

## **“Citizens of the Kingdom” (Matthew 5:1-16)**

### **Introduction**

In Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus is a King who has come to establish His kingdom. In this way, Jesus is fulfilling the OT prophecies concerning the promised Messianic king (e.g. Isa. 9:7; Jer. 23:5; Zech. 9:9). The challenge for us is to keep in mind that the kingdom has both present and future application—the kingdom of heaven is “now”, but it is also “not yet”. Jesus stated that the kingdom of God “has come unto you” (Matt 12:28), and yet we look forward to the time when “the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever” (Rev 11:15). And so while we long for the establishment of that Kingdom in its fulness, we are invited to become citizens even now. In fact, only those who enter in now will be able to enter in in the future.

Jesus made it clear elsewhere that there is a criteria for citizenship in his Kingdom:

- Your righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees (Matt 5:20)
- You must do the will of the Father (Matt 7:21)
- You must be converted and become as little children (Matt 18:3)

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus articulates the principles of the kingdom of heaven and sets out for us what it means to be a citizen of that kingdom.

Illustration – Australian Citizenship criteria

In Mathew 5:3-16, Jesus gives us a picture of what a citizen of the kingdom looks like. We have first of all the Christian’s character (3-12) and then the Christian’s influence (13-16).

### **Citizens of the Kingdom**

#### **I. Their Character**

- The poor in spirit → Spiritual poverty (cf. Luke 18:9-14 & Rev 3:14-22)
- They that mourn → Weeping over sin – the sorrow of true repentance
- The meek → humility rather than self-exaltation
- They that do hunger and thirst after righteousness → the desire to be holy as God is holy
- The merciful → compassion for people in need (Matt 18:21-35)
- The pure in heart → a clean heart; purity of motive (Psalm 51; 24:3-5)
- The peacemakers → the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18)
- They which are persecuted for righteousness sake → (cf. 2 Tim 3:12)

#### **II. Their Influence**

- Salt of the earth – a preserving and “flavouring” influence (Sodom & Gomorrah; cf. Matt 10:12-15)
- Light of the world – an illuminating influence. Our ‘good works’ must be seen.

### **Conclusion**

Blessed to be a blessing

- The calling of Abram (Genesis 12:2-3).