

Astonished prt 3

Matthew 5:3-12

MPS: **Blessed are those who enter, experience, and endure the kingdom of God**

## **WELCOME:**

Partnership Experience Starting March 1-22

Men's event March 6 – show qr

Men's breakfast coming up Feb 26

## **INTRO (5:30 min)**

- Review
  - We are in a new series called Astonished – the crowds were astonished at Christ's teaching
  - To be astonished is to be awestruck at something. We want to be awestruck, astonished at Jesus and His words.
  - Jesus teaches kingdom living – it's all about the Kingdom
    - John 3 – Jesus tells us we are born again in order to see and enter the kingdom of God born again people ENTER the kingdom
    - Already but not yet.
  - He starts of the sermon about kingdom living with the Beatitudes
    - Latin phrase
    - Happy, blissful, fortunate, blessed
    - 8 statements about one kind of people – those who have entered the kingdom.
    - That was the first point in which we covered the first 4 of 8 beatitudes

### **1. The Entrance into the kingdom.**

- 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.

**Blessed are those who enter, experience, and endure the kingdom of God**

## **OPEN**

- Video of caterpillar transforming into a butterfly
- Christians are not just better, faster caterpillars; they're butterflies
- He tells us what kind of people we are now that we have been born again and citizens of a NEW kingdom.

### **2. The experience of the kingdom**

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

- At a glance, it seems like the only way a person is blessed with mercy is to be merciful; however, I should read more like – because you've been given mercy, you are merciful, and the more mercy you give, the more you receive.
- (not karma but reaping)
- But until you've received merc you can't give mercy.
- He gave us His record now we act in accordance with it. We are merciful because he has been merciful

**Exodus 34:6 (ESV)** *6 The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,*

- God's **mercy** means God's goodness toward those in misery and distress.
- God's **grace** means God's goodness toward those who deserve only punishment.
- God's **patience** means God's goodness in withholding of punishment toward those who sin over a period of time.
- God's **love** is generous, unconditional without expecting anything in return
- God's **faithfulness** is Him never leaving nor forsaking us and keeping His promises
- Harboring bitterness toward another is to the soul much like drinking poison is to the body. Kingdom people quickly realize the mercy given them is the mercy that's to be given to others – grace when not deserved, patience when frustrated, and love that is unconditional.
- Dr. Drew and the inflammation of the soul (we purge -fast, we take into us – word, prayer, community, we HIIT – practice spiritual disciplines)
- We don't deserve his mercy... God has the right to have killed us and sent us to hell when we first sinned against him, but his grace and mercy abounded.
- WE are all those things to others and we are blessed when we've been astonished at God doing these same things for us.

**Vs 8** *“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*

### HEART

- The seat of our true desires and affections – where everything flows from... the center of us.

### PURE

- Pure means 'single.' Not divided. Made whole

**Psalm 86:11–13 (ESV)** **11** Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name. **12** I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify your name forever. **13** For great is your steadfast love toward me; you have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.

- In the OT, it's used to rid oneself of idols

**Psalm 24:4 (NIV)** **4** The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god.

- An *idol* is something in your life which is very good but has become the enemy of the best. An idol is something that's good, but it's become an enemy of the best because it has become your security. It has become something you live for
- “We become what we pay attention to...what we pay attention to doubles back and governs us.” Curt Thompson.
- Rid your life of idols and you will finally see God

#### SEE GOD

**John 14:9–10 (ESV)** **9** Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? **10** Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works.

**John 15:3 (ESV)** **3** Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.  
**John 15:11 (ESV)** **11** These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

**Vs 9** “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

- PeaceMAKERS vs peaceKEEPERS
  - Peacekeepers avoid conflict and pretend it doesn't exist.
  - Peacemakers resolve conflict and reconcile relationships.”

**Peacekeeper** → Passive, conflict-avoidant. Keeps the surface calm by sweeping things under the rug, staying silent, people-pleasing, or maintaining the status quo—even if it means injustice or hidden resentment continues. Often driven by fear (“I just don't want anyone mad at me”).

**Peacemaker** → Active, courageous. Steps into the mess, speaks truth in love, confronts sin or brokenness, pursues genuine reconciliation and justice—because true peace only comes when the underlying problem is addressed (like Jesus did on the cross).

- *shalom*, total well-being both personally and communally
- shalom is akin to blessed – kingdom people who have been blessed with peace will work to create that with others – why? Because we are about our Father's business.

**Matthew 3:17 (ESV) 17** *and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”*

- To be called a son or daughter... that is a child of God, is a definitive statement from God identifying you! It's a YES to your adoption.
- Conflict among individuals, races, and nations comes from our alienation from God. Jesus is the great peacemaker through His wall-destroying death (Eph. 2:14–18). In vv. 44, 45, Jesus calls the children of God to make peace, even with their enemies.
- Jesus has made peace with us, so we make peace with others BECAUSE we are sons and daughters of God almighty. It's what HE did therefore its what we do too.
- The Greenbriar Church Podcast about relationships – “the gospel when relationships are hard” could be very helpful for you.

### **3. The endurance *because* of the kingdom**

**Vs 10** *“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

- Notice the progression – spiritual bankruptcy, morning over our sin, becoming god dependent, pursuing God, becoming merciful to others, spiritually forming and growing, being active in reconciliation, to ultimately being persecuted.

*‘If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you,’” (John 15:20)*

- Want to know if you are in the kingdom of heaven? When you are persecuted for your faith, you're not mad at Jesus or bail on Jesus – you are blessed by Him and you stay in the kingdom.
- If the first 4 were about entering the kingdom, this one is about not leaving the kingdom... enduring persecution BECAUSE of the kingdom.

**Vs 11-12** “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.

- The persecuted's reward may not come on earth, but it surely will be theirs **in heaven...** **NOT YET KINGDOM.**
- **so they persecuted the prophets.** Throughout history, beginning with Cain's murder of Abel (Gen. 4:8; cf. 1 John 3:12), there have been those who oppose God's people
- This life is not all there is.
- Most of us have chosen heaven over hell, but not many of us have chosen heaven over earth.
- The pain of persecution is relative – there are Christians in difficult places in the world that are being severely persecuted, and then there is us here in the USA. Persecution hurts no matter the location or intensity. I broke both my femur and my pinky – both were painful but one cost me more than the other.
- Here's the deal... no matter your world view, no matter what you believe about God or politics or race or sexuality or any other cultural issue... no matter what, if you are vocal about it, you will be persecuted. You **WILL** be persecuted if you are vocal about your relationship with Christ **BUT** it's the only world view that comes with a reward.

## CONCLUSION

Polycarp was the bishop of the church in Smyrna – took the role in 115AD – 20 years after Rev was written.

The Roman government would force everyone in the empire to once a year burn a pinch of incense and say 'Caesar is Lord'

They really didn't care who you worshipped as long as you went through with this ritual each year.

Of course, Polycarp refused and after leading faithfully for 40 years, A warrant was issued for the church's gray-haired pastor

His church tried to hide him, but a young girl in their church who carried food to Polycarp was captured and tortured until she gave up his location

They put the pastor on a donkey and rode him back into the city and on the way, his guard urged him, out of respect for his old age, to recant his god:

“What harm can it do to say that Caesar is Lord? Just a pinch of incense and you’ll live to keep loving your friends...”

He was taken to the amphitheater where a large crowd was gathered--they shouting angrily, “Down with the atheists!”

before the governor of the city he was ordered: “Save your life and swear that Caesar is emperor and lord of lords; respect your years and change your mind; curse Christ and bless Caesar...” “reproach Christ, and I will set you free.”

“86 years have I have served him and he has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King and my Savior?”

“I have wild animals here. I will throw you to them if you do not repent.”

“Call them. It is unthinkable for me to repent from what is good to turn to what is evil.

“If you despise the animals, I will have you burned.”

“You threaten me with fire which burns for an hour, and is then extinguished, but you know nothing of the fire of the coming judgment and eternal punishment, reserved for the ungodly. Why are you waiting? Bring on whatever you want.”

The crowd gathered all the firewood needed to build a large mound  
he told them they wouldn’t need to waste rope in tying him; he’d hold  
himself there, at the post, waiting for his death  
‘he who grants me to come to the fire will grant me the security to remain in it’  
Once the fire was lit, the wind picked up so badly that the flames barely licked at him  
So, tired of waiting to see this old pastor meet his death, someone leapt into the fire and ran a spear into his body, killing him

- How can a man have that much courage, that much faith to stand up against totalitarianism attempting to make him oppose God.
- Because he has entered the Kingdom where God made Him new and Polycarp realized this life is NOT all there is, so he is able to endure the kingdom of God even when persecuted.

**Blessed are those who enter, experience, and endure the kingdom of God**

QUESTIONS FOR GROUPS:

- 1 What are some ways you have experienced transformation in your life after being born again?
- 2 Have you been persecuted for your faith to any degree? Discuss.
- 3 How should we view persecution as kingdom people?