

Astonished prt 2

Matthew 5:3-12

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

INTRO (2 min)

- We are in a series about the sermon on the mount – The last sentence in the Matthew's telling of the sermon says the crowds were astonished... the beginning Matthew says Jesus opens His mouth – when Jesus teaches us, we are left astonished.
- He starts this sermon with 8 (or 9) statements about being blessed known as the:
- Beatitudes – They are called “beatitudes” from Latin *beatus* [*BE-a-toose*], “blessed, happy” The original GK word means fortunate, happy, bliss – it includes spiritual well-being, approval of God, delight in communion with the Lord.
- It's hard to understand them if we don't understand the context of the Kingdom of God that Jesus is teaching us in the sermon on the mount.
- The beginning and the end of the Beatitudes both say, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is ...” What? “... the kingdom of heaven.” At the end, “Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is ...” What? “... the kingdom of heaven.”
- If we don't understand them within the context of the Kingdom, they seem like pithy proverbs or touchy-feely song lyrics or something. (give examples)
- These are MORE than wise sayings or stand-alone good vibes – they are words that astonish us as we see God's kingdom.
- The beatitudes are not about 8 kinds of people - they are 8 qualities and characteristics of one kind of people – KINGDOM PEOPLE. These are all characteristics of *one* group of people. Jesus is describing what the people who have entered the kingdom of God are like.

OPEN

- Do you belong to the kingdom of God? Are you a citizen of Jesus' Kingdom?
- There are only two kingdoms – and we belong to one or the other.
- That is not the usual way of asking that, is it? Usually, it is ‘are you saved?’ or ‘are you a Christian?’ or ‘are you born again?’
- Nothing wrong with those sayings, however, Jesus uses the language of the kingdom far more than any other way to describe what it means to belong to Him – 8 times alone in the sermon on the mount - see to belong to him also means to belong to his kingdom. Do you?

- John 3 – you must be born again to enter the kingdom of God – regeneration is the means to the kingdom
- You must be born again so you can do what? Enter the kingdom. In fact, he says it twice. “You must be born again if you are to see the kingdom of God. The whole point of being born again is to come into the kingdom of God under the power of the King.
- Inviting Jesus into our hearts or Accepting him as your personal savior etc. None of that is in the Bible but... repent and believe the gospel is! Enter the Kingdom of God is.

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

1. The entrance *into* the kingdom (10 min)

Vs 3 “*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

- Being poor in spirit means not being poor in general, it means being poor spiritually.
- I don't have what it takes to help myself or save myself. I am poor. I need to go to somebody who can help me. My problems are beyond me.”
- At one point, the *Times* of London did a series, and they asked great writers of the period to address the question, “What is the problem of the universe?”
- “The problem with the universe is me. Signed, G.K. Chesterton.”
- “I do not have the resources with which to make good my debt.”
- The first step in AA is “We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable.”
- But self help always runs amuck ... we even try it with religion... “I'm running into a bad patch in my life. Okay, I'll clean my life up, I'll do a few things, I'll come to church, I'll read some books.
- NO... Jesus says, the way to enter the kingdom is to admit you can't fix yourself. You are spiritually bankrupt and need help. That is everyone's plight.

Vs 4 “*Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*

- **those who mourn.** The context indicates that these are mourning over sin and evil, especially their own

- You can't mourn what you can't name – we need to name and confess our sin.
- If you don't mourn, you'll never be comforted because you'll be confused.
- The name is 'sin.'
- The essence of sin is "God, I doubt that you are good, I've got this on my own" or "I own me" (I ain't much but I'm all I've got)
- Too many have been taught or think that sin is simply doing 'bad' things.
- 10 commandments give us a hint... the first one says not to have any other gods. Its only when you break the first command that you break the rest.
- The first command is what is underneath the others – its because you break the first that you break the others.
- This is the case for both the irreligious and the religious
- Do you hate what God hates and love what God loves? If so, it will usher in mourning over sin BUT ALSO comfort from blessings for kingdom people.
- Have you ever mourned living your life without God? There is no comfort for those who live outside the kingdom. But, for those who mourn their sin, God gives comfort.

Vs 5 *"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."*

- The word 'meek' in original GK means 'a tamed wild animal.'
- "Aim at heaven, and you'll get earth thrown in. Aim at earth, and you'll get neither" CS Lewis
- It means to be humbled before God. I can't do it, I have messed it up, I need your help. I truly am poor and needy.

Psalm 37:11 (ESV) *But the meek shall inherit the land and delight themselves in abundant peace.*

- **inherit the earth.** The ultimate fulfillment of the promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:1–3; 13:14–17), whom Paul calls "heir of the world" (Rom. 4:13; cf. Heb. 11:16).

Vs 6 *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."*

- The word *righteousness* in the Bible is actually a word that means to be approved.

- The word *righteousness* means rightness, to be right with somebody, to be approved, to be received, to be accepted
 - Have you ever had a huge job interview?
 - Put your application in for a loan for your dream home?
 - Went on a date with someone you really want them to like you.
 - How about waiting to get your test score back
 - Get in that fraternity
- What do they all have in common? You say, “Well, they’re all really nerve-racking, anxiety-producing.” Here’s why.... You’re waiting for a verdict and if that verdict comes in approving you, there is this blissful satisfaction. But If the verdict comes in rejecting you, rejection makes you feel like you are going to die.
- Example – Jaye told Bob she was breaking up with him but didn’t even know my name yet. Bob got the wrong verdict, but I got the good one.
- The real reason we’re always so anxious and not feeling we’re acceptable is because we all know we’re not acceptable to God. We are all the poor boyfriend who didn’t have what it took.
- You can never feel accepted until you know you’re accepted at your worst. On the cross, God tells us, “I have seen you at your worst, and I accept you. I receive you.

CONCLUSION:

- Are you 100% sure you belong to the kingdom?
- With as much respect and honor to God as I can use here... know this: the only problem almighty God ever faced was our forgiveness. When he wanted to see light, he said, “Let there be light,” and there was light! When he wanted to see earth, he said, “Let there be earth,” and there was earth! When he wanted to see people, he said, “Let there be people,” and there were people!
- When he wanted to see us forgiven, he never snaps his fingers and says, “Let there be forgiveness,” but instead he has to go to this incredible effort to send his Son to earth to die on the cross and take our punishment
- What kind of record will open up the door to God? The answer is (and we all know it) a perfect record, a perfect life.
- Jesus gives us His record by us believing his gospel – His record is perfect and it’s the pass for our citizenship in the Kingdom.

THIS TIME TOMORROW

Question #1: "How would you describe your work and what will you be doing this time tomorrow?"

Question #2: As an image-bearer of God, how does your work reflect some aspect of God's work?"

Question #3: Because of the fall, we have to push back thorns and thistles in our work. "How does your work give you a unique vantage point to the thorns and thistles (the brokenness) of the world?"

Question # 4: How does your work function as an opportunity to love and serve your neighbors?"

Farmers

Anything with water

- Cleaning biz
- Plumbing
- Water treatment

Services to farmers

- Ag industry
- Repair, sales, manufacturing of farm equipment

Services to residents

Lawn care

Tree removal, land clearing, site prep

Home builders and construction

Electrical

Utilities maintenance

HVAC

Psalm 65:9–13 (ESV) *9 You visit the earth and water it; you greatly enrich it; the river of God is full of water; you provide their grain, for so you have prepared it. 10 You water its furrows abundantly, settling its ridges, softening it with showers, and blessing its growth. 11 You crown the year with your bounty; your wagon tracks overflow with abundance. 12 The pastures of the wilderness overflow, the hills gird themselves with joy, 13 the meadows clothe themselves with flocks, the valleys deck themselves with grain, they shout and sing together for joy.*

QUESTIONS FOR GROUPS:

1. Do you believe you are a citizen of the kingdom of God?
2. If not, what must you do to enter?
3. If so, how does it make you feel that you are 'blessed' in so many ways as a citizen of the kingdom of God?