

Day 1

Verse: Matthew 5:1-2

“Seeing the crowds, He went up on the mountain, and when He sat down, His disciples came to Him.

And He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:”

Devotional

Just as Moses ascended Mount Sinai to receive instruction from the Lord, now Christ has ascended a mountain to teach and lead His disciples. Moses acted as the middle man between God and the people as he gave them the Word of God. But here in Matthew 5, something entirely new happens. God no longer is speaking through an intermediary, God Himself is speaking directly to the people. In Exodus 20:18-19, the people of Israel were so afraid of hearing God speak and seeing God’s presence that they begged Moses to speak on God’s behalf. Now, God in the flesh has arrived and He is addressing His people. The fear that once held them at a mountains distance has now been replaced with the loving embrace and tenderness of God in the flesh. Jesus has come to show the world that even though we may be unworthy to be in His presence, He loves us enough to come into ours.

Questions

1. Do you believe that God still speaks to His people today?
2. What was it about Jesus that made Him so approachable for the crowds?
3. When the Word of God speaks, are you willing to listen?

Day 2

Verse: Matthew 5:3

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Devotional

Why does Christ start with this beatitude? Because without this one, none of the other ones can happen. Unless someone is poor in spirit, the kingdom of heaven is not theirs, and if the kingdom is not theirs, that means they have no share in any aspect of the kingdom. Martyn Lloyd Jones explains it incredibly well, “There is, beyond any question, a very definite order in these Beatitudes. Our Lord does not place them in their respective positions haphazardly or accidentally; there is what we may describe as a spiritual logical sequence to be found here. This, of necessity, is the one which must come at the beginning for the good reason that there is no entry into the kingdom of heaven, or the kingdom of God, apart from it. There is no one in the kingdom of God who is not poor in spirit. It is the fundamental characteristic of the Christian and of the citizen of the kingdom of heaven, and all the other characteristics are in a sense the result of this one.” If we are not first poor in spirit, how can we do anything else that Christ calls us to do? What it means to be poor in spirit is to see that apart from Christ, we are lacking the spiritual necessities. We acknowledge that we are utterly lost and in despair unless Christ first comes into our lives and saves us. John Stott says, “Thus, to be poor in spirit is to acknowledge our spiritual poverty, indeed our spiritual bankruptcy, before God.” If we want to be poor in spirit, we need to recognizing the greatness of our God and seeing how desperately we need Him.

Questions

1. Why was it so important for Jesus to list this beatitude as the first one?
2. Do you think that being poor in spirit has anything to do with physical poverty?

Day 3

Verse: Matthew 5:4

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”

Devotional

While Christ is certainly able and willing to comfort those who are going through the loss of a loved one, that is not entirely what He has in mind in verse 4. What Christ is referring to is mourning over our sin and over evil. When we pray for the earth to be as it is in Heaven, we are asking for the holiness and perfection of Heaven to be with us here and now. Do you hate your sin? Do you despise the evil that Satan has brought into this world? That is what it means to mourn. The Puritan John Owen is known for saying, “be killing sin or it will be killing you.” The desire to put sin to death is at the heart of mourning for sin. At the end of verse 4 we get another great promise from the Lord. If the thought of evil and the thought of sin breaks our heart, God Himself will comfort us. Christ is saying to us weep now while the world rejoices but your sorrow will turn to joy. This world is only temporary. The pains and horrors of sin are only going to plague us a little bit longer. Soon we will be in a place of absolute holiness and comfort. If you are a Christian, Christ has called you to stand out. Paul tells us in Romans 12 to hate what is evil and to cling to what is good. Hate the sin that overshadows this world, hate the sin that wants to control your heart, hold tightly to Lord and He will comfort you.

Questions

1. Does the presence of evil in this world make you long for perfection in the next?
2. Do you think that it is easy as a Christian to mourn over the presence of sin in the world?

Day 4

Verse: Matthew 5:5

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”

Devotional

When one thinks of meekness, they usually think of humility. However, when one thinks of leaders, I do not think that they naturally assume that they are humble. So, what does Christ mean in verse 5? What He means is that we as Christians need to have an attitude of humility and submission to the Lord and Christ serves our example of what this looks like carried out. Christ perfectly followed the will of His Father and lived in perfect submission to Him. Like Christ, we need to be people that are self-sacrificial. Christ gave up all the treasures of Heaven so that we might be closer to Him. In Christ, we see a picture of perfect humility. In Philippians 2, Paul gives us the depths of Christ's humility and the reward that came from it. Starting in verse 5, “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. But being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” We see the great humility of Christ, the sacrificing, seeking servant-hearted love of Christ set as an example for us to follow.

Questions

1. Check out Romans 8:16-17 and observe the connection between this beatitude and this verse.

Day 5

Verse: Matthew 5:6

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”

Devotional

What does Christ mean by blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness? Well it is basically the opposite of verse 4 which says, “blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.” To hunger and thirst for righteousness means to have such a desire to see God glorified that in your eyes, that is the only thing that matters. You have such a love and desire to seek God’s righteousness that nothing else in the world matters. If we as Christians are called to mourn for sin, that means to despise evil and to despise sin, then that means that the only thing left for us to do is to love the Lord and His righteousness. Here’s what I mean by that: If I as a follower of Christ want nothing more than evil and sin to be gone from the world, what remains? Nothing but the righteousness of God. If we hate evil so much that all we long for is the Lord, then that means that we have such a great hunger and thirst for righteousness. What Christ is telling us is while we are here on Earth, we are called to long for righteousness because we will be completely satisfied later. The fact that that great desire for the Lord is in our hearts is why we can be satisfied now and will ultimately be satisfied later.

Questions

1. Do you think that if you do well enough with mourning for sin and evil that you will automatically thirst for righteousness? Or do you think that they are 2 different actions?
2. Does the promise of satisfaction later make thirsting for righteousness easier?

Day 6

Verse: Matthew 5:7

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.”

Devotional

We have been so greatly blessed by the mercy of God; we have no real choice except to be merciful to others. It's when you stop and think about how merciful God has been towards you that you really start to act in mercy. What are some things that God has done for you that testify to His mercy? What God does; is He never sacrifices holiness for mercy. What I mean by this is that He can't just overlook sin because if He did that, it would be an attack on His holiness. God would fail to be as holy as He is if sin had no consequences. So, while grace deals with the forgiveness of sin, God's mercy deals with the consequences of our sins. You see, God showed mercy to us in our sins but the consequence of doing that was the cross. In order for us to appreciate God's mercy, we need to understand His justice. We serve a just God that does not bend the law in order to make us better. We serve a God that is hard on sin but abounding in mercy, a God that is willing to take on the consequences of our sins by dying on the cross. Because we have received such great mercy, we treat others with mercy. Sinclair Ferguson said, “Being merciful is the natural result of receiving Christ and experiencing the grace of God. If we are not merciful, we cannot have received Christ's mercy, and therefore cannot look forward to receiving His mercy in the last judgment.”

Questions

1. Why is it hard for so many Christians to show mercy?
2. When you think about Christians, do you naturally associate mercy with them?

Day 7

Verse: Matthew 5:8

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

Devotional

What does it mean to be pure in heart? Well what Christ is getting at is that we are to be pure internally and not just be physically pure. Back then, the Jewish audience was dealing with the mindset that if you touched a dead body, or were sick, or did something along those lines, you were not clean, or not pure. Christ is saying that it isn't what is outside that makes someone pure, it's what happens on the inside. In all things, we are called to pursue purity. This means that morally, we do all that we can so that we might be pure. One thing that Christ is concerned about is the people that just play church. These are the people that come to church, act like a Christian, but are still a total hypocrite. Terry Johnson says, “One can be present at services Sunday morning and Sunday night and Sunday school. One can attend circles and special services. One can baptize one's children and receive the Lord's supper. One can conduct daily family worship and catechize one's household. In other words, one can do all the things externally that one is supposed to do and yet be utterly unconverted.” We can do all that we want to make people think that we are Christians and yet still be separated from Christ because our hearts are not truly in the right place. So, how do we deal with that? It comes down to your heart. If your heart longs for Christ and you pursue the things that bring honor to God, I think you are doing more than just acting out a part. If you despise sin and you are doing all that the previous beatitudes have called Christians to do, I think you are pursuing purity in your heart.

Questions

1. Reflect on the past 7 days and think about what beatitude has stood out the most to you

Day 8

Verse: Matthew 5:9

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”

Devotional

If we have the identity of one who tries to be at peace with everyone and to make peace where it is necessary, then our identity will be seen as children of God. Well, this is probably one of the hardest ones to do because of how naturally quick tempered and defensive we are. But what we see in the life and death of Christ is that He is the ultimate peacemaker. How do we know that Christ is the ultimate peacemaker? Because He made peace with the one thing that on our own, we never will be able to: Death. Colossians 1:20 says that Jesus, “Made peace by the blood of the cross.” Now this is an interesting statement. How is their peace in death? Naturally our minds don’t gravitate to peace in the bloody murder of a man on the cross. This isn’t to say that Christ looked totally at peace, like how some people say that someone looked so peaceful when they passed, as He died because we know that He was in complete and utter agony on the cross. What it means is that at the cost of His blood, Christ was able to secure salvation for believers and made peace between sinful man and holy God. He reconciled us to Himself through His death on the cross. Christ through His death on the cross put to death the hostility that the Father has towards sinners. Through Christ we have access to the Father who has a spirit of peace so if God is a peacemaker, and we are said to be children of God, we also need to be peacemakers.

Questions

1. How are Christians supposed to be peacemakers?
2. What are some ways that you can rejoice in the peace that comes from God?

Day 9

Verse: Matthew 5:10-11

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.”

Devotional

At first glance, these verses do not sound very inspiring, do they? No one likes persecution. If we are young in our faith, we may read this verse and become totally discouraged. How can we find hope in these verses? Of course, the knowledge that the Kingdom of Heaven is ours is a great reward. The knowledge that we will be with the Lord forever has inspired saints throughout the ages. But there is an even greater encouragement in these verses for us today and it comes at the very end of verse 11. Jesus says that we are blessed when others revile, persecute, and utter all kinds of evil against us falsely on His account. What Christ is saying is because you love Him and you are following after Him, the persecution and the hatred that is directed towards you will actually go towards Him. Christians can confidently face persecution because they know that Christ is standing alongside them. The greatest comfort in the world is to know that God is for us in the midst of our trials and not against us.

Questions

1. How can Christians be ready for when persecution happens?
2. Do you believe that persecution is a sign that God is with us?
3. Take a few minutes and pray for believers all over the world that are experiencing persecution.

Day 10

Verse: Matthew 5:12

“Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Devotional

Looking back to verse 11, Christ reminds us that we can rejoice in the midst of persecution because the reward that we have in Heaven is so great. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, “Discipleship means allegiance to the suffering Christ, and it is therefore not at all surprising that Christians should be called upon to suffer. In fact it is a joy and a token of his grace.” Christ ultimately suffered for us and we are to align ourselves with Him and His suffering. But not only do we align ourselves with His suffering, we can align ourselves with His resurrection! Our Christ is not only a suffering Christ, He is a reigning Christ! In the last few words of this verse, Christ reminds us of one more thing: as Christians, we belong to a long line of Godly men and women. Just as the prophets were persecuted, so will we be persecuted. The family of God involves a long line of sufferers but it also contains a multitude of men and women that can rejoice in the face of suffering because they know that they belong to Jesus. Paul reminds Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:12, “But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.” That is the confidence that we have in Christ. We know Him and He knows us and our security is safely in His hands.

Questions

1. Who are some Christians that you really want to talk to when you get to Heaven?
2. Are you convinced that Jesus is able to keep your salvation secure in His hands?