

The Life of Disciples in the Sermon on the Mount

I. Introduction

A. This morning we are finishing the third of three weeks in the Sermon on the Mount

1. As we've studied the Sermon on the Mount, we've seen that it is an exposition of Christ's first preaching - repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!
 - a. What does it mean to repent and enter the kingdom of heaven? Well simply, it means to follow Jesus.
 - b. And what does it mean to follow Jesus? That's the question that the Sermon on the Mount answers - how do we follow Jesus? How do we repent and enter the kingdom of heaven?
2. So we should expect the Sermon on the Mount to be full of practical instructions - and it is!
 - a. But we didn't start our study with practical instruction, because there is something more glorious and more important in the Sermon on the Mount
 - b. First, two weeks ago, we saw that Jesus was behind every word of the Sermon on the Mount - the Sermon on the Mount revealed Jesus as the fulfillment of Old Testament types, the fulfillment of Old Testament promises and the fulfillment of the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount
 - c. Then, last week, we saw that Jesus was revealing what His kingdom was like and how it was different than the kingdoms of this world - in sum, the Kingdom of Heaven is about God's glory, not our glory, or, in other words, the Kingdom of Heaven is about Jesus, not about us - the Kingdom of Heaven should look like Jesus
3. This week we are going to finally look at the practical instruction in the Sermon on the Mount
 - a. The revelation of Jesus and the description of His kingdom is given in simple, straightforward commands
 - b. Now we shouldn't run after these commands without seeing Jesus first and loving His kingdom, but we also shouldn't overlook these commands, claiming that we are loving Jesus instead
 - c. We need to start with Jesus, not with the commands, because Jesus' kingdom is about Him, but seeing and loving Jesus should call us to obey these commands, not to display our own glory but because we see and love Jesus and because we know that Jesus kingdom should reflect Him and His glory

B. So this morning we are going to look at the commands of the Sermon on the Mount and think about how they should be reflected in our lives

1. Now, as a caveat, there is no way in less than an hour I can cover all of the practical instruction of the Sermon on the Mount - at best I can give you a spring board for you to dive into the text and mine out all of the rich teaching
2. So, before I start, I will once again invite you to study this passage on your own and work on applying it to your life - I hope this morning to encourage you in Christ, but I will never exhaust the glories of Christ in a morning of preaching
3. Also, I will apologize in advance - I will try to keep this sermon as close to our normal time as possible, but the amount of material here may cause me to go a little long - I will strive not to go overlong this morning
4. With that said, I'm going to divide the commands of the Sermon on the Mount into four categories of commands, and then I'll look at a few examples of those commands in each category
5. And within each category, we'll see that disciples should live in these ways because these things reflect the glories of Christ - even our practical obedience should be about the glory of Christ, not our own obedience

C. Proposition and Outline:

1. Proposition: If the kingdom of heaven is about reflecting the glory of Christ, then disciples must live in certain ways
2. Outline:
 - a. Disciples should hate sins the world overlooks
 - b. Disciples should care for others above themselves
 - c. Disciples should seek reward from God
 - d. Disciples should examine themselves

II. Disciples should hate sins the world overlooks

A. The world overlooks or excuses many sins, and as those in the world, we may be tempted to underestimate the severity of these sins as well - but Christ tells us that these sins are completely out of character with His kingdom

1. Disciples should hate anger
 - a. The world often runs after anger - in some ways they know it is wrong, but in more ways they excuse or even encourage it - for proof look no farther than current politics races that are dominated by those ruled by anger
 - b. But Christ comes and says that anger is antithetical to His kingdom, in fact He compares anger and murder
 - i. If murder is subject to judgement, then anger is too - they are, at the core, the same
 - ii. They are, at the core, both about choosing yourself over another and reacting in violence
 - c. So disciples of Christ cannot be marked by anger - we should not be known as those who are angry
 - i. Paul says in Colossians 3:8 says - *But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.*
 - ii. And James says, in James 1:19-20 - *Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.*
 - iii. Disciples of Christ should strive to distance themselves from anger, resting in God's goodness, resting in God's justice, and caring about the needs and desires of others
2. Disciples should hate lust
 - a. Our culture, and the world in general, is steeped in sensuality and lust - as the old adage goes, 'sex sells'
 - b. But Christ comes and says that lust is antithetical to His kingdom, in fact He compares lust and adultery
 - i. Lust disregards faithfulness to marriage and denigrates the covenant the same way adultery does
 - ii. They are, at the core, the same - both are about choosing your own pleasure over faithfulness
 - c. So disciples of Christ cannot be marked by lust - we should not be entangled in the world's nets of sensuality
 - i. Again, this is the witness of all of the New Testament; for example, Colossians 3:5 - *Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.*
 - ii. Not only sexual immorality, but even passions and evil desires are idolatry, taking our focus off of the goodness of Christ in the picture of marriage and seeking our own worldly pleasures
 - iii. Disciples of Christ should not be entangled in lust in any fashion, instead they should rejoice in faithfulness
3. Disciples should hate divorce
 - a. Again, our culture, and the world in general, makes light of divorce - marriage covenants are so easily broken
 - b. But Christ comes and says that divorce is antithetical to His kingdom, in fact He compares it, again, to adultery
 - i. Divorce is an unfaithfulness to marriage in the same way adultery is - it is a breaking of the marriage covenant, a disregard for the promises that are made
 - ii. And remarriage after divorce is a compounding of the unfaithfulness - it is saying that marriage is not significant and can be broken and remade with impunity, it devalues marriage
 - c. So disciples of Christ cannot be marked by divorce
 - i. Even the Old Testament testifies to this, Malachi 2:16 says - *For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her, says the LORD, the God of Israel, covers his garment with violence, says the LORD of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless.*
 - ii. Disciples of Christ should not treat divorce and remarriage lightly, there might be an exception here, but never a requirement to divorce, instead we should rejoice in God's faithfulness and reflect His faithfulness
4. Disciples should hate dishonesty
 - a. In some ways the world values honesty because the world falls apart with no honesty, but only to a degree - the world expects dishonesty, as the saying goes, 'buyer beware'
 - b. But Christ comes and says that all dishonesty is antithetical to His kingdom - failing to keep your word is the same as failing to keep an oath or a solemn vow
 - i. The world might say that any statements not made in contract are unenforceable - that simple promises, words spoken to one another, cannot be trusted
 - ii. But this devalues honesty - it only supports honesty when backed up by law - it in fact is dishonesty
 - iii. Any argument that claims that certain words must be kept and others may be broken is assuming and encouraging a culture of dishonesty, a culture of unfaithfulness, a culture opposed to Christ
 - c. So disciples of Christ cannot be marked by dishonesty in any degree - every word of ours should be faithful
 - i. Dishonesty, devaluing our words, being forced to differentiate between a contract or oath and merely a word spoken, are antithetical to who Christ is
 - ii. God in Christ is always faithful - He has been faithful to every word He has ever spoken and disciples should reflect this joy in honesty - taking care that we fulfill every word that we have spoken

B. Instead of being entangled in these sins that the world overlooks, we must strive for the opposite

1. One thing that struck me as I studied this section were the prescriptions that Jesus made in the face of these sins
 - a. Jesus didn't just say that these things are wrong and antithetical to His kingdom, He told us what to do instead
 - b. When He condemns anger, He tells us to go repair relationships quickly, even before going to worship
 - i. Matthew 5:23-26 - *So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.*
 - c. When He condemns lust, He tells us to go pluck things out of our life that would tempt us to sin
 - i. Matthew 5:29-30 - *If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.*
 - d. When He condemns oaths, He tells us to let our 'yes' or our 'no' stand firm
 - i. Matthew 5:37 - *Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil.*
2. Jesus doesn't just condemn sin, He calls for the opposite - His kingdom isn't merely about not doing wrong, it is about doing right
 - a. So, far from being angry at each other, we should be known as those who seek peace, those who work hard to bring about peace - we should be peacemakers, even as the Beatitudes encouraged
 - b. And, far from being filled with lust, we should desire Christ so much that we would seek to rid our lives of things that direct our affections elsewhere - we should be pure in heart, again from the Beatitudes
 - c. And again, far from being party to an undercurrent of dishonesty, we should strive to be known as those who are unwaveringly trustworthy - our word is our bond
 - d. Jesus is calling for a culture in His kingdom that doesn't just fight against sin but fights for righteousness - and it is a fight, a fight that will require us to set aside pride to go make peace, to set aside pleasures to be pure in heart, to set aside potential opportunities in order to be trustworthy
 - e. But this fight for righteousness is the joy of a disciple, because this righteousness springs from a changed heart - as we discussed last week - a heart that desires Christ more than the things of this world

C. We reject these sins and strive for the opposite to reflect the glory of Christ because Christ died for even the least of sin s

1. I want to end each point by bringing it back to Christ, because that is my overarching purpose in preaching the Sermon on the Mount, and it would be so easy to do these things without seeking Christ
 - a. So I want us to see that these things aren't rooted in us, they are rooted in Christ
 - b. The only reason we do them is because we see them in Christ and we want to reflect the glory of Christ into the world
2. So we fight for righteousness even in the least situation because we know that Christ never committed any sin
 - a. As I Peter 2:22 says - *He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth.*
 - b. Christ never committed any sin, He was never marked by even the least dishonesty, He was completely pure
3. And we fight for righteousness because we know that the least sin is an offense before God, a breaking of His law
 - a. James 2:10 - *For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.*
 - b. Every sin, even the sins the world overlooks, is an offense against a Holy God and unfit for His kingdom
4. And we fight for righteousness because we know that Christ died for the least sin
 - a. Christ died to make us holy, to wash us from every spot, not clean us up a little bit
 - b. Even as Paul says in Ephesians 5:25-27 - *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.*
 - c. Christ died for every sin, so every sin, even the least of sins, should be being purged from our life - we should be fighting for righteousness in every area of life because Christ died that righteousness might mark all of our lives
5. So we keep these commands to glorify Christ - we don't do it for ourselves, we don't do them to be better than others, we don't do it for our own glory, we do these things, we fight for righteousness, because Christ deserves it
 - a. If He died for every sin, then we should hate every sin; if He died to bring righteousness, we should fight for every righteous act
 - b. The fight for righteousness is a fight to glorify Christ

III. Disciples should care for others above themselves

A. As Jesus goes through the Sermon on the Mount, He doesn't have a discrete section on caring for others, setting others above yourself

1. But there is an undercurrent to much of the middle of the Sermon on the Mount that calls disciples to put others above themselves, to be marked by caring for others
2. So as we continue looking at the practical instruction of the Sermon on the Mount, I want to look at the heart that marks a disciples, and we'll see three broad ways that our hearts should care for others

B. Disciples should have a heart of service

1. The world, and can I say especially America, values winning, not giving up our rights
 - a. If someone mistreats us, we want to repay them in kind
 - b. If someone takes away our rights, we want to fight for them with every breath we have
 - c. We don't want to serve those who misuse us, we want to be recognized as people in our own right
2. But Jesus tells us that instead of fighting for our rights we should serve others
 - a. Matthew 5:38-42 - *"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.*
 - b. The contrast is significant - we shouldn't only not fight for our rights, not retaliate against others, instead we should set aside our rights in order to serve others, we take the radical position that our rights are there in order to be trampled on, in order to serve others
 - c. A disciple should have a heart that is willing to endure mistreatment without complaint, is willing to meet unreasonable demands, is willing to serve others even when, or maybe especially when, they don't deserve it
 - d. This should call us to consider how we use our time and our emotions - are we serving ourselves or are we serving others?
 - e. Disciples put other's desires, other's needs, other's demands above their own - they have a heart of service

C. Disciples should have a heart of giving

1. As we go on into chapter 6, Jesus starts to talk about positive things a disciple will do, and the first one is: give
 - a. 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.*
 - b. Last week we talked about how we give, but we shouldn't overlook the implicit truth that disciples should be marked by hearts of giving
 - c. When Jesus tells us how not to give and how to give there's an implicit assumption that disciples will be giving people - disciples will work to meet other's needs
2. So disciples should be ready to give up their rights to serve others, but they should also be ready to give up their money to serve others
 - a. Disciples of Jesus should be generous people - people who desire to give to those in need
 - b. They shouldn't give in order to draw attention to themselves, but they should give, they should care for others with their money - someone who rarely gives to serve others isn't marking themselves as a disciple of Jesus
 - c. This should call us to consider how we use our money - are we serving ourselves or are we serving others - we should consider that individually, we should consider that as a church - are we serving others with our money?
 - d. Again, disciples put other's needs above their own - they have a heart of giving

D. Disciples should have a heart of love

1. In Matthew 7:12 Jesus summarizes His law in one statement
 - a. Mathew 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. I'm calling this summary a heart of love because I think this is really what love is - caring for others in the same way that you care for yourself
 - c. In fact, this attitude is what fosters a heart of service and a heart of giving - a heart of love cares for others and therefore does for others

2. In fact, the call for disciples to love others appears throughout the Sermon on the Mount
 - a. For example, Matthew 5:43-47 - *"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. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?"*
 - b. Jesus says that disciples should be marked by a love that cares for and provides for others even as God does
 - c. And particularly this love should not be limited to those we like, those we admire, those we love, it should extend literally to everyone, even those who mistreat us, those who are our enemies
 - d. This should call us to consider - do we feel this way toward everyone? Do we really think through how we can love, how we can care for those who wrong us? Do we desire the good of our enemies?
 - e. Again, disciples put other's needs above their own - they have a heart of love

E. We have a heart of service, giving and love in order to glorify Christ because Christ cared for others above Himself

1. Again, these things aren't rooted in us, disciples are called to these things because they reflect Christ
2. Christ is the one who served others, even when mistreated, even when they had no right to demand service, even when it caused Him to give up His rights, even when it caused Him to give up His life
 - a. Matthew 20:26-28 - *But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*
3. Again, Christ is the one who gave to others, who took from His bounty and gave to those in need
 - a. II Corinthians 8:9 - *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.*
4. And again, Christ is the one who loved others, who cared for others even as He cared for Himself
 - a. Ephesians 5:28-30 - *In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body.*
5. Disciples have hearts that serve, hearts that give, hearts that love because they want to reflect Christ into the world - these are the things that marked Christ, these are the things that glorify Christ and disciples want to glorify Christ

IV. Disciples should seek reward from God

A. We somewhat covered this topic last week and I almost skipped it this week, but I decided it would be good not to skip

1. Last week we looked at chapter 6 and said that Jesus' kingdom is marked by seeking God not seeking the world
2. We saw that the attitude of Christ's kingdom is oriented toward enjoying Him, not enjoying the world
3. But, I want to go briefly through these one more time because I want to see that this is true, not only in attitude, but also in action - the actions of a disciple should testify that they are seeking God and not seeking the world

B. So seeking reward in others is wrong

1. Jesus says in Matthew 6:1 - *Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.*
 - a. We talked about this last week - we shouldn't do good things, like giving, prayer, or fasting, in order for others to see us do them, in order to make ourselves look good to others
 - b. This is very easy to do - it appeals to our pride and our fear of man, and there are always ample opportunities to gratify ourselves in these things - but Jesus says that this is not what His kingdom is about
2. So I'll try to make this very simple: seeking honor from men is wrong - it is out of character for disciples of Jesus
 - a. That doesn't mean that men will never honor us - in fact, the Bible calls us to honor men who serve and reflect Christ well, Paul says '*honor such men*'
 - b. And it doesn't mean that we will never do anything that others can see - Jesus Himself calls us to do good works publicly so that others glorify our Father in heaven
 - c. But it does mean that we will never seek our reward in other's perception of us and we will be careful to guard against this - we will choose when and how to do good works in order to maximize the glory that goes to God and minimize the glory that goes to us, it is an intentional action on our part not to be seen by men
3. We must not seek reward in others - it is a cheap reward, easily lost and extremely perishable and never very gratifying in the end

C. Again seeking reward in things is wrong

1. Jesus says in 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.*
 - a. We talked about this last week too - we shouldn't want treasures here, we should want treasures in heaven, our heart should be oriented toward the kingdom of heaven and disregard the kingdom of earth
 - b. But again, this is very easy to stumble in - it appeals to our pleasure, and since we exist in the physical world there are ample opportunities to gratify ourselves in things and the world calls us to gratify ourselves in things
 - c. In fact, the world looks down on those who don't work hard for treasures on earth, they value working hard and earning money, entrepreneurship, the American Dream as positive character traits - but Jesus says that this is not what His kingdom is about
2. So again, I'll try to make it simple: building up treasures on earth is wrong - it is out of character for disciples of Jesus
 - a. Now, I tried to word this carefully - I do not mean that having possessions is wrong, though many places in the Bible suggest it is dangerous - things here cause us to love here, having stuff is dangerous for our heart
 - b. And it doesn't mean that we won't work hard in this world, working hard is a reflection of God's work in Christ and a statement that we serve a good master
 - c. Nor does it mean that we won't provide for our families - Paul clearly calls Christian's to work to provide for themselves and for their families, not to shirk the business of earning a living
 - d. But it does mean that we will not build treasure here
 - i. We won't be making decisions based on building up our wealth here, instead we'll make decisions based on serving Christ
 - ii. We won't be storing up wealth here, instead we'll be generous with what God gives us so that we can enjoy Christ better
 - iii. We won't be oriented toward our careers or pursuing the American Dream, we won't design our lives to make sure we keep up with others or getting ahead, instead we'll be looking to a better possession
3. I'm not going to give any hard and fast guidelines here - but it's something we should all think about, especially as men who work in the world - this is a dangerous area because America is built on the opposite principle and I think it is easy to imbibe that principle, even believe that the American way is Christ's way, that it is right
 - a. But we must not ever seek reward in things - it is a cheap reward, easily lost and extremely perishable and never very gratifying in the end

D. Even seeking reward in certainty is wrong

1. Matthew 6:31-32 - *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.*
 - a. Right after dealing with things, with possessions, Jesus turns to consider worrying about things, about provision
 - b. In sum, Jesus is saying that worry is simply another way of seeking reward in this world - it is the reflection of an attitude that wants to be self-sufficient, an attitude that doesn't want to trust in God, an attitude that wants to be secure in its position in the world
2. So again, it is simple: anxiety is wrong - it is out of character for disciples of Jesus
 - a. Now, this doesn't mean that there isn't an aspect of wisdom in planning for the future, Proverbs talks about this, but at the same time, we shouldn't over emphasize that wisdom
 - b. We'll make sure that we aren't doing foolish things that will directly jeopardize our future provision, we won't foolishly spend our money or quit our jobs, but we won't demand that wisdom means we know how we are going to provide for tomorrow, or for next week, or for next year - we can rest on God for that
3. We must not seek reward by demanding security in this world - security is a cheap reward, easily lost and extremely perishable and never very gratifying in the end

E. Instead, disciples are characterized by seeking reward in God

1. In contrast to seeking any sort of rewards here, Jesus calls us to seek rewards in God
 - a. Matthew 7:7-11 - *"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!*
2. The life of disciples isn't about having no rewards, it isn't about pure and complete self-denial - it is about seeking the right rewards, the best rewards - there is a seeking that happens, it just isn't for cheap, counterfeit rewards
 - a. We seek the kingdom of heaven because we trust that our reward in God will be better than anything given up
 - i. Jesus says as much in Mark 10:29-30 - *Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.*
 - b. We seek a better reward in God, in fact, the Christian life is about believing there is a better reward in God
 - i. Hebrews 11:6 says - *And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.*
 - c. The Christian life is about seeking the best reward, giving everything up here to get a better possession
 - i. Jesus says in Matthew 13:44 - *"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.*
3. Disciples must seek reward in God - they must orient their lives in order to rejoice in and enjoy God Himself
 - a. This is how we must evaluate all of our actions in this world, all of our activities should be designed around helping us enjoy God better, helping us see God better, helping us rejoice in God better

F. We seek reward from God to glorify Christ because Christ sought reward from God

1. There are so many ways that this glorifies Christ that it is almost impossible for me to start, but I'll keep to my pattern and show that we rejoice in God, we enjoy God because Christ sought reward in God
2. This was Christ's prayer before He went to the cross - John 17:5 - *And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed*
 - a. He hadn't sought treasure in this world, but Jesus did seek treasure - He wanted His Father to glorify Him, to give Him a kingdom that would never perish, a kingdom worth more than everything in this world
3. And the author of Hebrews gives us a glimpse into Christ's thoughts at this moment - Hebrews 12:2 - *looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*
 - a. Christ wasn't seeking the joys of this world, but He was seeking a better joy - He went to the cross seeking joy, the joy that only God can give
4. So we seek joy in God because that's what Christ did and we want to reflect Christ
5. Put perhaps even more, we seek joy in God because we see God in Christ and by seeking our joy in Christ we testify that He is the best treasure, the best reward that we could ever get
 - a. Seeking reward in God is about glorifying God - it's really good for us, but it's about glorifying God

V. I'll conclude with one final thought: Disciples should examine themselves

A. I'll finish with this because Jesus both started and ended the Sermon on the Mount with calls to examine ourselves

1. He didn't want us just to hear, He wanted us to do His words, He wanted us to obey His teaching
2. And especially, He didn't want us just to hear and think we are obeying, He wanted us to examine ourselves
3. Are we really hating sins that the world overlooks? Or are we allowing sin to keep its place in our lives?
4. Are we really caring for others above ourselves? Or are we really looking out for number one?
5. Are we really seeking reward in God? Or have we stored up many treasures on earth?
6. So, I'll finish with three questions that come straight out of the Sermon on the Mount

B. Are we reflecting God's glory or our own glory?

1. As we saw last week, this is the point of the entire sermon on the Mount, and Jesus starts with a paragraph about this question - 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.*
2. We talked a little bit last week and more on Wednesday night about how this applies first to the Jews listening to Jesus and then to Jesus Himself, but as much as we are in Jesus, this applies to us
3. It calls us to consider if we really are being the salt of the covenant in the world - are we reflecting the glory of God into this world, or are we seeking our own glory?
4. I'm not asking are you being very religious? - Jesus was talking to those who were very religious - I'm asking, are you reflecting God's glory? Is your life designed to show how good God is? Think about it - examine yourself.

C. Are we growing in the fruit of the gospel or claiming Christ's name in vain?

1. Near the end of the Sermon on the Mount, Christ calls us to look inward once again, Matthew 7:17-20 - *So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.*
2. In one way, this is about evaluating others, especially teachers, prophets, those who tell you what God wants
3. But, in another way, this is directed toward each of us, especially when we see that this is the same warning that John the Baptist gave to those who came for repentance - everyone who repents needs to think about this truth
4. Are we bearing fruits that reflect the gospel? Are we bearing fruits that reflect that we are disciples? Or are we bearing fruits that show that we are part of the world? Are our accomplishments, our joys, our desires similar to the desires that anyone in this world would have?
5. A disciple will look radically different than the world - a disciple should look so different that the world really doesn't understand him, the world doesn't understand what he wants or what he does, because they can't want Christ
6. So, I'll ask you to think about this - are you bearing fruits that reflect the joys of the gospel, or are you bearing fruits that reflect the joys of this world? Are you full of good or bad fruit?

D. Are we resting in the wisdom of Christ or striving after our own wisdom

1. Jesus concludes the Sermon on the Mount with Matthew 5:24-27 - *"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."*
2. The Sermon on the Mount is a declaration of the law and the wisdom of Christ and at the end, He calls us to consider - are we living in that wisdom? Are we hearing and doing, or merely hearing only? Are our lives built on a firm foundation, or are they built on sinking sand?
 - a. It is so easy to follow other wisdom - other wisdom often looks right, often seems right, often feels right, other wisdom is preached by the world - overlooking sin isn't that bad, your rights are important, a good paycheck is paramount, other wisdom is rooted in our sinful hearts
 - b. But only the wisdom of Christ will stand - all others will fall; only the wisdom of Christ - getting rid of the least sin, setting aside your rights for others, seeking a treasure in heaven - will lead to joy in the end
3. So, I'll leave you with this question - are you resting in the wisdom of Christ, or your own wisdom? Are you resting in the wisdom of Christ or the wisdom of this world? Are you listening to Jesus' teaching or are you merely hearing it?