

Living Out The Beatitudes

10/09/2022

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Notes

Matthew 5:3-12

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

These verses in the Bible are called the Beatitudes, a word meaning "supreme blessedness." Some of us may read the Beatitudes as a list of requirements we have to meet in order to enter the Kingdom of God. But if this is a list of goals we have to meet, what are the chances we would actually end up supremely blessed?

God sees humans and knows that there is nothing we can do to fix our sin problem. That is why Jesus meets us where we are at; instead of forcing us to get to where He is, He brings us to Him.

The Beatitudes aren't a list of things we have to live up to, because the moment we think we have to achieve something to win God's love, we've missed the core of the Good News. Let's look at the context of the Beatitudes and learn about the group of people Jesus was talking to in Matthew 5.

Matthew 4:23-25

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed; and he healed them. Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him.

Jesus wasn't talking to a crowd of wealthy, popular, powerful people. He was speaking to people who were outcasts in their society. People who were told they were sinful, unclean, or unwanted. They didn't think they mattered to God, and they weren't treated by others as though they mattered to Him.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

In the Beatitudes, Jesus is saying that no matter where you are at, you are welcome in the Kingdom of God. Your past doesn't define you, because by entering His Kingdom, you are changed forever.

Jesus doesn't expect us to clean ourselves up before coming to Him. Instead, He picks us up in our present and then focuses on our future. The Kingdom of God is here, and it is here for all of us.

Group Questions

- Who was Jesus speaking to in Matthew 5?
- Does knowing about the people in the crowd change how you read the Beatitudes? How?

- Who is the Kingdom of God for?
- How do we enter the Kingdom of God?

Prayer

Thank you for opening up your Kingdom to all who come to Jesus. Without you we would live in our sin but through Jesus we are new. No matter what type of background we come from, we are welcome in your family.