

Matthew Chapters 5-7

Some Thoughts on Structure:

Structure Questions are difficult. Remember that the point of wrestling with structure is to ask the Question, “Why did the author arrange the material this way?” What is it about the presentation that helps me understand the meaning of the facts and information? In this case, why did Jesus order His sermon this way?

Possible General Structure for Chapters 5-7. Notice this is a very general structure!

- I. Introduction
 - a. Setting – vs 1-2
(Why did Matthew spend time on this?)
- II. Description of a Kingdom Man –
 - a. The beatitudes and salt and light
 - b. Jesus fulfills the Law 5:17-20
(Why did he spend time describing the Blessed Man? Why didn't he just immediately discuss the laws and their misinterpretation? Why all these verses about the Blessed Man before discussing behaviors/examples and warnings?)
 1. Specific Examples of Life as a Follower in a Fallen world- 5:21-7:11
 2. Warnings 7:12-27
- III. Conclusion – 7:38-30 the authority of Jesus to teach the Law in this way.
(Why is Jesus' teaching structured this way? How do I see Christ more clearly here?)

As I wrestled with this week's lesson, I began to see the importance of the structure of these chapters. When I realized that there was an Introduction (which contains the setting and the Beatitudes and all they encompass) before a lengthy discourse on behavior, I saw that the “Beatitudes” were likely the key to understanding the rest of the passage.

Sinclair Ferguson:

Jesus begins the Sermon on the Mount by defining the transformed life. The Beatitudes are a description of Jesus Christ and reveal to us who we are in Him. Jesus is the One who mourned, the One who was poor in spirit, the One who was meek, and the One who was persecuted. **The Beatitudes are really describing what it is to become like Christ. He is the blessed One, and in Him we will experience every spiritual blessing,** even if it comes with suffering and persecution.

The Beatitudes have a natural flow that logically connects them to one another.

1. We need to become poor in spirit to enter the kingdom; we learn to be sorry for our sins.
2. We are then able to understand what it is to mourn and be blessed, and in mourning, our pride is demolished as we begin to understand meekness.
3. God works in us new ambitions, tastes, affections; we begin to love different things and different people; we begin to love the church.
4. In being transformed, we begin to hunger and thirst for righteousness, and as we long for righteousness, we become merciful.
 - a. We know firsthand what it is to receive mercy.
5. Our hearts then become purified, and we begin to see God as the God of Peace.
 - a. As He reconciled us to Himself in Christ, we seek to be reconciled to others and desire them to experience the same fellowship in Christ.
 - b. We have physical expressions of our peace with God through Jesus Christ at the Lord's Supper.
 - c. Some people claim to want peace in this world yet spend their lives rejecting God's desire that they should have peace with Him.
 - d. Christians, on the other hand, are instinctively peacemakers.
6. When persecution comes on account of following Christ, we should also instinctively understand that we are blessed.
 - a. A natural response to ridicule and persecution is to fight back, but if we suffer for Christ, there is great joy in the realization that there must be something about us that reminds others of Him (Acts 5:41).
 - b. We are also blessed because of our resolve to trust the Lord through persecution.