by God. Your reward to come is everything you have ever hoped for and even dreamed about as you read God's Word and heard His Spirit say, "*Well done My faithful servant. Enter into your rest and eternal reward!*"

For two thousand years, men have tried to explain this Kingdom. For two thousand years men have tried to develop moral codes based on the teachings of Jesus Christ, yet failed to see the secret of a need for absolute obedience and trust. Jesus Christ did not reveal this Kingdom blueprint simply for man to spend endless centuries arguing the fundamentals of its content. Did Jesus mean what He said? Can one take His words literally? Perhaps there is a hidden meaning, an allegory, a mere model for moral behaviour? Perhaps man should re-examine Christ's words and re-shape their meaning relevant to contemporary culture and society? Jesus Christ did not deliver His *Sermon on the Mount* for consideration and possible acceptance into one's daily life. He gave this sermon as written proof of the Kingdom of God and a true purpose of that kingdom - the rule of its King.

The King does not require a *sacrifice* of endless hours of exegesis, creedal dogmatism and private interpretation. The King requires *obedience* and a *trust* that places His ways before man's ways. For that reason I have *expanded* the text of the *Sermon on the Mount* to demonstrate its everlasting truth, a truth when obeyed, will bring freedom. To understand the *Sermon on the Mount* one must always remember that Jesus teaches the Kingdom of God from a divine perspective, not an earthly

perspective. His divine perspective is a perfect perspective, that is, a complete perspective which includes the fullness of creation and man. That perspective is man as spirit, soul and body. The understanding of Jesus' divine perspective of the Kingdom of God is simple. Man's life is only godlike when *obedience* is applied to spirit, soul and body. The three are inseparable. Obedience begins in your heart. *It is to the heart that Jesus speaks.*

To speak to a man's heart will affect his soul, including his will, his reason, his intellect and emotions. To speak to a man's heart and soul will affect his body which is his conduct, his speech and his behaviour. **The Sermon on the Mount speaks to the heart, the spirit of man.** When divine kingdom truth is revealed by the Spirit of God to the spirit of man, his only response must be *obedience of faith* to affect his will, reason, intellect, emotions, conduct, speech and behaviour in such a manner as to become a living demonstration that in fact Jesus' Kingdom truth has brought about lasting and genuine change. It is a demonstration in word and deed that a follower of Jesus Christ has given his entire life in humble submission to the righteous and just government of the King. That is the Kingdom of God, the fellowship of those who believe and *obey in trust* their eternal and God-anointed King and Lord, Jesus Christ.

To their hearts Jesus Christ speaks the words of the Kingdom of God in His *Sermon on the Mount*. **Of them** He requires no more than *obedience of faith* and complete *trust*. **To them** He offers a new eternal life with forgiveness and abundant love. **In them** He works a rebirth of heart, a renewal of soul and a commitment of body to follow the Master's footsteps in the Kingdom of God. The original sermon was given by Jesus Christ probably in the year 31 AD. For an additional thirty years it passed from person to person in the oral tradition of teaching. Around 60 AD the gospel writer Matthew compiled a written record of that sermon in chapters five, six and seven. I wrote this *expanded* text of the *Sermon on the Mount* using the original text and adding a summary of over twelve years of teaching and study of the Kingdom of God. Needless to say, regardless of how much one reads the word of God, no study is complete without *obedience of faith*, the greatest form of worship. You are invited to sit on the mountainside of faith and listen to the words of Jesus. It is my prayer you will hear what the Spirit of God says to you.

*Gerrit Verstraete, 1998*

## MATTHEW 5

1. When Jesus saw the multitudes who were following Him, He climbed the slopes of a nearby mountain and sat down. Then He called His disciples. They came and sat down next to Him to hear what He was about to say.

2. He began to teach them about the **Kingdom of God** or as it is also called, the Kingdom of heaven. He began His teaching with a series of *attitudes* of the heart to describe the *character, conduct, and influence* of those who choose to make the Kingdom of God their life and to *persevere* in obedience and trust. Jesus Christ said Kingdom citizens with such attitudes would be *blessed*. To be *blessed* is to be happy and the envy of others. To be *blessed* is to be spiritually prosperous with joy and satisfaction in God's favour, regardless of what circumstances of life may say to the contrary. To be *blessed* is to experience every day the *assurance* of a right standing with God and a deep inner *peace* overflowing with *joy* and *power of faith* as children of God. What follows are the words of Jesus Christ known as the *Sermon on the Mount* or the *message of the Kingdom of God*.

3. Blessed are the poor in spirit who realize the shortcomings in their character because of their own inability and insufficiency to obey and please God, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven when they turn to the Father who will give strength and ability in times of need.

4. Blessed are those who mourn for their stubborn character and disobedient actions with a repentance that shows true sorrow, for they shall be comforted by the Holy Spirit and assured they are children of God.

5. Blessed are those whose conduct is meek and gentle, and who because of their teachable spirit will remain willing to learn and be corrected when they stray, for they shall inherit the earth and all God's eternal promises.

6. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness of character and a spiritual health that demonstrates justice and fairness, wisdom and godliness, for they shall be satisfied to know that God is pleased.

7. Blessed are the merciful, full of compassionate conduct without judgement or condemnation, for they shall be treated likewise and receive mercy, knowing God's love will overcome all hardship.

8. Blessed are those whose character is without pretense and pure in heartfelt attitudes, for they shall see the presence of God evident in their lives at every turn and in every situation.

9. Blessed are the peacemakers whose conduct brings a quieting influence in times of strife and opposition and in situations of conflict, for they shall be recognized as true servants of the Lord and called sons of God.

10. Blessed are those who persevere in their loyalty to the King, especially when they have been persecuted for the sake of remaining true to their right standing with God and without doubt about the righteousness they have been made in Christ. For theirs is the honour that belongs to citizens of the Kingdom of God.

11. Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you with rejection, slander, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, giving opportunity to the enemies of the Kingdom of God to undermine your faith in Jesus and undermine the power and authority you have in His name.

**12.** Rejoice, be glad, do not let their taunts and accusations get you down, for your reward in heaven is great. You are not alone when you suffer for Me, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. They are now with Me and have already received their heavenly reward.

**13.** You are the salt of the earth, so preserve the integrity of your character in order to have a constructive influence on others. But if your character strays from godliness, how will you influence anyone? Your words mean nothing anymore and your actions do not reflect the Lord whom you say you serve. Your character becomes good for nothing, your name unreliable and untrustworthy, except to be rejected and ridiculed by men.

**14.** You are the light of the world. Kingdom citizens must have a positive influence on others that is real and visible in every aspect of daily life. As a city set on a hill cannot be hidden, so must the light of God's eternal truth in your life humbly offer honest solutions for the lives of others and bring the light of hope and love into a world trapped in darkness of despair and fear.

**15.** Nor do men light a lamp, and put it under a peck-measure, but on the lampstand; and it gives light to all who are in the house. When your heavenly Father through His Spirit freely gives you answers to the mysteries of life, do not keep them for yourself. Share them openly and boldly with those who ask.

**16.** Let the light of your godly character, your godly conduct, your godly influence and your godly perseverance shine before men in such a way that they may see your obedience to the King as good works not done in your own strength but through the power of God's Holy Spirit, in order to bring glory to your Father who is in heaven.

**17.** Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. I am not here to tell you the Law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets are no longer valid. In fact they are valid. However, I will teach you to go one step further. I will teach you to make the Law and prophets a matter of not simply outward obedience, but commitment and faith of the heart.

**18.** For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke, nor one condition for obedience shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished. Every aspect of the Law as it pertains to human conduct is valid.

**19.** Whoever then changes or invalidates one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others to make the Law relevant to current issues and times, shall be called least in the Kingdom of God; but whoever keeps the Law and teaches the rule of the King, shall be called great in the Kingdom of God.

**20.** For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the Kingdom of God. The way I rule as a righteous and just King in your life, is not by strict adherence to outward rules and regulations. That was the function of the Law. **I fulfill that Law by taking obedience a step further through the careful examination of a believer's heart.** The scribes and Pharisees obtained a measure of right standing with the Father because of their outward obedience to the Law.

But the Law does not expose the actual intent of the heart. A man may not commit a sin in deed, yet sin because of the intent of his heart. This is most important to understand. **Examination by My Spirit exposes the true intent of the heart** and will direct you to turn to God's ways, not in fear of condemnation or punishment, but out of deep love for God and the freedom He brings.

To live in perfect obedience is no longer the *sacrifice* of a change of behaviour through Old Testament Law. Perfect obedience is a change of heart in response to My words which will result in a change of behaviour. Thus I fulfill the Law and the Prophets. Outward change is a temporary process that, with the best of personal discipline, will only yield frustration and defeat as you strive daily to obey the commands of God yet in your heart resent the demands of God's Law. But inner change, the change of one's heart, is a permanent change brought about by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will change your heart if you will believe in Me, and enable you to fulfill the greatest law. That law is to love God and to love your neighbour. To love God is to obey Him. When the Holy Spirit enables you to love God, you will in love obey Him. To focus the obedience of your love completely on God, fulfills the demands of the entire Law. From a changed heart, set free from rebellious attitudes, a river of living water will flow to affect your outward behaviour without fear of failure or the condemnation of trial and temptation. When you obey the Father and believe in Me, you will also believe all that was spoken about Me by the prophets. All that was spoken by the prophets about the times in which you live and the future of My Kingdom are true. I am the fulfillment of the prophets' words concerning the coming of My kingdom. I will also fulfill all that the prophets spoke about events to come. *These words are faithful and true; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show His bondservants the things which must shortly take place.* **My rule is life-giving truth of the Kingdom of God to examine the motives of your heart and set you free.** This examination has the exclusive purpose of showing you what stands in your way of the Kingdom's righteousness, peace, joy and power through submission to the rule of the King. By examining your heart, I fulfill the Law by revealing specific needs in your life that require trust and obedience to the commandments of God.

Having said that, let Me show you the way I examine your heart to expose hindrances of rebellion, resentment, independence, bitterness, unforgiveness and more. But I will also show you freedom through obedience.

**21.** You have heard from the 6th commandment of the Law in Exodus 20:13 and from Deuteronomy 16:18, that the ancients were told, *"You shall not commit murder"* and *"Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court"*.

**22.** To obey that law is one thing, but to fulfill it is another. Outward obedience may appear holy, but it is the heart that must be changed in order to experience real and lasting freedom. Therefore I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother in his heart, shall be guilty before the court; and whoever speaks out of an angry heart and says to his brother, *"Raca, you empty-headed idiot"*, shall be guilty before the supreme court as if he murdered the brother; and whoever in heated outburst shall give anyone a *"piece of their mind"* and say, *"You fool"*, shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell, a punishment deserved for those who kill, even if that murder is committed in the heart yet never acted upon in deed. **Because anger in your heart** is spiritual cancer. Spiritual cancer kills your will to do God's will. I want you to be free from spiritual cancer. Here is how you can be set free.

**23.** If you are presenting your offering at the altar, or before you go to church, or get together to pray and have fellowship with one another, and suddenly remember that your brother or sister in the Lord has something against you, there is strife and division



between you and a fellow believer, and you can feel that anger rising in your heart towards that person,

**24.** leave your offering there before the altar, drop whatever you are doing, stop and consider My Kingdom way; first be reconciled to your brother, settle the argument, repair the damage and then come and present your offering and resume your former plans. If you harbour repressed feelings and thoughts of vengeance, repent. Do not give spiritual cancer room to incubate.

**25.** Even if the situation threatens to go to court, ***do not let anger in your heart rule your decisions.*** Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, in order that your opponent may not deliver you to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. Even if the other person was wrong and you were unjustly treated, forgive.

**26.** Truly I say to you, if you do not obey My kingdom way, you shall not come out of there, until you have paid up the last cent. You will not escape the spread of spiritual cancer. Until you have obeyed all the kingdom ways I have taught you about repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation, you cannot stop the spread of spiritual cancer in your spirit, soul and body. When your heart is exposed and you see the anger in it, obey immediately and you will be free.

**27.** Let Me show you another way in which I examine your heart. You have heard from the 7th commandment of the Law in Exodus 20:14 where it was said, "*You shall not commit adultery*". Well, the same Kingdom truth applies as in anger of the heart. You may not have committed the act of adultery;

**28.** But I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. I want to expose those **hidden lusts and sinful desires**, especially your tendency to nurse those lusts and desires while you feed on them with self-pity. You lust because you say, "*no one really understands me; someone else can meet my needs better than my husband or my wife*". So you fantasize about who is better than your spouse. The result is a pollution of heart and soul so great, the danger of thoughts becoming actions increases every day. The result of actions based on lusts and ungodly desires is irreparable damage of relationships that leaves lasting scars.

**29.** Obedience to My Kingdom way means ***cutting out or cutting off everything that feeds those lusts.*** No surgery is too severe. And if your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. The price for purity may be severe, but freedom from guilt, shame and transmitted diseases is worth the price.

**30.** And if your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to go into hell. No surgery is too severe. Let My Holy Spirit examine your heart and show you that submission to My divine surgery brings abundant life.

**31.** Again from the Old Testament Law it was said, "*Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of dismissal*", referring to both the legal procedure of divorce and the legal binding of oaths. First the legal procedure of divorce.

**32.** Don't be too eager to violate the commitment you made to your husband or wife. Perhaps your motive was not right to begin with. You said "*yes*" but in your heart you added the condition "*for as long as it works out*" or "*until I tire of her and find*

*someone new*". But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the cause of unchastity, commits a serious error because he makes her commit adultery when she contemplates marrying someone else. Whoever marries or contemplates marrying a divorced woman participates in that same error and commits adultery too. But why do I single out marriage and divorce? Is one sin greater than another? No, it is not. Marriage is a direct reflection on the character of My Father in heaven.

**33.** My Father's character is one of faithfulness. You can fully depend on Him and trust Him in all He has said in His Word. The issue of marriage or divorce is one of faithfulness. **Faithfulness is commitment to the choice you have made.** This brings Me to the second legal procedure of binding oaths. Again remember, you have heard that the ancients were told, *"You shall not make false vows, but shall fulfill your vows to the Lord."*

**34.** Your choice is not an option to break a vow. But I say to you, consider all consequences when you make a commitment, or make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God,

**35.** or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. If you are going to commit yourself to a godly relationship, remember when you say *"I do, God helping me"*, or *"I swear on His Word"*, or *"in His name"*, it is a binding oath not subject to re-negotiation when circumstances change.

**36.** Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Your head may say *"yes"*, but what does your heart say? You can promise the world but if your heart's intent is not to honour what you say, then what good is your *"yes"*? The reason this is so important is simple. The way you conduct yourself in the commitments you make is a direct reflection on the God you believe. How can you speak of a God of love who is faithful and trustworthy when you entertain **unfaithfulness in your heart?**

**37.** But let your statement be, *"Yes, yes"*, or *"No, no"*; and anything beyond these is of an evil intention. Evil is the intent to change the rules of relationships as you see fit. Evil is the intent of walking out of any binding agreement you have made. My Kingdom is a people of godly character, conduct, influence and perseverance who honour Me and experience peace and joy of that Kingdom because of a **commitment to their binding choice** of Me, the Father and one another.

**38.** Let me take My Kingdom rule in your heart a step deeper to show you how by loving exposure of **wrong attitudes** in your heart, I can show you the way to love and compassion, healing and deliverance. You have heard that the Law said in Exodus 21:23-25, *"An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth"*,

**39.** but I say to you, do not resist him who is evil; but whoever slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. The Kingdom of God is not about vengeance, retribution and *"getting even"*. The Kingdom of God is about exposing rebellion, resentment and an independent spirit in your heart. These are the very things that will keep you from experiencing My freedom and your assurance of an eternal destiny.

**40.** Your life, your hope, your dreams, your ambitions are not wrapped up in the *"get-it-while-you-can"* attitude of the world. The more you are aware of the truth I bring about your eternal reward and place in the Kingdom of God, the less concerned you will be about the unfairness and injustices of the world. Your attitudes will change regarding a stand for your rights alone, getting even, how mistreated you really have been. When push comes to shove you can only depend on yourself. After all *"God helps those who*

*help themselves*". No! Instead **you must be free to be flexible**, allowing the Father to shape you any way He wills. Then if anyone wants to sue you, and take your shirt, you are free to let him have your coat also.

**41.** And whoever shall force you to go one mile, go with him two. You are free to go the distance in forgiveness and kindness. You are free to give beyond just the required minimum.

**42.** Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you. Your eternal treasure is with Me, in My eternal Kingdom, in the new heaven and new earth. It doesn't compare with the things you want to hang on to so dearly on this earth. As I examine your heart and show you the attitudes that keep you from My peace and My joy, do not resist My work in you. Do not let gut reactions of self-defense and getting even, based on wrong attitudes and wrong understanding of "*an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth*" prevent you from remaining **non-resistant, flexible, with a soft heart, yielding in My Father's hands.**

**43.** My rule in your life is to perfect you, which means to make you a complete person. That completeness is found in perfect love. Let Me explain. You have heard that it was said in Leviticus 19:16-18, "*You shall love your neighbour, and hate your enemy*". This law exposes **your capacity for love is only a conditional one.** You love those you like and cannot stand those you do not like. In fact you may even hate those who oppose you. But as I fulfill that law with unconditional love. I command you to do likewise. But there's more.

**44.** I say to you, love your *enemies*, and pray for those who persecute you including anyone who does not agree with you, fights against you, and who tries to slander your reputation. Why? Because to be complete through perfect love is to love unconditionally

**45.** in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. I am perfect love. I am unconditional love. As I am, so you must be to experience the freedom that comes from letting go of love's conditions, whether family, friend or enemy.

**46.** For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax-gatherers do the same? It is easy to love on the condition they love you back. It is easy to like those who like you. It is what the whole world does.

**47.** And, closer to home in your fellowship with believers, if you greet your brothers only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Don't they treat you with respect when you are a member of the same country club? That is no more than worldly, conditional love.

**48.** Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. You must be **complete in unconditional love** as I am towards you and am towards the world. I loved you when you were a sinner, and I love you now as a member of God's family. Therefore remove the dividing line between love and hate which is partiality. Partiality breeds a love that is doubtful and will eventually turn to hatred. Impartiality of unconditional love overcomes even the worst of times because there is nothing that can overcome the completeness of unconditional love.

## **MATTHEW 6**

1. Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. What exactly is your motive? Do you perform religious rituals and routines for everyone to see just so they will call you spiritual? If all you want is people's acclaim and reward, you will get it with a good show, but your heavenly Father will not be impressed. He is not going to reward you for just a good performance. He wants to know the attitude of your heart. Do you perform church works of service just because you think it is the only way to be blessed by God? God's favour is not because you work for it. God's favour is yours because God gives it freely. God's favour is called grace. In actual fact, the righteousness God delights in, is a secret life based on an intimate relationship with Him. **God is interested in the secrets of your heart and not the performance of your public self.** Take for example three areas where the attitude of a secret heart is often overshadowed by religious pressure to perform in public, so everyone may see just how spiritual you are. These areas are **giving, prayer and fasting**, three vital ingredients of your spiritual life.

2. When therefore you give any amount of money to the ministry of the church, especially large amounts or other great gifts of property and possessions, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honoured by men. Do not let the whole world know. Why not give anonymously? Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. Sure, people will respond and name buildings after you and put your name high up on a plaque for all to see. But that is all you'll get, except perhaps for a tax receipt.

3. But when you give anything at all, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. Do not pass your gift from hand to hand for all to see. Do not make a public spectacle of your giving. Do not wave your money high in the air passing it from left to right hand to make sure every one sees.

4. **Let your giving be a secret between you and the Father**, in order that the sole purpose of your secret gifts be to please Him. If that is your only motive, your Father in heaven, who sees the secret and true attitude of your heart towards giving, will repay you.

5. And when you pray, you are not to be as the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues, on street corners, at the front of a crowd and every time there is a call to prayer in the church, just so that they can be seen by everyone. They crave for media attention to look spiritual and perhaps gain some advantage and get stronger financial support for their cause. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. They may get what they perform so hard for, but the Father will not be pleased.

6. But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, and when you have shut your door, **pray to your Father who is in secret**, and your Father who sees in secret will repay you. Make prayer a private affair. After all, you may say all the right words in public, but God knows whether you believe any of them. **It is in private secret prayer where you receive the assurance your prayers are both heard and answered.**

7. And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition, as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. Words do not impress God. Your softness in your heart towards Him does. Quality is a whole lot more important to God than quantity. One word in faith is more powerful than a dictionary of

words. Replace those untrue motives of *bargaining with God* with pure and humble motives of obedience.

**8.** Therefore do not be like those who strive for public attention to their prayers; for your Father already knows what you need, even before you ask Him.

**9.** For example, let Me give you a model for your heart's true prayer. First pray to acknowledge God the Father above all else. Pray then, in this way:

*"My Father who is in heaven, truly I honour Your name. There is no name greater. You are My God. You are my Father and Creator.*

**10.** *May Your kingdom rule be established both in my heart and life as well as over all the earth. Only Your will matters on this earth as it matters in heaven.* Then continue pray for yourself and your loved ones.

**11.** *Give us this day our daily bread. Provide for me and my family all we need for safety, protection, provision and a peaceful life.*

**12.** *And forgive me my debt of always doing my will and not Yours. And even as I know You forgive me, I will obey Your command to forgive those who have wronged me regardless of how much they hurt me and my family.*

**13.** *Help me Lord not to be overcome by temptation and keep me from missing the mark as I trust Your Holy Spirit to warn me of the dangers that lie ahead. Give me the strength and faith to resist evil and be delivered from evil's deceitful ways.*

Then finish your prayer by returning to the source of all your comfort and joy, namely God Himself as you glorify Him with these words, *For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever, Amen."*

**14.** Remember the awesome power of forgiveness, both in your life and in the lives of others. Prayers of forgiveness are not enough. You must follow up with deeds that make it absolutely clear you have forgiven those who wronged you. It is the key to assurance of *your* forgiveness by God. For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

**15. But if you do not forgive men, the conduit to your heart is plugged. There is no place for God's grace and forgiveness to enter your heart.** Then your Father will not forgive your transgressions even though He wants to.

**16.** In addition to a secret life of *giving* and *prayer* there is a secret life of *fasting*. Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance in order to be seen fasting by men. Do not cry aloud that you are so spiritual because you are denying food for a day or a number of days. Do not boast about the length of your fast. Do not tell everyone that your fast is for such noble purposes you simply cannot be expected to do anything else such as look after your family or give your employer an honest day's work. Truly I say to you, **if that is the motive of your heart to be recognized as a spiritual giant**, you have your reward in full. They will recognize and honour you, but My Father will not.

**17.** But you, when you fast, anoint your head, and wash your face. Look your best, smell nice as if you are not denying anything at all

**18.** so that you may not be *seen* fasting by men. It will not be obvious to anyone that you are fasting. Instead it will look like you are celebrating life. If that is your true motive, then your Father who is in secret and who sees in secret will repay you and grant you the purpose of your fast. **I will expose the true motive of your heart towards giving, prayer and fasting.** I will show you if you entertain religious rituals, reward performances, positioning for God's favour, desires for earthly recognition for influence

and a deception that My anointing is for fame and prominence. The reason I will expose such attitudes is to set you free in the secret life of the Kingdom.

**19.** Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. There is absolutely no security in the material treasures of earth. Even the most stable investments can suddenly fall when market conditions crash. Even the best of savings are subject to depreciation and inflation. Even if you believe your home is secure from predators because of advanced security systems, you will never know for sure.

**20.** But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal. **Heaven's treasures are your investments in time and resources to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God.** A life saved is a life secure from moths, rust and thieves.

**21.** The issue is not how much you can save, but how generous you are with earthly treasures knowing heaven's treasures are more valuable and secure. Why hang on to what is insecure when you can hang on to what is secure? **If your heart is the King and His Kingdom, then your earthly treasure is at His disposal to use for whatever purpose He sees fit for His Kingdom.**

**22.** The lamp of the body is the eye; if therefore your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. If your relationship to earthly treasure and the spiritual power of money is Godly, then your whole life will be filled with the joy of giving.

**23.** But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. When you put your trust in the power and control of money, you lose. What was once a generous heart towards possessions, now becomes darkened by fear of not having enough for the needs of tomorrow even when you already have a great abundance of possessions. Light shining on your giving has become darkness over your treasures. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness. It will eventually consume you with fear of loss, and expose your true relationship to earthly material treasure.

**24.** Your freedom is in the power of your choice. Make up your mind. Which master do you chose? The power of money to control your life or the power of God to control your life? You cannot have both. **As one decreases so the other must increase.** No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. The power of money and the power of God are diametrically opposed. You cannot serve God and mammon. God gives riches so that He may use them for His glory and His Kingdom.

**25.** For what reason do you have to be anxious about the future. I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, as to what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; nor for your body, as to what you shall put on. Is not eternal life more important than worrying about food and clothing for the body?

**26.** Even nature's animals understand this. Do they worry? Instinctively they know there will always be food. Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? Of course you are worth more than just animals. **But will you trust Him with your life?**

**27.** Whether you are burdened by the poverty syndrome of a victim mentality, the success syndrome of a dominance mentality or the non-deserving worm mentality of a lack of self-worth in God's eyes, what does it get you? And which of you by being anxious

can add a single year to his life's span? Anxiety will shorten your life. Do *you* have anxiety in your heart? Why?

**28.** All you end up with is discontentment, fear of failure, fear of rejection and ridicule, worry and anxiety, and deeply rooted unbelief resulting in mistrust in the Father. And why are you anxious about clothing? Is anxiety about trend-setting fashions, peer acceptance based on brand names and belonging in the latest fad really worth the worry? Take a look at nature around you. God created every part of it. Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, and what about the bloom of a Spring meadow, the majesty of a ocean sunset, or the fabulous wealth and riches of Solomon,

**29.** yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself like one of these. Even his wealth and riches cannot match the wonder and awesome splendour of nature's grand beauty.

**30.** But if God so arrays the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, and so created nature to be a testimony to His trustworthiness, will He not much more do so for you. O men of little faith? Your journey of faith is not to worry about whether you will have enough for tomorrow. **Yours is a journey of faith and contentment knowing God will look after you now** on this earth, which is just a glimpse, a taste of what He has prepared for you in His Kingdom **to come**.

**31.** Don't worry. Do not be anxious then, saying, "*What shall we eat or what shall we drink? Or with what shall we clothe ourselves?*"

**32.** For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek. This is their lot in life, to worry about stock prices, money value, home safety, registered retirement savings and investment security believing somehow that the more they have the better off they will be, and the better prepared they will be for the later years of life. In the end, the power of wealth rules their heart's attitudes and beliefs. Their priorities of life are backwards returning to a darkness of despair and fear. Why not rest secure and be content with His provision for your daily needs? You can trust Him because your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

**33.** Your priority must simply be to serve the Lord with all your heart. Your priority is to make Kingdom matters of greatest importance. **The greatest Kingdom priority is to trust Jesus as He rules your life.** Your priority is to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you. When you make the righteous, just, fair and equitable life of the Kingdom *your* life, somehow by God's mercy and grace and because of His unfailing love for you, all the pieces of life will fall in place, from the smallest need to the greatest of daily needs to the needs of your entire life.

**34.** The answer to my question of *whom you will serve* is simple. Serve Me and there will no longer be a need to be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. In fact, I charge you emphatically, *do not be anxious about tomorrow*.

## **MATTHEW 7**

**1.** Let Me continue the examination of your heart. I must expose even more in order to let My truth set you free from the crippling effect of rebellion, resentment and

independence. Remember, My desire for you is complete freedom to enjoy My peace and My joy for all eternity. **Therefore I must deal with the deepest secret attitudes of your heart.** Are you aware how callous your judgments can be of others? I say, *do not judge lest you be judged.*

2. The hardness and insensitivity with which you judge others will return in hardness and insensitivity of others towards you. What you sow you will reap. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. Critics will always be criticized.

3. And why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? You repeatedly point to the faults of others when you make even greater mistakes yourself. How can you help anyone constructively when you don't even know the answers yourself.

4. How can you say to your brother, "*Let me take the speck out of your eye*", and behold, the log is in your own eye? How can you teach someone responsibility when you are irresponsible? How can you demand your children live by the moral standards of My Word when you live in violation of even the simplest of commands? Yet you judge *this young generation* having never judged yourself by the same measure.

5. You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. You are called to help, encourage, love and lift one another up. You may rebuke and correct based on the truth of My Word, but never with heartless judgment. **Never carry callous judgment in your heart** even when you are decent enough not to verbalize it. Eventually the venom of callous judgments will destroy your ability to reach out with love and compassion. Judge rightly and you will be judged rightly.

6. There is also a great need for Spiritual discernment. You must know the motive of your heart. How are you growing in the Spirit and what you may or may not share about My work in you. Not everything I expose or teach should be disclosed to others before you have had the opportunity to apply them to your own life. Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

What you share with others are precious secrets of My Kingdom, not just interesting facts and useful information. Share with those who have *ears to hear* and not with those who have *hearts of stone*. My truth is not an option for consideration. My truth is to be obeyed. **Watch for a carelessness of words** about My Kingdom teaching. Beware of the temptation to debate and argue My truth. If you do not discern carefully when to speak and when to be quiet, you will find yourself repeatedly in positions where you cannot defend your beliefs. Others will turn on you and in the end the teachings of My kingdom will have little impact. In fact, Spiritual discernment will be of greater need as the times draw to a close. Share from the fruit I grow in you, not the seed I plant in you.

7. You will see that as I examine your heart I will also teach you responsibility for what I expose. You are responsible to express your faith and trust in the Father with actions that demonstrate your citizenship in His Kingdom. Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. How responsible are you in what you *ask, seek* and *knock*?

8. For everyone who asks receives. Ask for the things the Father freely gives. He gives eternal life, healing, wisdom, daily provision, forgiveness and the baptism of the



Holy Spirit to those who ask. He who seeks finds. Search for God's face and not just His hands. Search for the truth for a mature life. Search for His answers to your questions and you will find what you are looking for. And to him who knocks it shall be opened. Earnestly pray for opportunities to knock on the doors of people's lives so you may share My eternal life with them and show them the treasures of heaven. **You are responsible for those whom the Father sends you and who ask, seek and knock about My Kingdom.**

**9.** Why would I *not* answer such questioning? Why would I *not* reveal such searching? Why would I *not* open to such knocking? I do not engage in the world's method of *bait and switch*, promise one thing and do another. Neither should you. Or what man is there among you, when his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone?

**10.** Or if he shall ask for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? No decent father does such a thing to his children. When you were a child and your father asked you to trust him and jump into his arms, he did not turn the other way just as you jumped, did he? No decent father would.

**11.** If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him! Even if you tempted your thoughts will ill will towards your children, you would not wish adverse circumstances on any of them, would you?

No! Your heart is towards their good. Why? Because you want the hearts of your children and others to be good towards you. **Again you will reap what you sow**, just as you did with the judgments in your heart.

**12.** Therefore, **however you want people to treat you, so treat them**, for this is the Law and the Prophets. In fact, you can summarize the entire Old Testament with the *Golden Rule* of the Kingdom of God. Ask, seek and knock with right, unselfish motives and you will be treated with unselfishness. Seek the highest good of others and they will seek the highest good for you. God sought your highest good, made you right again with Him and treats you accordingly as a true child of Him in the deepest of eternal love and friendship. He asks you to treat others in the same way.

It may seem natural to want to resist change that brings about obedience to the *Golden Rule*, but My change in you is *supernatural*. If you will sincerely ask, seek and knock to overcome resistance to change, resistance to My truth, resistance to growing up, resistance to responsibility, submission and authority, I will bless you with many who are My instruments of favour towards you.

**13.** The great treasure and secret of my Kingdom favour towards you is *abundant life*. But you will not find the road to abundant life easy. Instead the journey is through a narrow gate. **A condition of life is that you collect much baggage along the way.** It is baggage that begins with exposing your heart's selfishness. The baggage of sin is heavy. I came to take your baggage so you need not carry fear, shame, unforgiveness, rejection, pain and loneliness any longer than it takes to come to Me with a repentant heart. I came to show you how you must *decrease* while I *increase* in your life. It is a narrow gate where you will find no room to carry your baggage. **It is the narrow gate of God's pruning, of God's loving discipline and God's shaking.** You have no choice but to enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. Too many still believe that you can go through life carrying the baggage of continuous sin and unrelenting rebellion to

My Word. No you cannot! Beware of those who offer gain without pain, reward without sacrifice and righteousness without change.

**14.** For the gate to *abundant* life is small, and the way is narrow that leads to *abundant* life, and few are those who find it. Yet for those who discover the **pain of pressing through**, who experience **suffering because of faith and perseverance**, who know that *through many tribulations one enters the Kingdom of God*, who believe **pruning brings vigorous and healthy new life**, for them the narrow gate is **a willingness to let go** of every hindrance, every heart attitude and all behaviour that stands in the way of *abundant* life. As you accumulate baggage, do not be afraid to *enter by the narrow gate* as often as you need to in order to live in *abundant* life. My *abundant* life **now** is the assurance of your right standing with the Father, the seal of My Holy Spirit to mark you securely for eternal glory, My peace to endure life's rough roads, My joy to overcome the despair of all adverse circumstances and the power of my blood to protect you and keep you until My *abundant* life **to come**. That *abundant* life **to come** is forever with Me, the Father and all the family of God in a new earth and new heaven I have prepared for you.

**15.** But beware of those who will try to rob you of your abundant life. Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. Beware of those who deceive you. Beware of the dangers of self-deception, when you think you're so right and no one can speak truth to you any more or correct you in any Godly way. You must protect the most valuable of Kingdom possessions, namely your free and abundant life in the Holy Spirit.

**16.** You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes, not figs from thistles, are they? **Obedience means constant inspection of your fruit and the fruit of those who influence you.** Is there abundant evidence of the Spirit's fruit such as love, joy, peace, kindness, patience, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control?

**17.** But the inspection goes deeper. My examination of your heart not only inspects **fruit** it inspects the **roots** from which that fruit grows. Is it not true that every good tree bears good fruit; but the bad tree bears bad fruit? Why? Because a good tree has good roots and a bad tree has bad roots.

**18.** A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. **Roots of bitterness** produce fruit of unforgiveness. **Roots of fear** produce fruit of discontentment. Roots of anger produce fruit of criticism. **Roots of doubt** produce fruit of rejection. There is only one cure. Cut the tree off at the roots and burn it so it may not produce bad fruit anymore.

**19.** Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Cut off, uproot, throw away every teaching, every doctrine that attempts to fill your life with bad fruit and damage the abundance of your Spiritual life.

**20.** So then, when you are led by the Spirit of God, you will know yourself and the true intentions of your heart as well as others and the true intentions of their hearts by your and their fruits. Do not be afraid to be radical in protecting your Spiritual life from bad roots and bad fruits. My abundant life is too precious to waste on the entertainment of ear-tickling teachings and the deception of self-motivated truths. I call you to be a good tree with good roots and good fruit.

**21.** My Kingdom rule will even expose the very core of your heart. **That core is to obey Me or not obey Me.** Not everyone who says to Me, "*Lord, Lord*", will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Some plan to obey but have no intention of actually obeying. They will find many excuses as to why My Words appear to be too hard, to difficult to apply to daily life.

**22.** Many will say to Me on that day, "*Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?*" Some believe obedience is selective. Simply obey what is relevant to the times. But obedience to Me is unilateral. It covers all and every aspect of life, yesterday, today and forever.

**23.** And then I will declare to them, "*I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness*". This is not eternal judgment of unbelievers, but a disapproval of believers in their Spiritual life, a disapproval that stops the flow of God's abundant life. Disobedience results in disapproval. **Obedience means giving God the room, no matter how much it hurts, to line up your will to His right and perfect will.** The highest form of worship is to study God's Word and the way of His Kingdom. For the heart of a believer who is lined up to God's right and perfect will, is a believer who's *delight is to obey* and do what the Holy Spirit has revealed through study of God's Word. In His great love and mercy God has granted you a written copy of His will for your life, namely the Holy Scriptures, so you may study them to show yourself approved before God and man. Approval is obedience.

**24.** Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who builds his house upon the rock. Having said all I have about the Kingdom of God and having shown you what is in your heart and exposed through the careful examination of My Holy Spirit, the true beliefs and attitudes that reside there, there remains a need to experience a **genuine and lasting change** from natural, selfish character to Godly character. I compare it to the building of a house with a choice of foundations and a choice of ground to build it on.

**25.** You will experience opposition to My Kingdom ways because My ways are selfless, birthed in sacrificial love. **I have come to turn an upside down world right side up again.** Many will resent and resist being told to turn right side up. Like rain, flood and wind they will try to undermine your foundation and destroy the work I am building in you. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded upon the rock. If your foundations are what I have taught you about the Kingdom in this sermon, no rain, wind and floods can destroy your abundant life.

**26.** And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does *not* act upon them, will be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. Many will change until something better comes along or retain a hidden selfish agenda for change such as personal gain and power. For them change in neither genuine nor lasting. Their life is a rollercoaster of hot and cold, on and off again, never satisfied and never at peace.

**27.** Life will be a constant erosion of My abundance. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and it fell, and great was its fall. With what then will you build your house? **Obedience means abiding in My words and building your life on the foundations of My just and righteous rule.** For this is the government of the Kingdom of God, My righteous rule forever.

**28.** The result was that when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were amazed at His thorough and revealing teaching about the Kingdom of God and the way God rules by exposing their hearts.

**29.** For He was teaching them as one having authority, having pierced their hearts with truth and having exposed all the hindrances that so easily afflicts their lives. Not as the scribes who simply delivered words as a schoolboy would his lesson, without life and conviction.

This new law of the Kingdom, this new way of truth and life, this abundant life points to **a need for a new righteousness**. Not a righteousness of strict external obedience to rules and regulations, but *a righteousness of faith in the heart* whose willingness to obey is not a duty but a delight.

The Kingdom of God is a righteousness of faith empowered by the Holy Spirit to enable you to lovingly, willingly and delightfully yield your will in total submission to His examination of your heart so that you may be completely set free. The keys of the Kingdom that I have given you are the Biblical truths with which you unlock the powers of heaven to bring an abundant life of righteousness, peace, joy and power in your daily life. These keys also lock the powers of the world to protect you from their deceiving, destroying ways and to prevent you from walking in the freedom that is yours to have in My Father's Kingdom. Therefore hear My words and do them so you may be the vessels of honour My Father created you to be.

But having listened to and studied all that Jesus said, you may want to ask, *"But where is the love of God in all of this?"* When you first read the *Sermon on the Mount*, the task of obedience seems formidable. Have you not simply traded one set of legalisms for another? Is the *Sermon on the Mount* no more than extreme legalism? Are in fact, the commands of Jesus far too difficult? After all, who is not guilty of harbouring wrong attitudes in their heart? Who is not guilty of disobeying the rule of the King daily? Nevertheless, your conscience burns within you knowing that Jesus does not rule simply until you've had enough. His rule is not a matter of daily discussion and decision as to whether you feel like obeying. As a matter of fact, if one could point to a chronic failure in the church, it is precisely a failure to obey the words of Jesus. The church in North American and other parts of the world has sunk deep into a dark pool of confectionary Christianity, looking for preachers and teachers who will tickle the ears of the sheep with cheap words of love and comfortable pews, and fill their sanctuaries with smooth velvet performances that stir the emotions but leave the spirit starving for the meat of the Word. **Jesus preached meat in His Sermon on the Mount.** Meat cannot be swallowed. It must first be cut into smaller pieces and then chewed carefully in order to be digested into true nourishment. The words of Jesus are not soft and velvety. They are sharp as a two-edged sword piercing right through into your heart. But rather than leaving you naked in your rebellion and exposed to judgment, He forgives you. He heals you. He restores you. He lifts you up and strengthens you to carry on the journey of faith for yet another day. To cut the meat of His Word into small pieces and chewing them carefully for proper digestion and maximum nourishment is best said as *"to abide"*.

Jesus said to *abide in His words*. To *abide* means to faithfully continue in His teachings every day, applying His Kingdom truth to every aspect of your life.

If you *abide*, you will know the truth and the truth will set you free from observing mere legalism and moral codes. Freedom is knowing that as you walk **by faith** with a genuine desire to follow in the Master's footsteps and let His examination of your heart go the full distance of lasting change, so you believe it is **by grace** you are able to fulfill the *Sermon on the Mount*. **God's grace is His unmerited favour**. You will never live perfectly enough according to the *Sermon on the Mount* to earn God's favour. No merit of your own is good enough to say, "God, I deserve those Kingdom blessings of yours". Unfortunately there are those in the church who have majored in the *unmerited* part of grace, leaving many believers agonizing in the *dirt of doubt* about their salvation. They have forgotten that the key word is *grace* or *favour*, not *unmerited*. Even though you cannot **earn** one favour from God, He **has given you** ( which is His grace ) all the eternal blessings of the Kingdom simply because you are His child.

That is the great mystery of the Kingdom of God. You don't obey and abide in the words of Jesus' *Sermon on the Mount* because **you have to**. No! You obey and abide in the words of Jesus' **Sermon on the Mount** because **you want to**. It is your *delight*, not your *duty*. That is freedom! By God's grace you are free to live by faith without fear of failure. Instead you walk with confidence and assurance that this Kingdom Jesus spoke about, this Kingdom rule He asks you to submit to, is the best thing that ever happened to you. Why? because the end result is lasting and permanent change into the image of Jesus. You will be changed to be just like Him. And that is the Father's greatest pleasure. That is the very purpose for which He extends His grace to you, to ensure what He begins will come to perfect completion. Your perfect completion is the fulfillment of His love towards you. Your perfect completion is His dream, the answer to His prayer, the joy of His purpose for you, from before the foundation of the world, and the fulfillment of His eternal creative dreams. He rules so that you will be as He is, you will be as Jesus is, and you will be as all God's family will be.

### **About the author**

Gerrit Verstraete entered the teaching ministry in 1982, after a successful career as an advertising and marketing executive. He is a fine arts honours graduate from the *Ontario College of Art & Design*, as well as a Bible College graduate. After a glorious rebirth experience in 1981, and the full experience of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, according to Acts 1:5, he entered the ministry fulltime. He has traveled and taught throughout Canada and the USA, as well as numerous teaching missions to such faraway places as Mexico, Africa, and the Arctic. He is the author of a number of Bible study courses with special emphasis on the Kingdom of God, every believer's identity and authority in that kingdom, and the unique ministry of the Spirit of God to make kingdom living a daily living reality. In 1982, he founded the *Christian Communications Centre*, a teaching ministry of the *Verstraete Evangelistic Association*. Gerrit Verstraete resides with his wife Alice and children in British Columbia, Canada, where in addition to writing and teaching God's word, he continues his fine arts journey in his *Masterpeace Fine Art Studio*, and as founder of the *Drawing Society of Canada*. In 1993, Gerrit and Alice founded the *Church On The Rock* on Gabriola Island, and both are ordained and licensed pastors.

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