

Matthew 5.1-20: “The Kairos of Change”

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I. Background

- Become familiar with the passage by reading it a couple times.
- Kairos is a Greek word meaning ‘an appointed time or season’ – in this study, we will use the word to describe a time where many factors or events are orchestrated by God for a specific purpose in your life. This purpose is to bring about a holy change in your life, perspective, attitude, or heart. It is a holy change because God is intimately involved in the weaving of events in our lives and the change that takes place *at just the right time* – a time appointed by God.

II. The Beatitudes: vv 3-12 “Blessed are.....”

1. Write out the list of virtues and any other conveyed meaning you think they have (eg., meek: gentle, humble, surrendered – v 5; mourn: grieve an injustice in the world – v 4).

2. What are the feelings or impressions you have as you read this list of virtues?

It is tempting to interpret these virtues idealistically, meaning they are something we should strive to attain. You’ll probably agree that this type of interpretation leads to exhaustion, guilt, and possibly ignoring Jesus’ teaching if we cannot live up to them, or worse, comparison and self-righteousness if by some measure we are. One author (Guelich) suggests that we interpret them prophetically, which emphasizes *God’s action* to release us from things that bind us and keep us from living a kingdom life. This makes much more sense, especially if we read the passage in parallel with Isaiah 61.1-4, Jesus’ self-described mission statement (Luke 4.18-19).

3. Read Isaiah 61.1-4. Complete the chart showing the similarities:

Isaiah 61 verses	Matthew 5 verses
61.1-2	5.3
61.1-2	5.4
61.7	5.5
61.3	5.6
61.11	5.10

Taking a “bird’s-eye view” of the chart, we see that the Matthew verses show our absolute *need* for a Savior. The Isaiah verses show the *fulfillment* of these needs by the Savior Himself. The point: Jesus has come to change us into kingdom people. His Spirit is the power source behind this change. We need only to acknowledge His authority in our lives and surrender areas that hold us back from living fully as He intended. These verses bring hope: even though we may mourn or be broken in spirit or be persecuted because of Him, He will eventually work these situations out for His kingdom purpose.

4. Application: did an area of your life come to mind as you read the Beatitudes? If so, write it here:

5. Describe how you think God might want to change an area or has already changed an area. Go back to the definition of 'kairos.' You may not be aware of it yet, but God is orchestrating events in your life, even if the outcome right now doesn't seem very pleasant or desirable. God uses situations and people in our lives for a higher kingdom purpose. Can you identify even a glimmer of what that might be (write it in the margins)? One way to see a possible area of change is to determine if you have:

- a sense of longing to be freed from something which weighs on you
- a desire to live more fully into what is being described
- a change of heart or perspective on something in your life

Jesus can fill us in these areas, he can free us from areas that keep our spirits down, he can enable us to become people that live His priorities, in day-to-day life and eternally. By identifying in some way with the priorities described in these passages, *this is a sign that the kingdom of God is breaking through in your life and in the world.*

III. Salt and Light (vv 13-16); Jesus Fulfills the Law (vv 17-20)

What we studied above provides the perspective for interpreting these two sections.

1. Go back to your thoughts on the application from above. Write out the ways in which God might be able to use this situation in your life to be a witness to His goodness and presence in this world. _____

2. Extra Credit. If Jesus is the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets, which is affirmed in vv17-20, what does that mean for the kingdom of God if we seek to follow Jesus?

Pray that God would guide your thinking around these passages over the next week. Ask Him to show you how His kingdom is breaking through in your heart and life.

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