

The King's People

Matthew 5:1-10

July 9th, 2017

Intro:

If I were to ask you, "Raise your hand if you want to be happy?" I think you would all raise your hand. Now, you might want to qualify it by saying it's more important to be holy than happy and God's chief concern is not with our happiness, and you would be right to do so. But the truth is, of course we all would choose happiness if properly defined and qualified.

Martin Lloyd-Jones - Happiness is the great question confronting mankind. The whole world is longing for happiness and it is tragic to observe the ways in which people are seeking it. The vast majority, alas, are doing so in a way that is bound to produce misery.

Evading difficulty merely makes people happy for the time being. Sin always offers happiness and it always leads to unhappiness and to final misery and wretchedness. Sermon on the Mount says, if you really want to be happy, here is the way.

And it is paradoxical.

1. They recognize their spiritual **poverty**. (5:1-3)

- a. Jesus began His ministry at the end of chapter 4 with a call for people to repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.
- b. A natural question would be, "am I eligible for this kingdom? Who gets in?" Jesus answers that right out of the gates with the beatitudes (for the latin word "blessed"). There is an inclusion in v. 3 and 10 of the kingdom, indicating that all of these are characteristic of the king's people.
 - i. In chapters 5-7 we have His most famous sermon. Often called the Sermon on the Mount because He goes up on a mountain in v. 1 to deliver this address to his followers.
- c. Blessed – what does it mean?
 - i. #blessed on social media (although typically not "persecuted for the sake of righteousness at work today" #blessed). It can be used as recognizing a good thing is from the hand of the Lord.
 - ii. "bless you" when someone sneezes, perhaps hoping that it's not a foretaste of something worse in their health
 - iii. Literally, as used here, happy, fortunate, one to be envied
 - iv. Problem with translating it as simply "how happy is the man" is that we have a weak, shallow view of happiness, equating it more with entertainment or passing pleasure than a deep, abiding, happiness.
- d. Poor in spirit –
 - i. This is the foundational beatitude so will go more slowly on this one and pick up the pace as we go along.
 - ii. Financially it was used of someone who was destitute, bankrupt, literally of "crouching" like a beggar.
 - iii. Spiritually, this is someone who comes empty handed to God.
 1. Paradoxical because would expect entrance to the kingdom to be merit based.

2. Instead, it's the one who recognizes he/she is completely destitute and impoverished.
 3. **Isaiah 66:2** "For My hand made all these things, Thus all these things came into being," declares the LORD. "But to this one I will look, To him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word.
- iv. This makes it clear that the Sermon on the Mount is not some "self-help" manual where we can clean ourselves up and learn to be better people, although of course you will be a "better person" if you can live this out.
1. It negates that idea from the very beginning.
- v. Poor, not compared to other men, but coming face to face with God.
1. Isaiah – I am a man of unclean lips
 - a. **Isaiah 6:5** Then I said, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."
 2. Peter
 - a. **Luke 5:8** ⁸ But when Simon Peter saw *that*, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"
 3. Paul
 - a. **1 Timothy 1:15** It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of *all*.
- e. Luke 18:9-14 on the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector
2. They ***grieve*** at the wreckage caused by sin. (5:4)
 - a. All these are a "package deal" – each necessarily leads to the others.
 - i. The poor in spirit recognize their sin, their spiritual poverty, and they grieve over it.
 - ii. They grieve over the consequences of their sins, the sins of others, and life in general
 - iii. It's not merely a general promise of future comfort after present grief for loss of a loved one or in response to the pain of persistent sickness, etc. But it actually does include that, I think.
 1. Biblical understanding of suffering and death links those things to the wrecking ball of sin introduced by Adam and Eve and perpetuated by each of us. Not that every sickness is a consequence of immediate sin on behalf of the person, but that "sickness" is part of life post-Genesis 3.
 - b. God will comfort them – future.
 - i. Each of the "kingdom" references is present, each of the other blessings is future.
 1. Present, spiritual reality with an eventual, literal fulfillment
 - ii. There is some comfort now, there will be full comfort in the future when there is no more pain and no more wrestling with sin within and without.
 3. They are marked by gentle ***humility***. (5:5)

- a. Spiritual bankruptcy → grief over sin → gentleness with others
 - b. Meek, not weak. Not “walk all over me” but “let me walk a mile or two for you” –
 - i. Difference is someone who is fearful, timid, perhaps physically weaker than someone else so they are taken advantage of vs. someone who voluntarily chooses to serve, to lay aside selfish intimidation rather than demand their own way.
 - ii. Not the strong seeking to domineer but the strong seeking to serve.
 - iii. Example – Man’s man with Crusade who was gentle with me
 - 1. Giant man, former college football player, magnet for men, legends followed him (broke own finger during football practice so he could get a drink of water)
 - iv. **2 Timothy 2:24-25** The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, ²⁵ with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,
 - v. Matt Shethurst – Harshness is channeled weakness. Gentleness is channeled strength.
 - c. They will inherit the earth
 - i. **Psalm 37:11** But the humble will inherit the land And will delight themselves in abundant prosperity.
 - ii. Their trust is not in their own aggressiveness or boldness but in God’s provision.
 - 1. Aggressiveness and boldness have their place – business, military, etc.
 - 2. But in terms of inheriting the kingdom, it’s not earned but received.
4. They have an insatiable desire for righteousness. (5:6)
- a. “hunger and thirst” vividly expresses desire for righteousness even as they are confronted with their own unrighteousness.
 - i. They see growth and are grateful but also continually see more and more their need and desire greater personal righteousness.
 - ii. I’m so encouraged when a young person begins to say “no” to sin not merely because they are afraid they will be caught or because their parents disapprove but because they have an inner desire to obey God.
 - b. “satisfied”
 - i. In the future kingdom when all unrighteousness is rolled back
 - ii. In the present as Jesus’ righteousness is credited to them and God actively changes them from the inside out.
5. They show mercy because they have known mercy. (5:7)
- a. Turns from the Christian’s awareness of his need to his disposition toward other.
 - i. Lloyd-Jones points out that you can’t simply take any statement at random from these beatitudes and understand it apart from the others.
 - ii. A Christian *is* something before he *does* something.
 - b. Mercy – forgiveness for the guilty and compassion for the suffering and needy

- i. Grace is especially concerned with people and their sin, mercy is concerned primarily with people in their misery, whether misery from sin or merely suffering and need in general.
 - ii. It is pity combined with action to help.
 - c. The king's people have a bent towards mercy because they have been shown mercy by God and will be shown mercy in the future.
 - i. My attitude towards people must be completely changed by my recognition of myself.
 - ii. Little areas of life not just big efforts of mercy
 - 1. Not merely donating towards disaster relief but showing kindness and understanding at an area of weakness your child displays recognizing that you have weaknesses as well or at a spouse who forgets something important recognizing that you forget things to
6. They are **cleansed** by God on the inside. (5:8)
- a. Inner moral purity, not merely external piety (as addressed by Jesus in chapter 6)
 - b. Singlemindedness in desire to follow Christ
 - i. **Psalm 86:11** Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth; Unite my heart to fear Your name.
 - ii. But we've already seen that only those who recognize their *impurity* of heart can enter the kingdom! How can this be?
 - iii. This plea in Psalm 86 recognizes the psalmists divided heart and asks for God's work in his inner being. That's our only hope.
 - iv. **1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
 - c. See God – one day when we're with Him, now, more clearly, through the eyes of faith
7. They pursue **peace** because they have known peace. (5:9)
- a. Peacemakers – not merely those who avoid conflict but those who actually try to bring forth peace
 - i. Opposite of those who seem to thrive on conflict, division, strife.
 - ii. They don't brush under the rug but they do seek to bring reconciliation when possible.
 - b. Sons of God because God is a peacemaker and those who follow His pattern are seen as His children
 - i. Those who recognize their spiritual poverty, grieve over the wreckage of sin, approach people with gentleness recognizing their own frailty, show mercy, and have a single-minded devotion to Christ are uniquely situated to help bring peace to others.
 - c. **And yet, peace isn't always possible. Sometimes people will react against even our desires to follow Christ. That's what the next verse addresses.**
8. They are beloved in heaven but often **hated** on earth. (5:10)
- a. Expounded on in v 11 and following so we will dig in more next week but briefly touch on here.
 - b. Blessed – happy, fortunate, to be envied – those who have been persecuted.
 - i. Why? Not because the mistreatment is enjoyable.
 - ii. Recent Voice of the Martyrs on suffering Christians in Sudan

1. Shows the utter poverty of the health and wealth gospel
- c. Blessed because they are children of the King and this world is as bad as it will ever get for them.
 - i. Theirs is the kingdom.

Key ideas

You can only enter the kingdom **empty handed**.

Lloyd-Jones: "These beatitudes crush me to the ground. They show me my utter helplessness. Were it not for the new birth, I am undone. Read and study it, face yourself in the light of it."

Smethurst – imagine getting a text from a friend on July 4th asking you to meet them for fireworks at 11:00 am. You'd think they were crazy or it was a typo meant to say 11 pm. Fireworks aren't impressive in the middle of the day under a bright sun. The darker the sky, the more brilliant the display. In the same way, the brilliance of grace must be set against the blackness of sin.

Sin that we recognize. Sin that we mourn. Sin that makes us feel famished and parched as we hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Mourning our sin then becomes a pathway to joy because Jesus meets our repentance with forgiveness and comfort, not condemnation.

Give to **others** what you have been given by **God**.

Mercy

Gentleness/kindness

Intro – Rock of Ages –

v. 3 Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling. Naked, come to thee for dress, helpless, look to thee for grace



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