

SHIFT

the life we are meant to live



January 17th, 2016

Living The Blessed Life

1. Reject the FALSE NARRATIVE:

The Beatitudes Are The Way To A Better Life.

Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: ³“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” – Matthew 5:1-3 ESV

THE DOMINANT RABBINIC NARRATIVE OF THE “BLESSED LIFE” IN THE FIRST CENTURY

- YOU NEED TO BE JEWISH.
- YOU NEED TO BE MALE.
- YOU NEED TO BE A TORAH-KEEPER.
- YOU NEED TO BE HEALTHY.
- YOU NEED TO BE WEALTHY.

2. Embrace the JESUS NARRATIVE:

The Beatitudes Are Good News For Blistered Souls.

For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners. – Matthew 9:14 ESV

Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you. – Matthew 21:31 ESV

MAKARIOS – “truly well off” or “the favored life”

Reassessing What “Blessed” Means (What are the Beatitudes Telling Me?)

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 satisfied.*

⁷*Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive 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 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.*

– Matthew 5:3-12 ESV

Luke 6:20-23

1. JESUS IS INVITING ME INTO HIS KINGDOM.

Luke 14:12-24

2. NEGATIVE CONDITIONS NO LONGER DEFINE ME OR HAMPER ME.

3. THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WHO I AM NOW IN JESUS.

You have heard it was said...but I say to you...

- Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28, 31-32, 33-34, 38-39, 43-44

4. POSITIVE CONDITIONS CAN BLIND ME TO MY NEED FOR GOD.

But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. ²⁵*Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.* ²⁶*Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.* – Luke 6:24-26 ESV

5. I AM CALLED TO BE A LIVING BEATITUDE JUST LIKE JESUS.

You are the salt of the earth ... ¹⁴*You are the light of the world... let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.* – Matthew 5:13-16 ESV

Luke 6:27-36

I Will Shift by...

- Memorizing [Matthew 9:14](#).
- Accepting Jesus' grand invitation to the blessed life.
- Exhibiting the blessed life by blessing others, not on merit, but by grace.
- Giving my life to King Jesus for the first time.

WALK THE TALK

A Growth Group Guide

1. Think about a time you were excluded from a group. What was that like?
2. Why is it so important to see the beatitudes as invitations to the blessed life, more than prescriptions for blessedness?
3. Which of the Beatitudes do you most relate to? Describe the positive and the negative.
4. What is your experience, by personal observation, on how riches, satisfaction, happiness, and popularity (see Luke 6:24-26) have hindered a person seeing his/her need of God? Have you seen this in your life or the lives of others?
5. How has God used you, especially in your weaknesses, to bless others?
6. How is your soul-training exercise working out this week? If you have shown hospitality to someone who is different from you, what did you learn?
7. Name one way we can be a living beatitude this week.

SOUL TRAINING – HOSPITALITY

A Personal Transformation Exercise

The Principle:

The Beatitudes invite marginalized people into the kingdom of God, and hospitality can help us practice this essential aspect of the kingdom: God cares deeply about those who are left out. The kingdom is inclusive, but the world we live in is exclusive. And if we are honest, we are likely more exclusive than inclusive in our own lives.

Living in the Kingdom of God involves loving others, because our King is a God of love. Living in the kingdom of God involves forgiving others, because our King is a God of forgiveness. In the same manner, living in the kingdom of God involves hospitality – *inviting and including others* – because our King is a God of hospitality. Practicing hospitality makes us vulnerable, and can even make us uncomfortable. The easy choice is to only spend time with people we know, those who make us feel safe; the Kingdom choice is to step out of our comfort zone and include those whom the world excludes.

The Plan:

The plan for this week is to practice hospitality. Try to do two or three of the following suggestions this week.

1. Reach out to someone outside your comfort zone. Ask if they want to have coffee or go out to lunch. This might be a coworker or someone who has very few friends.
2. Listen to people. Become aware of the people around you and become a great listener.
3. Be a “preparer.” Preparing involves doing small things that show you care for other people.
4. Pay attention to the people you love. Make being present an intentional act by putting down the phone, closing the computer, turning off the TV, etc.
5. Welcome others into your “group.” Quite often, we spend time in cliques – our usual group of friends at work or in our personal life. There are others, though, who would like to spend time with you but feel uninvited. This week, invite them!