

Mount Pisgah AME Church

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Bible Study, Wednesday, January 22, 2020

Developing Christian Character *Kingdom "Attitudes": A Study in The Beatitudes* *Matthew 5:1-12*

"Blessed are The Peacemakers, For They Shall Be Called Children of God"

Review

- The *Fruit of The Spirit* (Galatians 5:22-23) indicate the presence of the Holy Spirit in a person's character and hence are evidence that a person is a believer in Christ.
- In his "Sermon on The Mount" Jesus introduces the characteristics and culture of "The Kingdom" that God is ushering in through Jesus. The culture of The Kingdom of God is fundamentally different from the culture of the existing world.
- 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.

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

- When we come to Christ we are humbled to realize we are all poor in spirit and in need of Christ's salvation. Receiving it makes us eligible to partake in the Kingdom of God.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted

- Disciples mourn both personal losses and also the existence of personal and societal sin.

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.

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 the children of God

Peacemaker - Dictionary: One who makes peace, especially by settling the disputes of others.

Peacemaker (Gk): *eirenopoios* Pacific, loving peace

God is a God of peace, and peacefulness is a Fruit of The Spirit. From Bible Study on 6/26/19

Peace: Wellness of being, wholeness. Balance. Tranquility. Comes by being in right relationship with God. Not necessarily the absence of conflict, but being at one with God and with oneself. (No God contradictions or inner contradictions).

The most important kind of peace we can achieve is peace with God. God's whole plan of redemption is to provide peace with God for those who were formerly alienated from God. He did this through sending Messiah, Jesus Christ the Lord

- Isaiah 9:6, 7 – Jesus is the Prince of Peace
- Luke 2:14 – The angels announced that the coming of Jesus mean “Peace on earth.” This did not necessarily mean peace between people, but peace between the occupants of earth and heaven was made possible.

On earth, however, there is strife and conflict between people with little hope for peace and unity.

- Human nature is self-centered. Self- nature always creates conflict (James 4:1-4)
- Where there is injustice, there is never peace. (Jeremiah 6:13-14)
- Jesus never promised there'd be peace in that sense (Luke 12:49-53)

However God calls us to be reconcilers: “Peacemakers.”

Characteristics of Peacemakers

Peacemakers are people who:

- Reconcile people to God
 - Reconciliation is our mission (2 Corinthians 5:17-21)
 - True peace comes from a change of heart (John 14:27)
- Peacemakers are people who try to turn people to the ways of justice (Isaiah 58)
- Peacemakers are people who try to reconcile relationships among believers (Ephesians 2:11-18, Philippians 4:2-3)
- Peacemakers are those who don't exacerbate conflict (Proverbs 15:1)
- Peacemakers are those who look for opportunities to facilitate healing (Proverbs 15:4)
- Peacemakers are people who *listen* before they draw conclusions (James 1:19)
- Peacemakers are those who try to facilitate communication and understanding
- Peacemakers are those who prioritize relationships (Matthew 5:23-24)

“They shall be called children of God.”

What is a Child of God?

- In the Old Testament “sons of God” is a description of angels, and rarely is such language used for the “saved.” In the New Testament “sonship” is a powerful expression for salvation. It means that believers have been born into the family of God by the Holy Spirit, and that those designated have a personal relationship with the God through Christ the Son, and are joint heirs with Him. They have a place in their heavenly home by birthright. Not yet in the full sense, but truly in the certainty of the promise, believers can say, “We are called the children of God.” (John 1:12,13, 1 John 3:1)

Those who “Make Peace” between people and God are operating with similarity to the Holy Spirit, who draws people to salvation. (John 16:13-15)

Those who call people to peace/justice with one another are bringing to pass what God forecasts for God's ultimate Kingdom (Isaiah 11:6-9)

The disciples of Jesus should be promoting peace. We do this by spreading the Gospel of peace in the world, and by promoting reconciliation within the household of faith as well.