

**6-14-20**

Sermon- Up With the Lord, Now In With Each Other

Scripture- Matthew 5: 1-12 CTW Psalm 116

Hymns 147, 152

Theme- We must never forget that for the Disciples of God, living a life of worship means to give thanks to God daily. We are called to a thankful response where we acknowledge all the blessings which He has bestowed upon us and show Him how grateful we are. Because of the pandemic, have you approached your "attitude of gratitude" differently?

The world is watching, have you let your discontentment with your current situation sidetrack you from being one, together in Spirit, giving thanks to the Father from whom all blessings flow?

### **I. Introduction: Adding "IN" relationships to our "UP" relationship.**

We talked about the shape of being a Disciple last week, by finding that first and foremost, God calls us to be "Up" That means to always be in close relationship with the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

This week we discover that we are to have a special **"IN" relationship with fellow Christians...This is the bottom right hand side of the triangle we drew last week.**

These are words that are contrary to the ways of the world but that is what Jesus is all about. If followed they will put you on the path to God, and the world must see true believers as **different, in a good way.**

**A. While on this path, we Christians develop an ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE** which grows stronger and deeper as we go. This is to be contagious among the people of God, and we are to strengthen each other in this relationship as we go. There is no better place to find this attitude than **Matthew 5:1-12**...the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount.

Someone has called **Matthew 5:1-12** the "**attitudes to be**" of **the Faithful**. John Wesley devoted over 15 sermons to Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount"- he saw it as a secret key to Christians being able to live the life God calls us to. This key should not be kept a secret, but our humanness has often made us misinterpret what it says.

The Beatitudes are not multiple choice- you cannot pick and choose and jump from one to the other- they must be taken as a whole and when you look closely, one leads quite naturally into the next.

There is no other set of verses like this in Scripture . Jesus did parts of this in other places but never did He elsewhere describe the whole process.

Each one of us needs to constantly check into this Sermon on the Mount to see where we are in the **process...and progress** in that regard should be evident in how we get along with fellow believers..."**Being the church**", **if you will**.

Some of us see this as a laundry list of things to strive for if we get the time- but that interpretation is wrong- this is a detailed step by step path to God- an oracle of the faith type pronouncement which, after you have accepted Christ as your savior- could be the most important thing you will ever hear...or accomplish.

It is interesting to note that in the original Greek it says that Jesus sat down and "Opened His Mouth". Why was it said that way? Because those were the words used when an Oracle- a statement directly from God was to be proclaimed. It added much importance to the event and culturally people would have recognized that.

What follows is so important that Matthew doesn't want you to get there unprepared. So let's prepare ourselves for these words

of our Master. Open your hearts and minds. Receive the lessons taught.

Listen carefully to what Jesus says. **"Blessed"...** **Nine** times Jesus uses this word. It means one who has received a gift or favor from God. We are not just talking about "happy." "Blessed" is the opposite of "cursed." One is a favor the other is a punishment.

Believers are to live together in a state of blessedness that does not exist among non-believers...that is why we are called the "set-apart" ones.

**1. So to begin the journey, we start with "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."** Being poor in spirit doesn't mean poverty, it means that we become aware of our sinful nature and we are troubled by it. We all have sinned and fallen short of the Lord but do we really accept ownership of that fact for our lives?

Once we accept that fact, it can be a very sobering and depressing time for us. Jesus tells us the great reward right up front- the fact that the kingdom of heaven can still be ours- it is within our grasp!

This is really the first step in anyone's turn around- Repent means to turn from your sins and head toward God- no wonder Scripture says it is the first step!

Wesley said that there is a tender humiliation that happens when we realize our sinfulness and turn to God and he reassures us with the promise of the reward of the kingdom. This was a watershed moment for Wesley when he finally realized that the kingdom of God truly awaits all sinners.

**2. The second step in the journey says "Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted."** Jesus is not talking about mourning for lost loved ones here- He means that we

mourn for God- to be closer to Him. We have found out about Him in our walk and we are actually mourning to be closer to Him.

We also mourn here because during this process we are being attacked by Satan- he keeps attacking our new resolve to follow God.

These attacks make us sorrowful and in despair- as if there has been a death. Jesus' answer is that God will comfort you through the working of the Holy Spirit. You do not have to go through this walk alone!

**3. The next step, Blessed Are The Meek for they shall inherit the earth** has to do with what Wesley calls our "**invincible meekness**". It is not the meekness of the world, however. In your quest for God, the Spirit has now grown stronger within you because of the process in the first two steps. Then you bear witness by submitting to the will of God for your life. Meekness here describes your willingness to submit all- your entire life- to God.

The result is that you are brought into the inheritance- this submission to God will now effect how you interact with others- meekness or submission to God clears out the extremes in your life and you take on the even keel attitude of "In Shallah"- whatever happens you accept God's will for your life- i.e. you will say the one prayer that is always answered- "Father, thy will be done."

**4. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be filled.** After submission to God's total will for your life, He clears out some of our sinful ways and the Holy Spirit fills us with a hunger for God and his rule in our lives.

If He is now the guide for your life, you will then hunger and be looking for His direction. 'Father speak to me now!' This will be on your agenda- to be renewed daily by the presence of God- and

what happens? WE ARE FILLED! (The song by Foreigner- I want to know what love is and I want you to show me! I want to feel what love is and I KNOW you can show me.)

**5. Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.**

In this stage of our faith life, the more we are filled with God, the more compassionate and tenderhearted we become toward Him and others. He has shown us mercy and for those of you who have experienced the mercy of God, you know how wonderful it is!

You now are filled with the need to pay it forward- to pass it around! God feeds us as we go and provides places and opportunities to show it- for instance the church.

We have here a place within which we can practice God's mercy- so how are we doing? Where and when have you seen God's mercy being practiced here? (give examples if you have time).

**6. Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.** This is the result of that refiner's fire that we always talk about- our hearts are purified through our faith in God.

Only the purified will see God. We therefore need to be aware of and work on our imperfections that threaten to taint our hearts. Wesley said that God causes His presence to be continually before the people- a state of grace- the light of his countenance will shine upon them- "God show us your glory!"

**7. Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called Sons of God.** Being pure of heart, therefore is the highest calling of what we are to be, and being peacemakers is the highest calling of what we are called to go and do.

If you are pure in heart for God, you will abhor all kinds of strife and turmoil and therefore be driven to go and make peace.

Peace here implies all manner of good- handing out food, and visiting those on prison is all about spreading God's peace.

Remember the message of the angels at the pronouncement of the birth to the Shepherds- "Glory to God in the Highest and on earth, peace to those upon whom His favor rests. We dearly love the state of grace where we can say that we are "those whom upon His favor rests!"

These really are glad tidings of great joy unto all the people given by a "Great company of the heavenly host" in **Luke 2:14**.

In those times there was something called PAX ROMANA which literally was the "peace of Rome"- but what that meant was as long as you were content with having the boot of the Romans on your neck you would know Peace- their peace.

This is different- this is the "PAX CHRISTOS"- the peace of Christ, god **for all believers** and **administered by the loving hand of God**.

8. And finally **Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven**. Here we see the very predictable reaction of the world to our having gone through this remarkable process, **that many of them will NEVER understand!**

When you have progressed through steps 1-7, you will be living your life with an "**attitude of gratitude**". You will have mastered the right-hand side of the triangle that the author of "A Jesus Shaped Life" says is a state that all believers **MUST** gravitate toward.

This state of grace will of course **put you at odds** with all sorts of worldly people who will seek to cause you all sorts of trouble because of it. Next week, we will talk about disciples venturing out into the world...the left-hand side of the triangle.

Remember **1 John 3: 13-14**- "Do not be surprised, brothers if the world hates you. We know we have passed from death to life because we love these people."

People who are living morally upright lives will expose and shame those who are not, and therefore will be despised. We make them painfully aware of their immoral way of living.

### **III. Conclusion: In Regard to Really becoming Disciples, there are at least five ways to understand the Beatitudes:**

1. They are a code of ethics for the disciples and a standard of conduct for all believers to grow into discipleship.
2. They contrast kingdom values with what is worldly...it flows back and forth along that side of the triangle, from the **"UP"** to the **"IN"**, in a very natural and spirit-filled way.
3. They contrast superficial faith with the faith the God actually wants...He wants us to be deeply rooted in natural Christian relationship with fellow believers...no substitutes...no superficiality.
4. They show how Old Testament expectations will be fulfilled in the new kingdom...**disciples** are the continuum to extend the kingdom until Christ calls us all home.
5. They describe what it is like to really be Christ's followers, and give us mile markers to go by as we go deeper.

Jesus never promised that this process would be painless or easy. We **must** all go through it however and we must find it significant that His very first sermon to His people completely outlined the process which we are all to enter- the process by which we truly become children of God.

Next week we will take a look at what it means for **"UP"** and **"IN"** Disciples, to go **"OUT"**! **Amen?...let us pray.**