

"Winning Attitudes from the Beatitudes"

Date 3/20/11 WBCFWB

Text: Matthew 5:1-12

Introduction: **Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference** – (Winston Churchill) **(PP)** **(John Maxwell)** “The attitude is an inward feeling expressed by behavior. **(PP)** That is why an attitude can be seen without a word being said. (the pout / sulker / jutted jaw) Of all the things we wear, our expression is the most important.”

As in the real estate business where it is said that success depends on location, location, location, so in serious biblical exposition, interpretation, and application, success depends upon context, context, context.

In the order of chronological events the sermon follows immediately after Jesus' 40-day fast and temptation in the wilderness, His baptism by John in the Jordan River, the calling of the 12 Disciples, His multiple healings, His Galilean ministry, the beginning of his great popularity, and with inauguration of his teaching ministry. Matthew tells us in chapter 4: 17 that “From that time Jesus began to preach and say, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’”

There are 8 beatitudes, with the one concerning persecution in verses 11-12 being combined thematically. And with the exception of the last one, all of these beatitudes, or “habits or dispositions of the heart,” begin with the same “Blessed are” introduction, and include some reward from God for the particular attitude being commended.

Blessed - in this context it means **one who, by adopting the particular beatitude, will externally be the recipient of God's favor, and internally experience joy, peace, and tranquility.** It is related to the word **“bliss,”** which was used by the ancient Greeks to describe the existence of the gods—a life of anxiety-free, work-free, untroubled state of perfect harmony and calm.

Thus, adopting these beatitudes makes one “happy”—with an internal joy unaffected by circumstances—and the recipient of God's eternal favor and the recipient of a reward. Some of these rewards are given in this life; some in the next.

Look at these “winning attitudes from the beatitude” - then see how to put them into application.

1. Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (v.3)

- This means literally one who recognizes his or her own spiritual poverty.
- Unlike the Pharisee in the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican in Luke 18 who reminded God how fortunate He was to have a servant like him, the tax collector, so remorseful over his sin, and with no pretence or excuse, simply said, “Lord, have mercy on me a sinner.”
- The tax collector is the model of the beatitude here.
- We like to compare ourselves to others—to feel convince ourselves that we might not be perfect, but we ain't doin' half bad.
- God gives Christ's righteousness to those who without excuse know, and confess to God they know, that they have nothing of spiritual merit or inherit righteousness to please God.

- “I **have nothing** without you, God; I **am nothing** without you.”
- To them belong the kingdom of heaven.

2. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. (v.4)

- We mourn for all sorts of things—mostly relating to our losses.
- The word Jesus uses here denotes a profound grief over the loss of a loved one.
- But it is broader than that. Jesus wept twice, that we know of, in the Gospels.
- Once at His friend Lazarus’ tomb, and once over the city of Jerusalem.

The mourning Jesus has in mind here is threefold:

- 1) The mourning we **experience at our own sin.**
 - When was the last time your sinfulness brought a tear to your eye?
 - Yet Paul tells us that godly sorrow leads to repentance.
 - And **repentance and confession** lead to—forgiveness and comfort from God.
- 2) The mourning we feel **over the sin and evil of the world.**
 - You want to feel sorrowful? Go to the children’s hospital or rescue mission.
 - There is bloodshed, hatred, injustice, greed, and wickedness everywhere.
 - Only the most stone-hearted can look around and not be moved by it all.
 - But God comforts even that grief—especially as we rise up and model Jesus Christ and do something about it.
- 3) The mourning we **feel at the loss of a loved one.**
 - Ps 30:5 “weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning”
 - God cares enough to even comfort us when our mourning is self-concerned.

3. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. (v.5)

- “Meek” power under control or “gentle” here—as in gentlemen and gentlewomen:
- It means the right action, at the right moment, for the right amount of time.
- The word also involves an attitude of trust and **subservience to God.**
- These shall inherit the earth when the Lord returns.

4. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. (v.6)

- **To be human is to have desires, hungers.**
- We Americans haven’t a clue about what real, genuine hunger and thirst is like.
- Greek - indicates the profoundest hunger and the profoundest thirst.
- We normally want what the world has to offer, and just enough religion to provide an escape hatch from hell and to comfort us when we get boo-boos.
- But Jesus here is referring to those whose hunger and thirst are for righteousness alone, not for righteousness and sex, or righteousness and fame, or righteousness, and you fill in the blank.
- For these blessed few who desire and crave righteousness, they will get what they desire.
- And what they get, unlike what the world gives, will last forever.

5. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. (v.7)

- Jesus is not saying that our mercy is dependent upon showing mercy to others.
- He says that if you have really had mercy extended to you, you will extend it to others.
- And what is mercy? Undeserved acquittal and forgiveness.

“Mercy there was great, and grace was free,
Pardon there was multiplied to me,
There my burdened soul found liberty—
At Calvary.”

6. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. (v.8)

- In “heart” not referring to the muscle that pumps blood through our bodies, “heart” means the seat and center of the human person. (It is our mind, will, and emotions.)
- It is those who **avoid evil**, *remain naïve concerning wickedness* and **guard their souls from unrighteousness that shall see God.**
- Paul reminds us to “**be simple**”—that is **ignorant, uninformed, concerning evil.**

7. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. (v.9)

- We all know those with permanent chips on their shoulders, and those who love stirring up trouble amongst their friends.
- **Being a peacemaker is difficult.**
- But it involves refusing to start or participate in an unnecessary quarrel, and trying to mediate and bring peace.
- **This don't mean the absent of conflict – but the working to make peace in it.**
- It also means being peaceful—at peace with yourself and with God.
- These kinds of people, Jesus says, **will be God's children.**

8. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (v.10) [11-12]

- If we are living this life of a disciple of Jesus right, we will invariably suffer some reproach.
 - Moral choices **will mean not getting a raise.**
 - Convictions **will cost friends.**

But there are **3 reasons these persecutions make us blessed.**

- 1) It **demonstrates our identity with the Lord. He suffered.**
- 2) It is **evidence of our sanctification**, as **unbelievers and immature believers rarely suffer for doing the right thing.**
- 3) Persecution is **a tool God uses to humble us, give us patience, and cause us to be like His Son, Jesus Christ.**

Conclusion:

How do we begin applying these beatitudes to our lives? (PP)

And how do we make this portion of the Sermon on the Mount practical?

1. Realize that all of these “winning attitudes from the beatitude” **go against our natural tendencies.** (PP)

- Incorporating them involves **dying to self / yielding to the Holy Spirit with discipline and perseverance.**

2. We must **commit these beatitudes to memory.** (PP)

- We remember what we want to remember.
- And the key to being these beatitudes is to commit them to your heart.

- **Write them down.** Say them aloud a few times a day for a week and you will have committed them to memory.
- Remember, these attitudes of beatitude are the blueprint for a joyful life blessed by God.

3. We must realize that these “winning attitudes from the beatitudes” are **dispositions of the heart and not actions.** (PP)

- Acquiring them results in right actions and righteous behavior, but **they themselves are convictions of the soul.**

(Phil. 4:11-12) Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

(John Maxwell) “The ability to tailor-make his attitude to his situation in life was a learned behavior. It did not come automatically. The behavior was learned and a positive outlook became natural.”

Close / Inv.

1. Jesus didn't come to bring more external laws to add to Moses' laws.
2. He came to call us to Himself. To a Personal Salvation and Relationship with Himself!
3. Are You Saved? Are you in a Right Relationship with Jesus today?
4. What has God said for You to Do in response to these Attitudes?

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I. The Sermon on the Mount

- A. Is a revelation of Jesus Christ's deity.
 - 1. By the location of the sermon (a mountain top).
 - 2. By His words ("Ye have heard it said...but I say to you").
- B. Is for Disciples (born again Christians) of Jesus Christ.
- C. Is difficult to keep for believers, but impossible for unbelievers.

II. The Beatitudes (vv. 3-12).

- A. The poor in spirit: Those who recognize their own spiritual inadequacy (see the Publican in Luke 18:9-14).
- B. They that mourn: Those that grieve over
 - 1. Their own sin.
 - 2. The wickedness and suffering of the world.
 - 3. Their own losses.
- C. The Meek: Those that are "gentle" (doing the right thing, at the right moment, for the right amount of time; also, humble).
- D. Those that hunger and thirst for righteousness (A focused, passionate yearning for what is right; a strong, singular desire for what pleases God—see Matt. 6:33).
- E. The merciful: Those extending unmerited forgiveness.
- F. The pure in heart: Those who keep their minds and souls free of evil and its entanglements).
- G. The Peacemakers: Those that mediate disputes; those that bring about reconciliation—see II Cor. 5:18-21).
- H. Those persecuted for righteousness' & Christ's sake.

Application

- 1. Realize the "attitudes of beatitude" go against our natural tendencies. Incorporating them into our lives requires self-discipline and determination.
- 2. Commit the beatitudes to memory.
- 3. Realize these "attitudes of beatitude" are dispositions of the heart, not transitory actions.