“Jesus Teaches the Beatitudes” Matthew 5:1-12

2-9-14

An elderly lady came across a young father in the cereal isle at the grocery store. His 2 year old son was in the cart crying. The father keep repeating over and over again “it’s going to be all right Billy, don’t cry”. After a few minutes the little elderly lady said to the young father “you are doing a good job, reassuring your son like that.” To which the young man replied oh I’m not reassuring my son, his name is Patrick; I’m Billy”.

When asked her thoughts about her daughters wedding, the mother of the bride said

“I’m not losing a daughter; I’m gaining a bathroom and a telephone.”

Children are a blessing form God. We parents just need to keep repeating that to

ourselves until we believe it.

The easiest way to fall asleep fast is to count your blessings instead of your

problems.

Ruth M. Walsh said envy is the art of counting another's blessings instead of your own.

God loves his children. He blesses us everyday. He comforts us, He has mercy on us, he gives us a home in heaven, he calls us his children, and he gives us eternal life.

Do we count our blessings? Are we thankful for God's blessings upon us? Do we share them?

Today we are studying Christ's

beatitudes; but Satan also has a set of Beatitudes: Satan says "Blessed are those who are too tired, too busy, too distracted to spend an hour once a week with their fellow Christians in Church ~ they are my best workers."

Blessed are those who wait to be asked and expect to be thanked ~ I can use them in my business.

Blessed are those who are touchy. Soon they will stop going to church ~ verily, they shall be my missionaries.

Blessed are those who sow gossip and trouble ~ they are my beloved children.

Blessed are those who have no time to pray ~ for they are MY prey.

Blessed are those who gossip ~ for they are my secret agents.

Blessed are you when you hear this and think it has everything to do with other people, and nothing to do with you. ~ I've got room for YOU at my inn.

Life is filled with spiritual warfare. If we are a disciple of Christ, we are in the army of the Lord. He equips us to fight for him; he gives us armor to wear and a sword to swing. What ever God calls us to do, He equips us to. He has called us to go and make disciples. The 1st disciple we need to make is ourselves. Are we Christ's disciple? Are we in His army? Are we striving to make disciples? Whose beatitudes are we living by? [Pray]

V1) When He saw the multitude; Jesus went up on a mountain. He sat down and began to teach his disciples. Teachers in that day sat & the students stood. Jesus was teaching His disciples&the multitude listened in. Jesus taught 9things that His disciples should do. The Sermon on the Mount is not a road map to salvation, but a way of life for true believers.

Chapters 5-7 of Matthew consuetude the Sermon on the Mount. In this wonderful explanation of the Law, Jesus shows us that the demands of the Law are humanly impossible to fill. Jesus is showing us that the law points to Him. In Matthew 5:17 Jesus says “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.” The Law points to Jesus; there is no other way to get the Kingdom of Heaven but by Him. Romans 3:19-20 “Now we know that whatever the

law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

The Law points to Jesus; He is the only one who ever kept the whole Law. We have all broken the law at one point or another. If we break just one little part, we are guilty of breaking it all. Galatians 3:24 "Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith." The law shows us that we have no human thing to merit salvation. We have nothing to cling to except the grace of God. Eph. 2:8-9 "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works lest anyone should boast." Do we totally trust in God's grace for our salvation?

In Matthew 4:17, Jesus began His ministry with these words “repent; the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Repent means to turn away from sin and turn to Christ. So now Jesus is giving us instructions on how to do that. Micah 6:8 “He has shown you o man what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and walk humbly with your God?” Justice, mercy and humility are 3 godly virtues that Christians need to exercise. Now Jesus is going to instruct us how to achieve them in our own lives. Jesus is about to take the mainly negative law & turn it inside out to show us its positive core; the spirit of the law. Not everyone in the multitude that day was a believer; are we?

Jesus taught the same message as the Old Testament prophets, obedience is more important than sacrifice. Jesus wants us to obey him because we love him, not because

we feel obligated or are trying to obey the law. The Pharisees were very legalistic; they taught the letter of the law, not the spirit of the law. Jesus taught us the spirit of the law.

Do we obey God because we love Him? Do we share His love with others?

The Beatitudes consist of 3 parts: they pronounce a blessing; they tell who will receive the blessing; and they state what the blessing is. V2-3) Blessed means to be happy, fortunate, or blissful. It means being favored by God. Psalm 1:1-2 “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the

LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night." Where do we find our delight? Are we blessed by God? Do we want to be? Do we spend time in His word?

"Blessed are the poor in spirit"; what exactly does it mean to be poor in spirit? It is the opposite of self-sufficiency and self-importance. It means to be humble; to be totally dependant upon God. It means realizing that apart from God, we can do nothing. Proverbs 3:34"Surely He scorns the scornful, but gives grace to the humble." James 4:6 "But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Being poor in spirit means acknowledging that we are a sinner. Humility is the foundation for our Christian walk. Christ humbled himself. Philippians 2:8 "Being found in appearance as man, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross." Are we Christ like in our humbleness? Do we give God the credit He deserves? Phil.4:13 "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Where do we get our strength? Are we humble? Are we poor in spirit?

The poor in spirit shall be blessed with the kingdom of heaven; what does that mean? The kingdom of heaven is simply the reign of Christ in our hearts. Where ever we go, he is our king. We are in his kingdom; whether here on earth or in heaven, we are his subjects living by his rules, loving him and he loving us. Paul tells us in Romans 14:17 “The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Sprit.” Are we living in the kingdom of heaven? Do we have Jesus reigning in our hearts? Are we blessed because we are poor in Spirit?

V4) Jesus says those that mourn shall be comforted. This mourning is not just when we are saddened by some event in our lives; it is being sorrowful for our sins and truly repenting of them. Sin separates us from God. Repentance returns us to God. Jesus

said he who is whole does not need a doctor, those who are ill need a doctor. When the Holy Spirit convicts us of our sins, we must mourn over them and repent. When we repent of our sin and draw close to God, we feel his comforting arms around us. He forgives us and holds us close, he comforts us. 2 Cor.7:10 “For Godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.”

Godly sorrow is produced in us by the Holy Spirit convicting us of our sins. The first time this happens, it leads us to salvation. Once we are Christ’s disciples, the Holy Spirit continues to convict us of our sins so that we can continue in a close relationship with him. True repentance cannot occur unless we are truly sorry for our sins. Do we mourn for our sins? Or are we just mad we got caught? Worldly sorrow produces death because it has nothing to do with true repentance and godly sorrow. It is simply wounded pride and unfulfilled lusts. It

leads to guilt, shame, despair and depression, but not salvation. These things can lead to physical ailments and shorten our lives. Why not truly repent and lean on Jesus? He tells us to cast all our cares on Him because He cares for us.

V5) Jesus said that the meek are blessed. We need to remember meek does not weak. It means those who quietly submit themselves wholly to God. They are obedient to His will, His word, and His discipline. Meekness is letting the Holy Spirit control us. Who is in control of our lives? The meek shall inherit the earth is quoted from Psalm 37:11.

This expression was commonly used for Canaan. Canaan is an expression for heaven. The meek who love Jesus will be in heaven with him someday. They will not only receive earthly blessings, but eternal ones as well.

V6) Just like the body hungers and thirsts for physical food and water, the soul hungers and thirsts for spiritual food. God promised to provide both for those who love him. We need God's righteousness because Isaiah tells us that our righteousness is as filthy rags. Only the righteousness of God will fill those who love Him. The Pharisees were filled with self-righteousness. Are we seeking God's righteousness?

V7) Mercy means two things; either forgiveness or alms giving. We show mercy to others when we help them out and when we forgive them for trespassing against us. Colossians 3:12 "Therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering." Paul here lists some of the character traits of a Christian. Christians must be merciful for they themselves have received mercy from God. James 2:13 "For judgment is without mercy to the one who

has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment." By showing no mercy or compassion to those in need, people are really telling us that they themselves have not received mercy from God. They are still lost and far from Him. Therefore if they remain in that state, they will not receive mercy on judgment day; they will be judged instead. Christians on the other hand, have received mercy from God, and are ready for judgment day. Mercy is a good example of what goes around comes around. Have we received God's mercy? Do we show mercy?

V8) Since God looks upon our heart; they must be pure if we want to see him. They must be full of love for him and not filled with sin and corruption. Psalm 51:10 "Create in me a clean heart oh God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." The Psalmist was asking God to renew, restore and transform him. Only God can do these things. We must be willing to let him. God will not force himself on anyone. We must

want and allow him to change us. Christianity lies in the heart; they must be pure. Only those with a pure heart will see God and live with him forever in heaven.

V9) A peacemaker is someone who uses their influence and wisdom to reconcile conflicting parties and reinstate peace and unity instead of conflict and strife. The gospel is often called the gospel of peace because it reconciles people both to God and each other. Sin causes man to have adversity with God. Peacemakers try to reconcile sinful man to a loving, forgiving heavenly father. Therefore since God is the father of peace and Jesus is the prince of peace, peacemakers can be called the children of God.

V10) how can anyone be happy about being persecuted? Especially when they are innocent to start with? But if we are to be persecuted, it should be for the cause of Christ. He was persecuted for us. Daniel, Shad rack, Meshach, and Abednego were all persecuted for God. Peter and Paul were persecuted for Christ. In fact, all of Christ's disciples, except Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him and committed suicide, which is self persecution by the way, were persecuted for his sake. Jesus himself told us we might face persecution. John 15:18 "If the world hates you, you know it hated me before it hated you." 1Peter 4:14 "If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you." Then he adds vs. 16 "Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter."

Are we persecuted for the cause of Christ? Do we glorify him in it?

11-12) Jesus finishes the beatitudes buy telling us that were are blessed if we are persecuted for His sake. Again, the key word to remember is falsely. Are we being falsely accused, or are we guilty? We have 2 reasons to be happy about this persecution. 1st, great is our reward in heaven. 2nd, we are not alone; they first persecuted the prophets who went before us. How do we handle persecution? Do we rejoice in it? fight it? Trust God to see us through it? Does it bring us closer to God?

Jesus told us to be glad when we are persecuted for his sake, but that is easier said than done isn't it? Persecution does have some good points. 1st, it takes our mind off of worldly things and makes us focus upon Jesus. Next it strengthens our faith and lastly, having a confident, joyous attitude sets a good example for others to follow. Persecution is a mark of faith. Faithless people are not bothered by Satan because he already has them. Faithful followers who endure persecution have the promise of heaven where there will be no more persecution. Can we say with Paul that I have learned in what ever state I am in there to be content in the LORD?

The Beatitudes describe what a true follower of Christ should be like. They give us a

code of ethics and a standard of conduct to live by. They contrast Kingdom values to worldly values. They contrast superficial faith with real faith. Which do we have?

The beatitudes do not promise fun, wealth and fame. They promise contentment with the presence of Christ in our lives. True Disciples of Christ have an inner peace and joy no matter what their circumstances because Christ is their focus, not their circumstances.

What are we focused on? Do we have this inner peace and joy?

The Kingdom of Heaven is organized differently from the world. The world teaches us to seek power, fame and fortune, where as Jesus teaches us to be lovingly obedient. Jesus says it is more important to be humble, sorrowful and meek than to be proud, rich and famous. He says we need to seek righteousness, be merciful, truthful and peaceable. What are we seeking?

The beatitudes are written for Christians. They are God's blessings upon His

followers. Jesus said the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peace makers, and the persecuted are blessed; not will be blessed; but are now indeed blessed.

They are a code of ethics to live by. They show us the difference between the world's temporal view of life and the spirits eternal view of life. They contrast the superficial faith of religion to the true faith of real believers. They describe how Christ wants us to live. Do we try to live and see things God's way? Are we trying to live His way?

The beatitudes do not promise us laughter, riches, or fun. The blessedness Jesus describes is spiritual. True love, hope, joy and peace only come from Him. These are what the world is looking for. Do we tell them where to find them? Do our attitudes reflect worldly ambitions or Jesus Christ? Are we poor in spirit? Are we meek, merciful, and peace loving? Do we hunger and thirst for righteousness? Are we willing to suffer for the cause of Christ? Do we mourn over lost souls? Are we pure in heart? Do we serve God with all our heart? Are we enjoying and sharing the blessings of God?

Amen, let's pray.