

The Mountain and the Garden

by Gary Wilkerson

Gary Wilkerson's sermon explores the blessings of the Sermon on the Mount and the contrast between God's kingdom and worldly kingdoms.

Duration: 47:03

Scripture: Matthew 5:1

Topics: "Christian Life", "Identity in Christ", "Blessings"

Description

Gary Wilkerson delivers a powerful sermon titled 'The Mountain and the Garden,' focusing on the Sermon on the Mount and its implications for all people, regardless of their background or struggles. He emphasizes that Jesus invites everyone to experience His kingdom of love and grace, contrasting it with the worldly kingdoms of power and jealousy. Wilkerson explores the themes of blessing, humility, and the significance of being chosen by God, highlighting the importance of recognizing our identity as children of God. He encourages the congregation to embrace their brokenness and to understand that they are blessed in their meekness and suffering, as Jesus, the ultimate elder brother, offers them healing and hope.

Transcript

You may be seated. Thank you for coming to church tonight. Glad you're here.

How y'all doing? You seem like you're enthusiastic. I want to talk to you tonight about the Sermon on the Mount. That is not actually, by the way, if you've ever read Matthew chapter 5, we call it the Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus didn't actually introduce the sermon by saying, uh, tonight my message is entitled the Sermon on the Mount. It just was called that later. Why? Anybody know? It has something to do with where he preached it.

It was on a, you all are, you all are with me already. I can tell you, you know, Sermon on the Mount. I'm going to give you the cliff notes.

You remember the cliff notes for those of you who were like me, didn't like school, and you didn't want to read the whole book. Um, I, my first book I ever read in school was, uh, called Contiki about a guy who got on a boat and went across the ocean. And, uh, it was about a 300 page book.

So I bought the cliff notes, which was about 16 pages. And I did a whole book report on Contiki without ever reading the book. Let me give you the, the cliff notes about my sermon today.

Jesus went up onto a mountaintop and he said, anyone can come with me. Poor, rich, black, white, young, old, brokenhearted, sick, demoniacs, Pharisees, anyone can come to the mountaintop with me, where I will proclaim to you my kingdom of peace and joy and love, a contrary kingdom to what he was experiencing with Herod. You remember Herod tried to kill all of his friends when Jesus was just born in Bethlehem.

And then he went away to Egypt because of the persecution of Herod, then came back later. Herod's son was now the king and killed Jesus's cousin, John the Baptist. So Jesus and the Herods didn't have a great reputation of, of, uh, being, uh, kindling kin brothers, kinship brothers.

They, they had a lot of conflict between them. And Jesus always in his ministry was contrasting the, his kingdom, the kingdom of love and grace and peace and kindness, contrasting that with the worldly kingdom, the kingdom of Rome, the kingdom of Herod. So that's the cliff notes.

And thanks for coming. Glad you're here with us tonight. Hope you enjoyed the message.

Shortest message you've ever heard. No, we're going to go a long time here tonight. We're not going to go short, but before I do, let me introduce my wife of 45, something like that.

46 years, Kelly Wilkerson. Thank you, Kelly. We, we have four children, 10 grandchildren, and now one more on the way.

That's number 11. They keep popping out. I tell you, they're coming left and right.

And, uh, you know, we started trying to save college funds for all our grandkids that went out the door after number four, you know, just like we, we just don't do that anymore. Hey, uh, since I'm in grandpa mode, some of our kids are moving from Colorado to Pennsylvania. And, uh, so they're living with us for a month.

So I'm in there for grandkids. So I'm in grandpa mode. So let me tell you, can I tell you a grandpa joke just before I get started? I almost never tell jokes, but let me tell you one grandpa joke.

A Panda walked into a bar and he sat down and said to the bartender, give me something to eat. Was it a Panda? A what? A Panda. Good.

If, if I, I told this joke once before and I gave the wrong animal and it made no sense to anybody. And, uh, uh, so a Panda walks into a bar and, and says, give me something to eat. The bartender gives him some food.

And also he takes out a gun and just starts shooting it up into the roof. Boom, boom, boom. And then he just got, gets up and leaves.

And as he's leaving the bartender says, Hey Panda, why did you come here and just eat and then shoot and then leave? He goes, look me up. I'm famous. I'm, I'm in, I'm in encyclopedias.

I'm in dictionaries. I'm, I'm, I'm online. Look me up.

And so the guy goes online, looks it up and says, Pandas eats, shoots and leaves. Some of you are not getting it. Would you tell the turn to the person next to you and explain the joke to them? If you, a Panda eats, eats, shoots, which is a plant.

And then he leaves the bar each. Oh, now you know what the last month of my life has been like this with the four grandkids on the way. The pastor Tim said, Hey, thanks for letting us be here tonight with you.

We love you guys. Ever since we started working together in Detroit, even before that, when we were little kids, I remember riding a five, a three speed silver swim bicycle with a slick tire, a banana seat, a high rise handlebars. And, um, they called it a sissy bar.

That's probably not a real good name to use in our culture today, but had a sissy bar, which was like a backrest on it. And we had, uh, uh, clothes pins. We put baseball cards on to make the spokes of the wheel sound like, uh, an engine and anybody over 60 here is looking at me like, yeah, we used to do that all the time.

So, so we would ride bicycles and have some fun together. Tim's older cousin and I, and, uh, in long Island, we would go riding. And, and ever since that time, we've just been kindred brothers and loving that.

And I love what God's doing here at times square church. It's really been real precious and powerful. I was here at the very first service, the opening service, and, uh, had a chance to, to be here in this pulpit many times.

And just to see what God is doing in what you might call the third generation of pastoral leadership, uh, brilliant stuff. So let's pray and ask God to show us what it means to be invited to the mountaintop and experiencing the kingdom with him. Jesus, we thank you for life.

And I pray that my words would be a word of encouragement. I pray that my, my message would not be one trying to impress, but it would be trying to love, trying to love people and show them that they are loved and show them God's love and show them the power of your love. I pray for grace to preach truth with life in Jesus name.

Amen. And amen. Amen.

So Matthew chapter five, if you turn there, Matthew chapter five, I think we have it on the screen up here, Matthew chapter five. And I just want to start with verse one. And it says, uh, now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on the mountaintop and he sat down and his disciples came to him.

And then the next thing we see here is in verse two. And he began to teach them. And in verse three, he said, blessed.

I want to stop there for just a moment. Blessed. So the first thing Jesus says on this mountaintop message that he has for his friends, his coworkers, and the people that he loved and were ministering to was that he was going to speak a blessing into their life.

Now, I'm sure pastor Tim knows this from his, uh, ministerial education. And I just want to, there's, there's this thing called the principle of the first mention, the principle of, you may have heard of this before the word blessed that Jesus talked about his first mentioned in Genesis chapter one, Genesis chapter one. So we're gonna look at as well, turning, uh, starting in verse 24 of the first chapter of Genesis.

And God said, let the land produce living creatures according to their kind and their livestock, the creatures that move along the ground and the wild animals, each according to his kind. And so it was, and God made wild animals according to their kind, the livestock, according to their kinds and all the creatures that move along the ground. Let me read that one more time.

And all the creatures that move along the ground, according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. All these animals that God created, he was saying they were good.

So there was, there was, there was fish and the birds and, and even snakes in the garden and all of these things that God created. The first thing he says about them is that, that they are good. Even, even the ones that crawl on the ground, even the lizards and the serpents were, were originally in that garden state work, all called good.

So God created. Now here's the next thing that happens in verse 27. So God created mankind in his own image.

So God's not doing something a little bit different, isn't he? The other ones, it doesn't say they were created in his image. They were good. And it was beautiful.

The garden of Eden was an incredible place. I would have loved to vacation there. It would've been amazing.

And so God's got all these animals there and he's calling all of them good. But now there's one who stands out as different, a different kind. All the other ones were created in their own kind.

This one is created in God's kind, a very different animal, if you will. And it says, and God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God. He created them male and female.

He created them. And here's Matthew 5 now, except this is the mentioned first time this word blessed is mentioned. God blessed them.

God blessed them. It doesn't, all the animals were good. The, the, the horses were good.

The drafts were good. The elephants were good. The fish were good.

The birds were good, but, but there's no indication of God stopping and saying, I'm here to bless you. I'm speaking a blessing in to your life. He blessed them.

Here's what he blessed them with. All right. He gave them a blessing.

Here's what the blessing is. Be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish and the sea and the birds of the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.

There was a snake in the garden. You remember that guy? He moved on the ground and early indications are that he was good, right? How many of you know that Satan before he fell was a, a good being. Many of us say, Satan was a fallen angel, a good angel.

Historians and grammaticans and Hebrew scholars tell us that's actually not the right way to look at Satan. He really wasn't a fallen angel. He was a seraphim, which is different than an angel angel.

We have these pictures of like, you know, cherubs, you ever heard of a cherub? They ride on a cloud and they, they shoot little bow and arrows at people to help them fall in love. That's, that's kind of the picture of cherubs. And then seraphim are like, who knows what a seraphim is? It's just like, but, but it's very interesting what the seraphim are is the, the, the, the, the cherubs and the seraphim are always described having wings.

The Isaiah has a vision of the seraphim and it says, and they covered two, they covered here and then the two, they covered the midsection and two, they covered their, their feet. And so the, but there's no indication in scripture that angels have wings. They're every time an angel appears, everybody thinks they're men at first, except they're maybe a little bit bigger or a little bit shinier, but they, but they don't have wings, but, but the cherubim and the seraphim have wings.

A seraphim in Hebrew is from the seraph that the, the singular of the plural seraphim is the singular for a, a creature that is called a fiery one, or in its most root terms, the Hebrew word there is a fiery serpent. That's why sometimes you read these really bizarre stories in scriptures. Have you ever read where Moses and some of the people began to disobey God? And when they disobeyed God, snakes came out and, and began to bite them.

The word therefore snakes is seraphim, became to bite them. And then God told Moses, put a seraphim, a put, put this God created being that, that has six wings had had the appearance of a serpent and put it up on top of a cross. And then whoever looks upon that serpent will be healed.

I remember the first time I read that story. Does that make you scratch your head? I was like, well, why in the world would God put a serpent on the cross and have people look at the serpent? You know, the serpent is the devil, not originally the, the, the Lucifer, the devil, Satan was originally a glorious seraphim. This is talked about in Ezekiel, I believe it's the 28th chapter where he talks about this fall that this man had.

He was in a glorious height. Then he fell, this, this being, this seraphim fell because of something that was going on. But apparently, again, if you look back at some of the scholars that are writing about this stuff, it's phenomenal to me.

And that's probably because I'm a Bible geek or a Bible nerd, if you will. And some of you are looking at me like, oh my gosh, why did pastor Tim invite a Bible geek to come to our church service here on Tuesday night and bore us with information about angels and seraphim and cherubim, but it really is going to make sense. And, and now you're really wondering, wait, didn't, didn't, didn't you say you were going to be talking about the sermon on the Mount? This does not sound like the sermon on the Mount.

Why didn't you call it the sermon at the garden of Eden? Well, it's going to make sense. I think in a little bit, I hope it'd be better than the jokes that I tell this to come together a little bit better. So, so, so some of the, those who study Hebrew literature and particularly back in this early time period, where it was an oral culture, where they began to, they would tell stories first before it was ever actually written down.

And, and when it first got written down, they would tell stories about these stories. And so the garden of Eden stories had all these things that were, were written by, sometimes they were written by rabbis or other Hebrew writers. And they would begin to describe what was happening in these stories.

It'd be similar to us. You know, some people say like, Oh, you don't want to read that early ancient literature. We just want to read the Bible.

Well, then my question is, do we read commentaries about the Bible or do you read a devotional about the Bible? There's our helps. And sometimes we skip over the early writers and only use ones that were written like in the 1950s beyond. And so I begin to try to study these folks.

And I see here, one of the things that many of them are saying, and some of them even now recently come up with some really good scholarship to, to suggest to us some of these questions I've had since I was a little boy about what happened. Like, do you ever ask these weird questions? Like what was, was, were the angels created before man and women or were they created all when God created the heavens and the earth where they created at one time? And when did the fall take place? Did it take place a long time ago? And then if it took place a long time ago, and then he created earth after the fall and Satan was already, a third of them had fallen from heaven and were cast down. And well, why would God create a beautiful good earth and then allow a third of the fallen angels and cherubim and seraphim who had followed Satan into his witchcraft really what it was to be planted on the earth at that time.

And so all of this kind of confused me and, and I'm some reading some stuff recently, and this is just a thought I have. And maybe I'll say, if you don't mind me sharing this with you, it's something that I think is intriguing about Genesis chapter one here. It says that those things that were creeping on the ground, and some of them were called serpents or, or seraphim.

And the seraphim had a physical form, but it was also almost like an angelic or a supernatural or a spiritual being created, not with a human body, but different. And so here, here's Adam and Eve and they're good. And they're, and then there's already before him on the earth, days before this, they were created and they're on earth and they're good.

And then all of a sudden this serpent, here's God say to them that they're good. Oh, I'm good. And then that feel good to be good.

God called me good. And then all of a sudden the next day, this naked man appears and a naked woman appears called Adam and Eve. And God says to them something different, not just that you're good, but you're in my own image and, and I've created you.

And now I blessed you. And the serpent or the seraphim is thinking to himself, I didn't hear him bless me like that. And then the seraphim hears these next words, fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it.

Wow. Why isn't he giving me that power? Why, why don't I have that kind of authority? What is there something not so good about me? Why do you pass me by and pick on others instead of this glorious seraphim that I am here in the garden. And then it goes on and it says, rule over the fish.

And the seraphim is thinking to himself, at least in my imagination, uh, yeah, those fish need ruled over, but I probably shouldn't have that job. And then it says, and over the sea and the birds over the sky and over everything that moves. So this next part, right here, where I'm going, every other thing that moves on the ground, the moves on the ground.

And now all of a sudden this, this, this, uh, seraphim who has the appearance of a, of a, of a, uh, uh, like a wings and he's different looking than we think of him. He's, he's not originally here in the garden, a snake

crawling on the ground. Cause we're going to read about what happens right after it gets cursed, right? Uh, his, his legs and his wings get removed and he's crawling down on the ground.

He, so something's happening in his heart here. He's, he's saying this, this person you just created this Adam and Eve, they're going to govern over me. They're going to rule me, a glorious being that I am, the, the connection I've had with heaven.

And, and now I'm, I'm, I'm seeing what he's doing on earth and I'm, and I, and I, and, and, and I despise it. I hate it. I, I, I'm angry at this.

I'm jealous over this other created being. Um, you may be thinking this is a weird Bible nerdy story, but it can relate to us as well, can it? When others get exalted, when others get chosen, uh, I'm an employer as well as a pastor and a minister. And I've had to hire some people that took over for like kind of passed over somebody that may be on the corporate ladder, so to speak, would have been next in line, but their, their, their gifting and their calling wasn't exactly the way that would be suited for that role.

So I chose somebody else to come in. And now that person who came in was their supervisor that's a hard thing to face. It's, it's like, what's wrong with me? And who is this person? And what's going on in the situation? And, and so this is a little bit of how we might understand how the serpent would have felt in the garden.

And because of this jealousy and this rage and this anger, he's mad at God and he's mad at these who are selected maybe to a seemingly higher place than him. And so what does he do? He goes to deceive them. Is God really good? Did God really say, why don't you partake of the fruit that he told you not to partake of? He, he wants to get the higher being to fall beneath him.

He, he wants to bring down those who God has given a position of authority and goodness and Gloria to be used by God, not just to rule over the serpents and the, and the fish and the birds, but to, to bless them, to multiply them, to, to, to create a, a glorious expansion of the garden that God put in the middle of the earth. And he, and he should have just said, you know, hey, I'm here for you. You know, I'll, you know, I'll walk with you in this thing.

Now, if you're asking the question, like a lot of skeptics ask, preacher, are you really saying that a snake talked to, to Adam and Eve in the garden? Maybe not, but I certainly believe a seraphim could talk to him because a seraphim was a created being that could communicate. They talked to God. They were in what, what scriptures in Psalm 86 talks about a divine council where God is sitting on his throne and there are angels and there are seraphim and seraphim and cherubim around him.

And it's called a divine council. And so certainly they could communicate. Now he's here, he's down here on earth and he's communicating with Adam and Eve because of this jealousy strikes in his heart.

And some of the rabbis that study this stuff in the first century, excuse me, and right after these things were written suggest to us that the fall, not only of man came in the garden of Eden, but the fall of Lucifer, of Satan, of this seraphim, when he saw God choosing somebody else over him, his jealousy and anger and rage became the part of the fall. How do we know that? Because he was somehow walking around, somehow had wings. And then we see Jesus, excuse me, that God curses him.

Remember when Adam and Eve, after they sinned, there's going to be pain in childbirth and Adam is going to have to work. How many of you sisters can say amen to the pain in childbirth? How many of you

guys can say thank the Lord? Anyway, I'm getting way off subject here. I just caught that.

Anyway, back to the subject matter here. Where was I? Oh, yeah, so they got cursed and so did the seraphim, it says. And he spoke to the seraphim and said to them, you're going to now crawl on your belly in the dust of the ground.

So some suggest that that was the actual fall, not only of Adam and Eve, but the fall of Lucifer and Satan that came all in this garden, opportunity for greatness. And instead of that, these petty jealousies and these doubts, Satan's doubts of God, the seraphim's doubts of God and Adam and Eve's confusion and temptation for these things. And it just caused chaos in the garden.

They all got kicked out of the garden. And the whole thing started because the one that, listen to this carefully, the one that was there first, it's my job, the one who wants to be the head and not the tail, the one who wants credit, the one who wants glory. When someone else comes along, the first one calls me, you're just a newcomer.

You're just a late bloomer. You're just a new kid on the block. And now you're going to get all the glory and credit.

And there's incredible stories throughout scripture of the one who's there first, getting angry with the one who came second. The Bible's full of it. Do you understand what I'm talking about? Wait, nod your head at me if you understand what I'm talking about.

Good, thank you. So there's all these stories of the first and the last. Jesus even talked about that, the first and the last.

And Jesus talked a lot about this. But even before Jesus in the Old Testament, incredible stories time after time of the blessing bypassing the first one and going to the second one. Are you following me here at all? The idea here is found in what's called the firstborn.

Have you ever heard of the firstborn? The firstborn is a principle in the Old Testament. And the principle in the Old Testament is the firstborn will get a double portion. The firstborn will sort of rule, almost like Adam and Eve.

They're going to rule and reign. So the seraphim's thinking, I was born before him, why aren't I ruling and reigning? And then Adam and Eve comes along late, and he gets to be the one who's ruling and reigning. And all of a sudden this theme is carried throughout the whole Hebrew Bible.

And we see this, that God has said the older one's going to be the double blessing. The older one's going to be the one who gets the first blessing on their life. Why was that? In ancient times, they were a nomadic people oftentimes, or they were farming or shepherding.

And so the father, knowing that he had a firstborn son, is kind of finally thrilled like, okay, prodigy, we have help. I have somebody to help me. I have someone to tend the crops, or I have someone to help feed the sheep.

I have someone who next generation can keep this family industry going. And so there was this joy over the firstborn. And then the second one would come along and get half the blessing that the first one.

You still follow me. I'm going through a lot of stuff here tonight. Thank you for your kindness.

And so the firstborns there, it's the older brother that always got the double portion, the blessing, and the leadership of the family, the household to protect the family, to help them grow, to help them encourage. And then they would pass them in inheritances down to the ones who came along. Secondly, how many of you are firstborn here? Let me see your hand if you're firstborn.

Okay. I was a firstborn son. How many of you are a younger son or daughter? Then let's see your hand.

Okay. How many of you have like, how many of you older ones have regrets of how you treated your brothers and sisters? Anybody? Okay. I know Tim's a younger brother.

Polly, his brother. I know Polly. I'm sure he must've messed with your head.

I mean, he just, if there's any psychological problems in your pastor, it comes from his older brother, Polly. All right. And I can say that with love for Polly, because I'm an older brother and much of my repentance over the years has been, I can't believe I'm so sorry, Lord, that I treated my little brother that way.

I neglected him. I ignored him. When my mom and dad said, go, let your brother come with you.

I would go like, okay, but you have to walk 10 steps behind me. It was just, I would call him names. I would push him down in the dirt.

One time I had him sit down. I said, sit down. You're going to like it.

It was in the ant hill of fire ants. And he started like, ah, just, I mean, I just feel so terrible about being the older brother. But, but for some reason, God had designed this thing, maybe because of the culture of the day, designed this thing.

So the firstborn would, would get that. But then all of a sudden he started seeing this thing in humanity, dominion, power, dominance, authority, unkindness, taking more. Oh, you gave me a double portion, but I'm going to take from my little siblings even more.

I'm going to, I'm going to rule and I'm going to reign. And that, and that became almost the predominant way cultures were born. We see this in the story of Cain and Abel.

Remember Cain and Abel? Cain was the older one, should have got the double portion of the inheritance. But there's something God recognizes in his spirit. And so he brings an offering to the Lord and it's, it's kind of a half-hearted offering.

His little brother brings the, it's called the first fruits of his flocks. So he's, he's honoring God for what God honors is giving the best of your first things. And so he gives that and God says, Oh, I look, I look pleasantly upon that offering, but not so much on Cain's offering.

Cain had the same spirit then that the seraphim had in the garden. Who is this God to tell me my offerings not as good as my little brother. And he gets angry at his brother.

And if you know the story, what does he do? You absolutely know it. He kills him. And so, so the, the problem with that story is God told Cain after his offering was not as acceptable as his little brother's was.

Why are you so angry? And why is your face down? Because I can give you just as much a blessing. The actual Hebrew word is I can exalt you too. Just like your brother.

What's that saying to us is that, that God, it's not a zero sum game with God. It's not as if he has like a hundred talents to give away and he's already given 90 away to your big brother. So he only leaves you 10.

It's a zero sum game. If he has 90% for your brother, he could give you a hundred percent because he has mathematically this impossible to us mathematically. It doesn't make sense, but to God, he's, he has more to give than we have the ability to even receive all that he could give to us.

So you never need to be jealous. You never need to look at somebody else and say, why are they promoted over me? And let that anger and that rage and that downcast face come into your life. And this is a biblical thing real quickly.

Nahor was, does anybody know who Nahor's older, younger brother was? Abram. Oh, it's up there. Sorry.

I was going, man, these people are really smart. They're like, oh, I know. I've known that since I was six years old.

That's Abram. Abram was, Abram, Nahor's older brother, but who got selected? It's not up in the notes there. Okay.

So you have to, you have to guess this one yourself. Who, who got selected? Abram later became, and Abram, Abram means father of children. And then God changes it to Abraham, father of multitudes.

Now that's a weird thing for a guy who has no children, right? I can just picture God walking up to Abram and say, Abram, what's your name? My name's Abram. You know what Abram means? Abram says, yeah, my name is father of many, but the problem is I don't have any kids. Okay, well, let me change your name.

Abram goes, that's good. I'm glad you're changing my name because I don't have any kids. And then he goes, okay, your name is Abraham.

And Abram goes, Abraham means father of nations of multitudes. And God said, that's exactly what I'm going to do for you. Change.

I'm going to change your name. Even before you see any evidence of it at all, I'm going to bless you because I have this unlimited blessing. Jacob and Esau, I remember that story.

How many of you have ever read the story of Jacob and Esau? Jacob, somehow, I don't know the whole story here. It's really weird, but Jacob is a surplanner. He wants the blessing for himself.

He wants the double portion. And I don't know how a baby in the womb can know that, but maybe something supernatural was going on in, in their mother's womb. And, and so Esau is coming out first.

And what does Jacob do? And that's not in the notes. Good job. We're really tracking it.

He grabs his heel to pull him down and say, I'm going to be first. There's something mysterious in the womb going on that, that's, that's almost like a, a Seraphim evil spirit on them or something to say, I'm going to pull this one down and ascend to myself. The problem with that was, and it didn't work.

So he came out second. And so he thought, oh, I didn't get the blessing. The problem with that, if he would have pulled Esau down and got out first in this whole story, the second one from God gets the blessing and not the first.

So Esau would have got the blessing over Jacob if Jacob would have pulled him down. And what that says to me is when you wrestle yourself into a position of power and authority over other people, when you try to finagle to get what you want, when you're not patient, we're not willing to wait on God and you're just, you're being destructive and you're gossiping and you're, and you're, and you're diminishing other people. So you could feel exalted.

You're just going to wound yourself. You're just going to put yourself in the place. David said, it's the pit they dug for me.

They fall into. And that, and that's why God is warning us here to let me do with you as I will. And I have enough blessing for the younger son who seems to be the outcast and the second and only gets half the blessing and is overlooked.

I have, I have such blessing for them, but older brothers, I have enough blessing for you as well. And so there's Aaron and Moses. Aaron was Moses's older brother, but Moses gets picked.

Jesus kind of carries on this theme. Workers who come late to the field end up making as much money as those who came to the field early. And people get angry at this kingdom principle.

Why? It's unfair. I'm the older brother. I'm supposed to get the inheritance.

I'm the stronger. I'm the wiser. I'm the more clever.

I'm the more articulate. I'm the more educated. I'm the guy who should ascend to the throne.

And God says, I'll choose somebody else. But in giving them a blessing, don't, don't, if you remember that, I think the story is best told by Jesus in the prodigal son, the younger son goes away and he falls into sin. He doesn't deserve anything, any kind of blessing.

And yet he comes back and the father throws them this lavish party. And the older brother, remember the story? He does the same thing the seraphim did. The same thing that he's, the same thing that, that, that Cain did.

He gets angry. I've been with you my whole life, working hard for you. And the father, what's the father say? Well, sorry, I'm giving the younger son the blessing, nothing left over for you.

He says, no, everything I have is yours. See, God is, God is not a zero-sum God. He can do anything for everybody.

So Jesus is basically saying all of you late comers, all of you non-inheritors, all of you who are little, all of you who are lesser, remember James the lesser? He was called lesser because he was a younger brother. And some of you feel like James the lesser, or some of you feel like some of these things we're talking about here that, that you're not called, that you're, that you're not gifted, that you're, you're not the one who's been blessed. And, and to God, what God said to Cain was be careful because sin is crouching at your door.

In the Hebrew there's, sin is crouching, sin is a croucher at your door. So it's not like sin is the entity that's crouching. You know what the Hebrew says? Sin is a croucher.

It's like a serpent. It's, it's, it's trying to get you. It's a, it's this fallen creature that's trying to get you to fall.

And, and so God warns Cain, don't, don't let this thing, this croucher get ahold of you, this envy, this jealousy, this comparativeness, this competition, this viewing yourself more than others. And you know, does anybody in this room ever see that in your heart sometimes? Man, I have seen it. You're, you're, you're applauding your own sin.

That's interesting. I see it in my own, my own life. I'm on social media and stuff.

And, and I noticed maybe three, four months ago, I started kind of seeing like, hey, you know, my numbers have grown from, you know, five people following me to seven. I'm really, you know, no, it's, it's a little different than that. But so I kind of started looking at that.

And then I would see like, you know, like some younger men in our ministry and they would be on social media and really go, man, how do they have like five times as many people following them? I've been in ministry for 50 years. It's like, this is, this isn't right. And so I saw this, that was a croucher at my door.

It could get me, I could get jealous. I could get competitive. I could compare, I could get into flesh and say, well, I'm going to build my platform.

I'm going to become a celebrity pastor. Like a lot of these guys that wear \$500 sneakers. You know, I'm going to, I'm going to be, I'm going to get up there.

I'm going to get up into this world. You know, I'm going to do it myself, you know, cause, cause it doesn't appear God's choosing me. So, and that whole thing was crouching at my door.

And so God said, I'll, I can bless you. You don't need to grab hold of that heels. And so I just, so for, for me, this is just, this is, this is a confession.

I just, I took my phone and just anything that has to do with social media. I just took it off. My computer just took it off and said, forget that stuff.

Let somebody else deal with that. I'm just going to preach the gospel. I'm going to love people.

I'm going to seek for the face of Jesus. I'm going to try to be, I'm going to try to walk in this kingdom life that God has for us. God, God is generous.

God wants to give to us. All right. I'm going to close now.

Have I run out of time? Yes, almost. Okay. I'm about to finish, but did I tell you, and I'm telling you the truth.

I told you I was going to be preaching from Matthew chapter five on the sermon on the mount. And, and, and here I am. And I think the sermon on the mount, listen to this sermon on the mount.

Now, when Jesus called the crowds, he went up the mountain side and he sat down and his disciples came to him and he began to teach them. And here's, and he said, blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Now, and he went on, blessed are the meek, blessed are those who mourn,

blessed are those who are persecuted.

And, and to understand, to understand really this, this story, you have to understand what took place real briefly. I just want to go there back up to the context is found in, in Matthew chapter four, Matthew chapter four, starting in verse 23. You have to understand the context.

Does that make sense to you? If I were to say to you tonight and Jill came tumbling after, do you, would you know what I'm talking about? Okay. Most of you understand, but if I, if I, it's not a scripture verse, let's just pretend it was a scripture verse. And I, and I, I didn't know the context.

I just started preaching. Jill came tumbling after today. Sermon is about Jill came tumbling after, and the best I can see, cause I don't have the context is, is Jill was a woman and she came tumbling.

So what I want to preach to you tonight is women are very prone to tumble. Um, women, women are more inclined to fall than men are to, so you could preach it wrong, right? But, but if you understand the whole story, it changes what you're about to say about that. Cause it was not only Jill that went up the hill, but it was Jack and who fell first? Jack.

Yeah. So the woman, I think the woman was trying to help him like, and then he just pulled her down. And so it changed, right? Doesn't it change the whole story? And, and, and, and they were, they were doing something good.

They went up the hill to fetch a pail of water for their children who were thirsty. And so it's a good story. And it's not about, you know, so, so to understand the sermon on the Mount, you have to understand who is listening to Jesus, man, this is, this so excites me.

Uh, verse 23 of chapter four, Jesus went through Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness among the people. Verse 24, news spread about him from all over Syria. And the people brought him all who were ill with various diseases and suffering severe pain, the demon possessed those having seizures and the paralyzed.

And he healed them large crowds from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and across the regions of Jordan followed him. So who, who was there in the, uh, I think I have some notes here on the screen. Uh, what type of people were there? It says the paralyzed, the, the ones who the disease, the sick, what else do we have here? This is the crowd.

Now these words up here, this is the crowd of probably five to 10,000 people that came up to a mountain top while Jesus was preaching. And this was the audience. Okay.

It wasn't scholars and, and Bible seminary preachers, and it wasn't a wealthy people. There was probably some Pharisees and religious leaders there suffering severe pain. It sounds like a church service, doesn't it? Uh, demon possessed.

Hey man, it really sounds like a church service. Uh, the, those having seizures. Look at the, the, the, the language here.

It's not those who had seizures, right? Part of the crowd was people that were having seizures. So Jesus is up here on the mountain crowds gathering around demon possessed people. They're sick.

People are there. They're throwing up. They're vomiting.

They're falling down. And some of them are, you know, a demon and others are like having seizures. They're that's a crazy crowd.

I mean, that's, that is a bizarre crowd that, that has gathered around there. And so listen to this. When Jesus is teaching on these, these, these, his wisdom, his, his blessing, he's not asking these people who came from, I have a map up here real briefly.

I'm sorry. I'm taking too much time. Uh, show me the map here.

If you have that up there. Okay. So it says that they came from a Decapolis.

That's called, that's a, that's a Latin word, a Greek word for 10 cities. So they came from 10 cities, Judea down below, uh, across from the dead sea, uh, across the Jordan river. They came from all that area.

They came from Samaria. They came from Galilee and way up on top there is Syria. So these are foreigners.

These are people who don't mix together well. These are Samaritans with Jews all together on this mountaintop. And instead of Jesus saying to them, here's what I want you to strive to be.

Here is your religious agenda here. Okay. I know you're, Hey, all you do human possessed people be quiet for just a moment.

I can pick up that guy with the seizure. I want them to hear this. You have to try to be more meek.

You, you, you, you got to start mourning people. I know you brought your demon possessed son that you want to be healed today, but I don't see enough mourning in you. I won't bless you until you start mourning and, and, and, and, and, and you're not meek enough.

You try hard. You know, we read these things as if there are aspirations that God commands us to try to follow. But I think it's the very opposite of that.

I think he takes broken. He takes little brothers who've been abused by their elder brother. He takes Adam and Eve who the seraphim deceive them and they got lost the garden.

And then now they just feel hopeless and helpless. It's, it's the, it's the people that bring their addictions to Jesus. And, and Jesus sees them in this broken condition.

And as he sees them in this broken condition, he, he says, I'm not trying to tell you do these things. So you'll be blessed. I'm saying, I brought you up to a mountain.

I've been on that mountain. It's one of the most beautiful places I've ever been in Israel in my life. It's these green rolling Hills.

And you can see, you know, almost all of Israel and Judea and Samaria all around you just, and I think it's purposely Jesus brought him to mountaintop. I want all you lowly people, all you broken people, all you possessed people by being driven down by demonic forces and overwhelmed and crushed by this world and considered no good and considered worthless and consider not enough. I want you to come to a mountaintop with me because it's the lowly that are going to send with Jesus.

And so even the position of the, of his sermon is so meaningful. He's going back to the garden and he's going through all these little brother problems that we have of not being the called and the selected. And we're the ones who end up demon possessed.

We're the ones who end up addicted. We're the ones that are broken. And he says, you're here with me right now.

And I'm welcoming you into my kingdom. And my kingdom says to you in the condition you're in and you're hurting and your woundedness, I'm calling you blessed. You're my son.

You're my daughter. You're, you're my child. And the last thing I'll say is in worship team, you guys come back.

In the weirdness of all these stories about the little brother ascending over the older brother, the Bible seven times calls Jesus. You know what that says about Jesus? He is the first, first born. Oh, he's the older brother.

Oh, the whole story here. The Bible said the older brothers are going to be mean mistreat us. Jesus is the quintessential elder brother.

He, he comes and says, this is what it was supposed to be like. Your older brother was supposed to protect you. He was supposed to guide you.

He was supposed to pull you into who you really are. He was supposed to help you with your inheritance. He was supposed to protect the family.

And after all these failures of older brothers, Gary included, Jesus says, I'm the first born. I am your elder brother. And I'm going to take you in.

And the sermon on the Mount is both a story for hurting and broken people, but it's also a way for us now to live our life, giving a blessing to other people, not looking down on them, even, even blessing those who maybe are exalted over us to still bless them. The blessing goes all kinds of directions. When you have the heart of our elder brother, Jesus, stand with me.

If you would, please want to pray for us. I just want to ask oftentimes here at Times Square Church, we invite people to come to the front. If it's okay, Pastor Tim, I'm going to, I'm going to not do that tonight.

If that's okay. I just right where you are. If you have, if you've come to this church, almost like the sermon on the Mount, like, like, man, I've got this thing possessing me at this pain.

I got this problem. I got this suffering. I have a family issue or it's more emotional.

I feel like the little brother, the little sister always overlooked. And, and you just want tonight just to raise your hand, allow me to pray for you and let Jesus touch you tonight and say, I have enough for you. I'm not withholding anything from you.

I have healing. Jesus wants to speak these words over you tonight, right in your meekness, right in your morning, right in your sorrow, right in your suffering. He's saying to you tonight, the very words he said in this sermon about 2000 years ago, you're blessed.

I've blessed you because you're in my presence. I blessed you because, and so I want to pray. Would you just raise your hand? If you need prayer tonight, if you need prayer for any of these issues, you all over the place.

Father, I thank you for my brothers and sisters. I thank you, Jesus, that you are our elder brother. You show us the way how to live the beatitudes.

You show us how to receive them, that we're blessed no matter how we feel or how broken our lives might be. We're blessed because you're our elder brother and you're going to teach us, train us how to live this kind of life. But then you're also going to send us forth as a beatitude type people, a sermon on the mount type people, giving mercy, giving blessing, giving love, not being like the Seraphim in the garden who fell because of his corrupt nature of saying, I want to ascend to the most high.

I want to, I'm jealous. I'm competitive. I want to be higher than others.

Jesus, humble us. Let us, let us not be afraid to be humble. Let us, let us, let us not be afraid to say I'm nothing.

I'm nothing, Jesus. But, but I have an older brother who's everything. And all his inheritance is mine.

All his power is mine. All his authority is mine. All his riches in heaven are mine.

All his grace is mine. All his forgiveness is mine. All his healing is mine.

Thank you that you're a wonderful elder brother, giving us finally an example of what it's really meant to be. And we thank you for that. Pastor Timothy, come back.

God bless you guys. Thank you for letting me be here with you tonight.

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