

SEPTEMBER 18 & 19, 2004

# The Real Deal

Becoming and Being a True Follower of Christ

Matt Heard, Senior Pastor

## Part 1: Kingdom Seekers

### Matthew 6:33

The genuine article. The real deal. What's involved in becoming and being a true follower of Jesus Christ? That is a question we want to begin to answer in this new series.

Floating around our culture are many definitions and opinions of what a true Christian is and the resulting adjectives are often less than flattering: Obnoxious. Fanatical. Pious. Intellectually shallow. Religious. Closed-minded. Crutch-holder. Right winged. Simplistic. No fun. Legalistic. Boring. Intolerant. Judgmental. Naive. Out of touch with the real world.

Then you come into religious circles and the definitions might not be as negative but they are often just as confusing: Church attender. Rule-keeper. Bible-owner. Person who prays. Somebody with conviction. Good morals. Nice family person. Somebody who filled out a form at an evangelistic meeting. Or raised a hand. Or walked down an aisle.

So what is a Christian? For the answer, we thought it would be a good idea to turn to Christ Himself. We'll look at His definition of a follower of His by taking a closer look at what has become known as the "Beatitudes" (Matthew 5:3-10). Today, as an introduction, we'll look at the context of Christ's teaching in Matthew 5-7, which is known as the "Sermon on the Mount."

Here Jesus is proclaiming the "good news of the Kingdom" (Matt. 4:23). He is explaining what an authentic relationship with God is all about. The Kingdom of God is referring to the "rule" or "reign" of God. To seek after an authentic walk with God is to submit to His rule—His leadership, His provision, His grace, His forgiveness, His power. Therefore you cannot separate becoming and being an authentic follower of Christ's from seeking His Kingdom. You can't have one without the other.

That's why, in Matthew 6:33, Jesus exhorts and encourages us to seek His Kingdom above all else. Authentic Christianity involves an acute awareness of Christ's agenda of building His Kingdom and, with our lifestyles and priorities, seeking first His Kingdom. That is where the real deal is!

When we are seeking Christ's Kingdom, we begin to taste and follow Truth in the context of life in a fallen world. Therefore we learn to approach our Monday mornings with a sense of both hope and reality.

*We can begin to grow as Kingdom-seekers, as true followers of Christ, by learning to balance four tensions:*

1. The " \_\_\_\_\_ " and the " \_\_\_\_\_ ."

2. Our status as both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ .

3. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ .

4. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ .