

"Kingdom 101 = The Beatitudes" [5.10.09]

Happy Mother's Day ~ "Mommy's Test" ☺

I. The Sermon on the Mount

A. (R) Matthew 5: 1 - 2 or p. 735 in pew Bible

1. The Sermon on the Mount is the most famous sermon ever preached!
 - a. The entire sermon is found in chapters 5 – 7 of Matthew's gospel. It can be read in its entirety, in 30 minutes or less.
 - b. Don't presume that the crowds Matthew mentioned walked to some remote area to hear Jesus merely talk to them for 30 minutes or less & then pacifically left for their homes.
 - c. Quite the contrary - on one such occasion, a teaching session like this turned into a 3-day conference in = (R) Matthew 15: 32
 - d. It's safe to envision that the Sermon on the Mount was spread out over a period of days.
 - e. Enormous crowds were following Jesus @ this early stage in His ministry & the text says, "He went up on the mountainside & sat down & began teaching them."
 - f. For those of you who have seen the Rocky Mtn.'s up close & personal, this is more like a HILLSIDE that is in close to Capernaum.
 - g. Perfect setting - - it's a natural amphitheater = divine acoustics ☺
2. The essence of the Sermon is simple, yet complex.
 - a. The Sermon on the Mount is simple in it's outline & basic structure:
 - i. Jesus lists 8 qualities (characteristics) = 8 beatitudes that should naturally characterize the behavior of all Christ-followers
 - ii. In addition, each of these 8 beatitudes has a unique blessing attached to it for those who [live-out] the particular behavior.

8 beatitudes + 8 unique blessings = simple promises of God!
 - b. However, this simple straight-forward teaching becomes complex when you begin to GRASP what Jesus is actually expecting from us;
 - i. He EXPECTS His followers to be different from everybody else. Jesus said in Matt. 6: 8 "Don't be like them"
 - ii. This KINGDOM that He is teaches about in word & deed is to be a counter-culture; that exhibits a whole set of distinctive values & standards!
 - c. Another reason this sermon sometimes feels complex & somewhat confusing is that we choose to treat Jesus' teaching like a buffet: you choose & pick what seems to suit your craving for that day.
 - i. i.e. Some days I can choose to be humble & other days I can choose to be pure & merciful [select my beatitude]

- ii. NO - - all 8 beatitudes, like all 9 fruits of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness & self-control.)
- d. Left to ourselves, our natural beatitudes would read something like this;
- i. Happy are the 'hard-boiled;' for they never let life hurt them.
 - ii. Happy are the 'rich,' for they have it all & have it all now.
 - iii. Happy are they who 'complain;' for they get their own way in the end.
 - iv. Happy are the blasé; for they never worry over their sins.
 - v. Happy are the 'slave-drivers;' for they get results.
 - vi. Happy are the 'trouble-makers;' for they make people take notice of them.
 - vii. Happy are the 'arrogant,' for people defer to them.
 - viii. Happy are the 'self-reliant,' for they are content with themselves & don't need others.

So the counterculture of the Kingdom of Heaven is @ odds with the cultures of the world.

Today Jesus teaches that IF YOU CHOOSE to follow Him; YOU WILL BE DIFFERENT in these 8 ways:

Simple outline of the (8) beatitudes.

The 1st 4 beatitudes concern our relationship with God, and the 2nd 4 beatitudes concern our relationship with others.

- I. 1st 4 Beatitudes concern our relationship with God!
 - A. 1st beatitude = (R) Matthew 5: 3
 - 1. "God blesses those who are poor & realize their need for Him."
 - a. This poverty has nothing to do with your economic status; it has everything to do with your 'spiritual poverty.'
 - b. God blesses those who acknowledge their 'spiritual bankruptcy' before God; that we are sinners under the holy wrath of God; deserving nothing but the judgment of God!
 - c. Romans 3: 10 "No one is righteous, not even one!"
 - d. [INSERT] Biblical worldview
 - 2. Promised Blessing = Kingdom of Heaven is given to sinners who recognize & confess that their sin nature separates them from the love of God: ACCEPTING HIS GRACE thru Jesus' shed blood saves you!
 - B. 2nd beatitude = (R) Matthew 5: 4
 - 1. "God blesses those who mourn."
 - a. It is plain from the context that those here promised comfort are those who mourn the loss of their innocence - - their righteousness - - their self respect.
 - b. It's not the sorrow of bereavement to which Christ refers, but the sorrow of repentance.
 - 2. This is the 2nd stage of spiritual blessing. It is one thing to be spiritually poor & acknowledge it; it is another to grieve & mourn over it.

- a. Theological terms = confession is one thing; contrition is another!
- b. Healthy not to forget who we used to be!

C. 3rd beatitude = (R) Matthew 5: 5

1. "God blesses those who are humble."
 - a. The Greek adjective 'praus' means gentle - - humble - - considerate - - courteous; therefore exercising self-control.
 - b. Numbers 12: 3, "Now Moses was very humble, more humble than any other person on earth."
 - c. Being humble = essentially is to possess a true view of oneself; still dumbfounded that God chooses to love & adore you!
2. Jesus says, "...the humble will inherit the whole earth."

D. 4th beatitude = (R) Matthew 5: 6

1. "God blesses those who hunger & thirst for justice."
 - a. Such 'spiritual hunger' is a characteristic of all God's people; whose supreme ambition is not material but spiritual.
 - b. Christ-followers are COUNTERCULTURAL!
 - i. Our primary pursuit is not for more stuff-possessions;
 - ii. Mindset changes to 'seek 1st God's Kingdom & righteousness. Biblical righteousness is more than a private and social affair; it includes social righteousness as well.
 - iii. It seeks liberation from the whole of humanity from oppression - - promotes the civil rights of others - - justice in the law courts!
2. [INSERT] Teenager wins court battle!

Once our attitude is right with God, Jesus transitions us to having a right attitude with others!

II. 2nd (4) Beatitudes concern our relationship with others!

A. 5th beatitude = (R) Matthew 5: 7

1. "God blesses those who are merciful."
 - a. Mercy is compassion for people in need.
 - b. Every time you seek to care for another less fortunate than you & extend mercy to another person;
2. The Bible promises, "...God will show you mercy!" [v. 7a]

B. 6th beatitude = (R) Matthew 5: 8

- [Question] when I use the phrase "purity of heart," who comes to mind?
 - I think of godly moms & dads!
 - [INSERT] = when you thought I wasn't looking!

C. 7th beatitude = (R) Matthew 5: 9

1. "God blesses those who work for peace."

- a. According to Jesus - - every Christian is meant to be a 'peacemaker.'
 - b. A peacemaker in = their homes; their community; & in their church family!
 - 2. Peacemaking is a divine work.
 - a. For peace means reconciliation; & God is the author of peace & reconciliation!
 - b. We have peace with God through Jesus' death on His cross!
- D. 8th beatitude = (R) Matthew 5: 10
- 1. "God blesses those who are persecuted."
 - a. True discipleship gives us the idea of being popular in this culture!
 - b. Being despised & rejected; slandered & persecuted; is as much a normal mark of Christian discipleship as being pure in heart or merciful.
 - 2. Every Christian is to be a peacemaker & every Christian is to expect opposition.

The Kingdom of God is countercultural: It makes a distinct separation of Who I Am from What I Do; BEING vs DOING

God is much more concerned about who I am BECOMING in CHRIST than what I DO for a living.

My world is different because I AM NOW DIFFERENT because of my personal relationship w/ Jesus that is developing my character & heart!

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