Lownes Free Church Sunday Morning – February 16, 2020

Let’s read Matthew!

***Living as God’s Kingdom People***

Matthew 5-7

**What’s happening in the book?**  King Jesus is here! Now what?

 Jesus has actively embraced the role of Messiah (the Christ), identifying with sinners (in baptism and temptation), and calling them to follow Him. Here, God’s Son assures His repentant followers that they have not made a mistake, and teaches them how to live, and more importantly, think, as obedient subjects in His now-arriving Kingdom.

**What would we like to ask Matthew?**

 What is the point and what are the purposes of the beatitudes?

 How does what Jesus teaches square with the Law of Moses?

 What is “the righteousness of the Pharisees and Law Teachers”?

 What are the reasons for loving your enemies and not worrying?

 Why do these commands, demands, and ideals sound impossible?

 Why is the road to eternal life so narrow? Why don’t many find it?

 Who are the wise and foolish builders? The false prophets?

**What do we need to know about this passage?**

❑ “The Sermon on the Mount” is the first of five discourses (sermons) Matthew uses to structure His Gospel. The beatitudes promise God’s Kingdom and eternal blessing to those who forego the world’s methods in favor of His grace, and the rest shows how that grace transforms our inner life and outward relationships (both divine and human) in real time.

 ❑ Much, if not most, of the Sermon on the Mount is correcting the bad theology of the Pharisees and Scribes (5:20, 43; 6:1, 2, 5-8, 16, 7:5, 6, 15-23). Their perversion of the Law created an outward, works-righteousness selfishly used to control others rather than love them.

❑ Jesus is not creating new, stricter laws. He is showing how loving others is behind The Law, that we need not fear persecution, nor be greedy or anxious, because God “has our back,” and that the Law must never be used as an excuse not to love and do good. Matthew 12:1-14; 15:1-9.

❑ Jesus is clear about the Law: (1) He came to fulfill the Torah, not destroy it. (2) The principles behind the Law are eternal. (3) Obeying God is essential, not optional. (4) Obedience to God presupposes a repentant heart transformed by grace. (5) The Law is fulfilled in loving God and others. (6) “Relationship” is acting out the grace we have received.

❑ Jesus is outlining Kingdom living for God’s children, not creating a check list for salvation. He is the King, so following Him is eternal joy while rejecting Him and His words exposes the rebel to judgment. He offers no comfort to those who deny God and pursue their own way.

**What’s the big idea (main point) of the story?**

**Jesus teaches His disciples to reorder their lives in keeping with the arriving Kingdom of Heaven, which means loving God and others according to the grace He has shown them.**

***So how do we apply these things practically today?***

 “Blessed”: Our new life is embodied in our response to God’s love.

 Order: We act and think as if God’s rule has begun, for it has!

 Motive: We obey Jesus out of delight, not just duty.

 Grace: We can give and forgive because God has given and forgiven us.