

Sermon Outline

“The Good Life: More on the Beatitudes,” Matthew: The Life and Words of Jesus, Part 9 – Matthew 5:2-10 – Joshua Harris – July 8, 2012

Introduction

- The word “beatitude” comes from the Latin word “beatus” which means happy, fortunate or blissful. R.T. France writes, “The beatitudes are descriptions and commendations of the good life ... a pocket guide to life in the kingdom of heaven.” Jesus is saying, here’s the truly blessed life. Here’s where true abiding happiness is found. This is what God smiles on. This is the *truly* good life.
- The beatitudes begin and end with the kingdom of heaven. This provides us with an important clue to their meaning: the beatitudes describe life lived under the reign of God. So the beatitudes aren’t a list of all the things we have to do to earn God’s favor and love. They’re a description of what our lives look like when God takes control. They’re a statement of how good and right and life-transforming it is to live under the kingship of Jesus.

The Secular Beatitudes

- The beatitudes are subversive: they undermine the expectations and values of the world. They clash with the way this world works. If there was a secular version of the “beatitudes” it might look something like this...
 - Blessed are the self-confident because they rule the world.
 - Blessed are positive-thinkers because they don’t need anybody’s comfort.
 - Blessed are the cocky and assertive because they get what they want.
 - Blessed are those who hunger for success and fame because they get reality TV shows.
 - Blessed are the vengeful because they get respect.
 - Blessed are the impure, pleasure-seekers because they see a good time.
 - Blessed are those who beat their opponents because the victors write the history books.
 - Blessed are the popular because everybody loves them.

Jesus: the Heart of the Beatitudes

- The beatitudes only make sense if there is an alternate kingdom. They only make sense if there’s a king who is going to reverse and overthrow our present world. The beatitudes only have meaning and power when you know Jesus as the King who has

Sermon Outline

all power and who will one day judge the wicked, upend the powerful and reward those who called on his name. They are a call to deeper faith in Christ.

- The beatitudes show us the blessed life. This is the blessed life. This is the good life because it gives us more of Jesus. This is the good life because it's the way Jesus lives. It's the good life because it's what Jesus values.

The Beatitudes

- *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."* To be "poor in spirit" is to be humbly dependent on God. It's being a person who realizes your need for God. It's admitting that you don't have enough intellect, enough goodness or enough wisdom to earn God's love and favor. Only the poor in spirit welcome the rule of God. They recognize they need it.
- *"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."* This is closely tied to being poor in spirit. When we behold Jesus and see his power and his holiness, we see our sin. We go from celebrating our wickedness to weeping over what it cost our Lord to pay for it. This isn't depression or being morbid, it's an appropriate sadness at the brokenness of our world. When you love the rule of God you should mourn over the injustice, the pain, the suffering of this world. Jesus is the great comforter. He died for our sins. He is coming again to establish justice in the world.
- *"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."* Meekness is not weakness. It is trust in God's ultimate authority expressed in how we relate to others. Meekness trusts in Jesus instead of using sinful means to achieve our goals.
- *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."* When we know the goodness of the rule of Jesus, obedience isn't a chore. It's not a list of rules. The Holy Spirit gives us a heart level desire to live in the way that God requires. This is only possible because of Jesus. He is the redeemer whose life, death and resurrection gives us right standing before God the Father. And it is only by his power working in us that we have new desires. Jesus is the one who satisfies this desire; we will one day be glorified in his presence and will be totally free from sin and its effects.
- *"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy."* When you live under the rule of the kingdom of heaven, you are marked by generosity of heart. The "merciful" are people who see things from the perspective of other people and extend grace. Those who have received God's mercy freely extend it to others.
- *"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."* Living under the rule of God means seeking purity of the heart. It is a single-minded desire to know and honor the Lord. Impurity obstructs our view of God. It distances us from him. But Jesus gives us this

Sermon Outline

incredible promise—and what a motivation this is to purity of heart. The pure in heart will see something so much better than anything sin can offer. The pure in heart will see God. They'll behold him. They will see his beauty. They will be satisfied in his presence.

- *"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."* When we work to bring estranged people together, when we seek to by our words and attitudes make peace, we're being like our Father in heaven. We're truly acting as his sons—his children.
- *"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."* Just as Jesus was persecuted, when we follow him, and reject the values of this world, we too face persecution. What this teaches us is that being in the kingdom of heaven isn't escape from this world. We're to engage our world, to be in it modeling with our lives and our words and our love the reality of God's kingdom.
- We cannot attain to these qualities by our own effort. We all fall short. Only Jesus lived the beatitudes perfectly. He lived the life we couldn't live and died the death we should have died. A right standing before God is a gift that is to be received by faith in Christ.
- It is equally true that by the power of the Spirit these qualities can grow in our lives. Look to Jesus.

Discussion Questions

1. The word "beatitude" comes from the Latin word "beatus" which means happy, fortunate or blissful. What makes this way of life "the good life"?
2. In what way is the return of Christ significant to the beatitudes?
3. In what ways do you see the beatitudes reflected in the life of Jesus?
4. Josh listed out the secular "beatitudes." Have you noticed this value system expressed in our culture? Has your intake of media influenced your view on what the good life is?
5. The beatitudes present us with a counter-cultural way of living. They bring out the striking contrast between life under the reign of God and the values of this world. Which one characterizes your life?
6. As you consider the beatitudes, are you more aware of your failure to live up to them, or are you resting on Christ's perfect work on your behalf and the power of the Spirit to help you live out this way of life?