

Keywords in Spirituality (2020)

Essentials to mentoring for change

The foundation of spirituality is kingdom life and that kingdom life lies at the heart of the teachings of Christ from the Gospel of Matthew, Chapters 3-9, often referred to as the *Sermon on the Mount*.

The *Sermon on the Mount* has been misinterpreted as a lengthy model for right pious living, when as an outcome, such right-living is reduced to trial and error, success and failure, only to add insult and injury to the compound list of guilt because regardless of how hard we try, we cannot do what the sermon says. The supposedly wonderful experience of kingdom life becomes confusing, doubtful, empty of real faith, and disappointing.

The sermon is often positioned as just another list of do's and don'ts. Of such is the domain of religion: ever aspiring, never arriving. But try we must at the risk of eternal damnation. As a result, any understanding of salvation turns into a sad wish of "I hope so," instead of a confident declaration of "I am."

But, the *Sermon on the Mount* is not a quick-fix prayer manual, an emergency confessional, or a mantra in time of need. It is a life-long commitment-of-the-heart (and will) to know the One who taught the kingdom way and a life-long experience of the power Christ has given to those who believe so that they may be empowered, not to achieve, but to **be** peace, joy, kindness, forgiving, and love, *et al*, the fruit of the Spirit.

The evidence of such a "way" is embodied in the life of Christ and the very realness of his death, resurrection, and ascension. The evidential proof is embedded in the testimony of actual witnesses who heard and saw these events and who experienced a real empowerment to which only a fool can say it was just a nice thought, a myth, a fairy tale, an illusion, and it never happened.

Therefore, to substantiate such evidence from my life, I gleaned the following keywords from nearly 40 years of teaching the kingdom way, as well as "living it" *and* "loving it. They may look like a "to-do" list, but they are not. Instead, they are a glimpse of what it is "**to be**" as an outcome of change, or as some would say, an experience of transformation.

You become passionate to:

change your life
ignite the kingdom life in you
don't test the Lord
worship God
be single-hearted
make things right
make the first move
don't say what you don't mean
don't embellish words with religious lace
don't hit back
live generously
live the Kingdom way
live your God-created identity

do things quietly and unobtrusively
pray
respond to God's giving
be gracious to receive
don't be flip with the sacred
no theology of accommodation
serious obedience
do not exploit emotions
simple trust
follow Jesus
stay alert
don't be naïve
be a survivor
be content
don't be intimidated
stand up for the truth of Jesus
go all the way with Him