The Constitution of the Kingdom

A 33-Session Journey through the Sermon on the Mount & the Sermon on the Plain

SESSION THIRTY-THREE — Coming Down the Mountain

Part Seven: Coming Down the Mountain · A Sending · Texts: Matthew 8:1; 28:19–20

The Texts

> **Matthew 8:1** *When Jesus had come down from the mountain, great crowds followed him; and there was a leper who came to him and knelt before him… and Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him.*
>
> **Matthew 28:19–20** *Go therefore and make disciples… teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*

The Crowds Came Down

Here we are, at the last session. Thirty-two times we have gathered around this table and climbed the mountain together, and now the climb is over. But notice what happens in the very next verse after the Sermon ends, because it is the most important thing in the world for us tonight. "When Jesus had come down from the mountain, great crowds followed him."

They came down. That is the whole point. The crowds could not stay on the hillside forever, sitting at the teacher's feet, warmed by the beautiful words. When the Sermon was finished, they had to get up, and come down, and go back to their villages and their families and their work — and there, on the level ground where real life is lived, either build on what they had heard or not. And look what waits for Jesus at the bottom of the mountain: a leper, kneeling, desperate to be touched. The teaching was barely cold before it became a hand stretched out toward suffering. That is where every sermon is meant to end. Not on the mountain. On the road, with your hand out toward someone in need.[1]

So let's search the Scriptures together — one final time — and then let's go.

This Is Not a Lesson. It Is a Sending.

Every session before this one was a teaching. This one is not. Tonight there is nothing new to learn — you have heard the whole Sermon now, every word of it, and you know more than enough to fill the rest of your life. Tonight is for something the crowds on the hillside had to do and could not avoid: to be blessed, and charged, and sent.

This is how the whole story ends, after all. At the very close of Matthew's Gospel, the risen Jesus gathers his people one last time and says: "Go, and make disciples… teaching them to

[1]Unless noted, Scripture is quoted from the New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition (NRSVue), the base translation for this course. This closing session is a sending rather than an exposition; its texts frame the movement from hearing to going—Matthew 8:1 (Jesus comes down the mountain and at once meets human need) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19–20), where the disciples are sent to teach others "to obey everything I have commanded you"—that is, this very Sermon.

obey everything I have commanded you." And what did he command them? This. The Sermon. Everything we have spent thirty-two sessions learning. The Great Commission is not a separate assignment tacked on at the end; it is the Sermon on the Mount, handed forward — go now, and teach others to live the very life you have learned. So we are not merely finishing a class. We are being enlisted into the oldest sending there is.[2]

What You Carry Down the Mountain

So take stock of what you are carrying as you come down. You are carrying a whole new picture of who you are — not a striver trying to earn God's favor, but one of the blessed, the poor in spirit whom the Kingdom already belongs to, a beloved child of a good Father who knew your need before you asked. You are carrying a whole new way of seeing others — the poor as blessed, the enemy as one to be loved, the neighbor as yourself, every human face as too sacred to reduce to a thing. You are carrying a whole new set of instincts, worn a little deeper into you than when we began: to give in secret, to forgive the debtor, to seek first the Kingdom, to take the log from your own eye, to build on rock.

And you are carrying one small, portable sentence that holds the whole mountain — the one we said every week and will say now for the last time as your marching orders: love, practiced, not just professed, reveals the Kingdom among us. That is what you carry down. Not a burden. A treasure — and a way to live.

The Corridor Is Waiting

And here is where you carry it — not to some far-off mission field, but down the mountain to the level ground where Jesus always stood: your own corridor. Your street. Your workplace. Your family table. The neighbor across the fence and the stranger across the river. This whole Sermon was always meant to be lived somewhere ordinary, among actual people with actual needs — and there is no shortage of them here, in these towns strung along this river, where the hungry are hungry and the lonely are lonely and the wronged are waiting for someone to do right by them.[3]

So the questions the Sermon leaves us with are wonderfully concrete. Who is the leper at the bottom of your mountain — the person kneeling in your path, waiting for a hand stretched out? Where is the hungry table you could set bread on? Whose enemy could you refuse to hate? What false peace could you break, what wound could you tend, what light have you been hiding that this dim corner of the world is aching to see? Come down, and look around, and start there — with the one need in front of you. That is how a Kingdom comes: not all at once, but one stretched-out hand at a time.

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[2]Matthew places the Sermon (chapters 5–7) as Jesus' inaugural teaching and immediately follows it with acts of healing and mercy (chapters 8–9): the word becomes deed the moment the crowd comes down. The Sermon is meant to end not on the mountain but on the road.

[3]The Sermon's own final blessing is implicit in the two builders: those who hear and do will stand. A course that has taught "hearing must become doing" fittingly ends by sending its hearers out to do—echoing Luke 10:37 ("go and do likewise") and the whole trajectory of a Kingdom "learned in the doing."

You Do Not Go Alone

But do not go down alone — that was the whole discovery of last session, and it is the reason The Confluence exists. You were never meant to carry this Sermon on a single set of shoulders, and you do not have to. You go down as part of a people — a confluence, many separate streams that met at this table over these weeks and became one current, stronger together than any of us was alone. What none of us could do by ourselves, we can begin to do together: feed the corridor's hungry, shelter its storm-battered, be its salt and its light, build houses on rock that keep the whole neighborhood dry when the flood comes.

So this course ends, but the community does not. That is the whole design. The Confluence was never a class with a finish line; it is a river that keeps running. This inaugural course is only the first stretch of a much longer journey — the Kingdom traced from the Sermon outward, through the whole of Scripture, for years to come. But more than that, it is a fellowship now, a table that stays set, a people learning together to live what we have heard. You came to study the Sermon. You leave as part of a community trying to become it.

And He Goes With You

One promise remains, and it is the one that makes all the rest possible. When Jesus sent his disciples down from the mountain and out into the world to live this impossible, beautiful life, he did not send them alone, and he did not send them empty. He said seven words that are the ground under everything: "I am with you always, to the end of the age."

You will not walk this out on your own strength — you were never meant to, and you could not. The One who taught the Sermon walks it with you; the Spirit who blessed the poor and clothed the lilies and knows your need before you ask is nearer than your breath, and will grow this life in you slowly, gently, all the way home. So do not be afraid of how far the road runs or how narrow the gate is. You do not climb back up the mountain to reach him. He came down. He is here, on the level ground, with his hand already stretched out — toward the leper, toward the corridor, toward you. Go with him.

Freedom for Others

Put it to our thread one last time — and let it be the door we walk out through. For thirty-two sessions we asked, of every teaching, where it increases someone else's freedom, dignity, and flourishing, and what it costs us. Tonight the question stops being a study exercise and becomes a life. It is no longer "where in this passage is freedom-for-others?" It is simply: "go, and be freedom for others." Go down the mountain and let your one life become good news for somebody — the hungry, the grieving, the wronged, the enemy, the least. That is the Sermon, done. That is the Kingdom, come near. *Freedom for others is why we were sent — so what will we lay down, and go and do?*

Around the Table — For Discussion

- The moment Jesus came down the mountain, a leper knelt in his path. Who is the person, or the need, kneeling in your path right now?
- The Great Commission sends us to teach others to obey "everything I have commanded" — this Sermon. Whom might you carry it to?
- Name one thing you carry down the mountain that you did not have when we began. Give thanks for it out loud.
- "You do not go alone." What is one thing this community could take up together, starting now?
- "I am with you always." How does that promise change the fear of trying to live all of this?

This Week — A Practice, and For Life

One movement, and it is not for a week — it is for the rest of your life. Come down the mountain, and begin. Find the one need in front of you — the leper in your path, the hungry table, the neighbor to be reconciled, the light to stop hiding — and stretch out your hand. Not someday, not once you feel ready, not after you have mastered the Sermon — now, imperfectly, as a beloved child who is loved before you do a thing. And keep coming back to this table, this community, this river, where together we will keep learning to live what we have heard, and keep sending one another out to do it. This Kingdom, from the first session to the last, is learned in the doing — so go, and do it. And come back, and tell us what you found.

A Closing Word

We began, thirty-three sessions ago, with a piece of paper — a constitution, we said, does not describe a people who already exist; it calls a people into being. Well: over these weeks, at this table, something has been called into being. Not a class that met and disbanded, but a people — a confluence — who heard the founding charter of the Kingdom and set out, together, to live it. That is the miracle hidden in these ordinary evenings. The Constitution of the Kingdom is no longer only ink on a page. It is beginning, however faintly, to take flesh in a fellowship, in a corridor, in you. So go now, and let it keep taking flesh, until the whole watching world can see what a city on a hill looks like when its light is finally, gladly, unhidden.

The Benediction — The Sending

So go. Come down from the mountain, and go home, and go to work, and go to your neighbor — and take the whole Sermon with you, written now not on paper but on your heart. Be poor in spirit, and inherit the Kingdom. Be merciful, and receive mercy. Make peace, and be called a child of God. Give in secret, forgive your debtors, love your enemies, seek first the Kingdom, and build your one life on the rock of these words. Do not merely admire them; do them. Do not carry them alone; carry them together. And do not be afraid, for the One who spoke them from the mountain has come all the way down to the level ground to walk the road with you, and he will be with you always, to the very end of the age. Blessed are you who have heard — now go, and be the answer to the prayer you have learned to pray: your kingdom come, your

will be done, on earth as it is in heaven, beginning right here, beginning with us, beginning today.

Love, practiced — not just professed — reveals the Kingdom among us.

Let's search the Scriptures together — and now, let's go and live them.

Grace and peace, and blessings always,
Pastor Mick Finch

SESSION THIRTY-THREE

Closing Video Script — The Sending

Single presenter, to camera · target 5–6 minutes · warm, steady, unhurried

[Begin still. A warm, full-hearted welcome — the last one.]

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They came down. That's the whole point. The crowds couldn't stay on the hillside forever, warmed by beautiful words. When the Sermon was finished, they had to get up and come down and go back to their villages and their families and their work — and there, on the level ground where real life is lived, either build on what they'd heard, or not. And look what's waiting for Jesus at the bottom of the mountain: a leper, kneeling, desperate to be touched. The teaching was barely cold before it became a hand stretched out toward suffering. That's where every sermon is meant to end. Not on the mountain — on the road, with your hand out toward someone in need.

[This is a sending.]

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[What you carry down.]

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[The sending. Slow, full, unhurried — the last word.]

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