

More Beatitudes by Jesus

Introduction

Our focus in this study has been on the beatitudes found at the beginning of the sermon on the mount in Matthew 5. But what we may not realize as much are the other “beatitudes” found in the gospels. These, just like the others, commend a person who has chosen the pathway of righteousness and goodness. And they also describe a present state of reality for the believer . . . a status given to them by God. It is the result of understanding one has the presence and approval of God.

May we all come to understand that a blessed life isn’t about luxury and ease, wealth or recognition . . . it is all about the surrendered heart that loves and trusts God.

Matthew 11.6

Blessed is the one who isn't offended by me.

As we examine this beatitude, it is important to consider the context. John the Baptist has been imprisoned by Herod. Matthew 14.3-5 informs us Herod had *arrested John, chained him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, since John had been telling him, "It's not lawful for you to have her."* Though Herod wanted to kill John, he feared the crowd since they regarded John as a prophet. Going back to Matthew 11, we're not sure how long John had been imprisoned, but it certainly was long enough for him to get discouraged. Josephus says John was being held at the fortress of Machaerus, east of the Dead Sea.⁵¹ Matthew 11.4-6 gives us Jesus' gracious answer. Verse 5 is a listing of Jesus' messianic works, just as Isaiah had foretold.⁵²

The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor are told the good news,

And to that, Jesus adds the beatitude of verse 6. *Offended* is translated “stumble” in other versions. The original word was often used as a metaphor to describe causing an offense. Certainly, Jesus caused offense to a skeptical and unbelieving world who doubted that He was the one. Many were simply put off by Jesus. His acceptance of the poor offended the religious establishment. His mission to reach those who suffered and were stung by sin was of little importance to those who yearned for liberation from the hated Romans. Not reacting to Jesus with the typical human response required spiritual discernment. Jesus' gentle, tender rebuke of John is a way of saying, “if you want the blessing of peace, don't doubt who I am.”⁵³

John needed to resist any preconceived ideas of what the Savior should be like.

⁵¹ Antiquities, 18.119.

⁵² Isaiah 35.5; 61.1.

⁵³ The Good News Bible translates it this way: “How happy are those who have no doubts about me!”

Today, the world remains offended at real Christianity. It is branded as judgmental, strict, narrow, and old fashioned. There is more pressure to conform than maybe at any previous time in our nation's history. We must resist any urge to apologize for remaining true to Jesus. May we remember Jame's teaching:

You adulterous people! Don't you know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? So whoever wants to be the friend of the world becomes the enemy of God, James 4.4

Instead, we follow what Paul said:

Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God, Romans 12.2.

Matthew 13.16

Blessed are your eyes because they do see, and your ears because they do hear.

Here, Jesus is not focused on humanity at large ... but rather disciples... those who have heard, believe, and continue to receive a blessing from God. These move with spiritual perception and perspectives. Rather than those of Matthew 13.15, whose *minds are dull, ears are stopped, and eyes closed*, these have chosen the eternal over the physical. They are operating from a higher perspective. They are on God's side, verses that of the world. When we choose to believe God's word and trust in His saving power, we are given salvation and more and more truth by which we can walk and worship.

What is ironic here is that the disciples stood in great contrast to the religious establishment, who were highly educated and had poured through the Scriptures from an early age. Yet, the ones you would expect to see were those who could not. Why? The simple answer is that they refused to believe.

For those who do believe, they can trust in God's revelation as being authoritative and know that the Spirit who resides within will help them explain, understand, and apply its teachings.

Matthew 24.46

Blessed is that servant whom the master finds doing his job when he comes.

This passage is in the part of Jesus' final Jerusalem discourse where He is addressing what will happen at the destruction of Jerusalem and being ready for His second coming, of which there will be no warning. We are all living inside the "great between," i.e., the time after His ascension and before His return. We do not know when He is coming back, but we trust the promise that He will. In the meantime, we work inside the kingdom, staying true to the mission we've been called, so that when He returns we'll be prepared.

When we are walking in obedience, we have nothing to worry about.

Do what is good, and you will have its approval, Romans 13.3b.

Obedience is the proper and natural response to the salvation we have been given.

"If you love me, you will keep my commands, John 14.15.

John 20.29

Jesus said, "Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe."

Here Jesus pronounces a blessing on those who believe without seeing. It has been said that "true faith is beyond personal experience. It is the evaluation and acceptance of the testimony about Jesus."⁵⁴

How are we blessed? Well, first we have received salvation through faith.

For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life, John 3.16.

Now without faith it is impossible to please God, since the one who draws near to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him, Hebrews 11.6.

Our having believed puts us together with countless others who have "seen" the same evidence . . . as presented in the Word of God. Just like we read a history textbook that testifies to the works and life of past leaders in our country and believe . . . so we read and comprehend Scripture . . . which is just as real and objective as any history book compiled by man. Our faith rests in the testimony of the word:

So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ, Romans 10.17.

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have observed and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—that life was revealed, and we have seen it and we testify and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us—what we have seen and heard we also declare to you, so that you may also have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light, and there is absolutely no darkness in him, 1 John 1.1-5.

⁵⁴ Bryant, Beauford H., and Mark S. Krause. *John*. The College Press NIV Commentary. Joplin, MO: College Press Pub. Co., 1998.