



THE BEATITUDES

Poor in Spirit -- Broken To Be Whole

Lee Coate

January 3, 2021

The Crossing Church
Las Vegas, Nevada

OPENING

This week we are beginning a new study called **Different Than Last Time**. Over the next few weeks we are walking through the most counterintuitive statements of all time: the **Beatitudes**. Here we will see the portrait of a Christian disciple pleasing to God and we will be challenged with the words and wisdom of Jesus. During the past year we have all been enveloped in a period of confusion and brokenness through our experiences in the pandemic. But, as difficult as it has been, God has used those experiences to create in us hearts for Him, renewed minds plus humility and trust so that we can say “Lord, to whom should we go? You have the words of eternal life.”¹

QUESTION: What does your brokenness look like to you? Who are you becoming through the pandemic?

SCRIPTURE²

Psalms 16:11 You have made known to me the path of life.

Matthew 4:23-25 Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed; and he healed them. Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him.

Matthew 5:1-11 Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up onto a mountainside and he sat down. His disciples came to him and he began to teach them, saying: Blessed are the *poor in spirit*, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

OBSERVATION

Jesus taught about His Kingdom to people with fundamentally different ideologies, world views, beliefs and expectations. These people would have been at a fever pitch – waiting for a revelation and even a revolution if Jesus chose to go that way. His was not a soft, contemplative type of teaching -- it was a politically and supernaturally charged moment where he was laying out what this new Kingdom He was introducing would look like. His words, spoken on the other side of the world thousands of years ago, are still words that matter in our moments of crisis today. “Disciples have a distinct profile over and against the world. They admit they are poor in spirit, are peacemakers and merciful. They communicate their differences from the world and

¹ John 6:68

² Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture referenced here is NIV

shine as witnesses in a dark world.”³ The disciples of Jesus’ time clearly exhibited these characteristics. They sat at His feet and heard firsthand the requirements of Kingdom citizens.

QUESTION : How different are you from worldly citizens?

APPLICATION

Now as we begin a new year, we are left with the responsibility to deal with disruption and to be “different than last time.” Sometimes we overlook the fact that the greatest theology of our faith, the loudest message of our faith community is “change is not only possible, but is actually expected if God is in the middle of it.” That’s why Jesus started His entire public ministry by calling on all people to REPENT – to CHANGE – to TURN 180 DEGREES! He is telling us that transformation is the expectation of every believer.

QUESTION: If you had the opportunity for a redo of some event in your life, what would it be?

So, as a new year is upon us and the expectation of change is possible and needed, let’s **ROOT** ourselves as a church more deeply than ever in what it looks like to be genuine, growing followers of Christ – people who live the Beatitudes.

QUESTION: What is your reaction to this challenge? Are you ready? How does your life shine for God?

One of Netflix’ cultural components is, “If something wins, celebrate it. If it fails, sunshine it.” So, as a church, if we are going to shine, we first need to sunshine some of the ways we have missed the mark. As individuals we need to do the same. Maybe we have met Jesus as a task master and missed a relationship with Him. Or we’ve checked boxes involving our behaviors, our words, our finances, our sexuality, and even our friendships. When we checked “OK” we considered ourselves blessed. There’s actually a word for that – **MORALISM** – which promotes a path toward Jesus that begins and ends with our efforts and our achievements. We are often inclined to think that blessing follows obedience, aren’t we? “**You do this = so be blessed.**” But, God says, “**You are blessed – so be this.**” Also, He says “I’m the King, bringing you a Kingdom and a way of being and I want to show you what it looks like to be aligned with Me.”

QUESTION: If you view your relationship with Jesus as dependent on your works, what can you do to change this perspective?

We are not to be **MORALISTS** – but we do believe in **MORALITY**. Christianity definitely has a moral component that is linked to God’s design for us and we see it throughout the Bible. The path that David is talking about in Psalm 16 is the preferred path God has created for us, with boundaries alongside that will allow us to flourish and experience what Jesus calls, “abundant life.” We need to choose to follow that path because it leads us to a deeper level of relationship with Him.

QUESTION: What does a deeper relationship with Christ look like to you? What does the term “abundant life” mean to you?

We know what a defibrillator does -- it resets a heartbeat. We need to **reset** our hearts today so they beat at the same pace as Christ’s does. This involves building our houses on rocks and not sand.⁴ Too many of us have built our lives on the same foundation as the world, we have just decorated them with Christian clutter. We don’t look much like Jesus, but we claim to follow Him. The test is: If Christ is in us, His life will flow from us.

QUESTION: What constitutes the Christian clutter in your life? What evidence is there that His life flows through you?

We are looking at this reset over the next eight weeks, and it has implications if we are going to be citizens of this Kingdom God is establishing – and they are intense because they are not the normal expectations we might have. In many cases they are the opposite of how someone is establishing a kingdom, defending a kingdom, and maintaining a kingdom would implement it. The Beatitudes condemn what worldly people aspire to. They are the foundational characteristics of God’s Kingdom. (Remember **MODGNIK**?)

³ Dr. Thomas Schreiner

⁴ Matthew 7:24-27

Jesus tells us that “Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.” The poor in spirit referenced here feel their poverty and receive God’s Kingdom life. It is a way of recognizing our neediness. If we don’t feel this, we will live trusting in our own abilities. To get God’s life flowing through us is to confess that we are actually poor – to recognize our fragility and the reality of our “lacking”. So, blessed are those who feel their poverty and know their limits – the ones who need grace, who know deep down they are poor. **To confess our poverty is to be close to God.**

QUESTION: When have you recognized your limitations -- your poverty of spirit? How did you feel?

When we are poor in spirit, there is nothing to: **1) PROTECT.** We have nothing to hide or cover up. We are honest and embrace our status as needing God desperately. That brings freedom; **2) POSSESS.** There is something about the blessing of not having things and about things not having us. We hold time, possessions and money more loosely; **3) PROVE.** We have no need for the affirmation of others.

QUESTION: What are you striving to protect, possess, and prove today? How ready are you to give them up and follow Jesus fully and completely as a passionate, loving disciple of His?

“Scripture doesn’t present us with a moral code and tell us ‘Live up to this’ nor does it set out a system of doctrine and say, ‘think like this and you will live well.’ Rather, the Biblical way is to tell a story and in the telling, invite: ‘Live into this – this is what it looks like to be human in this God-made and God-ruled world. This is what is involved in becoming and maturing as a human being.’”⁵ We cannot enter the Kingdom of God when we are trying to be the king of our own kingdom. **We can be proud in spirit or we can be poor in spirit.** It’s a choice our lives depend on.

PRAYER

Lord God, lead us on this journey to become poor in spirit and to follow Jesus as He calls us. Help us to pray dangerous prayers⁶ and search us to reveal any offensive ways in us. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

QUESTIONS

QUESTION: What does your brokenness look like to you? Who are you becoming through the pandemic?

QUESTION : How different are you from worldly citizens?

QUESTION: If you had the opportunity for a redo of some event in your life, what would it be?

QUESTION: What is your reaction to this challenge? Are you ready? How does your light shine for God?

QUESTION: If you view your relationship with Jesus as dependent on your works, what can you do to change this perspective?

QUESTION: What does a deeper relationship with Christ look like to you? What does the term “abundant life” mean to you?

QUESTION: What constitutes the Christian clutter in your life? What evidence is there that His life flows through you?

QUESTION: When have you recognized your limitations – your poverty of spirit? How did you feel?

QUESTION: What are you striving to protect, possess, and prove today? How ready are you to give them up and follow Jesus fully and completely as a passionate, loving disciple of His?

⁵ Eugene Peterson

⁶ [Dangerous Prayers](#). Craig Groeschle