

Welcome – Series The Story – Sermon Title- **No Ordinary Man** – can turn to Matthew 5

Carry & The Bear.

A reason it doing so well is certainly the writing and the **character development**.

It's a reminder that in literature and cinema what captivates us isn't always about a galaxy far away, or fighting to save the world across a multiverse, or vanquishing evil bad guys in battle... Sometimes what can capture and inspire us is witnessing the complicated process of a character's growth and development as they go through universal experiences in life - like grief and loss. How they persevere. How they fight the battles inside their head. And how they grow and develop.

Halloween we dress and pretend and act like popular characters...

Ever thought about who you'd want to play **you** in a show or movie?

Going deeper - **who would YOU cast as Jesus?**

God already nominated us for the role.

To love and live like Jesus did as witnesses and ambassadors in the world.

That's the role he has for us. The question – will we accept the script.

And perhaps the even bigger Q - will we accept the **character development** that comes with it?

When your life story is complete, will there be character development?

Because the character we're called to develop into is that of Jesus.

And that's no ordinary ask because that's no ordinary man...

Matthew 5:1-12

One of the first hints that Jesus was **no ordinary man** is he was **no ordinary teacher**.

The **Sermon on the Mount** was **the Kingdom Manifesto**, this was the **preamble**.

This was the initial invitation into Kingdom living...

The Beatitudes prove an awkward invitation

But Jesus doesn't just teach these principles – He lives them as if to prove the validity.

And we're called to live them too.

That's why in the Beatitudes are included in what make up **5 Growth lists** from the Bible. Matthew 5:3-10 – in the Beatitudes – we see humble, emotionally honest, meek, desiring righteousness, merciful, truthful, peaceful, and devoted spark the list.

(other lists both repeat some virtues and add others...)

Romans 12:9-21, 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, Galatians 5:22-23, 2 Peter 1:5-7)

This and the other growth lists map out the **character development of the disciple**.

And in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus goes on to speak analogously to salt and light - the **influence of the disciple**.

Then he breaks into the **righteousness of the disciple** when he speaks to exceeding the righteousness of the Pharisees

All of these build up to Jesus' powerful charge and climax in Matthew 5:48:
Therefore you shall be perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect

"Be perfect" seems like a recipe for not measuring up and the resulting feelings of guilt and inadequacy.

But here's the gamechanger - these seeming **extraordinary ideals** are accompanied by **extraordinary grace**. Because again - **Jesus was no ordinary man**.

Most unordinary people, extraordinary people --- they make us feel inadequate.
As much as they may spend time with us and teach us, the talent or gifting that makes them extraordinary isn't transferable.

But this is what is *extra*-extraordinary about Jesus. He's no ordinary human.
He not only wants to make us like Him, he opens the door to the possibility.
Unlike other extraordinary people, what makes him extraordinary is transferable...

He transfers his relationship with God the Father...

John 1 – "to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."

Jesus also transfers his thoughts and mind...

1 Corinthians 2:16: "*Who can know the Lord's thoughts?*" *But we understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ.*"

Jesus transfers his righteousness...

2 Corinthians 5:21 - For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God.

2 Corinthians 5:17- anyone who is in Christ is a ***new creation***.

And see that first creation of humans in Genesis – the Bible says we were made in God's image.

Again - God already nominated us for the role. To live in his image.

To be holy as he is holy. To live like Jesus did.

will we accept the character development that comes with it?

On the canvas of our life we are commissioned to paint a portrait of Jesus Christ.

Christ is our model given to us for the portrait. His character. His love. His heart and mind.

The early church leaders adopted the call of Matthew 5:48 as a call to live like Jesus...

John (1 John 2:6) – *Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did.*

Peter (1 Peter 2:21) – *For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in his steps.*

Paul (1 Corinthians 11:1) – *And you should imitate me, just as I imitate Christ.*

In Acts 11:26 it reads: ***“The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch”***

Christ followers should be somebody a person would point to and say: “That’s a little Christ.”

Aristotle– **“The soul does not think without a picture.”** (*“a picture is worth 1000 words”*)

90% of the information retained in our brain is visual.

People think using imagery. People learn better using imagery.

A person may not recall a verse or sermon, but their mind can recall an image.

These virtues make up our pallet of colors with which we paint the commissioned portrait.

And each day we get to place another brush stroke on the canvas of our life.

But here’s the issue - any portrait or any painting will fail if there’s no **proper perspective**.

Perspective in art speaks to how one captures a 3 dimensional object in a 2 dimensional piece.

In art there are three classes of perspective you need to be mindful of as you try to capture a 3 dimensional object in a 2 dimensional piece.

Linear perspective, color perspective, and atmospheric perspective.

But in life there are three perspectives we need to cling to as we try to capture and reflect Jesus in our day to day lives.

They have to do with ourselves, with others, and with circumstances.

In order to paint a portrait of Jesus with my life, I first I have to have a healthy and honest perspective of myself.

So I’ve mocked blonde haired, blue eyed Jesus for good reason in the past.

But I remember years back feeling the prick of conviction –

you mock misrepresentations of Jesus in film and art –

but what about when you misrepresent His heart?

This means I don’t just need to take a long look in the mirror for a fixed perspective of myself.

I need to take a long look at Jesus. If I’m painting a portrait of Jesus with my life, what does that portrayal currently look like? And is it accurate?

We aren’t left to wing it.

It’s like paint by numbers. Or like a coloring book where the lines are provided...

We’re all commissioned with the same portrait to paint – Jesus.

For all the diversity in personality or diversity in experience or alike, we as Christ followers aren’t called to diversity in character. We’re called to look like Christ.

Ephesians 4:22-24 speaks to this and to our character development:

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self... to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, (and I love how the MSG version closes verse 24) ***as God accurately reproduces his character in you.***

**To paint a healthy portrait of Jesus with our lives
we need a healthy PERSPECTIVE OF OTHERS**

But what set Jesus apart from other brilliant teachers is that the legacy he left in history had more to do with his EQ than his IQ.

But EQ is more than just self awareness and self mastery.
A gift of IQ and EQ that is only focused on ourselves becomes self absorbed.

But Jesus displayed empathy, compassion, an ability to connect with anyone and everyone.
And a willingness to lay his live down for everyone.

See we aren't just given the mind of Christ according to scripture.
We're to have the heart of Christ. To love God and love people well as he did.

**To paint a portrait of Jesus with our life we need a healthy PESPECTIVE OF OUR
CIRCUMSTANCES**

Follow Jesus long enough and like the disciples who experienced their own storms, you will come to realize in life that *God is less concerned with your comfort than he is your character development.*

In fact – in some ways your comfort zone is a danger zone.
Growth and development rarely if ever happen in our comfort zone.

It's why great stories told in literature and cinema aren't about people parked in their living room. They are people who dream big, dare greatly, fail, get back up, and are stretched by trials... and in the process... experience character development.

*1987 biosphere experiment - And yet **without adversity, we atrophy.***

*Without a healthy perspective of others our portrayal will be crippled by apathy.
Without a healthy perspective of our circumstances and storms we can atrophy.*

When you realize how far you've got to go you can get distraught over your development.

Condemnation gives up on the portrait.

Conviction realizes I messed up the perspective here or the tone there, but I'm still working on it
My portrait is still in progress.

My character is still developing.

The great thing about oil paintings is you can go back over it tomorrow and paint over it.

Da Vinci put 20 to 40 layers of paint onto the Mona Lisa... what if he stopped short?

“THE CREATIVE PROCESS”

1. *This is awesome*
2. *This is tricky*
3. *This is awful*
4. *I am awful*
5. *This might be OK*
6. *This is awesome*

At some point the process gets personal. We question ourselves and our ability to even do it.

“restful dissatisfaction”

Positionally we are perfect and righteous before God. We rest in that.
And yet in another way our perfection is pending. We are still growing.

Hebrews 10:14 says that **Jesus has made perfect forever those that are being made holy.**

The trap the enemy lays before us and we stumble on again and again - is to put our character development or lack thereof before our acceptance.

You don't operate for approval, you operate from assurance.