

Matthew (Sermon on the Mount)

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The Sermon on the Mount was Jesus' first public teaching exposition. Jesus is setting the stage for the rest of His earthly and eternal ministry. He lays out the foundational truths of His Kingdom. He is defining His personal character to be followed.

Matthew 5:8-12

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.*

Redefining "Blessed"

- Blessed – (Greek; *makrios*) This word is often translated to "happy." It could even be translated as a holy congratulations.
We mostly only understand it through the lens of Western values but remember Isaiah 55:8-9. Jesus' thoughts and ways are better and so we need to redefine the word "blessed" through the lens of Scripture.
Other Scriptures that challenge our view of being blessed: Psalm 41:1; 94:12; 112:1; James 1:12; Matthew 11:6
- Pure in heart...They shall see God – Purity (Greek, *katharos*) is sincerity (no hypocrisy) and blamelessness (unstained from guilt). The heart (Greek, *kardeeah*) here refers to the center of the personality. Including the thought, will, and emotions of a person.

An authentic person with an uncompromising desire to please God in all things.

- Our inherent desires are opposed to this value. Cf. **Genesis 8:21; Jeremiah 17:9-10; Matthew 15:18-19**
Psalm 51:10 *Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.*
- Our hearts need purification. The inner man CAN be renewed by the cleansing by the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. Cf. **Acts 15:9; Ephesians 4:22-24; 5:26; Hebrews 4:12-13; Titus 3:3-6**
- Peacemakers...shall be called sons of God – One who brings reconciliation to divisive and destructive situations.

Proverbs 6:16-19

16 There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him: 17 haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, 18 a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, 19 a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.

Because Jesus was crucified to bring peace to humanity, we too should crucify our flesh, personal preferences, and desires to become an ambassador of reconciliation, that we have received. With this shared desire, we exemplify our sonship. Cf. **Colossians 1:20; Romans 8:13-14; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20**

A peacemaker views every situation in light of the Gospel.

- Persecuted...Theirs is the kingdom of heaven / Your reward is great in heaven – Ones who are persecuted for living righteous and in truth for Jesus' glory. Cf. **1 Peter 2:15-24; Romans 8:18**
 - Christians were accused of:
 - Cannibalism, because of gross and deliberate misrepresentation of the practice of the Lord's Supper.
 - Immorality, because of gross deliberate misrepresentation of weekly "Love Feast" and their private meetings.
 - Extremism, because they believed that Jesus would return and bring an apocalyptic end to history.
 - Splitting families, because when one marriage partner or parent became a Christian there was often change and division in the family.
 - Treason, because they would not honor the Roman gods and participate in emperor worship.

The world responds this way when the values of this Kingdom are embraced and lived out. But rejoice because you are in the Kingdom!

The beatitudes are what Jesus is like and what He likes.

Discipleship Homework:

The Beatitudes are filled with so much counter-cultural truth that each one could be its own mini-teaching series. Don't rush through each value of the Kingdom of God but meditate and wrestle with the culture Jesus is inviting us in to.

- Is our definition of blessedness similar with Jesus'?
- Consider each of the values taught on Sunday: poverty of spirit, mourning, meekness, hunger and thirst for righteousness, mercy, pure in heart, peacemaker, and persecuted. Does our value system align with Jesus'? If not, continuing prayers of repentance. Ask Jesus to change your thoughts with His truth and for the Holy Spirit to lead you in His ways.