

Highlights

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*The Kerugma Message***

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The Kerugma

MESSAGE II

LOOK AT IT THIS WAY

Possessing the Kingdom – Part 1

By Zane C. Hodges

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Many New Testament texts are misunderstood because they refer to the truth that faithful believers will co-reign with Christ in His Kingdom.

Among other places, this truth is clearly stated in such passages as 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 2:26,27 and 3:21. It is elaborately dealt with in the famous parable about the minas (or pounds) in Luke 19:11-27. A failure to pay careful attention to this aspect of New Testament doctrine has resulted in a confused understanding of many powerful passages.

In the next few issues of *The Kerugma Message* we will deal with several of those misunderstood texts. Our first such text is found in Matthew 5:3 at the very beginning of the Sermon on the Mount:

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

-Matthew 5:3

With these words, the King opens His earliest recorded sermon. He

has been proclaiming a message that declared: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Mt. 4:17). It is appropriate to this message that He should open the Sermon on the Mount with a reference to those who will possess that kingdom.

The audience is described by Matthew like this:

“And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. And He opened His mouth and taught them, saying...”

-Matthew 5:1,2

We might compare this scene to a university lecture hall. The professor has his regular students before him, but his lecture is open to the public. The professor's fame guarantees that the galleries of the lecture hall will be full of outside people who are not his actual students. Although he is primarily addressing his class, the professor will not forget that others are present as well.

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Significance of *The Kerugma Message*

After Zane left his teaching position at Dallas Theological Seminary in 1986, Kerugma, Inc. was established in 1988 to be the sole supporting agency for the writing ministry of Zane C. Hodges. *The Kerugma Message* was launched in 1991 to acquaint people with the ministry of Kerugma, Inc. and Zane's writing. Publication stopped with Zane going home to be with the Lord in 2008.

With the formal establishment of Zane Hodges Library Inc in 2025, a decision was made to relaunch *The Kerugma Message*. Hence, this re-inaugural newsletter and its updated title *The Kerugma Message II*.

This newsletter will acquaint the reader with the ministries of Zane Hodges Library and provide helpful discussions of God's Word by Zane and other like-minded Focused Free Grace Bible teachers.

Possessing the Kingdom – Part 1

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The Sermon on the Mount was primarily for the “students” of Jesus. (The Greek word for “disciple” means “pupil” or “student”.) But our Lord does not lose sight of the larger audience, among whom we might expect to find both believers and unbelievers. Many were no doubt considering the option of becoming a disciple of this increasingly well-known Rabbi. The Sermon on the Mount is neatly crafted to contain something for everybody in its diverse audience.

For example, the warning “to start out right” by entering through the “narrow gate” (Mt.7:13) can easily be seen as a figure of the salvation experience. In the light of the clear teaching of the rest of the New Testament, we can take this to refer to man's narrow and restricted way into eternal life-i.e., we “enter life” by faith alone in Christ alone. If a person wishes to embark on the pathway of discipleship to Jesus, he needs to make sure that, first, he has entered by this narrow gate into life eternal. Sometimes, people began discipleship without doing so (for example, Judas; see also John 6:60-71).

But it is vital to keep in mind that the Sermon on the Mount is basically a “lecture” to disciples. No doubt it was read exactly that way by the first readers of Matthew's Gospel. And it should be read that way by us.

Opening words of the Sermon do not tell us how to “enter” the kingdom of heaven. They say nothing at all about “entering”. Instead they tell us how the kingdom can be possessed --how it can be OURS!

In this light, then, the opening words of the Sermon do not tell us how to “enter” the kingdom of heaven. They say *nothing at all* about “entering”. Instead they tell us how the kingdom can be *possessed* --how it can be OURS!

The kingdom, Jesus informs us, will belong to those who are “poor in spirit”. No doubt the phrase “poor in spirit” refers to the inner character of the people described. Thus it would suggest humility, in contrast to pride, and submissiveness to God, in contrast to stubborn self-will. Indeed, it suggests Christ-likeness, since

later in Matthew our Lord describes Himself as “meek and lowly in heart” (Mt.11:29).

The future kingdom, therefore, will not *belong to* -- it will not be reigned over by -- those whose hearts have learned nothing of the lowly spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ. Men like that may rule kingdoms now, for a while, but such people will not co-reign with Jesus Christ.

The kingdom of heaven belongs to God's Son, first of all. All kingdoms *belong* to their ruler. But the kingdom of heaven will also belong to those with whom the King of kings is willing to share His authority and control. And to qualify for that, a Christian must become “poor in spirit”!

**Zane Hodges Library
www.ZaneHodges.org**

Word from the Zane Hodges Library

Thank you to all who have contributed to the ministry of Zane Hodges Library. All donated funds are to cover operational expenses and projects which proclaim the message: “Eternal life is an absolutely free gift that can never be lost, once received by believing in Jesus for His promise of eternal life.”

We view all contributions as investments in things eternal, and ourselves as stewards to return as much eternal reward to donors.

No funds are currently used to pay salary or wages to the administrators who are unpaid volunteers.

Current and future Library projects:

- Translating *Absolutely Free!* into foreign languages starting with Spanish, Russian, Tagalog, Igbo and Romanian. If you know of other Focused Free Grace translators, email ZaneCHodges@gmail.com.
- Transcribing and compiling Zane's messages into books.
- Making more messages available online at www.ZaneHodges.org.
- Updating past messages with pictures and dynamic captioning.
- Revamping the website www.ZaneHodges.org

Donations may be made by credit card or online bank transfer through the website. Checks can be mailed to:

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Thank you and God bless.

Mike Lii
President of Zane Hodges Library