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Bridge of Hope
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“The Messianic Exchange”

Introduction: Good morning! We are glad you are here with us for worship. My name is David and I serve as one of the elders here at Bridge of Hope and will be sharing our talk for today.

We are returning to a series that we started earlier from the book of Matthew in the New Testament of the Bible. Previously we studied the first 4 chapters of this Gospel account and today we are going to begin our look at chapter 5.

There is something interesting about the series we are beginning today. Sometimes you make a plan and when the time comes around you realize how you have been directed by the Holy Spirit all along the way. As we turn to the series of messages we are calling The Messianic Exchange we do so against the backdrop of a truth spoken to us in prophecy from Psalm 102. So let me start by reading the primary verses from

Psalms 102:12-13 (NIV) *But you, O LORD, sit enthroned forever; your renown endures through all generations. **You will arise and have compassion on Zion, for it is time to show favor to her; the appointed time has come.***

As we discover the expectations of Jesus in this Messianic exchange from Matthew 5 we can also discover how living such a way can be fruitful. Especially when we do so in the appointed time of God’s favor. It is time. It is time for this truth to be discussed and our lives to reflect it.

Let me take a few moments to help us reconnect to the things we have learned. Through the first 4 chapters of his letter Matthew boldly introduces us to the Messiah. He walks us through the birth and childhood to water baptism and declares that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah. Then he introduces the formation of the Messianic Community, a new community of people who would include both Jews and Gentiles alike.

Now Matthew turns his attention to talk about the authoritative teaching of Jesus the Messiah. The Sermon on the Mount, as it is commonly referred to, covers chapters 5 through 7 as Matthew takes us through the expectations Jesus has for those who follow Him. Theologian R.T. France refers to it as “The Discourse on Discipleship.” Matthew is teaching his readers about an exchange of ideas as they trade some old Jewish understanding for the ideas of the new Messianic Community. This choice to be His disciple meant a new way of living.

Jesus had taught them about a new way of living that was the opposite of the legalistic code that dominated Jewish faith and life. This discourse on discipleship is going to set a standard of living that is perfect, the ideal. It is a guide for living. Jesus presented this to His new disciples and called them to a radical new way. Matthew gives us the cliff notes to a sermon that probably took several hours to share. Let’s take a look at the introduction to this discourse on discipleship as we begin to grasp the meaning of the Messianic Exchange of one way of life for another. We read in

Matthew 5:1-2 (NKJV) *And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:*

There are three things we need to learn so that we can better understand the discourse of discipleship offered in the Messianic Exchange.

- **The Setting**

1. Seeing the multitude or crowds
 - Chapter 4 has introduced us to the crowds that had begun to gather around Jesus as the word about Him spread through the area of Galilee.
 - Often it was Jesus' habit to stop and minister to the crowds as they came to Him, we will see this very soon beginning in chapter 8 of Matthew's account.
 - But here Jesus responds by withdrawing away from the crowd. The text says that...
2. Jesus went up into the mountain or hills
 - This is probably to the north and west of the Lake of Galilee where the hills begin to rise rather steeply from the shore.
 - Here Jesus does what teachers in His day would often do when talking with their followers. The text says...
3. And when He had sat down
 - This is a very rabbinical statement about Jesus because it is what Rabbi's did when they taught their disciples.
 - Rabbi's would sit to teach their disciples and there was a reason why they did so.
 - In this time, sitting was a position of authority much like standing in front and speaking to a crowd is today or the way that a judge sits in a courtroom.
 - Jesus assumed the position of authority; He sat down to teach His new followers.
 - It's important to understand that He was speaking the truth we find in chapters 5 thru 7 from the place of authority.
4. His disciples came to Him
 - This was a smaller group than the ones who we learned about and had gathered around Him earlier in chapter 4.
 - Those who were here listening to this Sermon on the Mount are the first disciples of Jesus. And we know this because the text says that they came to Him which is another way of saying that they followed Him to learn and hear. Remember He had taken the position of authority to teach. They were there to listen and learn.
 - What it means is that the things we are going to look at are the first things Jesus taught His disciples. They had responded to the broader presentation of the Gospel that the kingdom of heaven had come and Jesus was Messiah.
 - This group had entered into a new relationship with God and is being called to a very radical new lifestyle that would make them distinctly different from the rest of those who were Jewish.
 - It meant they were forming an alternate society; it would become a Christian counter culture. Through the Messianic exchange they were the Messianic Community.

- **The Message**

1. It is a powerful message.
 - What Jesus said in this Sermon on the Mount has had more influence in the life change of people than any other sermon ever.
 - We often look at some of the great sermons like: Peter on the day of Pentecost where thousands believe; Paul in Athens as he addresses the crowd about the

unknown God that they can know. But none can compare to the message in this sermon that was preached by Jesus that day.

- It is a powerful message because it changes the way that we live. It's bold and challenging and presents an alternative to the way most live their lives.
- 2. It is an influential message.
 - This sermon, probably more than any other has had a great influence outside of Christianity.
 - It is commonly understood that Gandhi built his entire political approach on this sermon of Jesus.
 - Alfred Rosenberg produced a modified version for those who wanted to remain within the Christian tradition and be accommodated to the Hitler philosophy of his Nazi's.
 - People often quote from this sermon without knowing they are quoting Jesus or the Bible.
 - There is no doubt that our world has been influenced by these words spoken by Jesus to His new disciples. Whether it is for the good of the people or as an attack on those who believe and hold to its truth, this sermon influences people.
 - It is an influential message to the world.
- 3. It is a distinctly Christian message.
 - For the disciple of Jesus it has to be the greatest sermon ever preached. Why? Because it came from Jesus and is extremely challenging and profound as it changes us to be more like Him.
 - This has to be one of the most penetrating messages to the heart of the Christian that has ever been shared. It speaks to us over and over again.
 - Its radical call to the standard set for entering the kingdom of heaven is a life challenge to every disciple of Jesus. We spend our lives trying to live this sermon out in the way we live. It's awesome and powerful.
 - When we look at this message and the truth that is presented, we can measure where we are compared to where God wants us to be and discover what it is that we need to work on in the days ahead.
 - As R. Kent Hughes says, "It is the antidote to the pretense and sham that plagues Christianity."¹ If we can get this right all the stuff that Christians are accused of would disappear because the only attack left would be false testimony like they brought against Jesus.

- **The Starting Point**

1. Where does Matthew begin in the teachings of Jesus?
 - He starts where Jesus started. He started where Jesus always starts.
2. This is a talk about the kind of character Jesus wants in the people who are a part of the kingdom of heaven.
3. The Beatitudes have some interesting characteristics.
 - The first 4 Beatitudes focus on our relationship with God.
 - The second 4 Beatitudes focus on our relationship with others.
 - They build on one another in a way that creates an amazing, compelling, progression of truth.
 - There is a profound unity that we find in this group of 8 statements.

¹ R. Kent Hughes, [The Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom](#), pg 16

- The first and last Beatitudes end with the same reward being mentioned “the kingdom of heaven” which according to Hebrew writing style means that all the Beatitudes between them deal with the same theme and reward.
4. Let’s take a look at them just to see what we will talk about the next several weeks.
- **Matthew 5:3-12 (NKJV)**
*Blessed are the poor in spirit,
 For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
 Blessed are those who mourn,
 For they shall be comforted.
 Blessed are the meek,
 For they shall inherit the earth.
 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
 For they shall be filled.
 Blessed are the merciful,
 For they shall obtain mercy.
 Blessed are the pure in heart,
 For they shall see God.
 Blessed are the peacemakers,
 For they shall be called sons of God.
 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
 For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

5. Amazing, some refer to this as the “Beautiful Attitudes,” an apt description for the people of the kingdom of heaven.
- They should be reflected in our lives. They should be our attitudes.

Conclusion: The Messianic Exchange is about giving Christ the inept, unfruitful, unsatisfying lives that we have known in exchange for the promise of hope and life that is fruitful and satisfying to our souls. It is about the transformation of our lives as we learn to make the exchange with Jesus.

I would like to tell the story of a man named Mickey Cohen, a gangster. *“The story goes like this: At the height of his career, Cohen was persuaded to attend an evangelistic service at which he showed a surprising interest in Christianity. Hearing of this, and realizing what a great influence a converted Mickey Cohen could have for the Lord, some prominent Christian leaders began visiting him in an effort to convince him to accept Christ. Late one night, after repeatedly being encouraged to open the door of his life on the basis of Revelation 3:20 (‘I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will go in and eat with him, and he with me’). Cohen prayed.*

Hopes ran high among his believing acquaintances. But with passing of time no one could detect any change in Cohen’s life. Finally they confronted him with the reality that being a Christian meant he would have to give up his friends and his profession. Cohen demurred, His

logic? There are 'Christian football players, Christian Cowboys, Christian politicians; why not a Christian gangster?'"²

Take this time today and commit yourself to learning and growing as a follower of Christ. As you realize that you can't be a Christian gangster, set your sight on this discourse on discipleship offered in Matthew 5 thru 7 that teaches about the Messianic exchange that brings real change to both our heart and life.

We are embarking on a great spiritual journey as we unfold and learn what the Messianic Exchange is about through the Discourse on Discipleship from the Gospel of Matthew. It is a journey that will revolutionize our lives, our homes and families, our community among one another, and the world where we live. It's the appointed time; the favor of God is with us for this change to take place!

² R. Kent Hughes, [The Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom](#), pg 17