

SERMON ON THE MOUNT

The Beatitudes

“Face to Face with God”

Matthew 5:1-3

Question:

Happiness is the great question confronting mankind. But how?

This is where the utter deceitfulness of sin lives. It is always offering happiness, but never comes across with the goods.

The Beatitudes contain an implicit invitation to become joyful! So, the disciples hear the beatitudes as words of CELEBRATION about the work of God in their lives.

Question:

What about the crowds standing behind the disciples? Do they hear these words of congratulations? How should they hear them if they are not poor in spirit, if they are not mourning, meek, hungry for righteousness, merciful, pure or peaceable?

They are certainly not congratulations then.

Question:

If you see people being promised the blessings of eternal life, don't those words of promise beckon you to become that kind of person?

For some the beatitudes are words of transformation by the power and mercy of God. What are they for you?

BEFORE WE CONSIDER CONDUCT: Four principles of character

1. ALL Christians are to be like this.

- This is Jesus Christ's description of every single Christian.

2. All Christians are meant to manifest all of these CHARACTERISTICS.

- The Beatitudes are a complete whole, you cannot divide them.

3. None of these descriptions refers to a NATURAL tendency.

- There is a continental divide between biological (natural) temperament and a disposition that is produced by grace.
- These are characteristics and dispositions that are the result of grace, the product of the Holy Spirit and therefore possible for all!

4. The essential DIFFERENCE between Christian and non-Christian.

- When the church is absolutely different from the world, then the world is made to listen to the Church's message, though it may hate it at first, that is how revival comes!

Non-Christian	Christian
<u>ADMIRE</u> self-confidence, self-expression, life master	<u>ADMIRE</u> the man who is poor in spirit.
<u>SEEK</u> money, status, position, publicity	<u>SEEK</u> to be right with God.
What they do: live to <u>GET</u> everything out of the world.	What they do: see the world as no more than a camping <u>TRIP</u> , a way of entry to a vast eternal and glorious home.
What they can DO: very confident in his own capacity, prepared to do anything	What they can DO: truly aware of his own limitations

PICTURE IT: Jesus on the mountain, the disciples, and multitudes

Matthew 5:1-2

"And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying..."

- Jesus taught the disciples to be able to **REACH** the multitude.

THE KEY THAT OPENS UP ALL THAT FOLLOWS: Humbleness

Matthew 5:3

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

- There is no one in the kingdom of God who isn't "poor in spirit", yet "poor in spirit" has never been a **POPULAR** idea, even in Church.
- Essential element of the gospel: **CONVICTION** precedes conversion.

FACE TO FACE WITH MAN, OR FACE TO FACE WITH GOD: We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.

If anyone feels anything in the presence of God but an utter POVERTY of SPIRIT, it ultimately means they've never faced Him.

- Well, I do get a little much over-impressed, 'til I think of Peter and Paul and the apostles. I don't stack up too well against them I guess, but by the standards 'round here, I ain't doing that awful. (Rich Mullins)
- What does it mean to be poor in spirit?

POOR IN SPIRIT

Three negatives identified

1. Does not mean that we should be weak or lacking in COURAGE.

- "Poor in spirit" does not mean you are born like that.

2. Does not mean glorying in your POVERTY.

- "Poor in spirit" does not worry about personal appearance and the impression made.

3. Does not mean a suppression of PERSONALITY.

- You don't have to go out of life.

Positive aspects

"For thus says the High and Lofty One, Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high & holy place, With him who has a contrite and humble spirit, To revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isaiah 57:15

1. Poor in spirit means a complete absence of PRIDE self-ASSURANCE and self-RELIANCE.

- "Poor in spirit" is signified by a consciousness that we are nothing in the presence of God.

2. Poor in spirit is to know we ARE nothing, and that we HAVE nothing.

- "Poor in spirit" is to look to God in utter submission to Him and in utter dependence upon Him and His grace and mercy!