

Happy Are the Peacemakers, For They Shall Be Called Sons of God:

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 h 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.

I would like to spend a little time at the start of this morning dealing with an issue that I believe is the underlying focus of the beatitudes, or the main reason our Lord taught this Manifesto of The Kingdom, in such a manner.

I believe that one of the reasons our Lord gave us these beatitudes is to ensure that believers would be equipped to discern and face the coming error in the church era.

Recap:

Let us remember the groupings that these beatitudes are in.

The first four are about our relationship with God

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

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.

So even from that observation alone we know that this is not a statement about our eternal standing or status before God.

Death to a false salvation:

You will notice that these statements are not independent of each other.

They all build on one another.

Line upon line.

If we don't obtain mercy, we receive judgment.

If we don't see God, we are not in heaven.

If we are not peacemakers, we are not sons, we are outside the family.

With each one of these elements of the manifesto of the Kingdom add another nail into the coffin that contains the corpse of a false salvation.

A false salvation is one that says a person can be saved without changing.

A false salvation says your works and actions earn you points with God.

A false salvation says that a person can inherit eternal life even if their attitudes, actions, and associations are the same as unbelievers.

One after another, each new beatitude, gives us insight into the different aspects of this all-encompassing conversion and its effect on our lives.

Remember that all nearly all of the epistles, all the writings of the Apostles, were completed between 20 and 40 years after the death of our Lord and they nearly all dealt with false teaching and poor doctrine concerning what it meant to be truly saved.

Most of Paul's writings fall between 51 AD 58 AD.

So it was a huge concern of early church leaders, and here in Matthew, Jesus Himself address the coming issues head on.

Introduction:

Western Christianity is the only religion without performance criteria. It is the only religion where you can just fill out a little piece of paper and you are, according to many modern pulpits, guaranteed eternal salvation.

You don't have to do anything.

You just need to pray the sinner's prayer.

Post your tithe in and turn up once every other month.

We will still keep you on the roll.

Your lifestyle will never be challenged, in fact the preaching will be in such an ambiguous way that you can interpret it through what ever filters you choose.

There is nothing asked of you.

You don't have to know what you believe.

You can walk out the door and do what you like, live the way you like, Jesus loves you , He requires nothing of you and we your ministry team will not judge you.

Paul was dealing with a similar group of people when he wrote his letter to the Philippians.

Philippians 2:12-13 ESV

(12) Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,

(13) For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

He was saying, this salvation is something that you are going to have to figure out, you're going to have to struggle with it and wrestle with it to stay in the center and avoid the pitfalls that lie on either side of the narrow path.

He was warning them of the twin dangers of what we would call: legalism and antinomianism (an-ti-**noh**-mee-*uhn*-ism).

Now I know it is a big word, but we made a deal years ago that I could use words bigger than an emoticon and you would not limit your vocabulary to a text message abbreviation.

LOL!

Antinomianism:

You know all people are lazy.
We all are.

We are interested in making life easier, so we devise technologies that assist us.

Dieting made easy means you can eat all you want and be slim.

Exercise made easy means a little electric gizmo wobbles your fat away for you while you sleep.

So also we have salvation made easy, in other words, you can go to heaven while actively, knowingly and deliberately living a lifestyle of sin that you know is contrary to the written word of God.

In other words you can have your cake and eat it too.

Churches are being packed with people who love this salvation made easy and all inclusively.

Last Sunday, Reverend Mary Douglas Glasspool, an openly lesbian and partnered priest was elected to the office of bishop in the Diocese of Los Angeles. This makes her the first lesbian bishop and only second gay bishop after Bishop Gene Robinson took office in New Hampshire in 2004.

This is in open disregard to the tenor and statement of scripture.

We would not ordain an openly fornicating priest.
A minister involved knowingly in pornography or pedophilia.
A minister in open adulterous relationship.
Nor should we allow openly practicing or confessing homosexual.
Because all of these sexual practices are not Biblical nor allowed by scripture, and this includes homosexuality.

Does this statement make me a homophobic? No, just Christian.

We have people in our church that were:
Fornicators, adulterous, and potential homosexuals-
Now they are just Christians.
They are born again.
They died to their old sin and self and have a new life in Christ Jesus.

This sort of inclusive lifestyle message is classically known as Antinomianism:
That is: salvation made easy.
That is a rule-less or a lawless salvation
The sales pitch is that you lose nothing while you are on your way to heaven.
You can be lawless and go to heaven.
You can have your cake and eat it too.

The other end of the scale from Antinomianism is Legalism.

Legalism:

Now we have all heard of legalism.

Legalism is the opposite of antinomianism.

Legalism says that salvation is based on human good works apart from faith and apart from grace.

Jesus condemned this view of the Pharisees.

Paul condemned this view of the Judaizers, here in Philippians' and in the books of Galatians and Romans.

Antinomianism says salvation is based on faith and not on obedience.

Legalism says that obedience is the way to salvation.

Jesus said neither.

So these are two opposite ideas, legalism and antinomianism, which are totally opposed to the teaching of the Bible.

Now can I have an aside to my aside?

People often have the catch cry that when you are suggesting to them that what they are doing is not worthy of the name Christian, they cry out...*your just being legalistic, your judging me!!*

The verse often quoted concerning judging another's life is Matthew 7: "Judge not, that you be not judged"

People say ..."You have no right to judge me, Jesus said you can't. You can't judge my lifestyle, you can't judge my life".

The problem is that their interpretation of what that verse says is in error.

When Jesus said that we should not judge unless we be judged also, he was not saying that we are to never judge if behavior is sin or not. What He was doing was giving us a caution to make sure that we are willing to be judged by the same standard of judgment. This verse is not a warning against judging an action. It is a warning against self deception and hypocrisy. Of thinking you are above failing or falling.

I dealt with this topic extensively on my blog and reposted it to CLC People last night for you.

Like Father Like Son:

Matthew 5:9 ESV

(9) "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."

You would have all heard the saying, 'Like father, like son.'

Or 'the apple doesn't fall far from the tree.'

The meaning is that within a family there are many similarities.

Family members resemble one another in mannerisms, values and behavior.

Those things that are important to the parents should be important to the children.

In a sense that is what Jesus is saying.

'Those that are sons of this house, will have the characteristics of this house, they shall be constructors and fashioners of peace.'

Peace is the restoration of unity, the resolution of strife.

Our Lord came to reconcile, to make peace, between God and man

I.e. establish the Kingdom of God in the hearts of women and men.

If we are sons of the same house then what is important to the Father should be important to us His sons.

Being a peacemaker does not qualify you to be a son.

That would be salvation by works.

Being a son you should exhibit the qualities of a peacemaker because you love the father.

So who should we be making peace with and how?

Reconciling Man With God:

Our first responsibility as a peacemaker should be establishing the Kingdom of God in the hearts of others.

The passion *of* Christ led to the passion *of the* Christ.

His love led to His suffering.

As sons of God we should have the same passion and desire to see people get saved as God does.

We should always be actively inviting people to church, to service, to events, to lunch and dinners with friends from church with the deliberate intent of being involved in the supernatural restoration of divine relationship.

Ladies, I hope that on Friday night you didn't just go to have a great time yourself, but you used the event to touch the lives on any unsaved friend or family member.

Everything we do must have the elements of encounter, excellence and evangelism.

Does this mean that this is all we do? That I can't do anything but to talk to people about Christ 24/7...No, not at all.

But for many it is something that they never do.

They never make a deliberate effort to reach out to an unsaved person and make relationships with a non-Christian or someone who thinks they are going to heaven but is heading to hell.

Remember our target market here in Texas is not the unsaved un-churched person who has never heard the gospel.

Our target markets are those who think they have heard the gospel and yet bear no fruit.

We are all commanded to go into the world, preach and make disciples.

Not some of us.

This is not a vocational calling, but a salvation calling.

Reconciling Ourselves and Others:

Romans 12:18

18 *If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.*

Paul doesn't say that you will be able to live and be at peace with all men.

He says, 'so far as it depends on you.'

So don't begin a quarrel, don't be the originator of it, do what you can to avoid it wherever possible, walk away instead of stay and fight.

Notice Paul says, 'if possible.'

In some cases it isn't possible to live at peace.

Now this is not something that comes easily.

Punching someone is far more fulfilling in the short term than turning the other cheek.

How ever between legal fees and the conviction of the Holy Ghost and the fact that you will end up on you tube with everyone laughing at you ...it just isn't worth it.

This is not a personality decision, this is a character decision.

This not something that comes natural but we must do our best to represent the family.

Does this take the sting out of what has happened? .No

Does this mean that you turn into a door matt? No.

If someone offends you have a Biblical responsibility to confront them and discuss the matter with them.

Just don't start the conversation with-

"Hey ugly....didn't I tell you not to do that"?

Do it in such a way as to leave room for reconciliation and preservation of their pride...because by now you have swallowed yours.

Three thoughts for you:

1. Keep our peace to keep our testimony.
2. Christ was prepared to be wounded to see people reconciled, so should we.
3. Sowing and reaping applies to jerks as well and when God brings the hammer down it is far more effective than you losing your temper.

I am not encouraging you to be spineless, just Christian.

Reconciling One to Another:

We should strive to reconcile one to another.
Sometimes people lose sight of what they have.
Couples lose their first love, children don't understand the pressure of parenting, people don't understand the pressures of leadership in business or in church, and people misunderstand because of non, poor or misheard communication.

We should always be believing the best of each other and for each other,

But sometimes we can get sideways because of each other.

As members of the same family we should always try and make peace.

Help people see the error and reasons that lie behind arguments.

Teach people that it is OK to give in on non-essential issues, and friend, most issues are non-essential.

As leaders we should always be prepared to take the heat when people are hurt.

The degree to which we are prepared to forgive denotes the degree to which we are prepared to forget.

Reconcile people to leadership:

The word insolent means:

Disrespectful, rude, cheeky (i.e.... challenging established biblical boundaries).

A dissenter is someone who actively and vocally rally's others against the beliefs and opinions of leadership.

Dissenters engage in activities that are the polar opposite to reconciliation

A dissenter is someone who challenges leadership not out of a place to help and improve a function, but to interfere and undermine a position.

But dissention against leadership is not limited to something that happens in church or business or government.

A husband can undermine his wife's leadership with her children; a wife can undermine her husband's leadership in a family.

The in-laws can undermine the newly formed family; grandparents can undermine the leadership of the parents.

All of these people fall into the category of dissenters.

Korah is a classic example of a dissenter.

Numbers 16:1-50

Numbers 6:1-3 (NIV)

"Korah, son Izhar... became insolent and rose up against Moses. With them were 250 Israelite men, well-known community leaders who had been appointed members of the council. They came as a group to oppose Moses and Aaron and said to them, 'you have gone too far! The whole community is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is with them. Why then do you set yourselves above the LORD'S assembly?'"

Korah is a typical and biblically persevered example of a dissenter. He became insolent and rose up against Moses.

No one loved these people more than their pastor, Moses, and his right-hand man, Aaron.

In fact, if Moses and Aaron had not have prayed for them so consistently, they would have been wiped out several times-by God Himself.

Even so, Korah rose up against the leader and attempted to turn the people against Moses.

He didn't want to achieve anything or build anything; he just wanted to break something down.

Dissenters just want to destroy a marriage, destroy a man, destroy a woman and destroy a leader.

Let's consider how Korah operated.

It wasn't the poor, weak little lambs that Korah was trying to protect. He didn't spend his time associating and trying to aid "*the little people*".

Korah didn't go to those people.

Korah's aim was not to help them.

Korah's aim was to overthrow leadership and get into power.

He was not trying to reconcile one to another but draw people to himself and cause division and strife.

He was not about trying to help anyone, but himself and his agenda. He rallied -250 people.

The bible says they were well-known influential community leaders.

Who were also appointees and members of the leadership council.

Korah went after the second level of leadership.

Dissenters never directly attack leadership, they try and woo the influential facilitators who are direct connects to the staff, to the flock, or to the team.

We should never give room or ground for dissenters, this is exactly the opposite of what we as peace makers and reconcilers should be involved with.

Church today:

People dissenting against leadership is apart of the acceptable part of the political machine and the corporate machine here in America. But the real sad thing for me is that it has become an acceptable part of church life here in Texas.

Think about this.....these people knew Moses.
Professed a love for Moses.
Said they cared for Moses.
Said they covered Moses back.
Yet when it came down to it they were echo's not voices!
They wanted to be the new guys friend, not the old guys shield.

Be it in church life or in business or community or home life.

You will either be the shield for your leader or the weapon in the hand of their enemy....there is no middle ground.

The damage caused by gossip:

One final area that I want to touch on that really threads it way through all of these areas and is the single MAJOR cause and reason for a lack of peace or for the destruction of relationship- Gossip and murmuring.

Gossip and murmuring destroys the possibility of reconciliation and being a peacemaker.

Murmuring is when you talk about someone or an issue to a person who has no way of addressing or correcting the situation.

Gossip: (def)

- Conversation about personal or intimate rumors or facts, especially when malicious.
- Somebody given to spreading personal or intimate information about other people especially maliciously.

The aim of gossip is always to portray yourself better than you are and to portray someone else worse than they are.

It is about exalting yourself while you defiling and defaming another.
Friend, it is Satan who is known as an accuser of the brethren.
It is Satan who stirs up a brother to speak against a brother.
It is a demonic thing when people start accusing leadership at work,
in the home or at church.

No you don't want to pray; you want a justification for your sin.
No you don't want input; you want people to side with you against
someone else.

Is talking to your best friend murmuring – quite possibly.
Is talking to your spouse murmuring – quite possibly.

You can have a different opinion or and idea to do something a
different way and you can discuss that, that isn't murmuring, that is
actually helpful.

If we are all going in the same direction, with the same desire in
support of each other then it all comes down to heart motive.
There is a difference between talking about how to better the kids
program and whining about what the kids program is not doing.
There is a difference between dreaming about how the church can
help the community and whining about what the church is not doing.
There is a difference between talking about how to increase sales at
work and whining about what the sales manager isn't doing.

And remember murmuring and gossip go both ways.

You can not be a leader and gossip about your people or murmur
about your people, it will destroy your organization.

Conclusion:

Remember friend-

Last week we talked about walking in the friendship and favor of God

One of the key ways that I believe this is manifests is when we give ourselves to reconciling one to another, and above all else reconciling man with God.

Some of you find it difficult sharing your faith or challenging the lifestyle of someone you love.

You know they are talking a good game but living a poor one. The hardest conversation I have ever had to have was to meet and sit with my father and challenge him on how he was living and the eternal ramifications of his decision.

I did it with all love and humility.
And it cost me something very dear to me.

But I was not going to allow my pride or my fear to stop me from talking to someone about what they needed to hear.
Not what they wanted to hear, but needed to.

Friend, if you struggle sharing your faith, if you find it hard asking people to church or to discuss an issue in their life, then I want to pray for boldness this morning.