

Matthew Chapter 5:1-12 – The Beatitudes
IT'S AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

AN OVERVIEW

Matthew 5:1-2 Matthew records a formal introduction.

The hearers on the mountain: Disciples who have a place in the kingdom. They have come to trust in Jesus and follow Him for everlasting life. Disciples are people who learn not only facts from their master, but attitude.

Note: The Sermon on the Mount is NOT intended to show people how to BECOME children of God; it is intended for people who have been made children of God; they have been led to trust in Jesus for forgiveness and eternal life. It is intended for people who realize God's favor is an undeserved gift. They have been led to sorrow over their own tarnished record and to trust in Jesus' perfect obedience and sacrifice in their place. God's mercy is now their confidence and their treasure.

For evaluation: At what point should an inquirer be directed to Jesus' sermon on the mount?

Beware: "Something I do can make me a child of God."

Beware #2: "Since Jesus has done it all I don't have to be concerned about doing anything."

Evaluate: "I'll never be perfect anyway, so what difference does it make how I live?"

**THERE ARE GOALS FOR PENITENT BELIEVERS TO STRIVE FOR IN OUR GRATEFUL
RESPONSE FOR GOD'S MERCY.**

What the children of the Kingdom are like.

5:1-16

Vs1-2

Matthew's formal introduction emphasizes content, not circumstances. What mountain is not important.

Vs3-12

Our Lord's description of the worthwhile life: The Beatitudes

Vs3

"Blessed . . ." How happy, how fortunate. These are not sentences, they are exclamations. not a wish on Jesus' part, but an evaluation. What blessedness is all about is enjoying real life in partnership with God, to a degree now, to a greater degree eternally. "Beatus" - Latin for "happy" "Blessed" = "How genuinely happy/joyful in relation with God."

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These statements of blessings do not tell us how to become blessed: rather they describe the blessedness that already belongs to all believers in Christ. They do not describe eight kinds of believers, they mention eight ways in which all Christians are blessed. All Christians are poor in spirit etc. We possess these characteristics

to a limited extent, we forfeit many blessings when we fail to live up to the ideals Jesus expresses here. These are the blessings we as Christians already possess.

How do unconverted people define/measure success? Happiness?

What's the relation to satisfaction? Pleasure?

Here is another contrast in values: The world's happiness is infested with impermanence.

Vs3 "The poor in spirit" (are people who sense a deep spiritual need and penitently look to God to supply it.)
Define the term: Isaiah 66:2

How does being poor in spirit make us members of the kingdom of heaven?
Matthew 11:28 & Luke 18:9-14 & 1John 1:8-10

How can Christians lose an important poverty of spirit? Revelation 3:14-18

What are the consequences when that happens?

A/D: Encouraging people to be poor in spirit will lead to poor self-worth!

"Kingdom" - God establishes His reign in such hearts. The Kingdom is not a matter of territory and force; it is the exercise of God's grace and pardon in penitent hearts.

Q: What is the difference between "poor in spirit" and low self-esteem? Which befits citizens of the kingdom?

Vs4

Q: What are the things that bring us to tears?

"Those who mourn" Psalm 32:3-5

- recognizing how they disappoint God. (Worry, anger, impatience, luke-warmness)

"Will be comforted." Revelation 21:4

Q: Are our tears symptoms of a weak faith? John 11:35 & Romans 12:15

How would you complete: "The Blessedness lies in . . .

Motto for misguided teenager in caring a foster family: "God does not love me because I am good; He loves me because I am precious, and I am precious because Jesus died for me."

Vs5 "Meek" - Jesus' word does not mean spineless but gentle and patient.

They do not insist on their own rights without consideration for others. They endure mistreatment, leave vengeance in God's hands.

The thought is "SELF-CONTROLLED." - it is the attitude that chooses not to retaliate though it has the capability to do so. It designates those who commit their way to the Lord, because they treasure His mercy and

can rely on Him to vindicate their cause. Jesus Himself is the prime example. In Greek literature the word was used to describe a war horse under control.

"Inherit the earth" - (O.T. phrase, Psalm 37 esp. vs9)

With Christ in due time they shall possess and enjoy whatever is worthwhile despite the arrogance of the wicked. It is for their sakes that the earth is preserved. God makes all things work for their good, even directing the affairs of the world/nations for them. They will inherit the new heavens and the new earth when Christ comes again.

What would Jesus say in response:

"You've got to tell them where to get off, or they'll walk all over you."

"Nice guys finish last."

Q: Was Jesus a success or a failure?

How do we apply this to defining success/fulfillment today?

How consistent is our endorsing/enacting this principle?

** In what situations do we need to work hardest for this self-control?

Vs6 "HUNGER and THIRST for righteousness." Matthew 6:33

Righteousness

- Being righteous through faith in Christ
- desire to live righteous and upright lives
- concerned about sharing Jesus' righteousness with the world

Q: What's our fate without God's kind of righteousness? How is it attained?

Matthew 3:15. Romans 5:19. 1 Corinthians 5:21.

Q: After we have been declared right in God's sight, what becomes the characteristic of God's children?

Ephesians 2:10

Hunger and thirst – Psalm 42, 63

- opportunities to receive Lord's Supper
- Word of God part of daily routine
- love to assemble with other Christians around Word of God
- appreciate the blessings of their baptism on a daily basis

Q: Where's the blessedness come in?

No appetite is a danger signal. Corpses have no appetite.

Scottish prayer: "God help me to be as holy as a forgiven sinner can be."

The next Beatitudes look forward:

Vs7 Roman society considered showing mercy a sign of weakness. It was ruthless toward unwanted children or worn-out slaves. What about our world?

Definition: Grace is God's undeserved reaction to our sinfulness. Mercy is God's undeserved response to our misery. Beyond pity, it involves emotion, thought, and action. It feels the other person's hurt, tries to understand, and moves to heal.

Luke 10:25-37 The Good Samaritan

Many opportunities to show mercy to those in need - how?

Mercy only asks what a less fortunate person needs not what he deserves.

"They will be shown mercy." By whom? By God

True when you enjoy God's mercy, it makes you merciful-concerned for helping others; Jesus is assuring us we can continue to receive His mercy in return.

For consideration: God gives us mercy because of what He is, not because of how we perform.

Q: Which are we more interested in for ourselves: Justice or mercy? What about for others?

Q: Can we identify what it is that induces us to keep mercy bottled up?

Q: With us is forgiveness a teaching or an experience ?

Vs8 "The pure in heart." John 1:47 & Ps 24:4

Sincere in their interest to live according to God's standards. Jesus is not commending self-righteous prudishness. "Pure" in N.T. times a word used to describe grain free of chaff or unwatered wine. Re: People - their motives are to serve God genuinely.

"Heart" in Scripture is more than what a person leaves in SFO. Not just emotions, in Scripture "heart" involves emotion, thought and will. Ref. "He has no heart for politics."

How am I pure in heart? Psalm 51

Purity is not the attainment of a sinless state by our effort; it is a cleansing that comes from being drawn closer to God. A pure heart comes from receiving and appreciating God's mercy.

See God. Under present circumstances no one can see God. "Seeing God" is not some mystical emotional experience; it parallels becoming more aware of Him now, and it is a future event.

1 John 3:2 & 1 Cor. 13:12.

Q: Which influences do you think are most destructive in eroding this characteristic of God's children? What does a person need to do about this for him/herself?

Evaluate: Those who are looking up to God are motivated toward purity more than those who are looking down on other sinners.

vs9. "Peacemakers." Hebrews 12:14 (where is born? Romans 5 – peace we have with God)

Peace - Hebrew: Shalom - is not mere personal avoidance of disturbance and trouble. It is a wish and intention for the other party's best interest. It revolves around a relationship.

Those who have experienced God's pardon and a restored relationship with Him seek to have others come to know the peace of God's forgiveness; and they bring this peace into their relationship with other people. They actively strive to make peace where there is hostility or enmity.

Q: Where in your life would you say is the most crucial area for you to be able to exercise this characteristic of a child of God? Family? Work? Neighborhood? Government?

A. Lincoln: "But would you not agree that I am destroying my enemies when I make them my friends?"

Matthew 10:34 - Jesus said that he did not come to bring peace, some would reject the peace he offers

Vs10 Persecution alert. The way for us, as for our Brother Jesus, will go through scorn, contempt, and abuse. Note how Jesus reinforces this point by expanding on it. 1Peter 4:12,13

Jesus left no doubt about what faithfulness would cost: Matthew 10:16-22; 16:24;

John 15:18-19; 16:2; 17:14. Is this the way to gain followers? All but one of the Apostles died a violent death.

Q: Why is opposition/hostility/persecution inevitable? Reflection: Persecution arose out of suspicion; suspicion arose from Christians being different. To what extent is this the case today?

Q: Where's there any blessing in being persecuted? Evaluate: "Persecution is a compliment." Wesley's students.

Q: Is having a good conscience worth suffering for? 2 Timothy 2:12.

Q: What forms does hostility toward Jesus take in our day?

Observation: Mere stoic endurance is not what Jesus is encouraging. What's a more constructive attitude? What about a persecution complex? Does enduring persecution earn God's favor?

Evaluate: Persecution is a consequence of being a follower of Jesus. What is the duration of this partnership?

The beatitudes are the blessings that belong to all believers in Christ, remind us of the greater blessings that can be ours in this life when we follow Christ.