

## The Kingdom part 4:

Matt. 5:3-12

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

*4 “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*

*5 “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.*

*6 “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.*

*7 “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.*

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

*9 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.*

*10 “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*11 “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.*

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

## Recap:

We started a couple of weeks ago looking at the kingdom of God.

Our Lord said that:

*The Kingdom is not something you observe,  
or my Kingdom is not of this world.*

He said His kingdom was something far greater than something that lines your stomach, far greater than something armies could fight for, far greater than a political position, a successful business, or a ministry.

*The Kingdom of God is within you.*

That is, inside of you.

The Kingdom of God is according to Our Lord's own definition is:

*God's rule and reign in man's heart through Jesus Christ.*

Simply put,

*the Kingdom of God, the kingdom of Heaven  
is God's redemptive action through the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Now-

Every kingdom has its laws.

Every kingdom has its characteristics.

The laws of God's Kingdom are derived from the very character of God Himself.

The character of the King is always reflected in the character of the Kingdom.

These characteristics of the King and his followers are scattered through the New Testament.

But there is a place where they are brought together into what George Boardman called the "Manifesto of the Kingdom"; we most likely have heard them called the Beatitudes.

In these scriptures our Lord talks about the nature of the people who are citizens of this Kingdom.

There are eight areas of character outlined in these Beatitudes.

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### **The Word Blessed:**

The Greek word used here is an adjective.

It means, chance, good-luck, well off. But in the context that Christ used them here, it means happy.

It is an old Greek word that talks largely of an outward manifestation, or outward prosperity.

This word ‘happy’ is about the outward manifestation that happens because of an inward revelation.

## **Happy are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven:**

They are those people who are conscious of their moral and spiritual poverty.

They are conscious of the fact that they are spiritually incomplete, that they do not have their 'stuff together', as it were.

True happiness, lasting eternal happiness cannot exist for a person if they do not know Christ.

## **Happy are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted:**

Now this is capable of two meanings.

**One-** the grief and lament that is brought about by the loss of family, friends or possessions.

**Or second-** what starts off as a poor or broken spirit, as we become aware of our sinful state, ultimately manifests in a deep sense of mourning and lost and desire for reconciliation with God.

Personally, I believe it covers both of these areas because our God is as immensely practical as He is spiritual.

## **Happy are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth**

Meekness is not weakness.

Meekness is flexible, restraint, strength that can endure test and turmoil.

A meek person is not stiff with resistances to the ways of God, but yielding.

Like a great willow or elm, the ability to face the wind is based on the deepness of its roots and the flexibility of the trunk.

This because you are rooted in the Word that tells you that He knows the beginning from the end.

Because you know He has planned the path as well as the outcome and you accept His ways.

'Not my will, but Yours be done'.

If you resist Him you will break.  
If in meekness you surrender to Him, then you withstand,  
indestructible in the face of any onslaught and any storm.  
He will deliver you.

Now this is not fatalism, as some would say.  
Fatalism is the philosophical doctrine holding that all events are fated  
to happen and that human beings cannot, therefore, change their  
destinies.

We believe in a God who is Sovereign and that He is the supreme  
authority over all things, and is free to operate as He wills without  
interference from any other force.

Fatalism offers only fear, Faith inspires hope in tomorrow.

Fatalism embraces the worst of our fears, while Faith affirms God's  
love for us.

Fatalism is very subtle because it can mask itself in very religious  
ways; faith is a very clear declaration in our trust in God who loves  
us.

So let us continue.

**Happy are those that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for  
they shall be filled:**

The capacity to feel a mighty want and an empty and barren soul is  
the thing that separates man from all other of God's creation.

All souls are made to crave.

When a soul gets to hungering, when a soul gets to thirsting after a  
right relationship with God, nothing else will satisfy it except divine  
interaction.

St Augustine said;

*Thou madest us for Thyself,  
and our heart is restless,  
until it rest in Thee.*

Heavenly things cannot support the body.  
Neither can earthly things satisfy your soul.  
When the soul is awakened to an awareness and need of God  
nothing will satisfy it except a divine collision.

*Ecclesiastes 3:11 ESV  
(11) He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has  
put eternity into man's heart,*

God has put eternity in our hearts and we have an inconsolable  
longing for relationship.

We may try to satisfy it with accomplishments of creativity, stunning  
cinematic productions, sexual exploits, national sports  
extravaganzas, hallucinogenic drugs, participation in religious  
activities, but regardless of what we do in the flesh we can not satisfy  
the spiritual longing and need that we have.

Many of you here this morning are like this.  
Many of us have sensed and tried to satisfy our soul with something  
other than Jesus Christ.  
And after you do, you still feel restless.  
We didn't recognize this as God drawing us to Himself  
Yet nothing would satisfy.

*And when the thrill of lust has finally evaporated  
all that is left is the sediment of guilt and loneliness.*

C.S. Lewis said,

*If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can  
satisfy,  
the most probable explanation is that I was made for another  
world.*

When a soul is awakened to its need for divine relationship nothing else will satisfy it.

And that is the thing friend.

Nothing will satisfy you except Him.  
Nothing will comfort you except Him.  
Nothing will give you peace except Him.

### **To hunger and thirst:**

To hunger and thirst is to have daily appetites, daily needs, that must be satisfied.

To have these desires and these hungers is a good and healthy thing.

These desires are not just the occasional craving, “hmmm, its Friday I feel like ice cream”.

No, this is something that goes a lot deeper.

What Jesus is talking about here is an essential hunger.

It is akin to the hunger of a man who has shipwrecked or is lost at sea for many months.

It is a hunger that goes beyond a mere craving, a mere desire.

You come to a realization that the hunger and thirst of your life can not be satisfied unless it is by God and doing what God has created you do to.

This righteousness, this right-doing, this right attitude towards God and towards people is a constant thing that is a visible sign that we are walking with Him and representing Him.

## **Don't separate the beatitudes:**

When you read these beatitudes, don't separate these items from each other.

They are not individual statements of work; they are a composite picture of the character of a man and woman who love Him who loved them first.

They each build upon each other.

They start with awareness and need for personal reconciliation with God;

That is, "*Poor in spirit*".

They move on to a sense of loss and then comfort, as to our spiritual state;

*"Mourn/comforted"*.

Then a realization as to His sovereignty and His power;

*"Meek/inherit the earth"*.

And then to a daily hunger and thirst, a desire to have every part of our life surrendered to Him.

Do you see how this builds?

Do you see how these are connected?

This I believe is what it means to hunger and thirst after righteousness.

I am not trying to do good works.

I am not trying to perform or put on a show to others.

No.

I desire to please Him who comforts me, Him who rescued me.

I want to be like Him, and show His qualities in the World.

I long to be like Him.

I long to please, serve and represent Him.

And this desire, this longing is something that has become not just a wish, but it is now an essential need for my life.

I hunger and thirst after this.

I want to be a child of God, I long to resemble my Father.

### **To Be Filled:**

To be filled means that these regular appetites will be satisfied.

These regular needs will be met.

Hunger and thirst are appetites that return regularly.

They are not things that are satisfied once, and then forgotten.

Salvation is a once off experience.

Once you are justified by faith, you are justified by faith.

You can't unborn a baby.

But sanctification, right living, right doing, and taking on the characteristics of this Kingdom are a daily pursuit.

Friend, you never arrive, settle that point.

But you can be daily satisfied.

Which means it is ok to daily hunger.

Don't get condemned because you feel like you don't have your stuff together; just be aware that it is a hunger a solution that must be satisfied regularly.

If you don't long to be like Him, then you need to ask yourself questions concerning the personal state of your relationship with Him.

## **Happy Are the Merciful, For They Shall Obtain Mercy:**

I want you to note a change that happens at this mid-point in the Manifesto of His Kingdom.

The first four points or principles of the Kingdom are focused on our relationship with the King of this Kingdom.

The next four are concerned with our interaction as representatives of the Kingdom to those around us.

One set is God's works in us; the next set is our work on His behalf or our work as citizens of His Kingdom.

You will notice a similar pattern in the 10 commandments:

ONE: *'You shall have no other gods before Me'*.

TWO: *'You shall not make for yourself a carved image'*.

THREE: *'You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain'*.

FOUR: *'Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy'*.

All of these have to do with our relationship with God.

Then the tenor of the Commandments change,

The final six have to do with our relationship with other people.

FIVE: *'Honor your father and your mother.'*

SIX: *'You shall not murder.'*

SEVEN: *'You shall not commit adultery.'*

EIGHT: *'You shall not steal.'*

NINE: *'You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.'*

TEN: *'You shall not covet'*.

About 1,400 years later, the 10 Commandments were summed up in the New Testament in Matthew 22:36-39, when Jesus was confronted by the religious "experts" of the day:

Matthew 22:36-40 ESV

(36) "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"

(37) And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

(38) This is the great and first commandment.

(39) And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

(40) On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

He sums up all of the commandments this way.

The first four are wrapped up in "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.*"

The last six are wrapped up in "*Love your neighbor as yourself.*"

The same pattern is repeated in the beatitudes.

The first four are about our relationship with God.

The last 4 are about our relationship on behalf of God with other people.

**Now let's look more closely at what this statement in the manifesto means:**

Let's look at what it does not mean first.

You would have noticed throughout our discussion on the beatitudes that our Lord does not tell us how to be saved.

None of these elements deal with the 'how' of our personal reconciliation with God, they deal with the fruit of our reconciliation with God.

He is not describing a program of works that ultimately leads us to salvation, and that is how some people have interpreted these things.

They say that in order to be saved you must do all these 8 things.

You must have all these 8 things

What He is giving us are the signs and evidences that the work of salvation has already taken place in our soul.

What is spoken of here is not mercy that leads to salvation.

He is not saying that if I do not act merciful towards others

I will not be able to earn God's favor, mercy and forgiveness in terms of salvation.

This is a very traditional Catholic way of interpreting these verses but the error lies in the fact that it is not an accurate way.

Friend we are justified by faith, not by works.

Justification is when God declares us guiltless before Him and places all of the righteousness of Christ to our credit.

This is instantaneous and is not based upon anything we can do, but based upon all that Christ has done.

You don't show mercy to others in the hope that God would show greater mercy to you.

You can't get more saved than someone else.

Mother Teresa is no more saved than you are.

William Booth was no more saved than you are.

We have already seen that those who have recognized their poor spirit have received the greatest gift you could ever receive – entrance to the Kingdom, that is, a restored relationship with the Father through Christ.

## So what does this beatitude mean?

### **Merciful:**

To be **merciful** means to be actively compassionate.

To obtain **mercy** means to receive or experience mercy;

That is to have help brought to you in a time of need.

So we can read this as:

*Happy are those that are actively compassionate for in their time of need they shall receive the help when they are desperate for.*

This is totally consistent with the principle of reaping and sowing outlined by Jesus and the Apostles throughout the New Testament.

I believe that being merciful can be broken up into 2 areas.

- Works of physical compassion.
- Works of spiritual compassion.

Both of these are driven by the desire to touch and help others as we have been helped.

To love others as we have been loved.

To help others as we have been helped.

It is this desire and this model upon which City Care is based.

Every church we ever plant will have at its heart a department that is driven by the desire to be merciful.

That's why we started Uplift.

To give a hand up to people, not a hand out.

I believe it is far more merciful to educate and train a mind as it is to just feed a mouth.

## So...let's look at Works of Physical Compassion:

These would include:

Matthew 25:35-36

*For I was hungry and you gave me food,  
I was thirsty and you gave me drink,  
I was a stranger and you welcomed me,  
I was naked and you clothed me,  
I was sick and you visited me,  
I was in prison and you came to me.'*

1. Feeding the hungry.
2. Giving water to the thirsty.
3. Clothing the naked.
4. Providing homes for the homeless.
  - Homes for young men.
  - Homes for unwed mothers.
5. Visiting the sick and dying.
6. Visiting those in prison.

All of these things we should be involved in.

This isn't a function of our vocation, but salvation.

We should all be driven to be merciful.

We should all be driven to be compassionate.

## **Works of Spiritual Compassion:**

1. Warn sinners of the eternal fate.

Go into all the world and preach and make disciples.

2. Instruct and teach.
  - Older men the younger.
  - Older women the younger.
  - Disciple and train. Take time to invest in those around you that have a hunger to know, but don't yet.
3. Comfort those in need.

Pray with.

Play with.

Partner with.

People until they are whole.

Sometimes the greatest thing you can do for someone who is struggling with life is take them to a movie or a coffee shop and sit down and help them laugh, or give them something to do.

4. Be patient with those who are wrong.

Strive to correct their doctrine and help them see what the Word truly says.

*2 Timothy 3:16-17 ESV*

*(16) All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,*

*(17) that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.*

## 5. Forgive offenses.

Nowhere do we imitate God more than when we show mercy towards one another.

I just think how easily we think the worst of each other.

I am always surprised at how people always jump to a wrong conclusion so quickly and how readily we are to think the worst of each others intentions.

Don't harbor ill will towards each other.

No matter how you have been wronged or slighted, we have wronged and slighted God far more.

Friend, there will come a day when I may need you to extend mercy to me, so I will in preparation for that day be merciful towards you.

## 6. And pray for one another

I covet your prayers church.

As your pastor one of the greatest things you can every do is to pray for the work.

Pray for wisdom.

Pray for provision.

Pray for direction.

Pray for anointing and power.

As I do those things for you, I ask that you do those for us.