

1st February 2017.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.II. THE BEATITUDES.II.

Matthew 5: 5,6.

We did start on our study of the great Sermon on the Mount that the Lord Jesus Christ gave originally to His disciples and followers by the side of a mountain in Galilee, presumably overlooking the Sea of Galilee, and now to us.

Having noted that the first part of the sermon were the beatitudes, which were literally self-contradictory declarations of the true nature of those that were to partake of the Kingdom of God, which was the most crucial spiritual need of the Jews, who had awaited the Messiah for ages knowing that His coming would bring about Israel's deliverance from the Roman oppression and establishment of their rights as espesaled of The great God of the universe.

As noted, Matthew's chief aim of writing the gospel was to assure them that the Man Jesus Christ was their Messiah King, even though many hadn't noticed that while he'd walked among them.

Well, here in the longest of Jesus' written out teachings by the disciples were His exclamations of the attitudes exhibited by those that were the true inheritors of God's Kingdom. Truly exclamations and not simply statements, as the italicized 'are' has it in the KJV, meaning that originally in the Aramaic Jesus spoke then, it wasn't included, but given to make a correct grammar in English. Otherwise it was "O the blessedness of the" which I'll adopt for the sake of it's reality.

We did extensively cover the first two in verses 3, and 4, which we identified gave a kind of progressive flow of consideration, a sequence leading from the first step of entering into a relationship with God that produces happiness and that is being poor in spirit. That is simply admitting spiritual bankruptcy. That leads us to dealing with our attitude toward our spiritual bankruptcy. Spiritual bankruptcy simply means I'm in sin and nothing else, and that leads to mourning, mourning over our sin. And the consciousness of our sin and the sorrow over our sin leads us to meekness, we feel small and insignificant in the face of a holy God. And that leads to a hunger and thirst for a righteousness we know we need and do not have. And when that righteousness manifests itself to us, it manifests itself in mercy, purity and peacemaking and a willingness to suffer persecution and insult.

That's the flow of these beatitudes, a rich and profound sequence.

The next of the exclamations was in vs.5

Sure enough even as it was for them then, already startled by his first exclamations, being meek was a contradictory essence of one who governed the earth. Basically because what comes to mind first and fast is that one who is meek is weak.

However, according to Jesus Christ, exhibiting meekness didn't mean that one was weak and lacked control, but rather that they possessed supreme self-control as empowered by the Lord. Therefore making them truly in charge all the time.

The meekness Christ implied was that by which one was always angry at the right time, and never angry at the wrong time.

That, by which one had every instinct, every impulse, and every passion under control, thus being entirely self –controlled. Such as is only possible by the Holy Spirit, as Gal. 5:23 has it...Gentleness, self-control, as fruit of the Spirit, against which is no law.[It causes one to even master lawlessness without being lawless].

It is a core of humility, even unto teachableness

The kind Jesus Christ Himself had, throughout His life, greatly exhibited at His mock trials.....

It is this meekness, Jesus says, which will inherit the earth even as it had him become the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.

Many men in the Bible like Abraham, Joseph, Moses, even David, as well as the Apostle Paul, though not perfect made an eternal impact because of this great quality.

This beatitude is rooted in Psalm 37, reading from vs 1...vs11 esp....

All of those are the attitudes of the meek. They just give up everything for the purposes of God. They trust in Him, they delight in Him, they commit their way to Him, they rest in Him, they do not fret, and they wait for Him. That's what it means to be meek...to trust, delight, commit, rest, cease. The psalmist is saying be meek, don't trouble yourselves when the wicked prosper. Don't trouble yourselves when your own plans don't come to fruition. God's blessing belongs to those who yield up to Him and what else can someone do who has nothing to offer? "... abundance of peace." Which of course is not of this world as we saw happen to the many examples noted above. The meek inherit the earth is a future, but I think it has a present.

I don't know about you, but the fact that I know one day I'll possess the earth gives me a sense of possession right now. Is that true?

Finally, you'd ask, why is this necessary? Why is meekness necessary? I've got to tell you this. It is necessary because only the meek can be saved. That's first. Only the meek can be saved. Psalm 149:4. "The meek will he beautify with salvation." Therefore, no meekness, no salvation.

If you don't come to God with a broken spirit, mourning over your sin and humility before his holiness, you can't be saved. That's why it's important.

Further, it's commanded. God says, "Seek meekness." Check out James 4, You want to know something further? You know why a Christian needs to be meek? You can't even receive God's word unless you're meek. James 1:21 says, "Receive the engrafted word with - " what? " - meekness." If you're not meek, if you don't have a humble spirit, you don't even listen to God's word. You can't even receive it.

You see, we need meekness because you can't be saved without it because it's commanded by God, because you can't receive God's word without it. Furthermore, you need meekness because you can't witness without it, because you can't witness effectively from a stance of pride. That's why Peter says, "Give to every man an answer of the reason of the hope that is within you with meekness." 1 Peter 3:15. Another thing, you need to be meek because meekness alone gives God the glory. Peter writing in 1 Peter 3:4 says, "If you want to glorify God, don't care of your outside, but adorn your inside with meekness, or adorn your inside with meekness." What does it mean? Power under control. How is it manifest? In all of the vicissitudes of life, you never seek to defend yourself, but only God. What are its results? Blessedness and the inheritance of the kingdom. Why is necessary? It's the only way to be saved. It's commanded by God. It's necessary for receiving his word. It's necessary for giving his word. And it's the very reason for existence, to glorify God.

Well, so interesting, isn't it?

Going on to vs. 6, Jesus further declared,.....

According to the Old Testament background, the image of hunger and thirst compares this drive for righteousness with the deepest and most constant needs we

have (see Ps. 42:1-3..... and 63:1,2,5...). Hunger and thirst constantly cry out for satisfaction; it is a basic human drive. The image then is portraying the desire to do the will of God as that constant and strong. A kind of chief ambition.....

This beatitude is saying much more than most people think. It is not simply describing those who are righteous, or who try to do good things. It is describing their passion in life--they hunger and thirst for it. Like the poor and the meek these people put their lives into the hand of God and hope for his help with a yearning to live in right-standing with Him (righteousness).

We have already thought about righteousness with its meaning of conforming to the standard, i.e., doing the will of God. Here the word probably has two meanings. One would certainly be in the personal life--the strong desire to be pleasing to God, to do what God wants, to live up to the will of God. But out of this would grow the desire for righteousness in the land, for social justice in a world that is unrighteous and unjust. The desire for personal righteousness cannot be separated from the world around.

And because that is a proper desire it will be fulfilled. It may not be filled immediately, but certainly shall be in the future when the king establishes his reign of righteousness. But the promise of the King is that the desire for righteousness will be filled. Theologically this happens in several stages. The basic desire to be right with God is met by the gracious gift of righteousness. This we call justification, being declared righteous in the courts of heaven. Then, as a disciple of the Savior, the desire to do righteous works will find fulfillment by the power of the Spirit. This we call practical sanctification, becoming more and more like Christ. And in the future, when the Lord returns and establishes universal righteousness, we shall be changed. This we call glorification, being transformed into the glorious state.

Here too we must ask how this desire is developed. Most Christians are for righteousness, but how does the desire become so intense? It also has to come from the development of the spiritual life. Paul teaches that the spiritual person is one who yields his or her members as instruments of righteousness. So it begins with commitment to God's will. Then, as the spiritual walk is guided by the Holy Spirit, He leads the believer into righteousness. And the closer one lives to the Lord, the more sensitive he or she becomes to the unrighteousness and injustice in the world. The truly spiritual person then will begin to long for righteousness.

How does this Beatitude fit in with the others? Well, notice, first of all, in verse 3, it says, “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” We talked about the fact that that means morally bankrupt. That is the recognition that you are destitute of any righteous thing. That is the recognition that before God you stand absolutely stripped naked and empty. That is the recognition when you’ve added up all the pluses of your life, they are zero. That is the recognition that you cannot help yourself. You are hopeless. You are sinful.

And that is followed by the next one, “Blessed are they that mourn.” And that is the response to that recognition.

When you see yourself and you’re broken in your spirit, you will mourn. Here is the sorrow that comes over the moral bankruptcy. And then there is meekness. And meekness says, “Look at me in comparison to God. I am nothing.” And meekness is humility and when you see your sin and you are broken and you mourn, you will take a place of meekness before God. And in your meekness before God, you realize that the only hope you have of ever knowing righteousness is to seek it at His hand, and so you come to the fourth Beatitude and you hunger and thirst after what you know is not yours on your own.

You could clearly notice the thirst and hunger after righteousness, the men noted in the beatitude of the meek had, Abraham, Joseph, David, Paul, notwithstanding Jesus. And how satisfying it was for them, to be looked up to even today, despite their imperfections save for Jesus.

However, it should also be noted how a thirst and hunger for unrighteousness, just empties and increases in the lives of those that never thirst for righteousness, as shown by all we see in the world that seek for fulfillment in the lusts of the flesh, the eyes and the pride of life, even as I John 2:15 -17 warns,.....

So our prayer, in closing should be as Mr. Darby, a great man of God of old said: “To be hungry is not enough. I must be really starving to know what is in God’s heart toward me. When the prodigal son was hungry, he went to feed on the husks, but when he was starving, he went to his Father.” Yes, that’s what Jesus is talking about, the kind of desperation that only God can satisfy.

And we’ll be satisfied forever! Like He promised the woman at the well in John 4. Let’s pray....