

Sermon Transcript
September 23, 2012



Kingdom Life is a Spiritual Life
The Beatitudes
Matthew 5:1-12

This message from the Bible was addressed originally to the people of Wethersfield Evangelical Free Church on September 23, 2012, at 511 Maple Street, Wethersfield, CT, 06109 by Pastor Scott Solberg. This is a transcription that bears the strength and weaknesses of oral delivery. It is not meant to be a polished essay. An audio copy of the sermon on CD is available by request at (860) 563-8286. An audio version of this sermon may also be found on the church web-site at www.wethefc.com.

Scripture Text
Matthew 5:1-12

- ¹ Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.
- ² And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:
- ³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- ⁴ “Blessed are those who mourn,
for they shall be comforted.
- ⁵ “Blessed are the meek,
for they shall inherit the earth.
- ⁶ “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they shall be satisfied.
- ⁷ “Blessed are the merciful,
for they shall receive mercy.
- ⁸ “Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they shall see God.
- ⁹ “Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they shall be called sons of God.
- ¹⁰ “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- ¹¹ “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.
- ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Introduction

This morning we begin looking at the Sermon on the Mount, found in Matthew 5-7. It is perhaps one of the most widely known passages in all the Bible. Many of you are familiar with much of the content we find in this sermon of Jesus. In this sermon you find the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer. It is this sermon that forms the basis for the children's song, "This Little Light of Mine." Jesus said, "*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.*" "Hide it under a bushel? No! I'm going to let it shine!" It is here we are instructed to not lay up treasures on earth, "*where moth and rust destroy and thieves break in and steal.*" Rather, we are to lay up treasures in heaven. It is here we are instructed to not be anxious about anything, but to "*seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.*" It is here where we are introduced to the golden rule and it is here where we have the story of the wise man who built his house on the rock and the foolish man who built his house on the sand. There is a lot of "good stuff" in this sermon. But be warned. This "good stuff" is going to meddle with your life and it will speak to how you live.

Before we even look at this sermon that Rabbi Jesus gives to his disciples, I think it would be good for us to consider some "ground rules" that will help us make our way through this sermon. These "ground rules" are important because they will keep us from making this sermon say something that it is not really saying.

Ground Rule #1: Matthew 4 comes before Matthew 5. I know it doesn't sound "earth shattering" but it is a pretty important rule to keep in front of you. This Sermon on the Mount doesn't appear just out of nowhere. It is not a sermon that is disconnected to what comes before it or what comes after it. Matthew 4 sets the stage for Matthew 5. For the last two Sundays, we have been in Matthew 4:12-25. What did we see in Matthew 4 that sets the stage for understanding these words from Jesus?

We saw Jesus withdraw to Galilee and to his hometown of Nazareth. He was then chased out of his hometown after he claimed to be the Messiah while reading from the prophet Isaiah in the synagogue. He eventually landed out in the middle of nowhere, in a remote town called Capernaum. It was the beginning of the second year of his ministry. It is at this time that Jesus begins to zero in on his main message. If he was running a presidential campaign, this would be the theme of his campaign. This is what you would find on his signs planted along the road and in the yards of his supporters and on his webpage. His message is found in Matthew 4:17, "*From that time on, Jesus began to preach saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'*" In Matthew 4:23, we see that Jesus stays on message, "*And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom.*"

Two weeks ago, we acknowledged the unfortunate reality that what was central to the message of Jesus, has for some reason become peripheral to our understanding of the gospel. We tend not to think “kingdom” when we think “gospel.” And yet to Jesus, the gospel or the “good news” is ultimately about the kingdom of God. And so when we come to Matthew 5-7, we need to understand that this sermon has everything to do with the kingdom of God. In Matthew 4, Jesus came announcing that the coming kingdom of God was at hand. It is here! In Matthew 5-7, Jesus is telling us what life in this kingdom of God looks like. In Matthew 4, the message is, “*the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*” In Matthew 5-7, the message is, “this is what it looks like to live in the kingdom of God.” Matthew 4 comes before Matthew 5. This is a message about Kingdom Life.

Ground Rule #2: The Sermon on the Mount does not tell us how to enter God’s kingdom but, rather, it tells us what it looks like when God’s kingdom enters us. This is an important ground rule to keep in front of you because there are some who see this sermon as “entrance requirements” for the kingdom. There are verses in Matthew 5-7 that can be taken the wrong way. For example, in Matthew 5:20, it says “*For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.*” Matthew 7:21 adds, “*Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.*” As a result, some have made the conclusion that that Sermon on the Mount tells us what we must “do” to enter the kingdom of heaven. But that is not the case at all. This sermon does not discount the need for the cross.

Jesus said to Nicodemus in John 3:3, “*Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.*” John 3 goes on to tell us that being born again is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. I wrote in my weekly email about an article I read in *Christianity Today*, about a movement of the Holy Spirit where Iranians living in Germany are being drawn to faith in Jesus through the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. In many cases, the testimony is that Jesus is appearing to them in dreams and sending them to churches and pastors where the Word of God is faithfully proclaimed. These Iranians are converting to faith in Jesus as their Lord and Savior and they are being baptized at the rate 500 to 1,000 a year. That is the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. That is the “new birth.” That is how one enters into the kingdom of God. It is what we confessed earlier this morning when we confessed, “I am not my own, but belong—body and soul, in life and in death to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ.” One is born again and brought into the kingdom of God through faith in Jesus Christ and “*not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Spirit.*”

Once you are born again through faith in Jesus Christ, God’s kingdom begins to take

root in your life and through the same Holy Spirit, God begins to change you. Michael Wilkins puts it this way, “The kind of life to which Jesus points in the Sermon on the Mount will be the Spirit-empowered result of those who have already responded to the gospel.” The Sermon on the Mount does not tell us how to enter God’s kingdom, but, rather, tells us what it looks like when the kingdom of God enters us. Hence we pray boldly, “Kingdom of God, break in!”

Ground Rule #3: The Sermon on the Mount is Discipleship 101. The final ground rule for understanding the Sermon on the Mount is that it is about discipleship. In Matthew 5:2, we see that this sermon is mainly directed to “*his disciples.*” Now, I think the crowd heard every word Jesus said. After the sermon was over, it says in Matthew 7:28-29, “*And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority and not as their scribes.*” No doubt, he was holding out the prospect of becoming a follower of Jesus to the crowd. But the words were pointed to the disciples.

We saw last week that Jesus was a rabbi. We witnessed his calling for Peter, Andrew, James and John to follow him. It was a standard rabbinic calling. In the Jewish culture, the disciple would follow the rabbi and the rabbi would interpret Torah for the disciple and introduce to the disciple not just an understanding of the text but he would teach the disciple a “way of life” governed by the law of God. That is exactly what Matthew 5-7 is for us today. It is a way of life. It is how to live life as a disciple, a follower of Jesus, living in the kingdom of God. This was “Discipleship 101.”

Here is an interesting thing I discovered about the Gospel of Matthew in my study for this series. Matthew has the most complete collection of Jesus’ teachings found anywhere in Scripture. Matthew contains five major messages that Jesus directed to his disciples. Put together, these five messages provide the template Rabbi Jesus used to disciple his followers.

Discipleship 101: Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5-7

What life in the kingdom looks like

Discipleship 201: Sending out the 12, Matthew 10

Taking the mission of the kingdom to an often hostile world

Discipleship 301: Spreading of the Kingdom, Matthew 13

Living as subjects of the kingdom in a world not yet fully won

Discipleship 401: Community of the Kingdom, Matthew 18

Living together as a community of disciples known as the church

Discipleship 501: Olivet Discourse, Matthew 24-25

Living with the expectation of the return of Jesus and the coming fullness of his kingdom

Wilkins says that this is why Matthew was a favorite book of the early church. These five discourses became a natural tool to develop followers of Jesus. He said, “We would do well to return to Matthew on a regular basis throughout our lives, both for guidance in our own lives as Jesus’ disciples, but also for our use in guiding others within our ministries.” Some believe, and I think rightly so, that when Jesus gave the Great Commission to his disciples in Matthew 28:19-20, he had these five messages in mind when he told his disciples to “*teach them to observe all that I have commanded you.*” Remember the goal of the rabbi was to prepare the disciple to pass on his way of life. And so the Sermon on the Mount is Discipleship 101. It is describing for us what a follower of Jesus looks like. It is defining for us the “way of life” that Rabbi Jesus wants to pass onto us and we in turn pass to others.

So remember the ground rules:

1. Matthew 4 comes before Matthew 5: It is about life in the kingdom of God.
2. The Sermon on the Mount does not tell us how to enter God’s kingdom, rather, it tells us what it looks like when God’s kingdom enters us.
3. The Sermon on the Mount is Discipleship 101: It is “the way of life” when one follows Jesus.

The Beatitudes

The Sermon on the Mount begins with a portion of Scripture that is known as “The Beatitudes.” It is a beautiful portion of Scripture. It is one of the most familiar portions of Scripture. It would be worth memorizing, perhaps even as a family. There are eight “beatitudes” in all. They read as follows:

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 satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive 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 others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

The word “beatitude” comes from the Latin word *beatus*. It is translated in our passage this morning as “*blessed*.” Sometimes it is hard to convey the meaning of a word when you translate it from one language to another. What does Jesus mean when he says, “*Blessed are the poor in spirit . . . Blessed are those who mourn . . . Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake?*” Some have substituted the word “happy” for the word “blessed.” I don’t think the word “happy” in English fully conveys the essence of what Jesus is saying here. When Jesus calls us “blessed” he is speaking of an inner well-being. When he calls us “blessed” he is speaking to the sense that the favor of God and the approval of God is upon us. Wilkins says, “it is a state of existence in relationship to God in which a person is “blessed” from God’s perspective, even when he or she doesn’t feel happy or isn’t presently experiencing good fortune.” It is that inner “blessing” that says, “if God is for me, who or what can be against me.”

So here we have Jesus introducing to his disciples what it looks like to live in the kingdom of God and he begins by telling them that kingdom life is a spiritual life. Kingdom life is something that starts on the inside. Life in the kingdom of God does not start with a sense of “doing.” It starts, rather, with a sense of “being.” Citizens of the kingdom of God are transformed from the inside out. The “Beatitudes” are not necessarily commands to follow. They are, instead, characteristics of those who live in the kingdom of God. This is what a life begins to look like when the kingdom of God enters our lives.

Do you hear what I am saying to you? When you read through these “Beatitudes” you are reading about the internal change that the kingdom of God brings to a person when one becomes “born again.” This is much like the “fruit of the Spirit” we read about in Galatians 5. This is the change of heart that God is pouring out inside of us through the work of the Holy Spirit. Sure, we can read this list we find in the Beatitudes and say to ourselves that we need to grow in these areas. Yes, I need to be more merciful. Yes, I need to hunger more for righteousness. There is always room to grow. But don’t turn these “Beatitudes” into a list of commands that can be realized by sheer human will and determination. This is the supernatural work that the Spirit of God produces in those who have repented of their sins and turned to faith in Jesus Christ. God is changing us from the inside out. The kingdom of God has broken into your heart and your life.

I had a conversation recently with someone who is relatively new to faith in Jesus. And this person was telling me about the changes God has been working in her life. When I

pressed as to how she sees God changing her, she pointed to the fact that she now speaks freely to others about their need for God and sometimes she can't believe what actually came out of her mouth! She indicated that she has a growing compassion for others that once was not there. She is not as anxious as she used to be. Something has been changing inside of her. When you come into the kingdom of God through faith in Jesus Christ, God begins to change you from the inside out. I think this is what Paul was referring to in Ephesians 1:3 when he said, "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.*" I have come to see the "Beatitudes" as some of the blessings poured out upon us because of Jesus and the coming kingdom of God in our lives. The kingdom of God is a spiritual life.

We mentioned a few weeks ago that when you talk about the kingdom of God there is the tension we feel because in one sense the kingdom of God is already here but it is not here in full. There is still coming a day when Jesus will return and will bring his kingdom in full and all of creation will be wondrously transformed. When this happens, our prayers will be fully answered and the will of God will be done on earth as it is in heaven. But here is the amazing thing about God's kingdom. The transformation that God is working inside of your life through the ministry of the Word and the power of the Holy Spirit is the beginning of God's work of transforming this fallen world. That is why we are so "blessed." God is bringing his kingdom to bear on this world, one person at a time. When I read these "beatitudes" it causes me to pray, "kingdom of God, break into my life!"

Kingdom Norms

So let's take a look at each of these "beatitudes," these "blessings" that the Holy Spirit is bringing to bear on those who are citizens of God's kingdom. I like what D. A. Carson calls the "beatitudes." He calls them "kingdom norms." That is a great way to think about it.

Every culture has cultural norms that dictate what is appropriate behavior. In fact, when you travel to another country and culture, you need to be somewhat aware of these cultural norms so that you don't offend anyone unintentionally. Did you know that in Uganda, if you sniff your food that is placed before you, it doesn't mean you are enjoying the aroma and anticipating the meal, but rather by sniffing what is served you are questioning whether or not the food is spoiled? Did you know that in Australia, if you hail a taxi, it is polite and proper to sit in the front seat as opposed to the back seat? Did you know that in Thailand, the head is sacred and it is an insult to pat someone's head, even if it is the head of a child? Did you know that in Argentina, it is normal to be

a half hour or an hour late for a business meeting and to be on time is to be early? (That would drive me crazy!) Did you know that in Europe and most other countries, when you go to a restaurant that a 15% tip is included in the meal, whereas in the States a 10-15% tip beyond what is on the bill is expected? We had a family from an African country take us out to eat once and they didn't understand the cultural norm when it came to tipping. So when they left a \$5 tip on the table I knew the waiter, who was extremely attentive, would be upset. I excused myself so I could tip him appropriately and as I turned the corner I caught him complaining vehemently about the lousy tip. Every culture has its norms, and so does the kingdom of God. The "beatitudes" are the cultural norms God is forming in the hearts of the citizen's of God's kingdom. Here is what citizens in the kingdom of God begin to look like. Here they are.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. To be poor in spirit means that you recognize that you have nothing you can bring to the table to earn any kind of favor before God. It is a recognition of your depravity and your sin. It is the recognition that you are spiritually bankrupt and that your need for God is a total need and not a partial need. You don't just need God's assistance. There is a great statement in Romans 11 that says, "who has ever given to God that God should repay him?" The answer is no one. This week I read Psalm 62:9, "Those of low estate are but a breath; those of high estate are a delusion; in the balances they go up; they are together lighter than a breath." The norm outside the kingdom of God is to be self-sufficient and to not see one's total need for God. In our affluent culture, we have many of "high estate" who are living in a state of delusion. They don't realize how desperately they need God. But those in the kingdom of God realize that in all of life, we need God. So we pray. So we trust. So we depend on God. That is a kingdom norm that God has formed in our hearts. Because we recognize our need for God and ultimately for grace and forgiveness ours is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. This is a natural reaction to the first "beatitude." To mourn means that you grieve over your own sin. When you become convicted over your sin, it bothers you and causes you to be filled with sorrow. It is how Isaiah responded when he saw the holiness of God and realized his own sinfulness. He cried out, "Woe is me." It is what Paul said when he confessed that he failed to do what he knew he should do. He said, "What a wretched man I am." That is mourning over your sin. But it is not just your sin you mourn over. Do you ever find yourself grieving and mourning over the mess this world is in and over the evil you see? That is normal for citizens of God's kingdom because we long for what is right and good. The promise is that we will be comforted. Personally, when we grieve over our own sin we are brought to the cross and told that Jesus has covered all of our sin. That is true comfort. And then we are promised that there is coming a day when God will

wipe away every tear. Isaiah 61:1-2, is what Jesus read in the synagogue when he was chased out of Nazareth. Here is what it says, *“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor, he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound, to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn.”*

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. People of the kingdom are gentle and meek. I know that doesn’t sound very inviting to our culture. But it is the way of the kingdom and it is not a sign of weakness. It is the exact opposite. It is a sign of inner spiritual strength. It is the natural progression of humility that comes from someone who fully sees their own sin and has sorrow for their sin. That impacts how you treat the next person. To be meek means that you do not assert yourself over others to advance your own cause. As opposed to always trying to win, you consider others better than yourself. It produces a spirit of patience and kindness that flows from the heart. Our world wonders, “how will you ever get ahead if you adopt a spirit of meekness.” How will you “inherit the earth” by being meek? The one who is meek in Christ is marked with a spirit of contentment because he or she understands that if you have Jesus you possess all you really need. You already have it all!

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. The words “*hunger*” and “*thirst*” speak to a longing of the heart. This desire for righteousness is as important to you as food and drink. It is all inclusive. It is a longing in your heart for strength to not give into temptation yourself. You want more than anything else to please God. Your desire is to love God and love others as you should. It is a hunger and thirst for holiness. But there is also a broader sense in which this kingdom norm is expressed. To “*hunger*” and “*thirst*” for righteousness means that you long to see the salvation of God and the kingdom of God advance in the hearts of others. It has an evangelistic bent to it. You have a sense of what others need and you desire to see them find the only thing that can truly satisfy their hearts. What is that? It is knowing Jesus. And so there is a growing burden in your heart. It is normal for kingdom people to long to see others meet Jesus.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. When the kingdom of God takes root in your life it causes you to become merciful towards others. Someone who is merciful is someone who is forgiving. That is not a normal thing. I have seen the demonstration of the power of the kingdom of God in action through some of you as you have been brought to a point of forgiving some pretty difficult things that have been done against you. Prior to Jesus, you would have never thought it possible, ethical or even desirable. But the norm in the kingdom of God is to forgive as we have been

forgiven. We are to be merciful as God has been merciful to us. And so, this also extends to caring with compassion for the one in need. *“He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”* (Micah 6:8)

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. It may be helpful here to say that when you study the Sermon on the Mount and try to understand what it has to say to us today, it is helpful to realize that much of what Jesus is saying is addressing the false ways in which the religious leaders were leading the people of Israel. They were big on rules and traditions and on putting on a show for others. There was nothing humble about it. They would pray to be recognized and give to be applauded. And so when Jesus says that the citizen of the kingdom is *“pure in heart”* he is indicating that the living of our faith is not for show or for self advancement. No, it is pure. It is who I am when no one else is around. It is who I am when I am on the computer or in my house or at work. It is not just who I am when I sit in the pew. It is genuine. It is of the heart. It shows up everywhere I go. The slogan, “whatever happens in Vegas stays in Vegas” doesn’t apply to kingdom people. Do you know why? Because when I am in Vegas, I am no different than when I am at home with my wife and kids watching. Life in the kingdom of God is pure and it is in my heart.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. We live in a fractured world. Peace is that allusive characteristic everyone seems to long for but have no clue as to where to find it. Ultimately, peace is found in the “Prince of Peace.” Ultimately, there is no true peace until one is at peace with God through Jesus and the cross. So in the purest sense of the word we are *“peacemakers”* when we help others find peace with God through Jesus. Jesus said in John 14:27, *“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled neither let them be afraid.”* But, it is also true, that because we possess the wonderful peace of God, that we are agents of peace in this world. We strive to bring peace in homes and in relationships that are fractured. We strive as much as it depends on us to live in peace with others.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. When I read this final “beatitude” I have to admit that in our culture it sounds more like theory than it does reality as opposed to many around the world who live in danger because of their faith. Though I do think that it is starting to cost us something to align ourselves with God’s kingdom. This final “beatitude” reminds us that God’s kingdom stands opposed

to the way of man and the kingdom of this world and so you can anticipate some opposition. When you suffer because of righteousness and because you align yourself with Jesus, you are called to rejoice! There is coming a day when the kingdom of God will come in full. Your reward is not today and it is not here in this life. But your reward is yet to come. It is in heaven. So persevere. Trust God. Continue to live as citizens of the kingdom of God. Let the norms and the values of the kingdom mark you even if it means suffering. You are a son or daughter of the King!

Conclusion

I conclude with a testimony that Michael Wilkins shares in his commentary on Matthew. He grew up in the church but really didn't embrace the teaching of Jesus until he was a young man. He was a student athlete and he recalls sitting in youth group in the back row being turned off by the whole Sermon on the Mount. It all sounded kind of lame and weak to him. Who wants to be "meek" and who wants to be "poor in spirit?" It all seemed rather pathetic to him. Listen to what happened to him.

"Not too many years after ruling out the Beatitudes for real life, I sat under the brilliant stars in a jungle in Vietnam and their significance overwhelmed me. I was a member of cocky airborne infantry battalion. We were a well-trained, exceedingly efficient war machine. One night, as I sat on guard duty after one especially ravaging battle, I experienced the reality of what Jesus expressed in the Beatitudes. I had killed gleefully that day. I had ripped the life from other young men without a twinge of conscience. I saw the bodies of my nineteen and twenty year old squad members ravaged by other young men who were our hated enemies, yet probably none of us on either side could really offer any adequate information for our animosity.

That night I experienced brokenness. I became poor in spirit as I recognized the depth of my depravity and shuddered as I considered the possibility of my fate before God, if he existed. I mourned the evil in me and at the evil I saw emerge so quickly in all of us. For the first time in my young life, I understood I was not the invincible captain of my ship. I could be killed at any moment. So from that very night I began to realize that there was indeed a very different way to live. I did not articulate it that night in these words, but meekness, righteousness, mercy, purity and peacemaking all became so much more clearly preferable than the way I have been pursuing significance and success.

I now realize I was experiencing the beginning of the pronouncement aspect of the Beatitudes. I saw for the first time the horror of my life as a human apart from God. desperately needed something, but what it was, I had no clue. I experienced the condemnation of my old cockiness and self-sufficiency, and above all, the condemnation of

my arrogant abuse of people in my quest to satisfy my own lusts. The transition in my life readied me and enabled me to accept Jesus' invitation to the life of the kingdom of heaven two years later." What about you?

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