

Just Checking In #220 June 2020 *THE BEATITUDES PART 1*

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The Beatitudes from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 are well worth meditating on and considering more than just in passing. I memorized them many decades ago, but they keep coming back to mind as they are so applicable to every one of us in every circumstance and stage of life. Let's look them over again and mine some of the riches they contain.

Matthew 5:1 And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. 2 Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:

3 "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 filled.

7 Blessed are the *merciful*, For they shall obtain 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 they *revile and persecute you*, and say all kinds of evil against you *falsely for My sake*. 12 "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

We will Look at the first four Beatitudes this month, and if God allows, the next four next month.

The first 2 “BLESSEDS” reveal the FOUNDATION of our salvation – a recognition of our spiritually destitute and bankrupt condition and genuine sorrow over our sin and guilt leading to repentance and forgiveness.

FOUNDATION #1 Blessed are the *poor in spirit*.

The word “poor” is a word that is variously translated in the new Testament as poor, beggar, beggarly, and having nothing. It signifies complete poverty and utter dependence on another for the meeting of their needs.

Blessed are those who recognize their own spiritual bankruptcy! They realize they have nothing in themselves from which to draw upon to commend themselves to God. They realize they are spiritually penniless and must come to God as beggars with empty hands to receive everything necessary for eternal life as a gift from Him.

Spiritual arrogance is deadly! Thinking we are righteous in ourselves, sufficient in ourselves, pleasing to God in who we are and what we do... this is a clear sign of spiritual arrogance and it is deadly to the soul. This was the deadly error of the Pharisee spoken of in Luke 18:11-12. I paraphrase: “I thank you God I am not like other men... those bad, sinful, evil people over there! I am a righteous and good man, and I know you’re pleased with me!” But nothing could have been further from the truth! He and we are all the same.. all sinners.. all unclean and spiritually bankrupt. Paul had that same arrogant self-estimate before he was saved! Phil 3 lists his glorious credentials... then he concludes... it is all dung, filthy, empty. Self-righteous spiritual arrogance is filthy and defiled in God’s sight.

Even we, as believers, can fall into the trap of spiritual arrogance. Hear the words of Christ to the church of the Laodiceans... Rev 3:14-20 "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. "Because ***you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' -- and you do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked--*** "I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, ***that you may see.*** "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

Listen to the words of Paul, who, after recognizing his own spiritual bankruptcy, finds His all in Christ alone... “I know that in my flesh dwells no good thing!” ... “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and I am the worst!” ... “Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to think any comes from ourselves, but our sufficiency comes from God” ... “I count everything as loss that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, *not having my own righteousness*, but the righteousness that comes from God through faith!”

Blessed are those who recognize their spiritual poverty-stricken condition; those who are spiritually bankrupt; who have nothing in themselves on which to rely or depend, and seek the riches to be found only in Christ.

FOUNDATION #2 Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

The first foundation for salvation is recognizing our spiritual bankruptcy. The second is sincere mourning and sorrow for our sin that leads us to turn in true repentance to Christ for forgiveness.

Not all that mourn are blessed, for the lost in hell shall mourn. “And there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth..” Matt 24:51 The lost at Christ’s return shall mourn. “And they shall see the sign of the Son of Man in heaven and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory...” Matt 24:30

In this second beatitude, He is talking about the same reality as in the first... blessed are the spiritually bankrupt, and blessed are those who see their iniquity and mourn over their own wickedness and sin. Like David in Psalm 32... the conviction of his sin and wickedness weighed him down, wasted his vitality and left him in a state of deep anguish, sorrow and loss... leading him to repentance, and then blessed forgiveness. His mourning was turned to comfort. But without the mourning, sorrow, and conviction of sin leading to repentance and forgiveness, no comfort will ever be found. Only the everlasting, never ending regret of hell.

That is why James tells us... 4:9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.” Sin is evil. Sin is awful. Sin is deadly. Sin is inexcusable and without remedy apart from the work of the Son of God on the cross bringing redemption, and the work of the Spirit of God in our hearts bringing repentance.

Are you experiencing the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing you repeatedly to a place of spiritual mourning, sorrow and repentance? If so, then you are blessed indeed. ***Blessed are those who are spiritually bankrupt for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who spiritually mourn over their sin and flee in repentance to Christ, for they will know the blessed comfort of forgiveness and eternal life in Him.***

The first two beatitudes describe **SALVATION'S FOUNDATION** – recognizing our spiritual bankruptcy and deep sorrow for our sin. The rest of the beatitudes describe **SALVATION'S FRUIT**. The first being the fully surrendered heart.

The next six “BLESSEDS” reveal the FRUITS OF SALVATION in the believer’s life.

FRUIT #1 Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.

This is a quote from Ps 37:11 “But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.”

What is “meekness?” Meekness isn’t weakness! Meekness is strength under complete control, in full surrender.

Moses is said to have been the meekest man of his day. His considerable gifts and abilities were fully surrendered (most of the time!) to God. Numbers 12:3 (Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)

Jesus is the model of true meekness, and He is the Lord of heaven and earth!

Matt 11:29 Jesus said... “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Matt 21:5 Jesus came into Jerusalem in meekness and humility fulfilling Zechariah’s prophecy.. Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, *meek*, and sitting upon an donkey, and a colt the foal of a donkey

Isaiah 61 “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the *meek*...

Ps 76:9 ...God arose to judgment, to save all the *meek* of the earth.

Ps 147:6 The LORD lifts up the *meek*: he casts the wicked down to the ground.

Ps 22:26 The *meek* shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him...

Ps 25:9 The *meek* will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.

Ps 149:4 For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the *meek* with salvation.

Isa 29:19 The *meek* also shall increase their joy in the LORD, and the *poor* among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

1Peter 3:4 "...it is the hidden person of the heart... a *meek* and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great value.

Meekness is complete surrender! It is not timid or weak. It is not hesitant or fearful. To be meek is to surrender all we are to God's complete control. To be always available, always yielded, fully surrendered to His sovereign will. This is blessedness indeed.

FRUIT #2 Blessed are those who *hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.*

The truly saved, the blessed ones, are those who have been transformed. Those truly in Christ are new creations as Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:17 "If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation! The old has gone. The new has come." ***And the clearest evidence of a new birth is a new hunger for God and His righteousness.***

Many are those who try to pursue righteousness on their own to escape the punishment of their sins in hell. They seek to become religious and respectable on the outside... but inside their hunger and thirst for sin rages on unchanged. As Jesus said of such people... "you are like whitewashed tombs... clean and white on the outside but within is all rottenness and filth.

Those who are blessed with a new birth have new desires. While they still sin, they despise that sin, make no excuses, mourn over it, and long and hunger for God's righteous will above all things.

Hunger and thirst are inner, inescapable longings that only increase over time. So the soul of the blessed believer longs more and more to please God and walk in righteousness and truth.

We must ask ourselves: "Am I indeed blessed? Have my "want to's" been transformed?" Do I love God's law, as David said... "Oh how I love Your law, it is my meditation all the day"? This longing for righteousness will be fully met when we see Christ and are made like Him in perfect righteousness.

Make It Personal:

1) Ask God to reveal your sin to your own heart and give you godly sorrow. As David prayed... "Search me O God, and know my heart, try me and know my ways and see if there be any wicked way in me." It is only as we see our sins and repent of them that we can grow into His likeness more and more. May God give us a Spirit sensitized conscience.

2) Lay yourself fully before the Lord in full surrender each day, and ask Him for His will to be done in your life. Ask Him to give you a holy hunger for Him and His righteous will. Ask Him to fill your heart and soul and make you more hungry for Him as each day begins.

Further Study: Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 and Galatians 5:22-23 and compare the beatitudes with the fruit of the Spirit and the description of love.

Remember, you are very special to us and we thank God for you.

Living with leaving in view.... John 9:4

Ron & Val

Seeing the Invisible, Embracing the Unapproachable,

Declaring the Unexplainable, Changed by the Immutable,

Running after the Irresistible with inexhaustible joy in our inexpressible sorrows,

Spending our time on eternity,

Owning nothing yet possessing everything that matters and lasts.

We are Pilgrims in Paradox.

Welcome to THE JOURNEY.