

DEEP IN SCRIPTURE

Verses & Notes May 10, 2006

The Beatitudes II

Matthew 5:1-12

- 1: Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain,
and when he sat down his disciples came to him.
- 2: And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:
- 3: "Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 4: "Blessed are those who mourn,
for they shall be comforted.
- 5: "Blessed are the meek,
for they shall inherit the earth.
- 6: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst
for righteousness,
for they shall be satisfied.
- 7: "Blessed are the merciful,
for they shall obtain mercy.
- 8: "Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they shall see God.
- 9: "Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they shall be called sons of God.
- 10: "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 11: "Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you
and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.
- 12: Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven,
for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Discussion Notes:

INTRODUCTION:

(to program) “Has anyone ever asked you: Do you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ?”

- What does this mean? What does this require of us, entail?
- Biggest problem, whose opinion can we trust.
- Well, Jesus preached a sermon on how to have an intimate, personal relationship with him:
- It was called the Sermon on the mount, and this is what we’ll be discussing on DEEP IN SCRIPTURE.

Intro:

*1: Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain,
and when he sat down his disciples came to him.*

2: And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

- “the mountain”: the place where people have always gone to encounter God.
 - Sets the right attitude: looking upwards (Phil 3)
- 5:3 through 7:27: One large sermon?
 - 7:28-29 imply that all this was one large sermon:
 - *“And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.”*
- Keys to understanding perspective:
 - Purpose: Intimacy with God
 - *“and when he sat down his disciples came to him.”*
 - *Speaking primarily to disciples, but thru them to people, calling them to come closer, to become disciples, to follow his instructions.*
 - The End / Goal: 5:48 . . .
 - *“You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”*
 - Perspective: 5:4,6,18 (3x, same thing!)
 - “your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”
 - The difference between Decalogue & Beatitudes:
 - The Law: servile fear;
 - The Beatitudes: filial fear
 - Focus: on pleasing / glorifying the Father, NOT the rewards:
 - (6:33) “Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well.”
 - *Mt 5:16 ...glorify God the Father*
 - Leave concerns / trust rewards to God
 - 5:3-12 . . . the New Decalogue.
 - Not replacing the Old / Mosaic Decalogue (5:17f)
 - But rather a fulfillment / a maturing
- The Beatitudes:
 - 8 vs 9 (vs Luke):
 - 8 if last 2 on persecution are combined;
 - 9 if last 2 considered separately:
 - Persecution for righteous living
 - Persecution for being a follower of Jesus
 - “Blessed”
 - “Makarios”
 - No one good English word to convey meaning

- Blessed, happy, fortunate
- Problem with “happy”: from “hap” = luck; happenstance
- Blessed = emphasizes that the rewards in each case are gifts from God, which is what entire sermon is about.
- Not list of separate, disconnected statements, but a ladder / steps:
 - St. Chromacius, Bishop of Aquilea (340-408)
 - Jacob’s ladder into heaven
 - A effort of climbing to God (Phil 2:12-13)
 - But in partnership with Grace!! (not on our own or apart from Christ)
 - Jesus’ Beatitudes are in a certain important order,
 - Each “rung” leads to the next
 - Each rung is the foundation for the next;
 - Once a rung is reached / surpassed / fulfilled, it does not cease; we do not reach a level of spirituality. We must always continue to practice all the beatitudes.
 - Each rung leads to a crisis
 - Requires sacrifice, perseverance, willful choice
 - We can step down / backwards.
 - Again this is all / only accomplished by Grace:
 - And it IS attainable:
 - Jesus did not make impossible demands!
 - 1 Cor 10:12-13
 - 1 Jn 2:1
- First Beatitude, first step / rung on the ladder towards intimacy with God:
 - 3: *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
 - First glance, often interpreted: “the poor” of the world.
 - Their poverty here, which is beyond their control, will be rewarded in heaven
 - But important qualifier: “poor in spirit”
 - This poverty is a poverty that we choose, regardless of material wealth, condition in life:
 - There are poor who focus on what they wish they had;
 - There are rich who recognize all that they have as gifts from God for which they are eternally responsible & therefore focus on the needs of the needy.
 - This poverty of spirit involves: detachment from things;
 - Again we are to see life from the perspective of the Father;
 - Material things are good in themselves ...
 - But are not ends in themselves; only fleeting, of no eternal value;
 - The first step involves, essentially what the first disciples did:
 - “Immediately they left their nets & followed him”
 - All of Jesus’ instructions on discipleship begin here;
 - And one must not turn back!
 - Luke 9:62: “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.”

- The reward: “*for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*”
 - Essentially the most important / primary requirement for entrance;
 - “is” present tense
 - Present intimacy with God the Father, Jesus, Holy Spirit;
 - Being “in Christ” or “Abiding in Christ”