

The Pattern of the Kingdom in the Sermon on the Mount

I. Introduction

A. Last week we started looking at the Sermon on the Mount seeing the Revelation of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount

1. As Jesus came back from the wilderness He began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand"
2. And then He called disciples telling them simply, "Follow me"
3. So the Sermon on the Mount is an exposition of what it means to follow Jesus, what it means to repent and enter the kingdom of heaven - so it should be a very practical message, a very applicable message
4. But last week, though we said that applying the message was infinitely important, first we needed to start with what was even more important - seeing the revelation of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount
5. So last week we went through Matthew 5-7 and saw that all of it was about Jesus and who He was
 - i. We saw that He was the fulfillment of Old Testament Types: Moses, Abraham and Solomon
 - ii. We saw that He was the fulfillment of Old Testament Promises: He came not to abolish but to fulfill the law and the prophets
 - iii. We saw that He was the fulfillment of the Sermon on the Mount: He gives a law that reflects who He is
6. In other words, if the Sermon on the Mount is teaching disciples how to follow Jesus, then the Sermon on the Mount should help us to see who Jesus is so that we can follow Him, and that is where we started last week

B. For our second week in studying the Sermon on the Mount we are going to look at pattern of Jesus' kingdom

1. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus doesn't only reveal who He is, but also what His kingdom is like
2. And the pattern of His kingdom is based in who He is - He has certain characteristics, certain qualities and His kingdom should reflect those qualities
3. So this message is rooted in who Jesus is and bridges who Jesus is and who we should be - if Jesus is the king of His kingdom, His kingdom should reflect Him
4. In a way, this theme started back in the temptations of Jesus - remember the final temptation that Satan offered was all the kingdoms of the world, but Jesus point blank refused, He didn't want the kingdoms of this world
5. Instead, He tells Satan to get behind him, comes out of the wilderness, and then proclaims a new kingdom, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand"
6. So the question we should be asking is, "what is this kingdom like? How is it different than the kingdoms of this world? What does it mean to be part of this kingdom?"

C. That's the topic we are going to cover briefly this week, and so our message this morning is going to be full of contrasts

1. If you spend any time studying the Sermon on the Mount you will see that it is full of explicit and implicit contrasts
 - a. Jesus talks about salty and unsalty salt, hidden and revealed light
 - b. Jesus says, "you have heard it said," but then follows up with, "but I say to you"
 - c. Jesus talks about hypocrites and gentile religion and says, "do not be like them, instead..."
 - d. Jesus talks about worldly and heavenly treasure, good trees and bad trees, wise builders and foolish builders
 - e. The entire Sermon on the Mount seems to be an exercise in contrasts
2. In sum, Jesus is saying that His kingdom is not of this world, and therefore His kingdom is not like the kingdoms of this world

D. But the interesting thing about the Sermon on the Mount is what Jesus contrasts with

1. As we read the Sermon on the Mount, we need to remember the audience
 - a. It is easy to think the audience is New Testament believers, those who trust in the death and resurrection of Christ and live in the power of the Spirit, because it is so applicable to them - they are the final audience
 - b. But for the initial audience, the events of Christ's death and resurrection are future events - they haven't happened yet - the first audience that heard the Sermon on the Mount were Jews, God's people made by the covenant at Mount Sinai
 - c. So the 'you' of the Sermon on the Mount is proximally the Jewish nation - those who were called into a special covenant with God to be His special possession, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation
2. Any good Jew would have been completely unsurprised if a Messiah figure came that claimed a different kingdom than the kingdoms of this world
 - a. The Davidic king and the Messiah were always over against the kingdoms of this world - even the Maccabees had been against the kingdoms of this world, fighting against the Seleucid Empire
 - b. The Jews would be glad to hear that a kingdom was being set up over against the kingdoms of this world, they would be glad to see a king get rid of the gentile rulers
3. But the Jews were surprised at Jesus' message, because Jesus doesn't primarily contrast His kingdom with the Roman Empire, or the Herodian dynasty or other gentile kingdoms
 - a. Most of the contrasts that Jesus makes are actually with the Jews themselves - especially the popular brand of Jewish religion and nationalism that became known as the Pharisees
 - b. Jesus teaches on the mountain and says that His kingdom is not like the religion of the Pharisees - the Jewish nation had failed to be what God had called them to be, they had failed to be the kingdom of God
 - c. Jesus appeared to restore the Kingdom of Heaven, to be what the Jewish nation and what the Pharisees were not - He came to perfectly fulfill the goal of the Covenant at Sinai
 - d. So Jesus contrasts His kingdom with the teachings of the Pharisees, the Jewish nationalists, who had misused the Covenant at Sinai and the laws of God and become merely another kingdom of this world
4. We see this clearly at the start of the Sermon in chapter 5:13-16
 - a. Matthew 5:13-16 - *"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.*
 1. The purpose of God's redemptive-historical work in the Jewish people was to create a people who would be marked by and therefore display His glory. They would be the salt and the light of the world. They would be a kingdom of priests mediating blessing to the world.
 2. Abraham's offspring were supposed to display and distribute the blessing of God as His kingdom of priests. But, they had lost their salt and hidden their light. They failed to reflect the glory of God because they were caught up in reflecting their own glory.
5. The Pharisees had hidden the light of the glory of God under a basket in the myriad of religious prescriptions and duties that they had pursued - they had pursued their own glory instead of reflecting God's glory
 1. You see, there is a huge difference between displaying the glory of God and displaying our own glory
 2. The Jews, Israel as represented in the Pharisees, loved the law of God, they loved the Word of God, but they loved it for their own glory
 3. But the purpose of the Kingdom of Heaven had always been to glorify God, not glorify man
 4. So Jesus comes to condemn the Jews for failing to be the Kingdom of God and to call out a new Kingdom in Himself, a kingdom that looks very different than the kingdoms of this world, whether they are kingdoms founded in gentile or Jewish religion

E. So this morning we are going to look at these contrasts, we're going to see what Jesus' kingdom is about based on how He contrasts it with the Pharisees and common religion

1. We are going to look at five contrasts this morning - five broad themes that go across the Sermon on the Mount that help us see what Jesus' kingdom is about, what Jesus' kingdom is marked by
2. And we're going to see that Jesus' kingdom is very different than the kingdoms of this world because, in the end, Jesus' kingdom looks very much like Him
3. This is why we started by seeing Jesus at the center of the Sermon on the Mount - Jesus kingdom is different than the kingdoms of this world because Jesus' kingdom is founded in Him and follows Him

II. Contrast 1: Jesus' kingdom is marked by joyful repentance not prideful self-righteousness

A. As we saw in Matthew 4, Jesus' ministry was preaching, "repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." and, in the Beatitudes, Jesus shows us that an attitude of repentance ought to be reflected in all of life

1. Matthew 5:3-12 - *"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.*
2. Jesus preaches repentance because Jesus' kingdom will be filled with those who are genuinely repentant
 - a. The poor in spirit recognize that they are sinners and have no hope of entering the kingdom of heaven, and yet theirs is the kingdom of heaven
 - b. Those who mourn mourn over sin and the grievance that it is against God, and yet they are the comforted
 - c. Those who are meek humbly receive everything as God's good gift that they didn't deserve instead of striving after more, and yet to them God gives the entire earth
 - d. Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness realize that righteousness is not in them and seek God's righteousness over against the things of this world, and yet they are the ones who will be filled
 - e. The merciful recognize that they are in need of mercy and therefore show mercy
 - f. The pure in heart renounce the joys and the pleasures of this world in order to be wholly satisfied in God and they will receive their greatest joy
 - g. Peacemakers recognize that peace with God is the ultimate blessing and reflect that peace to the world
 - h. Those who are persecuted for righteousness sake continue in repentance and righteousness even when the world hates them, showing that repentance has penetrated to their very core
3. In other words, we could say that the kingdom of God is marked by repentance in all of life, repentance that starts with a right understanding of self and sin and grows into a hunger for righteousness and a practice of righteousness that persists even in the face of persecution

B. This may seem like an interesting place to start a discussion of contrasts because there doesn't seem to be an explicit contrast here

1. But, once we look at what Jewish religion had become, at least as reflected in the Pharisees, we can see that Jesus' blessing of the poor in spirit would have been a radical contrast
2. Consider the Pharisee of Luke 18:11-12 - *The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.'*
3. Pharisaical religion was the opposite of Jesus' teaching; Pharisaical religion was about being righteous, taking great care to obey the least little prescription to prove that you were right with God
4. Paul describes it this way in Romans 10:3 - *For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.*
5. A religion built on an earnest and honest desire for self-righteousness tended toward pride and judgment - I keep the law better than others - and not toward a poorness of Spirit
6. But Jesus' kingdom is not like that - His kingdom is not for those who are sure that they can obey better than others, it is not for those who exalt the minutia of God's commands in order to be right with God, His kingdom is for those who recognize that they have failed, they have no hope, and turn and seek after God's righteousness

C. So Jesus calls us to consider if we want to be part of this kingdom

1. Do you want to be part of a kingdom where you cannot be proud of how well you obey? Or is your obedience a matter of pride, do you, in your inmost self, consider yourself to be better than others?
2. Do you want to be part of a kingdom where you rejoice that you are nothing more than a recipient of mercy? Or do you feel some joy that others probably need more mercy than you do?
3. Do you want to be part of a kingdom where you are called to elevate mercy and peace? Or do you look down on others and find yourself always arguing with others?
4. Do you want to be part of a kingdom where you might lose everything in this world and still be expected to be infinitely happy in God? Or are there things in this world that you hold tightly to?
5. This is what Jesus' kingdom is about - it's not for the prideful self-righteous, it is for those who are joyfully repenting

III. Contrast 2: Jesus' kingdom is marked by inward realities not outward actions

A. The rest of chapter 5 has a series of similarly worded contrasts that all deal with the law of God

1. Six times Jesus says, "You have heard that it was said... but I say to you..." We will look more closely at each of those contrasts next week, but this week I want to look at the pattern here - what is Jesus' underlying message here?
2. As we look at each of these contrasts, about murder and anger, adultery and lust, divorce and remarriage, oaths and truth telling, each of them moves from outward actions to inward realities

B. Jesus is saying that His kingdom isn't about the surface but about the heart

1. So, it is good and well not to murder, but if you harbor murderous thoughts in your heart, if you hate your brother or are angry with Him, then you do no better
2. Again, it is good and well not to commit adultery, but if you harbor adulterous thoughts in your heart, if you lust after a woman, then you do no better
3. Again, it is good and well not to be swapping wives (which is what the teaching on divorce in Deuteronomy is referring to), but if you divorce your wife, if you don't value marriage in your heart, then you do no better
4. Again, it is good and well not to break your oaths, but if apart from an oath your word is not trustworthy, if you are not honest in your heart, then you do no better
5. Again, it is good and well to limit retaliation to match the offense, but if your heart is set on retaliation instead of generosity and mercy, then you do no better
6. Finally, it is good and well to love your neighbor, but if you believe that allows you to hate others, if you are kind only to those who are like you, then you do no better
7. If God's people are to be marked by and display the glory of the God then it requires not outward conformity to carefully parsed rules of the law - outward action can be very visible and its visibility can often cause us to think that performing this or that action, living this or that lifestyle, obeying this or that rule is what God wants - but really this only displays our own glory, visible obedience shows how good we are
8. Instead, to reflect the glory of God requires inward conformity to the heart of the law, a submission to God that goes beyond what others see - this obedience displays the glory and the perfection of God
9. So, Jesus ends this sections saying, "You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" - the law is about reflecting how good God is, not how good we are - it is God's perfection that is embodied in the law, not our own perfection, so our keeping the law should be a reflection of God's perfection, not our own obedience

C. Again, this is a contrast with what Pharisaical religion had become

1. The Jewish nation, typified in the Pharisees, turned the law into a rigid checklist but neglected matters of the heart
 - a. Listen to a sample of Jesus' condemnation of them in Matthew 23:23-26 - "*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!*" *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.*
 - b. The Jews had failed to reflect the glory of God in the keeping of the law because their keeping of the law had become about them and other's perception of them and not about pleasing God in their hearts
 - c. Instead of being the salt of the covenant of God in this world, displaying the glory of God in this world, they had chosen to display their own glory, their own goodness
2. Jesus' command is the exact opposite of this, restoring the salt and light of the Kingdom Community
 - a. Christ's kingdom will not be about displaying our own glory in how well we can conform to external commands
 - b. Christ's kingdom will be about reflecting the perfection of God in a complete change of heart - a heart that loves the things of God and hates the things that are not of God, a heart that wants God to be glorified and cares not whether others notice it

D. So Jesus calls us to consider if we want to be a part of this kingdom

1. Do we want to be a part of a kingdom where having others' approval is not enough? Or do we rest in the fact that we do as well or better than others?
2. Do we want to be a part of a kingdom where the best obedience might not be seen by others? Or do we obey because we want others to see how good we are?
3. Do we want to be part of a kingdom where we have to want the right things not merely do the right things? Or is doing the right thing all we care about?

IV. Contrast 3: Jesus' kingdom is marked by pleasing God not pleasing men

A. As we enter chapter six, Jesus makes three very similar contrasts

1. Jesus contrasts the religion of hypocrites with the religion of His kingdom
2. He contrasts their giving, Matthew 6:2-4 - *"Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you."*
3. He contrasts their praying, Matthew 6:5-6 - *"And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you."*
4. He contrasts their fasting, Matthew 6:16-18 - *"And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you."*

B. Jesus' kingdom is about pleasing God even when other people know nothing about it

1. So when disciples give money to the needy, they do it as anonymously as possible, because they want to honor God with their gift, not have others honor them
2. And when disciples pray, their prayer life isn't marked by the prayers that they pray publicly (not to say that we don't pray publicly), but those that they pray privately, because they want God to hear them and not merely men
3. And when disciples fast, their fast is not ostentatious or evident because they want to seek God's favor and not men's esteem
4. In general, we might say that 'religious activity' - things like prayer, reading God's word, fasting, giving, etc. - shouldn't be done for the purpose of others seeing us, but for the purpose of seeking God - so often our 'religious actions' will be done in secret and assuredly they will not be limited to public display, because we are always in the presence of God and only sometimes in the presence of men
5. If the bulk of our 'religious activities' seem to be done in the presence of others it is likely we are doing it to win men's favor and not God's favor

C. And this contrasts with what Jewish religion had become

1. Since the Jews had failed to seek the glory of God, they had failed in their task to reflect the glory of God in the world, naturally their religion had ceased to be about the glory of God and rather the honor of men
2. So, in another place, Jesus will tell His disciples, Mark 12:38-40 - *"Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes and like greetings in the marketplaces and have the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."*
3. The Pharisees were very religious - they prayed, they gave, they tithed, they fasted, they did all the right things, and they made sure everyone knew it as well
4. But Jesus says that none of that matters, in fact, it leads to greater judgment, because instead of seeking God's favor they were seeking the favor of men
5. All of the religious activity in the world - the best prayers, the most bible knowledge, the biggest gifts, the most devout fasting, the most restrictive lifestyle, the most religious - all of it is worthless if its purpose is to receive honor from men
6. Seeking favor from God and seeking favor from men are not only different activities, they are mutually exclusive activities - we cannot seek God's favor and try to display our glory to others at the same time
7. We can't care about being the best and care about God being the best at the same time - if we are on the throne and we are trying to give glory to ourselves, then we are not putting God on the throne and giving glory to Him

D. So Jesus calls us to consider if we want to be part of this kingdom

1. Do we want to be part of a kingdom where other people might never know how well we serve God? Or do we derive joy and pleasure from others knowing that we serve God well?
2. Do we want to be part of a kingdom where we want God's favor so much that we don't care what men think of us? Or is our reputation the driving force of our life?

V. Contrast 4: Jesus' kingdom is marked by seeking God not seeking the world

A. The second half of chapter six changes topic slightly and can be encapsulated in two quotes at the beginning and end

1. Matthew 6:19-21 - *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*
2. Matthew 6:31-33 - *Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*

B. In the first half of chapter six, Jesus tells us that His kingdom is about seeking God's favor, not men's favor, but now Jesus says that His kingdom is also about seeking God's riches not earth's pleasures

1. In Jesus' kingdom, the kingdom of heaven, our treasure is in heaven and so our effort, our desire, our passion is directed towards the things of heaven and not the things of earth
2. Instead of hoarding treasures on earth - whether it is money, or land, or possessions, or whatever else the world might hold out as pleasurable - instead of hoarding treasures on earth, we work for heavenly causes
3. And beyond that, instead of desiring the things of earth, we will desire the things of heaven, because if our eye is bad, if the seat of desiring is directed toward the world, then our whole body will be full of darkness
4. And since we have no desire for the things of this world, the things of this world fail to be a matter of worry for us - we know that our Father will give us what we need and we don't want an ounce more than He would give us
5. When we desire the riches of heaven instead of the riches of earth, then we will serve the things of heaven and not the things of earth
6. In fact, Jesus says it very plainly - we all serve something, and we serve what we love, we serve what our heart is drawn after
7. In Jesus' kingdom, hearts are drawn after the glories of God, which are revealed in Christ, the ultimate desire and the ultimate joy of the Kingdom of Heaven is God Himself as revealed in Christ, and that desire drives our actions, our passions, our efforts, and our desires
8. In Jesus' kingdom, we will serve God and not the things of this world, in His kingdom we will seek first the Kingdom of God and not the kingdoms of this world

C. In a way, the two themes of chapter six are connected - what goal are we pursuing, what joy are we seeking, what pleasure are we running after

1. The kingdoms of this world, whether it is pagan nations or the Jews themselves, ran after joys in this world, whether it was the joy of possessions, the joy of recognition, the joy of pride, the joy of security
2. But Christ's kingdom is about a better joy, a better desire, a better pleasure because in Christ's kingdom He is the ultimate joy and the ultimate treasure, God Himself is the goal of the kingdom of heaven

D. So Jesus calls us to consider if we want to be a part of this kingdom

1. Do we want to be part of a kingdom where we may and will have to give up the things of this world? Or are our possessions too valuable to be parted with?
2. Do we want to be part of a kingdom where the ultimate joy is Christ? Or are there other joys that are hearts truly desire?
3. Do we want to be part of a kingdom where the least desire for the things of this world must be rooted out? Or do we want to pretend that our hearts can be split, desiring the things of heaven and the things of earth at the same time?
4. Do we want to be part of a kingdom where the only reward is knowing Christ? Or are we seeking other rewards in the end?

VI. Contrast 5: Jesus' kingdom is marked by loving others not being better

A. As we finish, I want to highlight one more contrast in chapter 7, and we see it clearly by looking at a few verses

1. Matthew 7:1-5 - *"Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? 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.*
2. Matthew 7:12 - *"So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.*

B. Jesus says that His kingdom is clearly about loving others

1. In fact, this theme pops up several times in the Sermon on the Mount
2. For example, earlier in Matthew 5:43-45 Jesus had said - *"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is 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.*
3. And this is in contrast to judging others - to puffing yourself up by believing yourself to be better than others
4. Love and judgment are mutually exclusive in Christ's kingdom - we can't be loving others and dedicated to believing that we are better at the same time
5. Now we need to be careful here and not misunderstand this contrast - many people would say that this requires throwing out the concept of sin because we can't be judging one another - we can't say that anything is right or wrong because to do so would be to judge and invite judgment
6. But that's not the contrast that Jesus is making - He's not making a contrast between righteousness and lawlessness, but between love and superiority - the judgment Jesus is talking about is making yourself look better by putting others down, by calling attention to their faults, by believing that their faults are worse than your own
7. This is the opposite of love because love seeks the good of another, love considers others better than oneself, love does not envy or boast, love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things
8. So Jesus' kingdom will be radically opposed to sin, but it will be opposed to sin in a loving way - those in Jesus' kingdom will recognize that others are sinners and seek their best in love as a fellow sinner, not look down their nose at them as a failure

C. Unfortunately, the Pharisees had been marked by the exact opposite

1. The Pharisees had gained 'spiritual' recognition by being better than others, that is by more carefully keeping the rigid aspects of the law and denigrating those who did not
2. We can see this clearly in their question or accusation to Jesus in Matthew 9:10-11 - *And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"*
3. The Pharisees held themselves above the rabble - those who didn't keep the law as well as they did were not even worthy of consideration, and they prided themselves in this
4. We can see this again in the Pharisees prayer we looked at earlier, Luke 18:11-12 - *The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.'*
5. The Pharisees were about being better, about putting others down in order to exalt themselves - their righteousness status seemed to come partly from the fact that they could say that they did better than everyone else
6. Really, they had been seeking their own glory once again - they were puffing themselves up and putting others down so that they could seem like the best
7. But Christ's kingdom will seek God's glory, which is evident when those in the kingdom of God seek to lift a brother up and not cast him down - not ignoring sin, but dealing with it as brothers in love, not as judges in condemnation

D. So Jesus calls us to consider if we want to be a part of this kingdom

1. Do we want to be part of a kingdom where we need to set our own selves aside in order to seek the good of others? Or do we love ourselves so much that we need to be convinced that we're doing better than most people?

VII. Conclusion: Jesus' kingdom is about desiring God and not this world

A. We've gone through five contrasts this morning as we've stepped through the Sermon on the Mount

1. And I don't know about you, but as I studied for and wrote the sermon for this morning, the more I studied and the more I wrote, the more each of the different contrasts sounded exactly the same
2. At first this was really frustrating because as I honed my notes and thought more clearly about the text, I felt that I ended up saying the same thing five times in a row
3. But, once I thought about it, that's actually the point, Jesus makes a lot of contrasts that all expose the same underlying heart attitude - in the end there is only one contrast

B. Jesus' kingdom is about desiring God and not this world

1. Jesus' kingdom isn't like this world because it doesn't desire any of the things the world desires - whether it is keeping the letter of the law, fostering favor with men, pursuing possessions in this world, of puffing up pride before others
2. In contrasts to these worldly desires, Jesus' kingdom has one desire - in Jesus' kingdom God's people desire God Himself, God is their only joy and their only treasure, His favor is the only favor they desire and His pleasure is their only goal

C. And that brings us back to last week's message: Jesus is at the center of the Sermon on the Mount

1. Jesus has to be at the center of the Sermon on the Mount because, in the end, Jesus' kingdom is about Him and not about us
2. So Jesus' kingdom is marked by repentance, following after Him, and not by rejoicing in our own self righteousness
3. Jesus' kingdom is marked by loving Him in obedience from the heart, not winning a game of outward conformation to a code of laws
4. Jesus' kingdom is marked by seeking His favor in our religious activities, not seeking our own honor before men
5. Jesus's kingdom is marked by seeking His riches, not seeking the pleasures of this world
6. And Jesus' kingdom is marked by seeking His glory through loving each other, not seeking our own glory in putting each other down
7. Jesus is at the heart of the Sermon on the Mount and Jesus is at the heart of His kingdom
8. When we desire God in Christ and not the things of this world, then we are ready to follow Jesus into His kingdom