

**SERMON ON THE MOUNT**

**PROGRAM 4 (#912174)**

**WEEK 1 (912339)**

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## ***PRECEPTS FOR LIFE***

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**P.O. Box 182218, Chattanooga, TN 37422-7218**

**1-888-734-7707/ [www.preceptsforlife.com](http://www.preceptsforlife.com)**

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**SERIES: Sermon On The Mount**

**TITLE: Program 4 – What Does True Christianity Look Like?**

### **THURSDAY**

#### **OPEN**

I'm sitting beside the Sea of Galilee. This is where Jesus walked and yet when He came here because of His teaching, because of the miracles that He did, the message went out and the multitude could see Him and they came because He had the words of life. It's on this shore that He said, "Blessed are those that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." Today God can satisfy your deepest needs.

#### **PART ONE**

It was during the first part of Jesus public ministry as He walked the shores of the Galilee that He went up onto a mountain and taught what we call the Sermon on the Mount. He showed us that the standard that is set for those that really follow God, those that really know God. Those are that are true disciples of Jesus Christ. They needed to see this because they thought that the righteousness that they could attain that would get them to heaven was an external righteousness and they didn't understand that it was a righteousness that would come from the heart. As He began the Sermon on

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the Mount, He opened up with, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” And He showed us the starting place of where Christianity really begins. It begins in that deep poverty where we see that in and of ourselves there is no righteousness. There is no way that we can ever please God. That righteousness has to come from someplace else. And He shows us that character as He gives us the blessing for people who have that character. Then He goes into the conduct. How do I conduct myself as I live this life as a citizen of heaven? And then He went into the conflict because conflict is going to come. And you see that conflict woven throughout the message of the Sermon on the Mount. But then He does something very interesting. At the end of the Sermon on the Mount, He really clears up the confusion that so many face as to those who profess to know God and really don’t know Him. In Matthew chapter 7, as He starts to bring His teaching to a conclusion this is what He says in verse 21. “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.” Do you know someone and you look at them and you say, “You know, their life is so different to what I thought Christianity was all about and yet they profess to know Jesus Christ. Surely they belong to Him because they’ve been baptized or they’ve been confirmed or they’ve joined the church or they say that they’re a Christian.” Well what the Sermon on the Mount does is it clears up what true Christianity is like. As He gives the Beatitudes, He comes to the one that says, “Blessed are those that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.” (Matthew 5:6) Now we know from the first Beatitude to the last Beatitude that these are an inclusive description of the children of God because it begins with, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (5:3) And then at the conclusion of the Beatitudes it says, “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake ...,” etc. “... for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (5:10) All the rest in between talk about an attitude, a character, an attribute that brings a blessing in the future. When we think of hungering and thirsting for righteousness, it’s logic that we would think of, here I am. I’m a sinner and I need to be righteous and where am I going to find that righteousness? Well that righteousness begins

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with salvation. It begins when I come to the One who is righteous because I know, as Romans 3 says that, "... there is none who are righteous..." So, there's a desire to be righteous. Now what does it mean to be righteous? To be righteous means I want to be in right standing with God. I want to measure up to what God says is right. In a day and age when we have no absolutes, we find that God's absolutes have never changed. What God does is He uses a very fleshly thing to show us an incredible spiritual truth. When He's talking about hungering and He's talking about thirsting, He's talking about a hunger that is, "I'm so hungry I'll eat anything that I can get a hold of. I'm so thirsty I'll drink anything that I have to in order to quench this thirst." That's the kind of hunger and thirst that He's talking about. And when we become that hungry and when we become that thirsty, what is the source? What is going to satisfy? Well, when Jesus went to Samaria, He stopped at Jacob's well and there was a woman there and the woman had come to get water. And Jesus sensed that there was a spiritual hunger in her. And He said, "If you knew who it was who is asking you for water, you would have asked of Me and I would have given you water that springs up into eternal life." (John 4:10) Let's look at it for a minute because I think it will be good for you to look at the scriptures and see for yourself what He is saying. So I want you to go to John chapter 4. And in John chapter 4 Jesus said, "...whoever drinks of this water shall thirst again ..." (4:13a) Behind me is the Sea of Galilee. You could drink it dry and still not be satisfied because it's temporal water. It's physical water. And then He says, "... but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life." (4:13b) In John chapter 7, Jesus stands on the great day of the feast. It's the Feast of Tabernacles when they're pouring out water and when they're quoting the Psalms and when they're talking about everyone thirsting and coming and drinking of the water of life. Jesus, "On that last day, the great day of the feast ...," verse 37, "... stood and cried out ...," He was watching those priests pouring out the water and, "... He stood and He cried out...'If anyone is thirsty let him come to Me and drink.'" He says, "... He who believes in Me, as the Scripture says, 'From his innermost being

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shall flow rivers of living water.’ But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” (7:37-39) Now when the Spirit would come, He would come inside of us and He would create in us, now listen carefully, He would create in us a continual thirst, a continual hunger for righteousness. Because when we believe on Jesus Christ, we receive that righteousness that is put to our account. That righteousness that is reckoned to us that is imputed. It’s an accounting term and it’s put over here under the credit ledger. Here is the righteousness of God. And yet there has to be a thirsting and a hunger for a daily righteousness and this is what He’s talking about here. So I want you to go from here back one chapter to chapter 6 of John and I want you to see what Jesus says as He feeds the multitude from the loaves and the fishes and He used that as an opportunity. He left here and He went up to the synagogue in Capernum and there in the synagogue, He delivered this discourse. And Jesus said to them in verse 35, “...I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.” So when He’s talking about hungering and thirsting for righteousness, yes there’s that initial receiving but then there’s that continual walking, that continual coming to Him. How do you continually come to God? You continually come to Him by being in the Word of God, by drinking of Him and by understanding that this is the source, this is the well spring that you need. You know, if you’re not satisfied right now, if something’s happening and you feel a void in your life the first thing I would tell you to do, my friend, is go back and check what you’re doing day by day. Because Jesus said in John 7, “He who comes to Me and drinks ...,” it means keep on coming. It’s in the present tense and keep on drinking. I want you to go to Isaiah chapter 55 and I just want to share with you as we go to Isaiah chapter 55 that it’s just like good nutrition in life. So many times what happens in life is that we’re hungry and so what we eat is junk food instead of eating what is nourishing and good for us. And so many times what happens is we go to the works of man, we go to the books of man or we go to television instead of going to the Word of God and there finding that which satisfies. In Isaiah chapter 55 it says this, “Ho! Every one who

thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, and buy and eat. Come, and buy wine and milk without money and without cost.” And then He says this, “Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy?” (Isaiah 55:1-2a) So many times we miss coming to the source and this is the source of hungering and thirsting after righteousness. You know, my friend, if you’re not hungering, if you’re not thirsting after righteousness, if you can go weeks on end, if you can go months on end and there’s no sense of void and there’s no sense of a dissatisfaction or a craving within you, you really need to examine your faith to see if you are really, really a true believer. Because only those that hunger and thirst after righteousness, will be satisfied. I want you to go to Psalm 42 and in Psalm 42, this is what God tells us, In verse 1 he says, “As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for Thee, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; When shall I come and appear before God?” Now he’s asking that when his tears have been his food all day. In other words, something’s wrong and he needs God to satisfy what is wrong. Psalm 63, verse 1 says this, “O God, Thou art my God; for I shall seek Thee earnestly; My soul thirsts for Thee, my flesh yearns for Thee, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.” Here’s your water, Beloved. Drink, drink, you will be satisfied and nothing else will fill that void. I’ll be right back because we need to talk about what it means to be merciful and what it means to be pure in heart.

## **PART TWO**

We come to the next blessing. It’s a blessing for those that are merciful. It says, “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.” (Matthew 5:7) You know when I hunger and thirst for righteousness, it’s going to make me more and more like Jesus and more and more like my heavenly Father. And when you stop and think about the tabernacle, which was a picture of how a man can be right with God and how a man can approach God. You come into that outer court and you see the altar of sacrifice. This is where the poor in spirit come and where the blood covers our sins and where we then have

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forgiveness of sins. Then you come to the laver where you're washed and where you're cleansed. You walk into the holy place and on the right is the table of showbread. You see the laver, the water. You see the bread. You see the satisfying of the thirst and the satisfying, so to speak, of the hunger. You see the lamp stand on the left, the light. You see the altar of incense with Christ as our intercessor. And then what you see is you see that beautiful veil in the temple and if you go beyond the veil into the holy of holies, you come to the Ark of the Covenant. And what covers the Ark of the Covenant? What is it? Stop and think. Because that Ark of the Covenant represents the very throne of God and what's on that throne? It's a mercy seat. When you and I think about God, we've got to think about mercy. When you and I think about Jesus Christ, we think about a merciful and high priest. We think about the new covenant that He brought that gives us mercy for our sins. So when we talk about being merciful, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy," we need to know and understand that mercy and being merciful to others is a lifestyle of the child of God. And if there's no mercy within you, if there's no compassion within you for others then you have to stop and say, wait a minute. Is the Spirit of God inside of me? Am I truly a child of God?" I think that this attribute, this character of mercy is something so often that we push aside and we excuse. "I would help that person but I'm too busy." "I would help that person but I just don't have enough for myself." What is mercy? Well let me give you a definition of mercy. Mercy is having total compassion on someone who is in need without regard as to their worthiness. Without even looking at their worthiness. The compassion comes simply because they have a need. This is what mercy is and it's not just being moved with pity but it is having compassion so that you move to help them in their need, so that you supply what they need. So you give them what they require. Do you remember the parable that Jesus told about the good Samaritan? And remember He tells the story about these men that walk by. Religious leaders that walk by this man that has been beaten and is laying beside the road. He's been robbed. No one goes near him. They look at him and they see him there but they walk around. But then someone comes along, a Samaritan of all things and

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he takes that man and he bandages his wounds and he puts him in the care of another and he says, “Now listen. Anything that he needs you just charge it to my account.” That is mercy. You know when I think about Christianity, I think about all the acts that have been done in the name of Jesus Christ and for the cause of Jesus Christ that have really changed a culture. I go back and I think about the Earl of Shaftsbury in England and how this wealthy man and a man who held a position in the parliament from time to time. How this man, because he knew Christ could not be content sitting in the parliament and sitting in his own luxury and comfortable state. But he had to go down to those children, to the poor that were imprisoned because they were poor, to the children that were waifs on the street and were living this survival kind of lifestyle and the schools that he started for them to teach them and the things that he brought to meet their physical needs. This is mercy. I think of Florence Nightingale and how she started that whole nursing profession out of mercy. These were believers. I think of Wilberforce who looked at the slavery of these people from Africa and said, “This is not right.” And he worked all his life to abolish slavery. This is mercy. And God says, “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.” Do you want mercy from God? Do you want mercy in your situations of life? Then it comes by being merciful and this is what God does. He pours initial mercy out on you when you get saved. But then there is a continual pouring out of mercy because we realize that apart from Him we are nothing. Apart from Him we can do nothing. And we find ourselves in states of need, especially spiritual need and we come to God and we say, “God, I don’t deserve a blessing. God, I don’t deserve this, but I’m coming to You because You’re merciful.” And so then what does God want us to do? Remember the man that owes a huge debt and is forgiven that debt? And then he goes and he finds another man who owes him money and he grabs him by the throat and he says, “You pay me everything that you owe me.” And when he does that the man says, “I can’t pay you.” And it’s a small debt compared to what he’s been forgiven and yet what does he do? He goes and he says, “No, I’m not going to forgive it. I’m going to cast you in prison. And when you come to the end of that story it’s so interesting because He’s

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talking about forgiveness. But He moves from forgiveness in Matthew chapter 18 to a statement about mercy. In Matthew chapter 18 this is what He says, “Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, even as I had mercy on you?” (18:33) You see forgiveness and mercy go together. When we’re merciful to someone we see their desperate need and putting aside all their worthiness or their unworthiness we go to meet that need. So God says, “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.” I want us to go to James chapter 2. And in James chapter 2 this is what He says and this is very, very important because we need to understand that mercy comes to us when we are in a state of looking at someone and judging them. Then we have to know that we are to be merciful. And in James chapter 2 this is what we read. He says, “So speak and act, as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty.” (James 2:12) Now when he talks about the law of liberty, he’s talking about the Word of God. He says you and I are going to be judged by this Word and so if you and I are not merciful we’re not going to receive mercy because we haven’t been and done what we should have been and done. And so then he goes on to say, “For judgment will be merciless to the one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.” (2:13) Now listen. When you and I are merciful, where does that lead? Well it leads to purity of heart. And it says, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” (Matthew 5:8) When you and I allow impurity in our hearts, Beloved, then it obliterates our vision of God. We don’t see Him as clearly as we should. Blessed are the pure in heart. We’re going to talk about it later on and the Sermon on the Mount as Jesus demonstrates His purity of heart in telling us about being careful with what our eyes see but I just want you to understand this. That you and I are to be pure in heart and if we allow anything in we’re going to miss seeing God.