

Mount Pisgah AME Church

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Bible Study, Wednesday, February 12, 2020

Developing Christian Character *Kingdom “Attitudes”*: *A Study in The Beatitudes* *Matthew 5:1-12* *“Blessed Are YOU”*

Review

- The “Sermon on The Mount” is Jesus’s explanation of how Christians are called to live “counter-culturally.” The invisible Kingdom that Jesus ushered in when he came, the one that we became citizens of when we became His disciples, has drastically different norms and values than the world that we see around us.
- What God esteems has very little to do with what human’s tend to esteem. “Blessedness” (i.e., what God counts as successful) has little to do with material possessions, political influence, or even popularity. “Blessedness” is achieved by walking in harmony with what GOD values.
- God values character. Jesus shares in *The Beatitudes* some of the character traits that God values.

What Character Traits Does God Bless?

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God

- Those who realize that without Christ they are spiritually destitute, regardless of how materially wealthy they are, humble themselves at the cross. Christ is their key to spiritual prosperity

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted

- Disciples mourn both personal losses like everyone, but also the existence of their own sin and brokenness. Comfort comes through receiving God’s compassion and forgiveness. Disciples also mourn brokenness and sin around them. They will be comforted because they believe that God’s justice is coming.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth

- Disciples are not weak, but meek: humbled by God and surrendered to Christ: Choosing to respond in alignment with God’s mission and purpose for them.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

- Disciples long for both personal rightness in God’s sight, and justice in the world around them. God has promised to make us righteous through Christ, and bring about righteousness in the world.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

- Disciples realize the extent to which they *have* received mercy, *are* receiving mercy, and *shall* receive mercy. They are therefore willing to have mercy on others.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

- God purifies (makes pure and wholly devoted) the hearts of disciples, first by replacement of our corrupted hearts, then through our following The Spirit throughout the ups and downs of life.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God

- Peace with God comes through receiving God’s Son. Disciples have peace with God, and are at work reconciling others to God (evangelizing). Disciples also seek justice and understanding among people – when there is justice there is peace.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for there is the kingdom of heaven.

- Disciples realize that we live in a world in which wrong is celebrated. Our “light,” (our pursuit of righteousness) *exposes* the darkness of more negative ways of life, whether we intend it to or not. . Those who wish to maintain the status quo resent it, and may even attack us because of it.

YOU ARE BLESSED

Rejection by a world system that God is displeased with CAN be a sign that you're headed in the right direction. The opposition that you're experiencing can be a sign that the devil is mad at you (1 Peter 5:8), and that you are on the right side (1 John 2:15) However there are some pre-conditions:

- IF you have Jesus (John 3:16)
- IF you are pursuing Jesus (1 Peter 4:12-16, Philippians 3:7-14)
- IF you are not simply reaping what you have sown (Galatians 6:7-9)
- IF the resistance you are experience is not simply a result of YOUR selfishness clashing with other people's selfishness (James 4:1-6)
- IF you are not simply seeking to get attention (Matthew 6:1)

However if you are TRULY seeking for your life to conform to the image of Christ, EVERYTHING that you go through becomes part of what God is doing to prepare you for eternity. (Romans 8:28-30)

Note

The last couple of verses have an implicit claim to deity by Jesus. In the Old Testament the prophets were persecuted because of their faithfulness to God. Now Jesus is saying that His disciples will be persecuted because of their faithfulness to Jesus. He is God.

YOU ARE BLESSED!

- You are promised a future that will be the complete opposite of your present suffering. (Romans 8:18)
- You are a citizen of a kingdom that will never crumble (Hebrews 12:28-29)
- God will not forget your sacrifice (Hebrews 6:10)
- God has promised to reward you with crowns. (1 Peter 5:4 (glory), 2 Timothy 4:8 (righteousness), 1 Thessalonians 2:19 (rejoicing), Revelation 2:10 (life), 1 Corinthians 9:24-25 (imperishable))
- You have folks cheering you on. (Hebrews 12:1-2)
- God has not changed God's mind about what God has promised for the obedient (Deuteronomy 28:1-16)

The goal of our lives is to be conformed to Christ (1 John 3:1-3). If it means facing opposition and working on ourselves to get there it is worth it!!