

SERMON ON THE MOUNT

The Beatitudes

“Christian Character in the Cross”

Matthew 5:11-12

As we travel the road of the Beatitudes, our initial stop comes head on with our awareness of need. We need fuel but can't pay for it, we are **poor in spirit**. We recognize our need and lack, then **mourn** due to our sinfulness. God graciously gives the gift of spiritual comfort. Where we once set our own route we now practice surrender, denying ourselves to follow Christ and becoming **meek, gentle and teachable**. What follows? God's provision: the route, the plan, the map!

Blessed are those who **hunger and thirst for righteousness** for they shall be filled. What is our action to be as we travel this highway to heaven? Happiness is found in action of **mercy**, as the redeemed see their tank full of rich fuel they couldn't pay for! Our whole drive is an expression of what we are. But what's the purpose of this; aren't we to **see God**? The only way to have **pure** motives is to realize we can veer off course. We're traveling to an entirely new and different kingdom. We are called to **peace**. The poorest, meekest, and most severely persecuted of all drivers are surely found at the Cross of Calvary. Our allegiance is with Christ the Crucified, where we have lost all and yet found all.

The final Beatitude cries “Blessed! **Rejoice and be exceedingly glad!**” It's the call from The Cross directly given to Christ's drivers.

Three principles clearly emerge from what the Lord teaches us here.

1. Clear cut distinction between Christians & Non-Christians

- The Bible describes Satan as our adversary, who is as a “roaring lion, seeking whom he may **DEVOUR**” (1 Peter 5:8).
- (Matthew 10:34) The servant is not greater than his lord, so he experiences the same fate.
- The Christian isn't just like everyone else with a **SLIGHT** difference. He is essentially different, a new creation.

2. A Christian's life is controlled & dominated by Jesus Christ

“Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.” Matthew 5:11

- Blessed when you change, blessed when you come, blessed when you do. The world will **HATE** you for it.

EXPECTATION ADJUSTMENT:

- **EXPECT** to be insulted, expect to be lied about, expect to be pursued, expect to be physically attacked, expect to be referred to as evil.
- If we are truly Christian, our desire must be, however much we fail in practice, to **LIVE** for Christ, to glory in His name, and to live to **GLORIFY** Him.
- This was not only taught by our Lord, but emphasized everywhere in the New Testament (life's great controlling motive).

3. A Christian's life should be controlled by thoughts of Heaven

*“Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”
Matthew 11:12*

LOOKING FOR A CITY WITH FOUNDATIONS, WHOSE BUILDER AND MAKER IS GOD

- Here we have no CONTINUING city, but we seek the one to come.
- The Christian is a person who thinks a great deal about these things and dwells on them. They are great CONTROLLING principles and factors in the whole of his life and outlook.

PERSECUTION ULTIMATELY FALLS ON CHRIST, HE CARRIES IT

- Matthew 11:28-30
- “It is He who bears our BURDENS. The curse, the deadly persecution, and evil slander confirm the blessed state of the disciples in their fellowship with Jesus.” ~Bonhoeffer
- With His own hand God wipes away the tears from those who had MOURNED upon earth.
- Revelation 19:7

Doing Deliberate Discipleship What really matter is the way the Christian faces persecution

1. The Christian must not RETALIATE.

- To retaliate is to be like the natural man who always does reply, by nature he has the instinct of self-preservation and the desire to protect his own back.

2. The Christian must not harbor RESENTMENT (more difficult).

- A Christian does not hold on to bitterness or resentment, rather commits judgment to God.
- James 5:9

3. The Christian is never DEPRESSED by persecution.

- “Rejoice and be exceedingly glad”
- To the natural man this is an utter impossibility, but it is the position the Christian is called to by Jesus Christ.

Two Questions

1. Why should the Christian be exceedingly glad?

- Persecution received for “Christ’s sake” is proof to the Christian of who he/she is and what he/she is! It means that we have become identified with Christ.
- This persecution is proof also of where we are going!
- Why then should we rejoice? Because our reward in heaven is great (2 Corinthians 4:17-18; Luke 6:23).

2. How is this reward possible?

- It doesn’t mean we earn or merit salvation, it means God treats us as a Father.

Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in Heaven!