

The Beatitudes

The first Beatitude

Int.

1. Aim: To discuss the meaning of the beatitudes as they apply to us today.
2. Matt. 5:1-12 - 1st part of Sermon on Mount
 - a. Preacher = Jesus Christ Pulpit = Mountain
 - b. Audience = Disciples Time = about 28 ad
3. The beatitudes are sometimes called the formula for happiness
 - a. John 10:10 "„I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."
 - b. We need these for the abundant life promised by Christ
4. These Beatitudes are the building blocks of moral character, or the foundation of Christian Character.
5. Beatitude or Beautiful Attitudes
 - a. Blessed or happy or fortunate -- 100 Beatitudes in Bible Psalms 1:1
 - b. Beatitude a Latin word "beatus" which means happy
 - c. God expects us to be happy and He gave us the things necessary for happiness in this life and in the world to come.
6. Happiness does not come by:
 - a. Possession of outward things - cars, buildings, hobbies, clothes, money
 - b. Pleasures of flesh - carnal things
7. But happiness comes from our inward attitudes.
 - a. Prov. 23:7 "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he:"
 - b. Happiness does not come from what a man has but in what he is.
 - c. The beatitudes teach us to have good attitudes which make us happy.

- d. This is Heaven's recipe for happiness.
 - e. This is the Highest possible happiness man can enjoy on earth.
8. Beatitudes are called the Introduction to Christianity
- a. First part of the Sermon on the Mount
 - b. Much like the "Bill of Rights" in our Constitution of the USA
9. Beatitudes are divided into two groups
- a. [1] **MAN TO GOD RELATIONSHIP** (1-4) V. 3-6
 - (1) Sin has separated man from God
 - (2) Man cannot be happy with this sin separating him from God.
 - (3) Sin must be removed to make peace with God.
 - (4) These first 4 beatitudes can remove sin and put us in the proper relationship with God. This is our first responsibility
 - b. [2] **MAN TO MAN RELATIONSHIP** (5-8) V. 7-12
 - (1) Man is a social being - we must live peaceably with one another
 - (2) After we make peace with God then we can work on being at peace with one another.
 - (3) The last 4 beatitudes instruct us about how to be at peace with one another.
 - (4) This is essential for happiness.
10. The First Beatitude: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" --- Two questions answered:
- (1) Who are the Blessed ? -- Poor in Spirit
 - (2) What is their Blessing ? -- Kingdom of Heaven

Discussion

I. BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT - V. 3

A. The World says:

1. *Blessed are they that are materially rich;*
2. *Blessed are the great and powerful;*
3. *Blessed are those who lay up treasures on the earth;*
4. *Blessed are the highly educated*
5. *Blessed are the high and mighty;*
6. *Blessed are those who spend their days in mirth and pleasures.*
7. *Blessed are the rich, for theirs is the kingdom of the world.*

B. But Jesus says Blessed are the Poor!!

1. Poor means - Be without and know it.
2. Years ago the Indians roamed this country, had very little, but they were not poor. They had all they wanted or needed.
3. To be poor in spirit is to be in need and realize that you are in need !!
4. There is a difference between being "poor spiritually" and being "poor in spirit"
5. To be "poor in spirit" means to:
 - a. Have a humble opinion of oneself
 - b. To be aware that we are sinners and have no righteousness of our own
 - c. "Blessed are the ones who know that spiritually they are paupers, for heaven's kingdom is theirs." [McCord's Translation] Matt. 5:3
6. If man is lost and knows that he is lost he has the attitude that will help him to learn the truth and obey it.

7. But if a man is living in sin and he delights in that way of life he has no desire to get out of that sinful life.
8. Poor in spirit is not to be confused with poverty
 - a. A person can be without money and still not be poor in spirit.
 - b. Or a person can be wealthy but also be poor in spirit
 - c. He is not teaching that material poverty is a good thing
9. Poor in spirit is not being fearful, timid, lazy, an introvert or lack of ambition.

C. Pride was involved in the fall of man - Gen. 3

1. Man assumed that he was self-sufficient to make decisions without God and contrary to God's will. - 1 Tim. 3:6
2. Man thought that he knew what was best for him!
3. Humility is essential in man's return to God.
4. He renounces any idea that he is self-sufficient in knowledge or righteousness.

D. Humble our self

1. To be poor in spirit means that we humble our self spiritually
2. We must lay down human wisdom and accept guidance of Divine Revelation
3. We must become a fool to become wise
4. I Cor. 3:18 "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise."
5. The poor in spirit remove all desire to exercise self-will.

6. Poor means to be without - spiritually it means to be without pride, arrogance and haughtiness.
 - a. Two words for poor
 - (1) Lack wealth, struggle
 - (2) Poverty, danger of starvation
 - b. This latter word is the one used here
 - c. Poor in spirit were the spiritual beggars who had abandoned pride and the sense of self-sufficiency in knowledge or in righteousness.
 - d. McCord's Translation - "Blessed are the ones who know that spiritually they are paupers,... **PAUPER** = without anything
7. James 4:10 "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."
8. The less you know, the more you think you know. The more you know, the less you think you know.
9. A humble man will have an absence of pride but an abundance of trust in God.
Jer. 10:23 "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."
10. A humble man is teachable - moldable - song "Thou art the potter, I am the clay"
11. Ill. "Self Importance" Socrates was once asked by one of his disciples, "Why is it, Sir, that you tell everybody who wants to become your disciple to look into this pond so clear, and to tell you what he sees?" "That is very simple, my friend," answered the old sage. "I am ready to accept all those who tell me they see fish swimming around. But those who see only their own image mirrored in the water are in love with their own ego. I have no use for them."

12. Until we see our desperate need and utter inability to fill that need ourselves we cannot come to God. We will remain in sin until we die unless we see the need to do better. But if we submit and obey then "theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
13. Opposite --- proud, self-righteous, stubborn, independent

II. **THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN**

A. Kingdom of Heaven

1. Humility is the door to the kingdom
2. The humble-hearted depend upon God for direction and will be guided into the kingdom of heaven.
3. The poor in spirit will receive God's greatest blessing!
4. Those who are humble and dependent upon God are the ones who will have their citizenship in heaven.
5. The kingdom is the church
 - a. Mt. 16:18-19 Church - Kingdom
 - b. A person must be born of the water and Spirit to enter the kingdom - Jn. 3:3-5
 - c. But a person with poverty of spirit would immediately obey the gospel once he understood what is required of him.

B. Fulfilled at Pentecost

1. These words were not fulfilled until the day of Pentecost.
2. On that day they entered the kingdom and the kingdom became theirs.

3. At v. 37 it indicates their attitude of "poor in spirit" when they ask "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"
4. Acts 2:47 "...And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." --
- theirs is the kingdom -- the kingdom is theirs
5. This is the reward, the happiness for those who are poor in spirit.
6. The poor in spirit are the ones who will inhabit that eternal place called heaven.
7. The kingdom of heaven enters the "poor in spirit" because such people make room for it.

C. What about the Proud?

1. If the "poor in spirit" are blessed what about those proud in spirit?
2. They are cursed [not blessed].
3. Prov. 16:18
4. Theirs is not the kingdom.
5. Mt. 23 stands in contrast to Mt. 5:3
 - a. Blessings are given to the poor in spirit.
 - b. But woes come to the self-righteous who are Proud in spirit.
 - c. Nine Woe's

CONCLUSION

1. BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT

a. **Specific**

(1) Poor means to be without - spiritually it means we are without pride, arrogance and haughtiness

(2) We must lay down human wisdom and accept guidance of Divine Revelation

b. **Results**

(1) Kingdom of Heaven

(2) The poor in spirit will receive God's greatest blessing!

c. **Principle**

(1) Humility is the principle of this beatitude

(2) We must humble our self - no one else can do it for us

(3) A human man is teachable - moldable

d. **Application**

(1) This attitude of humility opens the way for faith in God

(2) Faith is trusting in God -- not self.

(3) The poor in spirit will trust God.

2. Jesus said "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners," [Mt.9:13]

a. He did not mean that some were so righteous that they did not need him.

b. Every accountable person has sinned - Rm. 3:23

c. He was talking about the self-righteous Pharisees who felt superior to Jesus and said they did not need him.

d. Jesus did not call them, nor does he call such today.

- e. He calls those who are poor in spirit
 - 3. Anyone who is "poor in spirit" has the basic qualification for entrance into the kingdom.
 - 4. The kingdom of heaven will be made up with the poor in spirit because they seek it.
 - 5. Why did Christ put this first?
 - a. He is teaching about a new kind of living, a new standard, and a new way of life.
 - b. Becoming poor is the first thing that must happen in the life of anyone who would enter the kingdom.
 - c. The poor in spirit will go on to mourn because of their sins, hunger and thirst after righteousness
 - 6. Summary of it all
 - a. In the Sermon on the Mount we have a summary of the Teaching of Jesus. [Mt. 5-7]
 - b. The beatitudes are a summary of the Sermon on the Mount. [Mt.5:1-12]
 - c. The first beatitude "Blessed are the poor in spirit" is the keynote of all the 8 beatitudes.
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