

c) Matt. 25:40

Blessed are those who engage the lowly with the just actions that flow from a pure heart, for although they may get their hands dirty, they will indeed see God in that encounter.

IV. The Merciful and Those who Hunger and Thirst (5:6, 7)

- A. Those who Hunger and Thirst for Justice
 - i. Psa. 107:4-9

 - ii. Isaiah 49:9-10

- B. The Merciful
 - i. Isa. 49:10 LXX: "but the one who shows them mercy will comfort them."
 - ii. Matthew 25:35-37, 42-44

When disciples meet those longing for elusive justice with acts and mercy in Christ's name, there is the kingdom of heaven.

LIVE THE STORY

The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.

- How does viewing the Beatitudes as a call to action for disciples potentially change how we read them?
- How does this reading help define what it means to seek first God's kingdom and righteousness?
- How does the title of this sermon reflect the intent of the passage?
- Why in the context of Jesus and the disciples would engaging the lowly mean a disciple would get their hands "dirty" (unclean)?
- What are some practical ways to put into practice any of the last four beatitudes in our context today?
- Why might "theirs is the kingdom of heaven" be applied to all of these beatitudes?
- How do these beatitudes reflect that Jesus is a completely different kind of king?

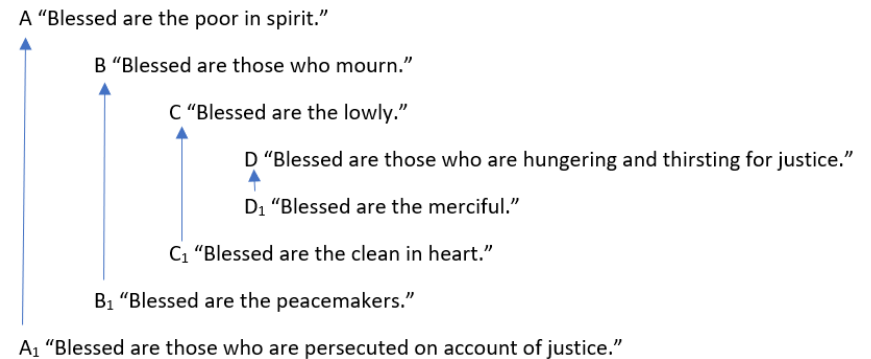
The Beatitudes and the Life of the Church

Jerry Cisar — December 27, 2020

Text: Matthew 5:3-10

Introduction

The Beatitudes describe how the kingdom of heaven, which has drawn near, is manifest now.



Disciples do the actions of the last four for those in the condition of the first four in a chiastic relationship.

I. The Persecuted and the Poor (5:3, 10)

A. The Poor in Spirit

The Old Testament makes clear that the spirits of the economically poor were being crushed by economic injustice which the prophets repeatedly call out. They see no hope; they know the destructive impact of poverty.

- i. Psalm 34:18

- ii. Psalm 51:17

B. Those Persecuted on Account of Justice

- i. *They are persecuted because they live out the justice of God's kingdom.*
 - a) Matthew 6:19-34
 - b) Matthew 10:34-36
- ii. The actions of the disciples in the eighth beatitude meet the needs of the poor in the first.

When disciples, for the sake of bringing justice to the poor in spirit, do so even if it costs them through persecution, there, in that act, in that meeting, is the kingdom of heaven manifest.

II. Peacemakers and those who Mourn (5:4, 9)

- A. Who are the mourners?
 - i. We mourn that which is missing.
 - ii. Isaiah 61:1-3
 - iii. Robert Guelich: *Mourn* "is an expression of the intense sense of loss, helplessness, and despair."

B. Peacemakers

Shalom restores mourners to a place of flourishing and fruitfulness in God's world. Shalom is that state for which God made humans to exist in the beginning, and to which the gospel of peace (shalom) restores us.

Jesus is indeed talking about turning things over in these beatitudes, but not through the power of the sword. Jesus is proposing that it be done by the power of deeds: acts done in his name intended to restore wholeness to those who have suffered loss.

III. The Pure in Heart and the Lowly (5:5, 8)

- A. The Pure in Heart
 - i. Psalm 24:3-4

Purity of heart and purity of hands, in biblical language, go together in many Old Testament passages.

The Pharisees were *not* focused on innocent hands, but on ceremonially washed hands.

- ii. Matt. 23:25-28
- iii. Matt. 15
 - a) Matt. 15:19
 - b) Matt. 15:11
 - c) Matt. 23:4

"Blessed are those who have pure hearts, but are willing to get their hands dirty so that their hands might bring God's kingdom justice."

- iv. Matt. 8:1-3

B. The Lowly

- i. The lowly were unable to maintain such ritual purity standards.
- ii. The other two uses of this word in Matthew refer to Jesus as *lowly*.
 - a) Matt. 11:29
 - b) Matt. 21:5 (quoting from Zephaniah 9:9)