
Beatitudes

The first blessing: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, because theirs is the Kingdom of God."

There is something quite significant here: even though you may be a believer, you are still poor in spirit! Many believers have a terrible time with this concept, because they fail to understand that this sermon assumes residence in the kingdom.

Now, this is truly a remarkable statement! You have no power, and yet the kingdom of heaven belongs to you! But you can see that this is a fantastic introductory statement. This is the wisest thing that you can say to a new believer - just the simple fact that they are poor in spirit - whether they like it or not, whether they acknowledge it or not.

And, this is a blessing from God regardless of whether it is enjoyed.

This is not something you obtain by being humble; it is your estate regardless of your attitude.

Furthermore, this is a remarkable statement because it holds in view the doctrine of eternal security. You have the kingdom of heaven in spite of your lack of merit!

Therefore the first blessing to the one in the kingdom is eternal security.

The second blessing: "Blessed are they who mourn, because they will be comforted."

There are two ways to take the mourning: in the literal sense of mourning for some loved one that is lost; in the figurative sense of mourning over lost fellowship with God.

Now let's turn to mourning. Mourning due to the loss of fellowship is a fairly common Biblical theme.

Psalm 30:1-12

I will extol You, O Lord, for You have lifted me up, and have not let my enemies rejoice over me.

O Lord my god, I cried to You for help, and You healed me.

O Lord, You have brought up my soul from Sheol; You have kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.

Sing praise to the Lord, you His godly ones, and give thanks to His holy name.

For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime; weeping may last for the night, but a shout of joy comes in the morning...

Hear, O Lord, and be gracious to me; O Lord, be my helper.

You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; You have loosed my sackcloth and girded me with gladness.

That my soul may sing praise to You, and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to You forever.

Psalm 38:1-8

O Lord rebuke me not in Your wrath; and chasten me not in Your burning anger.

For Your arrows have sunk deep into me, and Your hand has pressed down on me.

There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your indignation; there is no health in my bones because of my sin.

For my iniquities are gone over my head; as a heavy burden the weigh too much for me.

My wounds grow foul and fester because of my folly.

I am bent over and greatly bowed down; I go mourning all day long.

For my loins are filled with burning; and there is no soundness in my flesh.

I am benumbed and badly crushed; I groan because of the agitation of my heart."

Isaiah 61:1-3 connects mourning and the atonement,

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and freedom to prisoners;

to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn,

to grant those who mourn in Zion, giving them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they

will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the lord, that he may be glorified."

2 Corinthians 7:9-13 makes a very direct connection between sin and grief. This passage seems almost as if Paul intended to clarify our beatitude.

"I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, in order that you might not suffer loss in anything through us.

For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong!

In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter.

So although I wrote to you it was not for the sake of the offender, nor for the sake of the one offended, but that your earnestness on our behalf might be made known to you in the sight of God. For this reason we have been comforted."

Conclusion:

Emotion is NEVER to be a criteria for thought or action.

Emotion should ALWAYS remain subordinate to thought.

Motivation is a system of thought which leads to action.

Sin puts you out of fellowship with God, and God the Holy Spirit.

While you are out of fellowship, God inflicts varying degrees and categories of suffering on your person.

These sufferings cause mental dissonance, and God designs them to get you to wake up.

Once you understand that you are out of fellowship, and that you are receiving divine discipline, your period of mourning begins.

Mourning over sin is a complex of thought about the sin that includes:

- The perception of pain over the loss of fellowship.
- The perception of pain because of the divine discipline.

The mental mourning over sin then should naturally invoke emotional response in the form of sadness, or mourning.

This complex of thought and subordinate emotion naturally moves the believer toward confession, and this is the intent of God.

Therefore, mourning is a blessing from God, for it brings comfort in the restoration of fellowship. The comfort comes from the comforter, who is God the Holy Spirit.

There is woe to those who laugh, because if they laugh at divine discipline, and while they are out of fellowship they will have little motive to confess.

Hebrews 12:5, "and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, 'My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reproved by Him;'"

Mourning and feelings of guilt after the restoration of fellowship are illegitimate, and should be all left behind.

The third blessing: "Blessed are the humble, because they will inherit the earth."

This really denotes the ability to solve problems without violence or angry reaction - but to solve the problems really and truly through the use of Bible Doctrine in the Soul.

Therefore this meekness really brings the idea of doctrinal problem solving, and reliance on the truth vs. reliance on human viewpoint solutions.

And therefore, there really is the connotation of doctrinal orientation vs. human viewpoint orientation.

It brings the inheritance of the earth.

Inheriting the earth while Satan rules it is no prize. It is not about that.

Neither does being meek bring in the millennium - there is nothing that we can do to accomplish what only Christ can.

Therefore, this is about the inheritance of the earth during the millennium, an inheritance based on the death of Christ.

The fourth blessing, "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, because they will be filled."

The words for hunger and thirst are pretty standard here - exactly what we understand them to be in the English, with little or no extra emphasis.

This blessing works as a companion to the "poor in spirit". It is the realization of that very state.

No person in this world has righteousness in an of him or her self. That is the essence of being spiritually helpless. The one who hungers and thirsts after righteousness has realized this, and thus seeks righteousness in God.

This is about positive volition, and even quite a bit about doctrinal dependence.

There are two righteousnesses related to Jesus Christ.

The first is the righteousness which He produced on the cross, and which is imputed to us at the moment that we believe in Him.

Romans 5:18, "So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of [eternal] life to all men."

The second righteousness is that which comes through the study of the word of God.

2 Timothy 3:16, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness."

1 Corinthians 2:16, "For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ."

This beatitude concentrates on the second righteousness. This is a righteousness which can only come through faith perception.

Hunger and thirst are very excellent metaphors for positive volition, because they convey need, as opposed to simple desire.

Hungering and thirsting for righteousness is a simple honesty with self about a spiritual need. It is the need for Divine viewpoint thinking.

Hungering and thirsting for righteousness leads to fulfillment. God is 100% faithful to positive volition.

The fulfilling that comes from knowing the word of God is a great blessing in itself. To be filled to the point of overflowing is truly great.

Being filled with the Word of God means:

- Knowing God - the greatest person you will ever know
- Being able to resist temptation more effectively.
- Being able to reduce the impact of sin in your life.
- Understanding your destiny in Christ for this life and the next.
- Tapping into a great portfolio of blessing for this life and the next.
- Adding meaning to every blessing and understanding to every category of suffering.
- The development of an invincible Spiritual self esteem.
- Becoming the recipient of Divine personal love.
- Being able to solve life's problems through doctrine, and not reaction.

Therefore, this is a fantastic blessing indeed.

The fifth blessing: "Blessed are the merciful, because they will be shown mercy."

All of the actions of God are done without conditions.

Unlimited atonement is an expression of Divine mercy,

1 John 2:2, "He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world."

Eternal security is an expression of Divine mercy,

1 John 3:1a, "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!"

The life and death of Jesus Christ are the ultimate testimony of the love of God.

An extension of your life is often an expression of mercy, so that you may have another chance to use your volition responsibly.

The merciful of the tribulation will be shown mercy in the preservation of their human lives in the tribulation. In fact, human mercy as expressed in charity is very much a measure of Christian maturity during the millennium.

The sixth blessing: "Blessed are the pure in heart, because they will see God."

Almost anyone can appear to be pure. This is not a great accomplishment. But those who are privately and mentally pure are another category entirely.

Why is anyone pure in heart? It only because they are in fellowship with God. No one is righteous - no one at all. We can only be pure in heart because of the ability of God to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Pure in heart does not refer to spiritual maturity, but rather the state of being in fellowship and cleansed from all sins.

Putting the word in your heart causes personal purity related to spiritual maturity.

Purity of heart is a requirement for prayer,

2 Tim 2:22, "Now flee from youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart."

Summary of Biblical References to Maturity.

Purity may refer to the status of spiritual maturity.

Purity may also refer to the temporal state of being in fellowship with God.

The only extra context we have is the blessing which attends the state. And the blessing is that the pure in heart will see God. "will see God" is the future indicative of OPSONTAI with the simple accusative case of THEON .

So, those who are pure in heart now will see God in the future.

Observation: this future may be in one minute or it may extend to the tribulation, the millennium, or even into eternity.

OPSONTAI however, is from the verb HORAO, and this verb designates a category of sight that goes beyond on the literal to the figurative. It is seeing God in the figurative sense, and thus what can only be seen through the Word of God.

Question: do you have to be pure in heart before you can become pure in heart? In other words, it is very important to separate the idea of fellowship from the idea of maturity. Both derive from purity, but they are quite distinct from one another.

Conclusion: this purity of heart is the fellowship which comes from the confession of sin. Thus a connection exists between this and the second beatitude, that to "they who mourn".

Blessed are they who mourn, because they will be comforted [and thus become pure in heart]; blessed are the pure in heart, because they will see God. There is a definite string of blessings here, one balanced on the other.

Purity of heart is the status of being in fellowship with God. It is only while you are in fellowship that you can learn and apply most doctrines.

The seventh blessing: "Blessed are the peacemakers, because they will be called sons of God."

The interpretation of the term is somewhat more difficult. We will begin with the meaning of the word itself.

This is the only place in the Bible where this noun occurs. Its corresponding verb appears in Colossians 1:20.

"For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven."

Christ is the peacemaker through the blood of His cross. Therefore, Paul connects the word to the doctrine of reconciliation.

Christ was the peacemaker through His fantastic victory on the cross. He founded that victory on His non-violent policy for the incarnation.

However, at the second advent, Christ will make peace through His great military victory at the battle of Armageddon. That will be peace through violent means.

If Christ is the peacemaker through the reconciliation, then certainly we are whenever we introduce others to that same reconciliation.

So, peacemakers are purveyors of the gospel.

The peacemakers will be called the sons of God.

And so it comes to this: that this is a special reward for those who lived or will live in any of the dispensations related to Israel.

A person's name held great significance in Biblical times - probably more so than it does today.

And to gain a new title, given by God Himself, would be significant indeed.

To hold the same title as God the Son is truly a fantastic complement. Peacemakers having the same title as THE peacemaker has a certain poetic symmetry to it.

The eighth blessing and its explanation: "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, because theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. You are blessed whenever they insult you and persecute you, and whenever they ostracize you and they insult you and cast down your name as evil falsely for my sake. Rejoice and exult and leap wildly, because your reward is great in heaven; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

Conclusion: you may be persecuted for two reasons: because you are a Christian, and because you are a mature Christian.

The blessing for this is the kingdom of heaven. This seems curious at first, because the same is awarded the poor in spirit no matter what they might do.

However, there is a contrast. In the first beatitude the emphasis lay on eternal security. In this last one it is on eternity, period.

Next comes the explanation. It begins with the phrase "you are blessed".

Then comes a command that is predicated on the persecution. "Rejoice and exult and leap wildly, because your reward is great in heaven; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

The second pairing of verbs has to do with wild rejoicing. Matthew's verb concentrates more on verbal expression, while Luke's on physical expression. They both describe an ecstatic kind of rejoicing - the kind that you see when you win the world series.

The reason for the rejoicing is the reward in heaven that waits for those who endure undeserved suffering.

Undeserved suffering leads to great reward in heaven.

And, therefore Christ commands His hearers to rejoice when they encounter it.

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