

08/04/19

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THE GOSPEL OF JESUS

The Sermon on the Mount

The Beatitudes – Part 2

The Gospel of Jesus

Mat 5:3-12 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

I. Legalism and the Law

a. The context of The Beatitudes

- i. Jesus established His power and authority – the Messiah, anointed by God, to preach the gospel to the poor and set the captives free
- ii. And then He proceeded to expose the Pharisees and their man-made religious system
 1. "Weren't they just following the God given law of Moses?"
 2. They had taken the Mosaic Law and twisted it, perverted it – manipulated it for their own personal gain
 - a. ***Mat 23:1 NIV Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: 2 "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. 3 So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. 4 They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. 5 "Everything they do is done for people to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; 6 they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; 7 they love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and to be called 'Rabbi' by others.***
 - b. ***Mat 23:13 NIV "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.***
 3. They had created a religious system in which God had no part
 4. The roots of this religious system ran deep – permeated every area of Jewish life – and these systems would not die easily
- iii. That is why when Jesus set out to deliberately offend them – to expose their hard hearts – they reacted so violently – they had a great deal to lose

1. Jesus' attack on the Pharisee's wasn't an attack on the law, in was an attack on legalism. It was an attack on hypocrisy. It was an attack on following the letter of the law and ignoring the heart of the law.
 2. The law was good, it had a distinct and important role in God's plan for the redemption of mankind
 - a. Remember Jesus' words when the Pharisees complained that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors - 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.'
 - b. Legalism says "I have made myself well"
- b. Why set this stage? Because of Jesus' words in Matthew 5
- i. ***Mat 5:17-20 "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot (tenth letter in the Hebrew alphabet and the smallest) or one tittle (even smaller than a jot, a pen stroke that can differentiate one Hebrew letter from another) will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.***
 - ii. "I thought Jesus came to get rid of the law, and now he is introducing a bunch of new ones?"
 1. Is that all that The Beatitudes are – just a new set of laws? A new set of have tos? A new set of hoops that we have to jump through to earn God's favor?
 2. Not even close

II. Realizing Our Lack

- a. The Beatitudes that we covered last week
 - i. Pronouncements of blessing – Jesus declares certain kind of person supremely fortunate
 - ii. The word blessed is from the Greek word – Makarios – supreme happiness
 1. The path to fulfillment – something mankind has been searching for since the fall
 - iii. The path is radically different then the world's path – that is because it is not of this world, it is from a different Kingdom – the Kingdom of God
- b. Who is blessed in this Kingdom?
 - i. The poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness
 - ii. What are they promised? Theirs is the Kingdom of God, they will be comforted (as one draws near), they will inherit the earth, they will be filled
- c. Right away we see that Jesus' commands are different then the 10 commandments
 - i. Don't make for yourself an idol, don't take the Lord's name in vain, honor your father and mother, don't commit murder
 1. Deal with behaviors – dos and don'ts
 - ii. Jesus deals with matters of the heart – desires of the heart – motives of the heart
 1. The things we want most at our core
 - iii. Blessing begins with an understanding of our lack, our need – our inability to measure up
 1. And brokenness over our sin
 2. And meekness, humility, brought low because of our condition

- 3. And a hunger and thirst for everything that we are not, and that Jesus is
- iv. That's the person that is adopted into the Kingdom of Heaven, that is the person that is comforted by the Spirit of God, that is the person who is filled with the Spirit of God
- d. What are The Beatitudes? It is the gospel of the kingdom! "I have come to preach the gospel to the poor."
 - i. **Mat 4:23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.**
 - ii. **Mat 9:35 Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.**
 - iii. The Beatitudes are the gospel of the kingdom – the path to salvation and sanctification
 - 1. The Beatitudes are an invitation to open our eyes to the truth – that we are hopelessly lost, lacking any good thing, our sin has cut us off from God's presence and that is tragic, heartbreaking – but if we desire righteousness, it will be given to us through the righteousness of Jesus Christ
- e. The Jewish leaders didn't want any part of this
 - i. They hid their lack – they projected righteousness and Godliness while they were dying on the inside
 - ii. Let's not make the mistake of thinking that this doesn't exist in the church today
 - 1. What we are describing here is a desire for the blessings of God apart from God Himself
 - 2. Give me some rules to live by, give me a formula, give me instructions to carry out so I may have my reward.
 - a. Like the prodigal son - give me my inheritance so that I may leave this place
 - 3. That is what is coming out of a lot of pulpits today - preaching and teaching absent of Christ - absent of the cross - absent of the gospel – absent of our desperate condition and our lack
 - 4. Instead we have anecdotes, and illustrations, and short stories that may or may not have anything to do with the message - messages about how to deal with stress, or how to have a better marriage, or how to move ahead in the corporate world, how to be a more positive person, or how to parent a teenager
 - a. Those topics are not bad in and of themselves - it's the motives that lie behind them
 - b. My primary need isn't an understanding of how to be a better husband, or better father, or better pastor, or better friend – My primary need is complete and total surrender to Jesus - complete and total dependence on Him
 - c. A love for Him above all other things - a desire for His Kingdom, His ways, above all others.

III. The DNA of a Child of God

Mat 5:7-12 Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

- a. The path of sanctification – describes our new nature
 - i. Tucked in those blessings is this promise – blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God
 - ii. I don't know about you guys, but I'm not satisfied with simply knowing things about God, I want to know Him personally – I want to see Him
 - iii. Having a friend who gets back from Hawaii, tells you all about it and it just stokes your desire to go there yourself
- b. Here's what we learn from scripture about knowing God
 - i. **"Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (John 17:3)**
 - ii. **"Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded." (James 4:8)**
 - iii. **"You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart." (Jeremiah 29:13)**
 - 1. God is to be found, He is available to be known, He wants to be known
 - iv. Fortunate are the clean in heart, thoughts, feelings, the middle, for they shall gaze at God with eyes wide open
 - v. Three questions
 - 1. What is the heart?
 - 2. What does it mean to be pure in heart?
 - 3. What does it mean to see God?

IV. The Heart

- a. The obvious - Jesus is concerned about the condition of our hearts
 - i. This goes well beyond my behaviors – it is much deeper
 - 1. **Matt 23:25-26 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of extortion and rapacity. You blind Pharisee! First cleanse the inside of the cup and of the plate, that the outside also may be clean.**
 - ii. **Mat 15:18-19 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. (19) For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.**
 - iii. **Mat 12:33-34 "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. (34) Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.**
 - 1. It is the source of our thoughts, our words, and our actions
 - iv. One pastor defines it like this - The heart is what you are, in the secrecy of your thoughts and feelings, when nobody knows but God. And what you are at the invisible root matters as much to God as what your are at the visible branch. **"Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).** From the heart are all the issues of life....Jesus did not come into the world simply because we have some bad habits that need to be broken. He came into the world because we have such dirty hearts that need to be purified.

V. What does it mean to be pure of heart?

- a. **Psa 24:3-4 Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? (4) He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, Nor sworn deceitfully.**
 - i. No idolatry (taking a good thing and making it a God thing) - There's no other object of worship, nothing that competes for God's authority and place of honor

- ii. There's no deceit, no falsehood, no lies – deceit is wanting people to think one thing about you when you are really something else – the pure heart is the transparent heart
- b. Jas 4:8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.**
 - i. Be of one mind, a singular mind – what does it mean to be double-minded?
 - ii. Jas 4:4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.**
 - 1. There's no dual citizenship in the Kingdom of Heaven – and when we try to live for both kingdoms we lose sight of God
 - 2. Like a husband with a wife and a girlfriend – life of deceit, chaos, and pain
 - iii. We also see that phrase again – cleanse your hands – what does that mean?
 - 1. Repentance, making right
- c. Matthew 22:37 Love the Lord your God with all your heart**
 - i. Again, a single focus, a single aim - pursuing God with single-mindedness. That is purity of heart – to want to know God – hard stop, no strings attached, no and...God is infinitely worthy of being known and we pursue Him as such

VI. What's the promise we have?

- a. We will see God and when we see Him we will be undone – not enough of this in the church today because we are doubled minded in our pursuit
 - i. To see God is to exposed to His goodness and His glory – to begin to understand His worth
 - ii. What was Peter's response to the presence of Jesus? What was Isaiah's response to the presence of God?
 - 1. Woe is me – I am a sinner – His response, "I know, and I love you. Come and follow me."
 - 2. And this wonderful cycle of the Beatitudes starts again – poor in spirit, sorrow over sin, hunger for more of Jesus – leads to humility, grace for others, a desire to see peace made between God and man, purity of heart and experiencing God
 - 3. And persecution (next week)