

I. The Sermon on the Mount: The great revelation

- A. The sermon on the Mount reveals the Kingdom. It expresses what the culture of the Kingdom is, and is in itself a mirror into which every Kingdom citizen must look to continuously align themselves with their imputed character i.e. the righteousness of Christ.
- B. Jesus the ideal citizen of the Kingdom expresses with precision a vision of what is great in the Kingdom of Heaven, which you know is contrary to what is great in the Kingdoms of the Earth.
1. Poverty of Spirit as opposed to confidence in self
 2. Valuing Mourning as opposed to pursuing a persistent state of glee
 3. Showing meekness as opposed to flexing strength
 4. Valuing Hunger and thirst as opposed to ardently pursuing a state of being satiated
- C. The Kingdom is entered into through faith (Ephesians 2:8). However the Sermon on the Mount is a statement of James 2:26. The faith that is necessary for entrance into the Kingdom is expressed through actions such as seeking the Kingdom of God as the primary pursuit of our lives. It is also expressed through actions such as the pursuit of reconciliation.
1. It should not be lost on us that that expressing the Kingdom culture expressed in the Sermon on the Mount necessitates doing actions that are in keeping with the First and Greatest Commandment to love the Lord with all the heart, mind and strength. (Matt 6:19 - 21, Matt 6:33)
 2. Neither should it be lost on us that the Sermon on the Mount requires submission to the second greatest commandment that flows from the first, which is to love our neighbours as ourself. A great deal of the Sermon on the Mount speaks to personal relationships. (Matt 5:21 - 48). A good summation here are some perspectives from Yakum's presentation "**Introduction to the Sermon on the Mount**," "The Sermon on the Mount truly highlights the relationship between the First and Second Commandments. It repeatedly calls us to be like our Father in heaven (Mt. 5:45, 48; 7:21), and to seek Him and His Kingdom above all else (Mt. 6:33), which is the only way we will be able to love others..."
 3. Opening this treatise on the culture of the Kingdom and the character of its citizens, are 8 statements of characteristics of the citizens that Jesus calls supremely blessed, as He lists them He states the blessedness of each characteristic.

II. The Beatitudes: The progression of the character of the citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven

- A. The Beatitudes are the entry way into the life that pursues the Sermon on the Mount. It is the heart makeup of the Kingdom. Jesus deals with character before He deals with conduct. From Matthew 5:1 - 12 there seems to be a progression of the character of the citizen of heaven. This character progression, or maturing characteristics are communicated through the Beatitudes.

There is a poverty of spirit (v 3) that produces mourning (v 4) which produces the fruit of a meek heart that is empathetic to the weakness of others (v 5).

Such meekness springs up out of an admiration for the meekness of Christ, and an awareness of the comfort that is ours because of His own meekness (Matt 11:28).

To stand between the awareness of our poverty of spirit and the beautiful meekness of Christ produces a longing for the righteousness of Christ in the citizen (v. 6).

That consistent seeing and savouring of the righteousness of Christ produces a likeness of Christ's character (2 Corinthians 3:18) or in other words a pureness of heart (v 8). That purity of heart produces a wisdom that is made manifest in the making of peace (v 9) (pursuing the ministry of reconciliation).

This character of peace is so counter cultural that it invites persecution because of it (v. 10). The encouragement for the citizen is that the inevitable reviling they experience will be for the sake of the character of God that has been formed in them (v. 11).

B. We'll consider more closely the first four of these beatitudes, and here I am greatly benefited by the studies on the Sermon of the Mount by my sister Lindsay - Rae Powell.

1. **Blessed are the poor in Spirit for there's is the Kingdom of God**

- I. Poverty is a statement of acute lack. But its not only an awareness of that lack, but a powerlessness to change that reality unless someone outside of yourself helps you.
- II. This awareness though is an agency of wisdom, for to be self reliant and to lay the basis of our hope for a richness of character upon ourselves is foolish.
- III. Though we have established that salvation enabling faith produces Christ like actions, Matthew 5:3 teaches us that we are enabled to walk out these actions not from a heart posture of pride in our strength but a humble awareness of our weakness
- IV. This may insight despair in your soul, but in rightly considering the King of the Kingdom of Heaven we are inspired to confess our weakness to Him, because God gives grace to the humble, and exalts in due season the one walking in a spirit oh humility (1 Peter 5:5-6)

... "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

[1 Pet. 5:5-6]

V. Consider Jesus' words in Revelation to the church in Laodecia

"Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—**I counsel you to buy from Me gold** refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments..."

[Rev 3:17-18]

- VI. It is blindness to be self reliant. Blessed are those that take the counsel of the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation and seek grace through faith with humility (*what I believe it means to buy*) which will produce righteousness and purity of heart.

2. **Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted**

- I. When you follow the prescription of Rev 3:18 and buy salve and the spiritual eyes are anointed to see the state of our condition, it produces in us mourning.
- II. This sorrow is precious, it is not agreeing with the Devil in a spirit of condemnation but experiencing a Holy sorrow that produces a radical participation with the grace made available by God to walk according to the newness of heart that has been given to us.

*Godly sorrow produces repentance [wholeheartedness] leading to salvation [breakthrough]... What diligence it produced in you...what indignation [against compromise], what fear [fear of God], what vehement desire [for Jesus], what zeal, what vindication!
[2 Cor. 7:9-11]*

- III. It is important to be aware of the value of Godly mourning. Without such an awareness we run the risk to succumbing to the culture of the Kingdom pursuing the satisfaction of this Godly angst with ungodly satisfaction. We run the risk of being underdeveloped in the key characteristic of hungering and thirsting for righteousness.

3. **Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.**

- I. A good indicator that we have dealt rightly with our Godly mourning is the fruit of meekness in our lives.
- II. When confronted with our lack the culture of this age is to respond with defensive pride or apathy, this we want to resist.
- III. When we however are made aware by the grace of God of our lack, and we stand in the midst of our angst, resisting inferior satisfaction and crying out to God in humility a great part of the response that we get is the revelation of Jesus Himself.
- IV. It is to such a one that Jesus says, come to me you who are weary from the awareness of your state. Come and I will give you rest, and that rest is me, my very yolk. Come and be attached to me and learn what you see as you behold me, meekness and lowliness. In this revelation you will find rest for your soul. *(My paraphrasing of Matthew 11:28-29)*

*Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
[Matt 11:28-29]*

- V. To see the meekness of Jesus produces a double fold blessing. Firstly we are comforted that He to whom we have come for reprieve is Himself gentle and exalts lowliness and lifts up the lowly one. Secondly we begin to become what we behold, *(2 Corinthians 3:18)*. His instruction is not just to see Him and gawk at Him, but further to learn of Him, to be transformed through this beholding. That meekness we behold and become qualifies us to be partakers in the inheritance of the earth.

4. **Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be filled**

- I. When we endure the pangs of hunger and thirst that comes from a longing for righteousness, as we discussed above, we receive righteousness Himself.
- II. It is interesting here to note the counterintuitive-ness of the Kingdom, for the one that is filled in the Kingdom of God is more disposed to hunger and thirst.
- III. You see, Hunger-less and passionless Christianity is not normal from God's point of view. No matter how much we have received through revelation, a

lack of hunger is a serious sign of sickness in the spirit. Gaining new ground in the grace of God—growing in our hunger and pursuit of God—is the only way to keep the ground we have today. There is no static position. Our heart is either growing colder or hotter. It is *not* staying the same. The Spirit is willing to make anyone spiritually hungry, if they will begin to seek Him for it.

The beatitudes are an expression of tension. One thing we must note from our pursuit of the knowledge of God is that as far as our growing understanding of Him goes, He exists in tensions. The beatitudes are a statement of what we possess the capacity to be through the fact of our citizenship of the Kingdom of Heaven. They are at the same time a light that shines upon our hearts and shows us the extent to which we fall short of the character of the blessed citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven. And it is an invitation to be spiritually violent and preserve our hunger until we are satisfied with righteousness.

The Beatitudes are the entry way into the life that pursues the Sermon on the Mount. It is the heart makeup of the Kingdom. Jesus deals with character before He deals with conduct. Let us respond to the call of the Lord to manifest our Sonship.